

Use Your Slingshot
Presented by Mary Lowman
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Day One

Are you happy with who you are? Do you often wish you were someone else or had a different personality? Are you envious of other people's gifts or abilities or accomplishments? No doubt all of us struggle at times with accepting ourselves the way we are, and sadly some people spend their entire lives wishing they were someone else. Living a life of envy and disappointment in yourself is living in misery.

I want to examine learning to accept and appreciate who you are—the way God has created you. I'm calling this "Use Your Own Slingshot," and that comes from the story of David and Goliath.

Off and on throughout my life, I've found myself trying to be what someone else wanted me to be. Do you have that problem too? At this stage in my life, it seems to hit me periodically and unexpectedly. Before I realize what's happening, I'm comparing myself to others or wishing I were different or trying to be what someone else thinks I should be.

Symptoms of this disease are uneasiness in your spirit, feeling guilty about something but you're not quite sure what, knots in your stomach, and a general sense of gloom and despair. Can you recognize some of these things in yourself? Maybe, like me, it hits you only occasionally, or you may indeed find yourself continually consumed with this disease of not being satisfied with who you are.

David found himself in a situation of being urged to be like someone else, but he knew he had to be himself. You remember how David volunteered to go up against the giant, Goliath. Nobody else in the entire Israeli army had been willing to face him, even the experienced fighters. After all, Goliath was over nine feet tall, so you can hardly blame them.

David was on an errand to the fighting field, to bring food to his brothers, and he heard Goliath making his daily challenge, which he had been doing for forty days. He was goading them and taunting them.

When David heard this, he essentially said, "Why are we allowing this bully to stand there and make threats against the Lord's army? Why hasn't someone stood up to him?" His brother, Eliab told him to go back where he came from and tend the sheep. He belittled David and insulted him. After all, he didn't want to be shown up by his baby brother.

But David didn't let Eliab intimidate him. Even at this young age, you can see the strong faith of David in his God and his confidence that God could deliver them from Goliath.

Day Two

You remember the famous story of David and Goliath. I think there's a lot we can learn from this story. David visited the battlefield, where the Israelites were fighting the Philistines—and frankly, they were doomed to lose because nobody would go up against Goliath the giant. David was appalled that they were intimidated by a giant, because after all, they were God's people, and God would give them the victory.

Finally, King Saul sent for him because David had volunteered to fight Goliath. Of course, Saul was reluctant to let him do this, knowing it was highly unlikely David could. But David insisted and told Saul how he had killed a lion and a bear. He said, *The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine* (1 Samuel 17:37).

Saul relented; after all, nobody else was willing to even try, and then Saul tried to tell David how to do it. "Here," he said, "put on my armor, take my sword." David immediately realized he couldn't use Saul's armor.

I cannot go in these, he said to Saul, because I am not used to them (1 Samuel 17:39).

He took them off, found his five smooth stones, got his slingshot in his hand, and faced Goliath. You know the story: He takes aim at Goliath's head, hits him in the right place, and knocks him out. Then he cuts off Goliath's head with his own sword, and claims victory.

How did David defeat Goliath? By using his slingshot. You don't kill giants with slingshots—right? But that's what David was good at; that's how he had defeated the lion and the bear; that's the gift God had given him. David was smart enough to realize trying to do what God wanted him to do in someone else's armor would lead to disaster.

Now, think about some lessons we can learn from this. When you try to do your work to please people; when you try to copy others and do what they're doing, it's like putting on Saul's armor—you can't do it. But when God has given you a gift, skill, or opportunity, don't underestimate God's power in you, doing it the way he's gifted you.

Use your slingshot. It may not be the conventional way to do things, but if that's how God is leading you, don't be intimidated by what others think. Go with what God has given you.

Day Three

Use your own slingshot! It comes from David's life. When he volunteered to fight nine-foot Goliath, King Saul offered him his heavy armor and a sword. But David knew he couldn't win wearing someone else's armor. It didn't fit him and he couldn't move in it. Instead, he chose his slingshot—the tool he knew, the skill he had practiced—and he defeated the giant.

I have to relearn that lesson often. God gifts each of us uniquely. It's a mistake to try to do what God has called us to do in someone else's armor. It's so easy to look at someone successful and think, that's what I should be doing. But God has given you certain gifts—and not others—on purpose. Don't minimize what he has entrusted to you.

