

Stewardship Revival Week

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Breakthrough
Living

Stewardship Revival Week

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Breakthrough Living

Are you searching for life's purpose? Are you seeking restoration from past emotional wounds and mistakes, aspiring to live at your fullest potential, longing for deep and meaningful relationships, or refusing to settle for the minimum in your spiritual, family, and professional life? Do you wish to boldly and faithfully engage in God's mission?

These pursuits can be summed up as a profound aspiration for breakthrough living.

Our best strategy to experience breakthrough living is a personal daily encounter with the One whose mission statement reads: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners" (Isaiah 61:1).

Before you enter 2026, the Stewardship Ministries Department invites you to connect deeply with the Facilitator of breakthrough living through the Stewardship Revival Week.

During this week, let us pause and reflect on an episode of the life of David, the giant slayer. Guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can acquire practical life management lessons that, when applied, contribute to self-awareness, meaningful living, growth, resilience, freedom from fear, and above all, a God-first life.

As you advance on this journey, we invite you to claim God's promises for breakthrough living and embrace the daily suggested commitment for a transformed life.

GC, Stewardship Ministries

Chosen by God: A Call to Be His Steward / Day 1

When we tell the story of David to our children, we usually focus on the section where a young boy defeats the giant Goliath with a slingshot. However, we rarely discuss what preceded this epic battle, and we seldom mention other chapters of David's life—when he cheated and acted as a villainous criminal. Are we missing the bigger picture?

David's story started long before the battle with Goliath. One of the remarkable moments in his life was when he was chosen by God. If we aspire for a victorious life through breakthrough living, it is essential to pause and explore this critical question: How does God choose His champions? After all, if one is not selected to run a race, there is no possibility of winning it! Let's talk about God's selection.



God Makes the Selection

God sent Samuel, His prophet, on an important mission: "I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king" (1 Samuel 16:1). Equipped with his horn full of oil, he left Rama and went to Bethlehem.

Arriving there, God guided him to the house of Jesse, and Samuel asked to see his sons. He examined Eliab, the eldest son, and thought, This must be the one! But God said, "No, not him!" Jesse introduced six more sons to Samuel. None of them was the one chosen.

Confused, Samuel asked Jesse: "Are these all the sons you have?" (1 Samuel 16:11). Hesitantly, Jesse answered that one son remained; the youngest one was keeping the sheep. Immediately, Samuel asked that he be sent for. When the

little shepherd walked in, God told Samuel: "Rise and anoint him; this is the one" (1 Samuel 16:12). Samuel obeyed and poured oil on David's forehead.

David was not the choice of his dad, his brothers, or even the prophet Samuel. He was chosen by God Himself. He was anointed, meaning that God selected him for a task that was very special.

All Are Selected

Have you ever been picked last in a game or left out? Well, I have. When I was growing up, when we would create teams to play soccer during recess. The team captains got to pick the players on their teams. They would choose one player at a time, often picking the most talented players or their best friends first. They would often reach their maximum number of players without me being picked.

That made me feel sad, and I realized that the right thing is to include everyone when we are playing or having fun.

Unfortunately, the experience of being left out and the feelings it brings can affect many aspects of life besides what happens on a playground. It happens in our relationships, even with those we deeply cherish. In our professional lives, we may feel overlooked in favor of someone else, and sometimes we go through the pain of being excluded entirely.

Life teaches an important lesson: Just because someone does not choose you, it does not mean you're bad, incapable, or have done something wrong. Often, the person selecting is looking for certain qualities that you might not have at this time; some tasks require specific qualities. It is also possible that the person choosing is

simply not seeing your awesome qualities. In that case, the problem is not with you, but with the one doing the selecting. For example, Michael Jordan, widely regarded as one of the greatest basketball players of all time, did not make his high school varsity team during his sophomore year because his skills weren't recognized. However, even if people don't recognize our great qualities, God does. The Bible teaches us that God has selected all of us.

One time, Jesus told His disciples that they were His friends, His buddies, and then He announced: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last" (John 15:16). This means God has handpicked all of us to go out on a mission, and He promises good results. How encouraging is it to know that God has chosen you to be on His team?



Three Big Lessons from the Selection of David

The story of David's selection reveals three things about God's selection:

1. **God chooses before you accomplish anything.** When God chose David, he was not yet a giant killer. He was only a shepherd boy. But when David accepted God's selection, the Bible says that "the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David" (1 Samuel 16:13), and God created opportunities for him to learn and grow. He chooses and prepares us for something great.

Receiving the Spirit of the Lord comes with many benefits: First, you feel God's presence and realize you are not alone when facing difficulties (John 14:16, 17). Knowing this chases away fear and makes you bold and courageous (2 Timothy 1:7). Next, the Spirit of the Lord equips us with talents and abilities (1 Corinthians 12:4–11). We can do things better or simply accomplish new things. It transforms us into better people (Romans 12:2). Finally, we start sharing Jesus, the Divine Selector, with others (Acts 1:8).

Sometime after his selection, David became a part-time musician and armor-bearer for King Saul. There is no better place to learn to be a king than to live in a palace; this is precisely where God placed David. God will always make a way for you to be where you can learn, grow, and prepare for your life's purpose.

2. **God does not choose by looking at the outside.** God's selection is not like a beauty pageant or a bodybuilding competition. God reminded the prophet Samuel: "Do not consider his appearance or his height. . . . The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Humans often believe that to qualify for a mission or task, a person must possess certain intrinsic characteristics—to look like someone who has performed this kind of task previously. We easily cultivate stereotypes. Doctors, teachers, pastors, Christians, and even unbelievers are expected to look a certain way. We tend to apply our constructed standards

to ourselves and others. As a result, we are prone to disqualifying ourselves and others based on superficial, external, and preconceived criteria.

Ellen White, God's prophetess for our time, tells us in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets* that the prophet Samuel was interested in Eliab because he "more nearly resembled Saul for stature and beauty than the others" (p. 638). However, God told him this was not the right way to choose. Do we also make the same mistake?

Gender, language, social background, or color does not matter for God's selection. He loves everyone, and He chooses those who love Him for great responsibilities. Even if you don't look like the "one," you can be the one when God has chosen.

3. **God's timing is different.** Even though God chose David, he did not become king right away. David probably did not fully understand Samuel's action. He only knew that God had chosen him, and he moved ahead. He had to trust God and be patient for 15 long years before he became king.

Chosen as God's Steward

As descendants of Adam and Eve, we share a core identity: God has made us His stewards (Genesis 1:28). Everything else flows from this foundational truth. It implies that God is the Owner of all and the Provider for all, and humans are His managers. This is the greatest honor and privilege conferred upon any of His creatures.

Additionally, the Owner has provided a clear job description for His human managers, one that aligns with His own identity:

- As He is the Creator . . . He calls us to behave as creatures.
- As He is the Provider . . . He calls us to act as His dependents.
- As He is the Model . . . He calls us to be His representatives.
- As He is the Triune God . . . He calls us to prioritize relationships.

- As He is the Master . . . He calls us to adopt a servant attitude.

Sadly, humanity has fallen into temptations of the enemy, believing that we could become owners in the place of the real Owner (Genesis 3:5). As a result, Satan became the prince of the world (John 12:31).

However, through perfect obedience, Jesus became the new steward, the One under whose feet the Father has put everything (Ephesians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 15:27). Today, as He is the Redeemer, He wants us to be forgiven and be empowered as happy stewards.

As members of the human race, we are all chosen to be His stewards. As for us who have received salvation in Jesus, He has entrusted His wealth to us (Matthew 25:14). We are His treasure. No one is left out!





Going Deeper

- 1 Why do you think God chose David instead of his older brothers?
- 2 How does it make you feel to know that God has chosen you for something special?
- 3 What does it mean to you to be chosen as God's steward?

God's Promise

Isaiah 61:1

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."

Commitment

By God's grace, I choose to learn to be a faithful steward in my daily life.

When Challenges Feel Too Big / Day 2

Have you ever tried really hard for something, like finishing a project, studying, or growing a relationship, but it continued to feel overwhelming? Maybe you thought, *I'm doing the right thing, so why is it so difficult?* You may have experienced the same feeling while trying to witness about your faith and be part of God's final mission.

