

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Why Five Stones?

David's victory over Goliath teaches us a great lesson on the nature of faith. It also points to another ingredient that is essential for success in life.

“Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. . . . Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth” (1 Sam. 17:40, 49).

The story of David's victory over Goliath is the archetypical example of faith in action. A young shepherd boy takes on an enemy super-soldier, and defeats him with a single shot from his sling. KA-POW!!

It's a rousing story that thrills young and old alike. But it contains one curious detail that begs explanation. David needed only one shot to take down Goliath; so why did he take *five* stones into the battle?

Google this question, and you'll find several explanations. Maybe it was because Goliath had four relatives (brothers?)—also giants (2 Sam. 21:18-

22)—and David figured he would have to deal with all five of the big boys. But this is unlikely, since there's no indication that David had any knowledge of his opponent's family tree at this point.

The least likely explanation was that David lacked faith in God to deliver his enemy into his hand. Give me a break! One stone or five, taking on this hombre with nothing more than a slingshot required an enormous dose of faith, and David had it in spades. That's the whole point of the story.

Actually, stick with the text and it's not too hard to figure out David's strategy. Recall his exchange with King Saul prior to the battle. David related his experience fighting lions and bears as a shepherd (v. 34-36), so he knew what was required to take down a determined foe. When Saul sought to equip him with his personal armament, David tried it on, but decided against using it (v. 38-39). He had no experience with such things, and the heat of battle was a poor time to learn.

So David went into battle armed with what he knew and understood. He

was a skilled slinger, and he knew from experience that a beast the size of Goliath would probably take several shots to bring down. As it turned out, he only needed one, but he had no way of knowing that as he prepared for the encounter. He took five stones because *experience taught him that's what he would need to do the job.*

David's preparation for his battle with Goliath provides a life lesson for us today. God gives each of us our own unique talents, molded and shaped through years of experience. When we are faced with threats or obstacles, He does not expect us to use the tools that others are comfortable with; He wants us to use the tools that *we* are comfortable with. They do not have to be elaborate or elegant, just useful *to us.*

By the way, this little study answers another intriguing question: What if Goliath had not gone down on the first shot? Easy. David would have simply taken out another stone, and another, and another, until the brute collapsed. *David was prepared*, both mentally and materially. So should we be.

— David King