Use what God has given you. Do what you do well. Don't try to impress people or copy someone else's style. Every time I've tried to do God's work someone else's way, I've fallen flat. I have to lean into the strengths God placed in me and I encourage you not to underestimate what God can do through you using your own slingshot.

Remember, David's skill was developed in obscurity—out in the fields, caring for sheep. In that quiet, unnoticed place, God was preparing him. He practiced with that slingshot until he was an expert. What looked small and unimportant became the very thing God used to bring victory.

Looking back, I can see how God used even the hidden seasons of my life to prepare me for what I'm doing now. He wastes nothing.

Polish your gifts. Develop your skills. Trust how God has wired you.

And then step forward—using your own slingshot.

Day Four

Did you ever think about this: David had to be able to kill Goliath, because that was the deed which propelled him to eventually become the King. It made his reputation and paved the way for God's plan for him. But it began in those lonely fields as a shepherd boy, slinging stones from a slingshot day in and day out and learning how to kill big enemies in unconventional ways.

When facing Goliath, David was prepared for the job. He used his creative thinking and refused to try to do it Saul's way, which would have meant defeat. He used his slingshot—a most unlikely weapon, but God gave him that skill to prepare him for this incredible challenge. He could kill a giant with a slingshot.

Where are you now? In the fields, all alone, being prepared by God for what is coming? David didn't know, when he was tending sheep, that God was preparing him to be King. He had no idea. But he did that job well, and while he was doing it, he learned to do other things—like play a harp, write poetry, aim a slingshot well, and tackle an enemy of overwhelming odds.

Maybe you're on the battleground and your Goliath is staring at you, taunting you. Are you tempted to fight in someone else's armor? Remember, if God has brought you to that battlefield, he has a plan to make you victorious; but don't get out of yourself. David knew how to stay within himself and not try to mimic others or be intimidated when others told him what he should do or how he should do it. David knew God had equipped him to slay this giant, and he wasn't afraid to try. It wasn't a matter of pride or conceit; he just knew he had a skill from God that now God wanted to use.

You remember David's brother was angry that David would try to kill Goliath and told him to just go back home. When others tell you can't do it or to quit or they belittle you in some way, remember David. If he had allowed his brother's remarks to get to him, he would have turned around and gone back to the sheep. He never would have defeated Goliath. But he was willing to step out even in the face of his brother's protests and jealousy.

If God has told you to use a slingshot, then use it. Don't let the "Sauls" in your life dictate how you are to attack your giant if you know God has given you directions. Many times, well-meaning people will give us poor advice. Certainly, Saul thought it would be best for David to wear all that armor, but David knew better. A conventional one-on-one sword battle would have wiped David out in a few seconds.

Learn from David to use your slingshot for the honor and glory of God.

Day Five

Do you have some giants in your life right now—some people or situations that are way bigger than you are? Some obstacles you don't know how to overcome? We all have them at times, and I've noticed usually God leads us to fight the giants in our lives in the most unusual ways.

It almost always goes against human logic. We must learn to walk by faith and trust the Holy Spirit within us to give us guidance, and then not doubt it when others say "That's not the way to do it," or "Nobody has ever done it that way before." There are times when we should ignore what others tell us. If you remember when Jesus was going to heal Jairus' daughter, his friends came to him and said, "Don't bother, she's dead already." But Jesus ignored what they said and told Jairus, *Don't be afraid; just believe* (Mark 5:36).

If you're facing a giant in your life right now, use your slingshot like David did when he faced Goliath; don't try to wear someone else's armor. And ignore those who would tell you otherwise.

Maybe the battle is over, and you are victorious. Remember what David said before he fought Goliath: *All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands* (1 Samuel 17:47). When your battle is over and God has given you victory, please remember it was the Lord's battle, not yours, and he gave you the skill, talent, and wisdom to know how to fight and be victorious. Give him all the glory.

I think we can all relate to David. Because he was who he was—the way God had created him—and used the skills he had learned, he killed the giant. I hope you'll remember this illustration from David's life to inspire you to use your slingshot—God's gifts in you to do what he has called you to do. Go into the battle without fear, knowing it's not your battle. It is the Lord's, and you can face that giant equipped by God to win the victory.