Guess what? You're not alone!

David, the one selected by God, knew what that felt like. He did what was right: He obeyed his dad, took good care of his sheep and played inspirational music. But one day, everything changed. His father, Jesse, sent him on a simple errand, and suddenly he found himself standing near a battlefield facing a giant challenge!

Let's look at the terrifying challenge that David faced on the day he became a national hero and compare it to the challenge of doing mission in our generation.

What can this terrifying moment—the day David became a national hero—teach us about the seemingly impossible challenges we face in our own lives and mission today? Let's dive in and discover how breakthrough living can happen even when challenges feel too big to overcome.



Scary Challenges

The day David accomplished his exploit was marked by significant challenges. After all, there can't be a hero without a foe. David had to overcome a massive hurdle!

1. The Challenge Was Close.

We read in 1 Samuel 17:1, "Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah."

The Philistines, who lived on the western border of Israel, could not stand the

Israelites. After making a powerful alliance, they crossed into Israel. They were now inside Israel's territory, ready to fight. Before this, the Philistines were far away, and the Israelites did not worry much about them. But now the danger was close, right in their country.

How we feel about a challenge depends much on where the challenge is. Think about it: When it is far from us, it doesn't feel like a big deal. Unfortunately, we sometimes laugh, crack jokes, or criticize those facing difficulties. But when the challenge is close—an enduring conflict

with your spouse, your boss bullying you, your child struggling with some serious illness—it can be scary. It hurts, we feel the pain, and sometimes we even cry.

The challenge of mission is also one that is close, even closer now to us. Christians are called to call others. Locally and globally, people need to hear of Jesus. The mission was relevant both yesterday and today. Today, this mission is even more urgent and critical: "When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of

the Lord in the clouds of heaven” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 490).

2. The Challenge Was Huge

How big was the challenge? The challenge of David was beyond normal. We read in 1 Samuel 17:4: “A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.” Goliath was over nine feet tall, almost the height of a basketball hoop! Goliath wasn’t just tall—he was giant-sized.

King Saul and his army were ready to fight normal soldiers, but now they faced a giant. We all face regular problems, like the flu, losing our car keys, a long day at work, or something similar. But sometimes in life, we face “giant” problems that are much bigger than anything we are used to. These aren’t things you can easily fix. They make you feel too small, incapable, fearful, and unsure of what to do next.

Have you reflected on the enormity of doing mission in our time? In post-Christian societies, many people have a deep aversion to institutional religions. In the fastest-growing regions of the world, the population embraces belief systems and worldviews that are not rooted in the Bible. Furthermore, in several countries and regions, the preaching of the gospel and conversion to Christianity are punishable by arrest or even harsher forms of punishment, including the death penalty. With such strong opposing winds, are we demoralized and tempted to play it safe?

3. The Challenge Didn’t Go Away

Whenever we face a hard time, we often ask how long it will last. The Bible tells us in 1 Samuel 17:16: “For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.” Goliath didn’t just show up one time. He came out twice a day for forty days!

After the first day, the people in Saul’s army were surely praying and expecting that Goliath was only like a bad dream and that he wouldn’t come back the following day. But he came back, shouting at and challenging everyone. At the end of the first week, Goliath was not tired and had not lost his voice. They were scared to see Goliath every morning and evening for over five weeks.

Goliath represents those challenges that come into our lives and stick around. They are persistent and sometimes even seem permanent. Prayer and the passage of time do not seem to bring any solution. Some examples could be a chronic disease, grieving the loss of someone dear to us, or living with a spouse battling addiction. Day

in and day out, you struggle with the hard reality.

Preaching and supporting the gospel is an ongoing challenge. What you did yesterday cannot make up for what you neglect today. The Master expects to find His servants actively serving others when He returns (Matthew 24:46)! At the same time, the risk of mission burnout or fatigue is very real.

4. The Challenge Was Personal

The army of King Saul came out to fight against an army. But Goliath changed the rules of the battle. We read in 1 Samuel 17:8, “Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me.’” Goliath wanted one person to step up. One man had to stand up to take the challenge to win the battle.

With the support of everyone, it is much easier to move forward with mission. Teamwork is paramount. However, many situations require a personal decision or a personal engagement. You can’t always depend on others to decide and do for you. When others around you are not making the right decision or doing the right thing, you may need to stand alone. It takes courage to stand up alone.

Local church communities or the church at large can suffer from diffusion of responsibility or the bystander effect. Individuals are assuming that someone else is taking the responsibility to witness, serve, and support. It may result in a stagnation in mission.

Challenges for Growth

We sometimes complain that we would have done better in our lives and in mission if everything were easier and smoother. The story of David reminds us that hard times can make heroes. When challenges are close to us, feel huge, don’t go away, and need us to take some personal actions, what should we do? Give up? Blame God?

Here are two important lessons to remember when you face your scary personal and mission challenges:

1. You can be victorious with God’s help.

David was victorious. Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Our loving God and heavenly Father will never allow a problem to destroy you. And He promises

His strength for you to go through any kind of challenge.

2. Challenges make you grow.

David acquired a national stature. Apostle James wrote, “The testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:3, 4). We can compare our challenges to a physical workout. It can be hard, even painful, but you become healthier, stronger, and faster. Facing challenges helps us become wiser, braver, and more faithful.

We can’t stop some “giant” challenges from coming our way, but with God’s help, we can face anything, be victorious, and grow. Are you struggling to balance your hectic agenda to find time to share and witness for Jesus? Do you feel too shy or unprepared? Is it possible that the people around you or the society in which you live is hostile or indifferent to the gospel? Your challenges are real, but you can still make a unique difference.

Ellen White makes an appeal for personal involvement in mission for our time: “The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the light before others? God has left to every man his work; every one has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the peril of our souls” (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 126). How would we respond?





Going Deeper

- 1 What kind of things make it hard to do good sometimes?
- 2 What can help us keep going?
- 3 Share how you have grown after addressing a major challenge in your life.

God's Promise

Galatians 5:1

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Commitment

By God's grace, I choose to never quit doing what is right, even when it is getting difficult, but to always act according to the convictions God has placed in my heart.

Avoid Failing Strategies / Day 3

Have you ever tried opening a Japanese puzzle box? It is a special wooden box that opens only if you slide the pieces in the right order. You can twist it in all directions, but if you don't follow the right strategy, you might try for hours, and the box won't open. In the end, you might get so discouraged that you give up even before discovering the secret inside.

Life's challenges—and especially the mission we're called to in this generation—can feel just like that puzzle box. Without the right approach, our efforts can stall, leaving us discouraged or even causing more harm than good.

So, how do we avoid wasting time, energy, and resources on failing strategies?

Today, we'll learn about failing strategies from the story of King Saul and his army, who had to face a giant challenge but chose the wrong strategies! By examining their mistakes, we can uncover key lessons to help us avoid the same pitfalls—and unlock breakthrough living in our own lives and missions.



Trusting in the Wrong Thing First

When the Philistines invaded the territory of Israel, King Saul had a plan: “Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines” (1 Samuel 17:2). King Saul did something, but he didn't have a positive result.

Israel had an army and a general, King Saul. They had commanders, officers, soldiers, uniforms, and they knew how to march. They had rules, protocols, and battle strategies. Everything seemed to be ready, but even with all that, they were stuck. Why? Saul trusted first in his army's strength and plans before trusting in God. The best organizations or teams are insufficient to overcome a giant personal challenge or effectively advance in mission if God is not the first source of help.

As a believer, we might be part of a loving family, school, church community, or group of friends. These are good, essential, and can help you grow. But when tough problems come our way, it is not wise to trust first in people or systems around us. First, depend on God.

Ellen White, God's prophetess for our time, wrote about this danger facing God's children: “He is in danger of shifting his burden upon organizations, instead of relying upon Him who is the source of all strength” (*Welfare Ministry*, p. 265). One of King Saul's failing strategies was to depend first on good structures and good people instead of upon a good God.

Running Away from the Challenge

When Goliath the giant marched and shouted toward the camp of Israel, how did the soldiers in King Saul's army react? The Bible says: "Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear" (1 Samuel 17:24). Out of fear, they turned their backs and ran away.

Sometimes, we do the same when we are scared and worried about our challenges and the possible outcomes of facing them. How does this happen? Sometimes we put things off that should be done right away. When asked to do something we don't like, we reply with: "I'll do it later." It is important to understand that procrastination is rarely about laziness; it's often a self-protective response rooted in fear of failure or doing something wrong. Another common approach is distraction—playing games, watching TV, internet browsing, or anything that helps us forget what requires our attention for a while. Some may turn to even more harmful coping mechanisms, such as using drugs, drinking alcohol, or self-medicating to run away from their challenges.

But here's the truth: Running away won't fix anything. Challenges don't disappear, but often grow bigger and harder. And the next time we decide to take care of it, it will be much harder.

Only Talking About the Challenge

The soldiers not only ran away but also just talked about their challenge. We read in 1 Samuel 17:25: "Now the Israelites had been saying, 'Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel.'"

These soldiers could clearly identify the challenge: a giant named Goliath. They knew about the solution: Someone had to stand up and fight the giant. They even knew what the rewards would be: no taxes and marrying the king's daughter. But they just talked and talked without any action.

Talking about your challenges is alright, but it's not enough. As we grow up or spend more years in God's church, our knowledge naturally increases. We can speak, write, and argue about various topics. But knowing something is not the same as doing it.

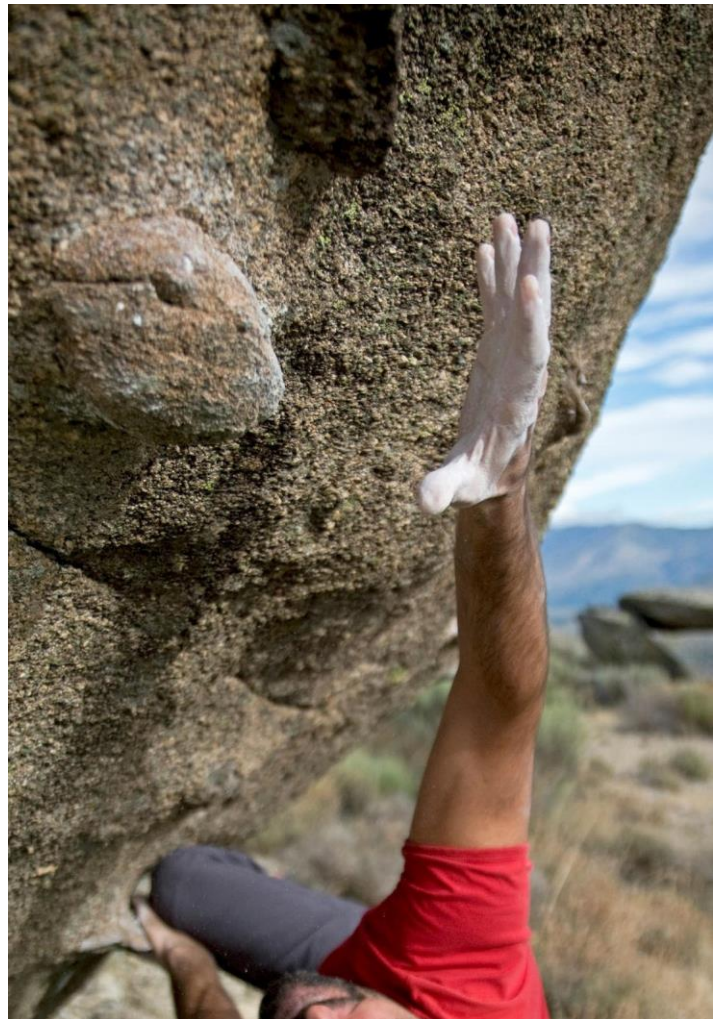
For example, a church member might make thoughtful contributions every week during Sabbath School on the quarterly theme of personal devotion. But that extensive knowledge means little if, throughout the week, that same person fails to get out of bed to spend unrushed time with God before starting the day's activities.

Use Winning Strategies

King Saul and his army responded to the giant challenge by using the wrong strategies: depending on their army setup instead of God, running away instead of facing the challenge, and just talking without doing anything. And guess what? Nothing happened for 40 days. Are we using any of these same strategies? Be careful! Solomon, the wise king, warned us: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12). Using the wrong strategy not only prevents us from addressing the challenge, but it can also make things worse.

How can we find the right strategy to address our giant challenges? Where should we start? Here's a powerful truth: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). The immediate context of these words of Jesus reveals that people were anxious about meeting their needs. Some were concerned about basic necessities—shelter, food, clothing (Matthew 6:25). Others worried about their personal worth (Matthew 6:26), while some feared events beyond their control (Matthew 6:27). Jesus offered an antidote to these fears: seek God's kingdom first. Trust in a kingly God, the One who provides His saving and transforming righteousness.

Solomon reached the following conclusion about how to navigate through life's challenges: "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and



understanding" (Proverbs 2:6). In simple terms, God promises to make us smart! He helps us decide the right thing to do when facing our giant challenges. This is the much-needed discernment in a complex and confusing world. You might wonder, How do I tap into God's wisdom?

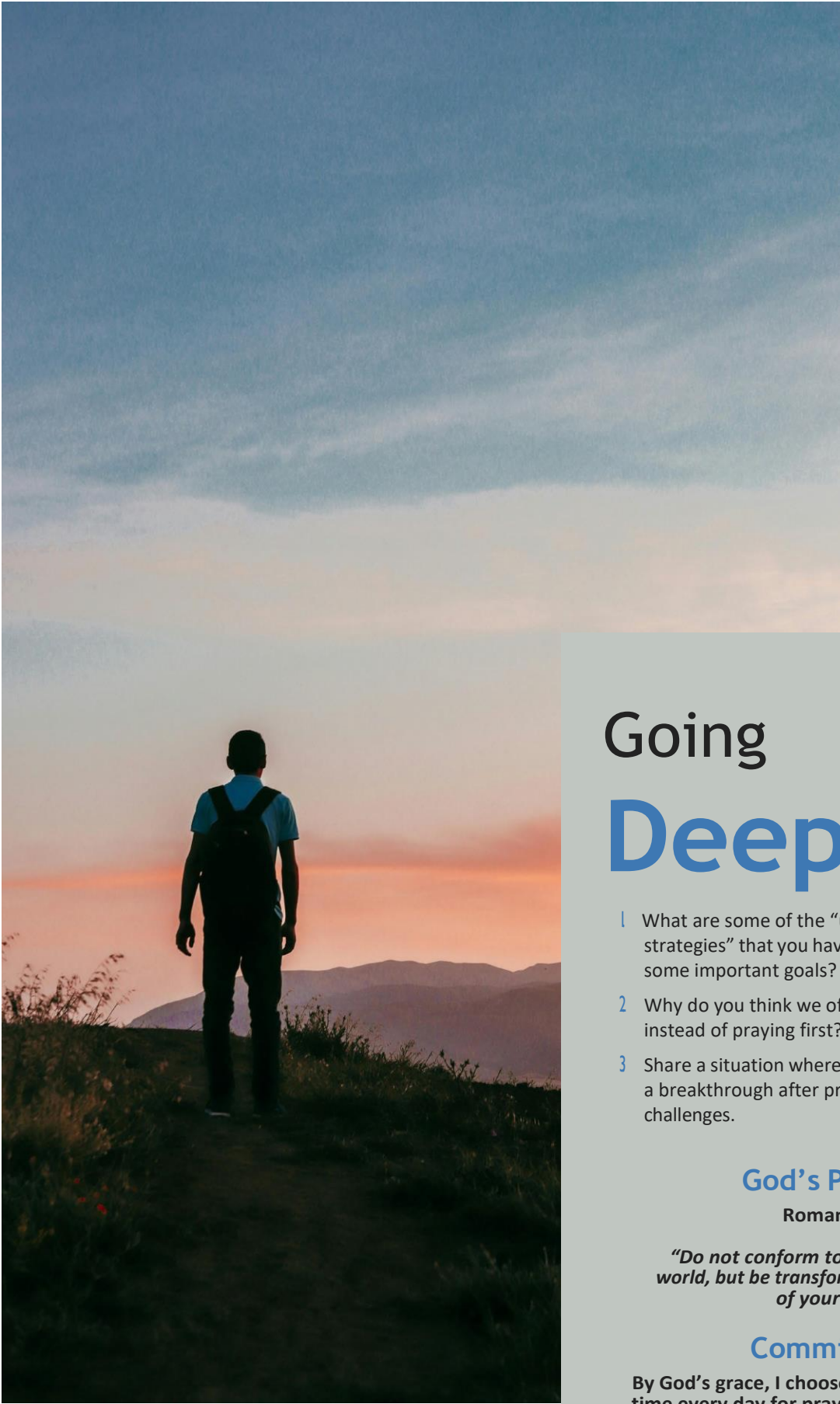
Apostle James wrote, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). So, if you need wisdom, ask for it. When you pray for wisdom, God answers. Apostle Paul also gave excellent advice to a young man, Timothy, about a sure source of wisdom, "And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise" (2 Timothy 3:15). Keep reading and studying the Bible. It will make you smarter so you can handle life's challenges.

While we generally acknowledge the value of a robust devotional life comprised of prayer and meditation on the Scripture, a global church survey indicates that we are unfortunately lacking in several areas' vital to spiritual practices:

- 52% engage in personal devotions daily
- 65% have personal prayer daily
- 48% read the Bible daily
- 36% study the Sabbath School lesson daily

Is it possible that God's people in this generation are trapped in the failing strategy of only talking about revival without practicing the exercises leading to revival?

Be careful about what strategies we use to solve our problems; not all are right in God's sight! The safest plan is to depend first on God, face our challenges, and do what is right. Remember to always pray and read the Bible for wisdom.



Going Deeper

- 1 What are some of the “unsuccessful strategies” that you have employed to achieve some important goals?
- 2 Why do you think we often try to do more instead of praying first?
- 3 Share a situation where you have experienced a breakthrough after praying about your challenges.

God’s Promise

Romans 12:2

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Commitment

By God’s grace, I choose to set apart unrushed time every day for prayer, Bible study, reading of Spirit of Prophecy, studying the Sabbath School lesson, and participating in family worship.

Making Yourself Available: Invest in the Good of Others / Day 4

What comes to your mind when you think of a giant slayer? We might think of one of the superheroes who has amazing superpowers. David, God's chosen, who successfully defeated the giant, was not a superhero. He was an ordinary young man, just like us or the person sitting beside us at church.

The Bible describes David like this: "David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem" (1 Samuel 17:14, 15). He was a young teen caring for his father's sheep. He couldn't shoot webs, crawl on walls, or have superhuman strength like Spider-Man. He did not have the strength, speed, and fighting abilities of Wonder Woman. Neither could he become invisible, teleport objects, or have some fancy gear.

But how did David, a simple shepherd, become a giant slayer and a hero? It was not a mere chance or coincidence. David developed some special characteristics. Would you like to accomplish more every day? Here is one key characteristic of David: He made himself available by investing in the good of others. Let's reflect on how availability can unlock breakthrough living in our own journey.

I Will Go

One day, David's dad gave him a simple job: "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them" (1 Samuel 17:17, 18). That's it, just a simple delivery and bringing back news for his father. It was an ordinary job for a young boy. The distance from Bethlehem to the Valley of Elah was 15 miles, around 24 kilometers, to the southwest. If he left in the morning, David would have returned to Bethlehem by the evening and could sleep peacefully at his home. But he chose to act beyond his term of reference.

When David arrived in Elah, he saw Goliath yelling and scaring the army of Saul. No one was brave enough to face the giant. David demonstrated a unique quality. He went to the tent of King Saul and spoke these courageous words: "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him" (1 Samuel 17:32).

Without military experience, armor, or a sword, this young man cried out, saying, "I will go. I will fight." He was ready to step up! One of David's biggest strengths is that he made himself available. Now, why would he do that?



He Cared About Others

Fighting Goliath was not David's responsibility. He was completing the task his father gave him: He delivered the food and checked how his brothers were doing. But when he saw the desperate condition of Saul's army, he didn't just walk away—he offered to help. David was concerned and interested in the welfare of his brothers and others. This caused him to go out of his way to help.

As we mature in life, many of us have learned to focus on ourselves and avoid getting involved in other people's business, so we are not considered nosy. This can keep us in our own bubble, blind to the difficulties and needs of others. When we're OK, happy, and satisfied, it's easy not to notice that others are hurting or need a helping hand. However, apostle Paul disapproved of this selfish attitude. He told his young disciple Timothy that in the last days, "people will be lovers of themselves" (2 Timothy 3:2), not showing concern or caring for others, and encouraged him not to imitate such people. Young David became a giant slayer and a national hero because he cared and was interested in the well-being of others.

Ready to Give Something Up

When David decided to fight the giant, he was ready to give up his own time and comfort. He could have peacefully returned to Bethlehem, played his music, or relaxed with his sheep. It would be a well-deserved rest! Instead, he stayed and took a big risk of being hurt and even put his life in danger for others.

Helping others or doing what's right often means giving something up. We all have limited resources, such as time, energy, and money. When we spend time helping someone, we have less time for ourselves. When we give a portion of our income or savings as offerings for missionaries to go preach to people who don't know Jesus, we have less money to spend on ourselves. Do we hesitate to do or attempt something big because we are afraid of what we might lose?

We should be wise in the use of our resources. However, when we help others, give money for God's mission through tithes and offerings, or dedicate our lives to serve Jesus, God promises to reward our sacrifices and bless us (Proverbs 19:17; Malachi 3:9, 10; Mark 10:29, 30). He always finds a way to give us much more than we previously had. It's like the little boy who gave his basket of food to Jesus. Jesus multiplied his food to feed a huge crowd, and the boy had a surplus to bring back home.

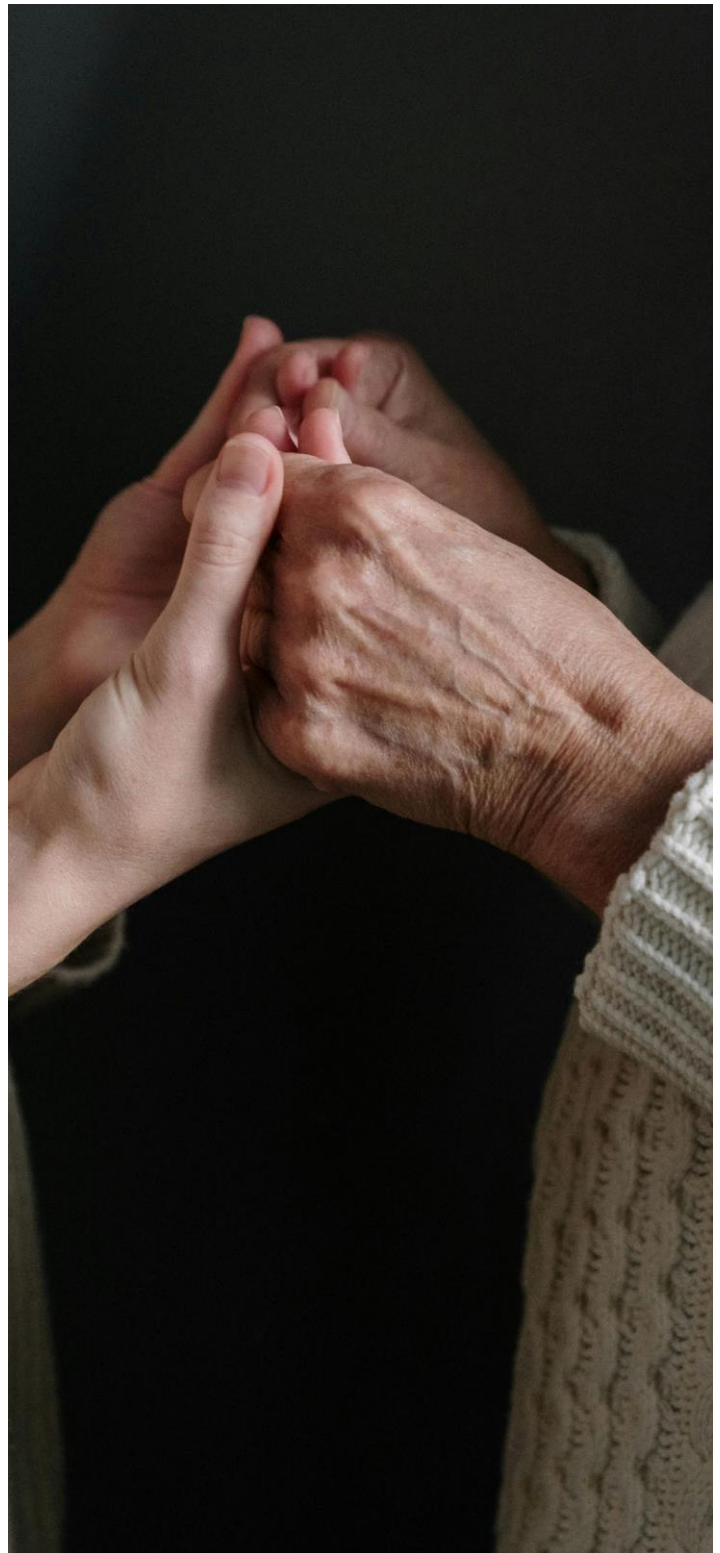
Ready for Something New

David was ready to do something that he had never done before. He had never seen or fought a giant, and had never seen anyone fight one either. But that did not stop him. Even though his brother Eliab made fun of him and told him to go home, David was ready to do something original.

We all have our habits that please us the most. When we see a need or are asked to do something, do we decline to act because it is something new that we've never done before? Are we hesitant to commit because we do not know the full details of how it will turn out? New things and initiatives can sometimes be scary, but this should not stop us from doing what is right.

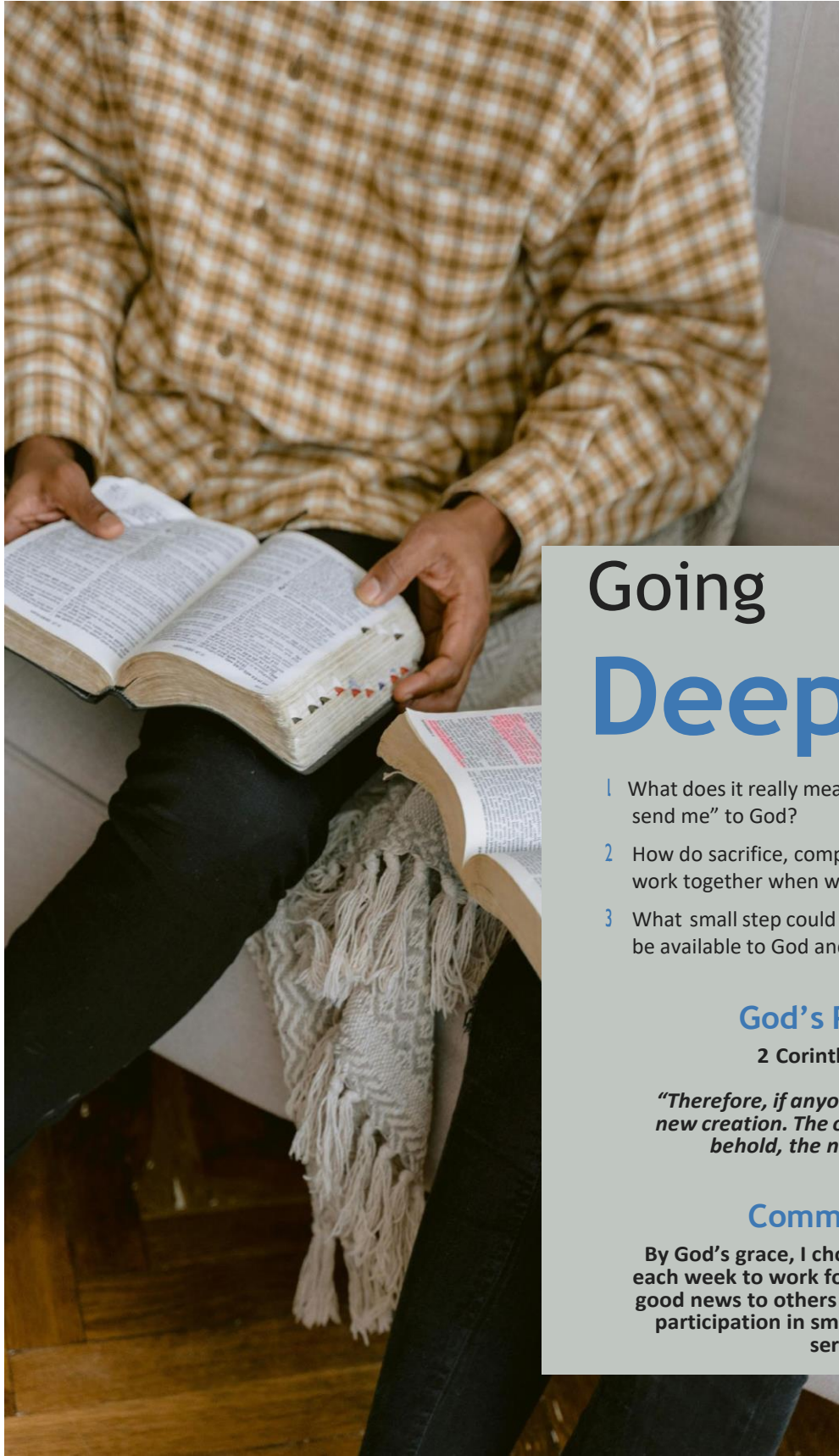
The Bible tells us that God likes doing new and unusual things: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:19). He would love to use us to do these new things if we say yes. Growth, development, and outstanding achievement happen to those prepared to attempt things they have not done before.

As believers, our basic life orientation is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This places relationship at the core of our identity. Jesus exemplifies the highest form of authentic love: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). The apostle John upholds the same standard of love: "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18). In our relationships with others, we should certainly strive not to do no harm, avoid unnecessary conflict, and treat others with kindness, politeness, and respect. But to truly emulate Jesus and act in harmony with His Word, we are called to go even further, seeking the good of others.



We have learned that David became a giant slayer and developed a special bond with Israel because he made himself available. Availability made the extraordinary possible! His availability flowed from his genuine care for others, his readiness to give something up for others, and his willingness to try something new for the benefit of others. Today, as God's people sing and shout like David, "I will go," our impact will be far greater if we share the same selfless spirit, always seeking the good of others.

In whatever field of service we find ourselves, in every encounter we make, it's not just about completing tasks or fulfilling assignments. It's about adding value to the lives of people. Cultivate meaningful relationships that uplift and strengthen others. This is His good purpose!



Going Deeper

- 1 What does it really mean to say, “Here I am, send me” to God?
- 2 How do sacrifice, compassion, and courage work together when we say yes to God?
- 3 What small step could you take this week to be available to God and others?

God’s Promise

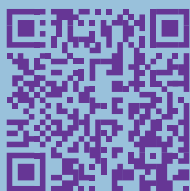
2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Commitment

By God’s grace, I choose to dedicate time each week to work for God— spreading the good news to others through Bible studies, participation in small groups, or acts of service.

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Acknowledging the Owner / Day 5

A few years ago, our family visited a beautiful country for our holiday. Our little boy was thrilled to make new friends and play on the beach. But one thing deeply disturbed him: stray dogs on nearly every street corner. He was confused by the sight of dogs moving around without leashes, looking dirty, malnourished, and posing a public hazard. Troubled, he asked: “Where are their owners?” I tried to explain that these dogs either have no owner or have been abandoned by their owners. But he struggled with the idea of “no owner” or “abandoned by their owner.” The truth is that the presence of a caring owner is what makes the difference—it’s what turns a stray dog into a lovely pet.

An owner does make a difference. Have you ever wondered how David was so brave when he faced Goliath? He was just a young shepherd boy, so where did this kind of courage come from? David knew something very important: God owns everything, and He is a caring Owner. The truth about God’s ownership was the source of His confidence and courage.

Are you ready to stop living like a stray and start walking with the confidence of one who is known, chosen, and fiercely cared for?



Who Is the Owner?

When David came to the battlefield, he heard Goliath shouting and mocking the Israelites, calling them “servants of Saul” and “the armies of Israel” (1 Samuel 17:8, 10). Goliath thought he was challenging King Saul and the nation of Israel. The soldiers thought that, too, and they were terrified: “On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified” (1 Samuel 17:11). They were scared because neither King Saul nor the soldiers believed they were prepared to win.

David saw things differently. When he talked to the soldiers, he asked: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Samuel 17:26). He knew that it was not Israel’s army but God’s army. So, when he spoke with King Saul, he repeated it: “[Goliath] has defied the armies of the living God” (1 Samuel 17:36). Finally, when he faced Goliath, he declared: “I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (1 Samuel 17:45). He knew who Goliath was really picking on—God. And since God owns the army of Israel, He would fight for His people.

In times of crisis and in times of celebration, David believed that God owns everything. He wrote in the opening lines of one of his songs: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters” (Psalms 24:1, 2). As the Creator, God owns everything. The apostle Paul also said: “You are not your own; you were bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). This means, as one saved by God, we belong to God too—our lives, time, talents, money, and everything else.

As mentioned in the introduction, human owners are not always trustworthy. Additionally, human owners have their personal limitations, and they don’t live forever because they are mortals. When they die, their belongings go to someone else. They have no more control and cannot protect or care for their property. Unlike human owners, God never dies. He is the Living God, always watching over what belongs to Him, including you.

Why God's Ownership Matters

David recognized God as the Owner of the army and of the problems they were facing, and this gave him confidence to face anything.

When King Saul asked David how he could be so brave, he answered: "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). Since he belonged to God, he knew God would protect him and ensure his victory.

Even when Goliath tried to intimidate David by calling him a puny little dog and threatening to kill him, David did not back down! Why? He trusted that God, the real Owner, would show up: "The battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into

our hands" (1 Samuel 17:47). David believed that if God *owns* the battle, God will *fight* the battle. The conviction of God's ownership comes with the assurance of His intervention. He takes care of His own.

The Bible tells us that God's protection, care, and intervention come with His ownership, kind of like a bundle. Zechariah 2:8 gives us a beautiful picture: "For whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye." When something passes by your eyes, it is hard not to blink. Your reaction is automatic, which is called a reflex. In the same way, when we are in danger, God intervenes right away as if it is His reflex because we are the apple of His eye. We are His precious property.



We're Not Owners—We Are Stewards

If God owns everything, then what are we? According to the Bible, we are God's stewards. That means we are managers—people who take care of things that belong to someone else. It started in the Garden of Eden: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15). God asked Adam and Eve to take care of His magnificent creation. Apostle Paul wrote that God "put everything under their feet" (Hebrews 2:8). God gives us time, money, talents, our body, and everything else—not to own but to manage well for Him.

Good stewards do three things:

1. **Remember the Provider.** The Bible invites us to "remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18). Some activities help us remember the Owner. They act as mnemonic devices. When we keep the Sabbath, we remember the Creator of all things and that time belongs to God. When we return tithe (10% of our earnings) and offerings, we remember that God provides for our everyday needs.

Ellen White speaks of giving as God's memory aid for His children: "Tithes and offerings for God are an acknowledgement of His claim on us by creation, and they are also an acknowledgement of His claim of redemption. Because all our power is derived from Christ, these offerings are to flow from us to God. They are to keep ever before us the claim of redemption, the greatest of all claims, and the one that involves every other" (*Testimonies for the*

Church, vol. 6, p. 479). Tithe and offerings "keep ever before us"; they help us to remember. Each time we return tithe and give offerings, we are sending a signal to our brain that God is indeed the Owner who provides and cares.

2. **Are Faithful.** God's stewards are faithful. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). Stewards do not make their own rules. Instead, they obey and follow the instructions of the Owner. As long as they are faithful, they don't have to worry much about results; the Owner takes care of that. The Bible is the guideline for faithful stewards.

Regarding faithful stewardship of our resources, the Bible tells us that one-tenth belongs to God. The biblical principle of tithe is not about giving a large amount or any amount, but 10 percent of all our increase, just like Abram: "Abram gave him a tenth of everything" (Genesis 14:20).

The ultimate value of tithing is in its symbolic meaning. When we tithe, we declare that God is the true Owner of everything we have obtained. A partial tithe, however, acknowledges God only as a partial owner and provider, potentially fostering pride and arrogance. Recognizing God as the giver of all things fosters gratefulness and encourages generosity and a heart for doing good. In a world full of uncertainties, tithing contributes to peace

of mind. There is a God who provides for everything, even our minutest needs.

3. **Serve and Bless Others.** Stewards serve and bless others. It implies caring and sharing with others: "Having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). They search for ways to bless others. They understand that they are designed to serve as channels.

The greatest blessing that we can bring to our fellow man is to make the good news of salvation accessible to all. One important way of participating in this final push for the world to be reached by the gospel is through our means. It is what some women did during the final stage of Jesus' earthly ministry in Galilee: "These women were helping to support them out of their own means" (Luke 8:3). It is God's design that those who dedicate their complete life to the ministry are supported by the tithe of His people (Numbers 18:21–32). Returning tithe is not about maintaining an institution but serving and blessing others.

The soldiers in Saul's army were afraid because they didn't see God as the true Owner of Israel and the battle. When we act as though we own everything and try to control everything and everyone, we become anxious, fearful, and stressed. But when we remember that God owns it all, we live with peace and are courageous, just like David. We're not owners—we are stewards. Let God be God. Our battles belong to the Lord. Regular tithing helps us internalize this essential truth about God's ownership and who we are.



Going Deeper

- 1 What helped David to be so confident when everyone else was scared?
- 2 How does knowing that you are “the apple of God’s eye” make you feel?
- 3 How has your participation in tithing strengthened your conviction of God’s ownership over your life?

God’s Promise

2 Corinthians 10:4

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

Commitment

By God’s grace, I choose to faithfully return the Lord’s tithe, which is equivalent to 10 percent of my income or increase.

Don't Always Believe What Others Say About You / Day 6

Once, there was a baby eagle that was raised in a chicken coop. She looked nothing like the other chicks and often asked her mother hen why she looked different from her siblings. The mother hen tried to comfort her by saying, "I'm sorry that you look different from the other chicks, but that doesn't change the fact that you are still my baby chick." And she believed the hen, thinking that she was just a weird-looking chicken.

Every day, around midday, a beautiful eagle would fly high in the sky above the coop. All the little chicks would fearfully run to hide, but the strange chick would stay behind, gazing up in admiration. She would whisper to herself, "If only I could be an eagle . . . but I'm just the strangest little chick." But what she didn't know was that she, too, was an eagle! She just didn't know it—because she believed what others told her.

Now here's the question: What story are you believing about yourself?

Do you know that what you believe about yourself will shape what you accomplish?

The story of David reminds us that breakthrough living begins when you stop letting others write your story. He did not always trust what others said about him. Let's explore how to stop letting others define us and start living the story God has written for us.



Be Careful of Others' Evaluations

On several occasions, people—including his brother, King Saul, and Goliath—told David he could not fight the giant and was not a good fit! But he didn't listen to them.

His Brother

The first one to look down on David was his eldest brother, Eliab, whom he probably admired most and looked to for approval. When David showed interest in what was happening and possibly fighting Goliath, Eliab got mad. The Bible says, "[Eliab] burned with anger" (1 Samuel 17:28). Eliab questioned the good intentions of David for coming to the battlefield and blamed him for neglecting his job as a shepherd. He accused David of being proud and said he knew "how wicked

[David's] heart is" (1 Samuel 17:28). No words of affirmation! That must have hurt, especially coming from his family.

The King

The second one to look down on David was King Saul. When David shared with him that he wanted to fight Goliath, he was probably expecting words of praise, encouragement, and confirmation of the rewards. But what he heard was completely different: "Saul replied, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth'" (1 Samuel 17:33). King Saul questioned David's abilities and experiences. He compared him to Goliath and concluded he was just a boy. Had David believed the

king, he would have given up right there, taking the road back to Bethlehem, not the battlefield. But he didn't. Have you interacted with someone in authority, like a teacher, a Pathfinder director, or a pastor, who seemed to overlook your potential? Did you persevere in doing what you knew God had chosen you to do?

Goliath Himself

The third person who made fun of David was Goliath. He laughed when he saw David and took him for a joke: "He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him"

(1 Samuel 17:42). He made it clear to David that he despised him: "You don't look like a giant fighter, and you are surely not one!" But David knew that he was chosen by God and was convinced that God was calling him to do something.

How people look at us tells us how much they believe in our capacity. When they ignore us or pay little attention to what we have to say, it tells us that we are not important to them. Do we abandon our good plan when this happens? For David, people's views of him were always secondary. He understood that his value did not decrease based on someone's inability to see his worth.

How Do You See Yourself?

Sometimes, the biggest problem isn't what others say about you—it's what we say about ourselves. Let's look at two big mistakes we often make:

1. **Comparing Ourselves to Others.** A lot of times, we compare ourselves with others to measure how much better we are or how less talented we are than others. Then, we quickly realize that we are all different. When we see that we don't have the same qualities, skills, or talents as others, we believe that we are not gifted. But this is not true!

God has given everyone something different but still valuable: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them" (1 Corinthians 12:4). Some are good at singing, others at writing, some at talking, and others at solving math problems. Work together with others, and you can do amazing things.

2. **Only Thinking About the Past.** Some people judge what they can do by looking at what they have already done in the past or what they are doing now. When they see their failures, mistakes, low grades, or terrible performances, they conclude that their future cannot be different. But that's not true!

The Bible tells us that our future is not doomed because of our past. God has a good plan for us. He even takes care of our past disappointments: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

The prophet Isaiah describes what has often happened in our personal lives: "Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall" (Isaiah 40:30). We all go through some hard times and mistakes. Even when we make mistakes or mess up, God gives us a second chance. He said, "They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Our future doesn't have to be a repetition of our past. No one must stay stuck. Change is possible: "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31).



The Sabbath—A Reminder of Our Personal Value

The Sabbath is a memorial of the Creation week. It reminds us that the universe, including humans, is not the result of a slow evolution or random mutation. God spoke, and it happened. He molded the clay, breathed into its nostrils, and man became a living creature. This is what we celebrate every Sabbath.

Abraham Heschel, in his book *The Sabbath*, writes these words: “Creation is the language of God. Time is His song, and things of space the consonants in the song. To sanctify time is to sing the vowels in unison with Him.” The weekly observance of the Sabbath creates a rhythm in our minds, making it easier to remember our intrinsic worth and divine origin.

In today’s world, personal value is often measured by productivity and performance. Students are assessed by the quality of their papers, and professionals by their expertise and output at work. Mistakes, shortcomings, and weak spots are often experienced as withdrawals from our personal worth account. That’s why a week filled with missteps and failures often leaves us feeling bad and depressed.

Everyone needs relief from the tyranny of productivity and performance. We are all fallible. The Sabbath, the pinnacle of the Creation week, exists to remind us that our ultimate worth is not determined by what we accomplish or fail to accomplish, but by who we are as created beings that belong to God.

The Sabbath also celebrates God’s redemptive actions, the God who delivers from slavery (Deuteronomy 5:15). On this day, He repairs what is broken and

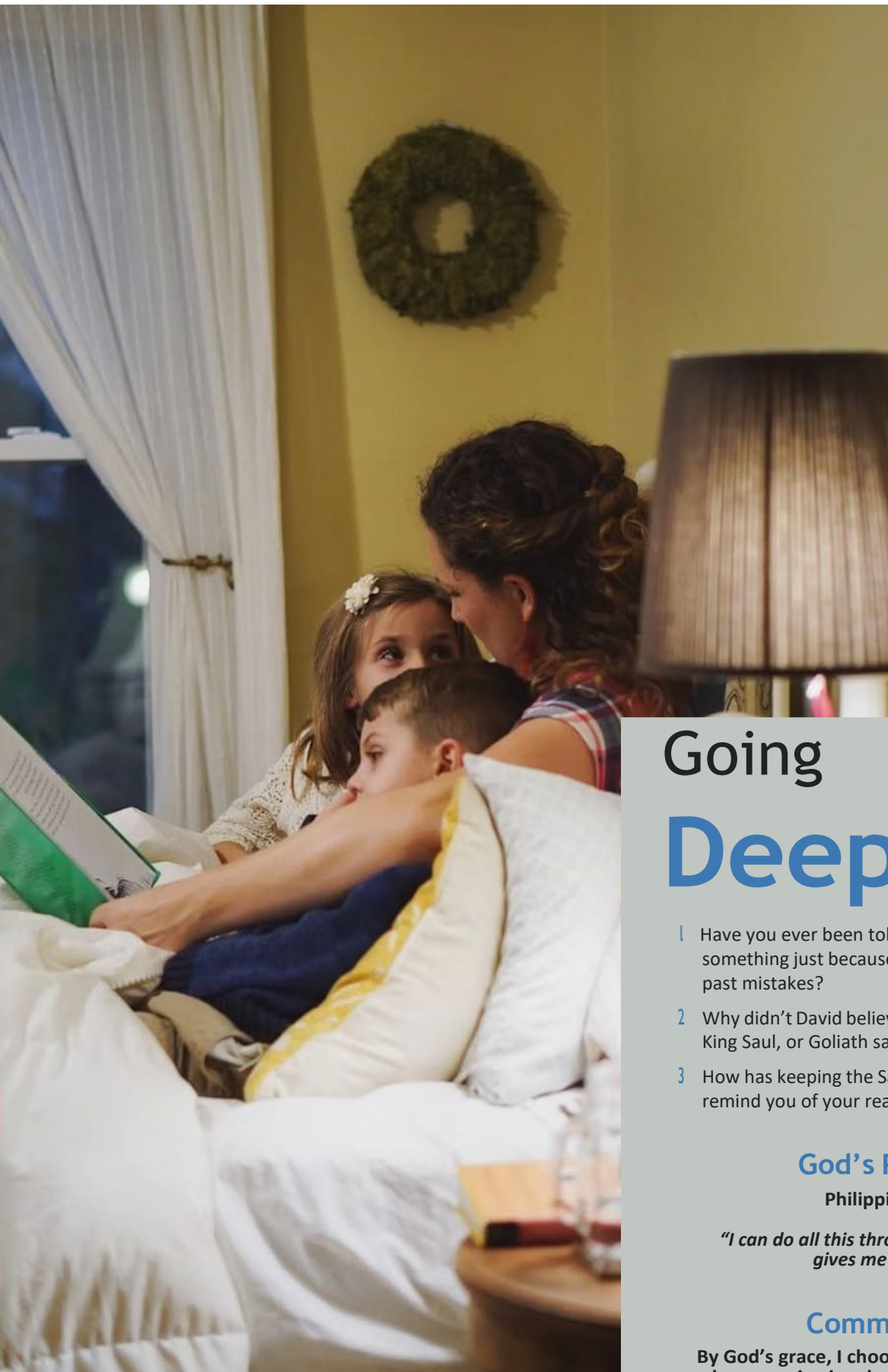
replenishes what is empty. The Sabbath is the weekly dedicated time to experience the promise from Jesus: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Let us not limit our Sabbath observance to the Sabbath morning worship time. God knows that we need the 24 hours to be fully recharged, from sunset to sunset. The appeal of apostle Paul is worth our attention if we aspire for the well-being that God has designed for us: “Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11).

David, the giant slayer, did not allow human opinions to stop him. He trusted God’s calling, power, and care, and stepped forward in faith. He defeated Goliath! Ellen White, God’s messenger for our time, wrote: “The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them” (*Christian Service*, p. 262). The Sabbath is the memorial in time, the divine reminder of our great value.

We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), and Jesus paid the highest price, His life, to save you. So next time someone says something hurtful, calls you names, or makes you feel like you’re a “strange chick,” remember: You’re an eagle. Soar high.





Going Deeper

- 1 Have you ever been told you couldn't do something just because of your age, size, or past mistakes?
- 2 Why didn't David believe what his brother, King Saul, or Goliath said about him?
- 3 How has keeping the Sabbath contributed to remind you of your real worth?

God's Promise

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all this through him (Christ) who gives me strength."

Commitment

By God's grace, I choose to keep the Sabbath by preparing in advance during the week, respecting its boundaries, and engaging in activities and thoughts that align with its purpose.

Grow Your Muscles and Your Character / Day 7

Have you ever dreamed of stepping into a big moment—only to realize, when it finally comes, that you’re not quite ready?

At a high school track and field championship, a girls’ 4x400 relay team was missing one runner. The coach didn’t know what to do. So, he turned to the crowd of student supporters and asked for a volunteer.

Then, out of the blue, one girl bravely stepped forward and said she’d like to run. She had never trained for a race before, but it had always been her dream to participate in a real athletic competition. Since there was no other option, the coach let her join the team.

She started off strong, full of energy, running her first few meters confidently. But soon, she got too tired and collapsed. She couldn’t finish her part of the race. She hadn’t trained, and her body wasn’t ready.

Let’s look at how David prepared outside the battlefield—how he built his strength and character long before his big moment arrived. From David’s experience, we can learn that preparation happens in the shadows. Without training, we can miss the breakthrough God has for us. Would you take the risk?



Growing in Strength

When you imagine David fighting Goliath, which image comes to your mind? Do you see him as a weak and frail boy standing fearfully before the giant? No. That’s not right! David was young, yes, but he built up great physical strength and endurance.

In 1 Samuel 17:17, 18, we read: “Now Jesse said to his son David, ‘Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them.’”

It was a simple task, but not easy. What David had to carry—roasted grain, loaves of bread, and cheese—weighed approximately 30–40 pounds (13–18 kg). That’s like carrying a full 5-gallon water jug! Many, including teens, can lift more than that, but David had to carry the weight for over 15 miles (24 kilometers). That’s

more than half a marathon! And his father, Jesse, specifically told him to run to the battlefield. Jesse knew his son had the strength and stamina for the task.

Later, when Goliath came toward him, David “ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him” (1 Samuel 17:48). He was quick! David’s quick movement and swiftness made it difficult for Goliath to avoid the incoming shot from the sling.

David was in excellent physical condition. That kind of fitness does not come overnight or on the day of battle. It took David time, consistency, and discipline—through hard work, exercise, healthy choices, and avoiding anything that could weaken his body.

We need our bodies to achieve both big and small tasks. We don’t have to be giants, but our physical condition truly helps us accomplish much for God. Ellen

White, God's messenger for our time, reminds us, "Strength is a talent, and is to be used to glorify God. Our bodies belong to Him. He has paid the price of redemption for the body as well as for the soul. We can serve God better in the vigor of health than in the palsy of disease; therefore we should cooperate with God in the care of our bodies" (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 115). God cares about how we treat our bodies. It largely determines how we fulfill God's mission.

What good habits can you start today, and which ones do you need to stop to stay strong?

Growing in Faith

David didn't just grow his strong muscles—he also grew his character and faith. Before he fought Goliath, he had already fought other challenges. David told King Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it" (1 Samuel 17:34, 35). David had developed responsibility and bravery while doing his job as a shepherd. He did not run away from danger and was ready to risk his life to protect his sheep. These same qualities helped him to stand boldly when he later had to face Goliath. His experience confirms these words: "By faithfulness in that which is least, they acquire strength to be faithful in greater matters" (*From Eternity Past*, p. 148).

Most importantly, David learned to trust God: "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). Every time David had to protect his sheep, he cried out to God. And every time God intervened, his faith in Him grew bigger. So, when he arrived on the battlefield, he was already sure that he could face anything with God. Faith is like a muscle—the more you exercise it in everyday situations, the stronger it gets.

The Neglected Dimension

The physical dimension of life is increasingly overlooked in our contemporary society. Before the age of mechanization, most tasks relied heavily on muscular strength. Mechanization undeniably transformed the process of production, greatly reducing our dependence on physical strength. It's no more an anomaly to speak of a physically weak lumberjack!

Presently, we are fully immersed in the digital era both in the workplace and for our leisure activities. These mind-boggling inventions can create the impression that the only physical aptitude needed for success and to have a good time is the ability to move our fingers rapidly across a keyboard. Even that is becoming outdated, as voice recognition technologies continue to rise in popularity! In this context, are we tempted to neglect maintaining our physical health and capabilities?

Ellen White offered relevant counsel in a letter to Edith Andrews, the daughter of the missionary John Nevin Andrews. She addresses the importance of exercise, especially for those whose activities are mostly sedentary:

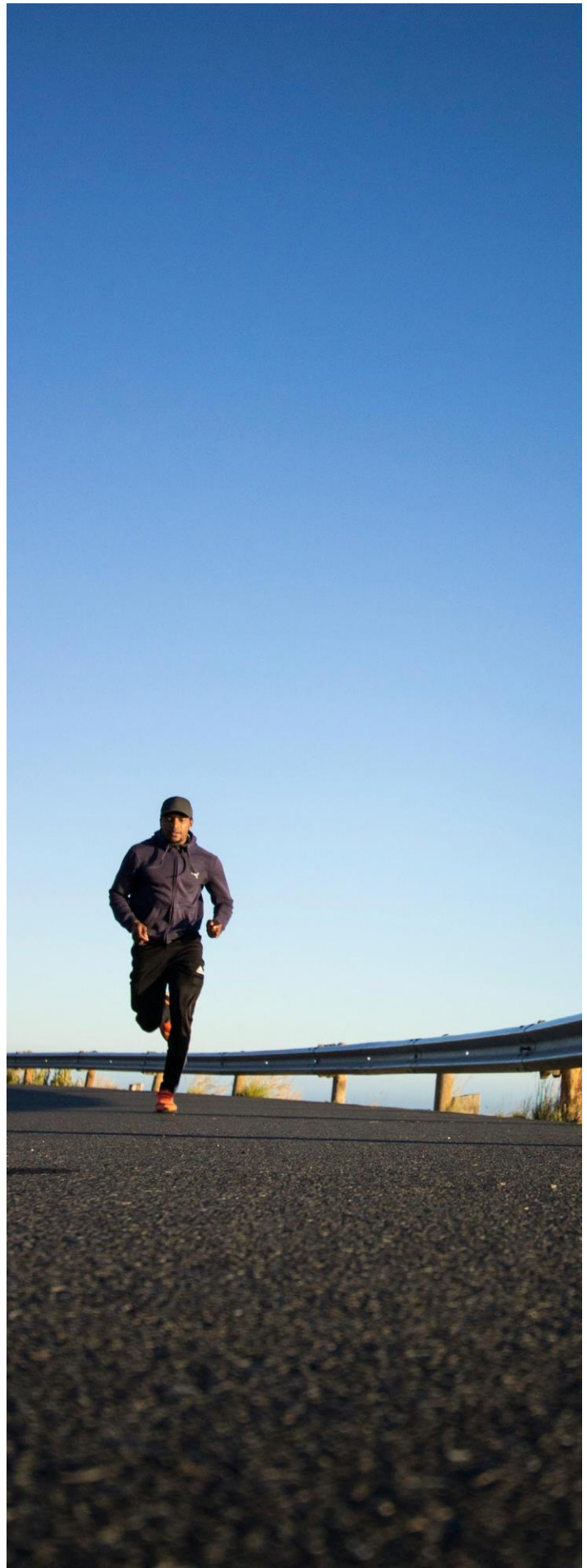
Exercise is indispensable to the health of every organ. If one set of muscles is used to the neglect of others, the living machinery is not being worked intelligently. . . .

The nerves gain or lose strength in accordance with the way in which they are treated. If used too long and too severely, they are overtaxed and weakened. If used properly, they gain strength.

In order to have health, equilibrium of action must be maintained. The mind must harmonize with this, or the benefits are not realized. If physical exercise is regarded as drudgery, if the mind takes no interest in the exercise of the different parts of the body. The mind must be interested in exercise of the muscles. . . .

If their employment is sedentary, they have a distaste for other branches of labor. They complain of great weariness if they take exercise. This should be to them a convincing fact that they need to train their muscles (*Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 4, Letter 6, 1885).

Her counsel remains remarkably relevant today. In a world where physical activity is often optional, we must intentionally care for the body God has given us—not only for our health but also for clarity of mind and balance in life.



Start Today!

A lot of people wait for a “big moment” to make a splash. But David did not wait—he got ready by doing small daily tasks and exercising faithfully. It was what prepared him for greater tasks and achievements.

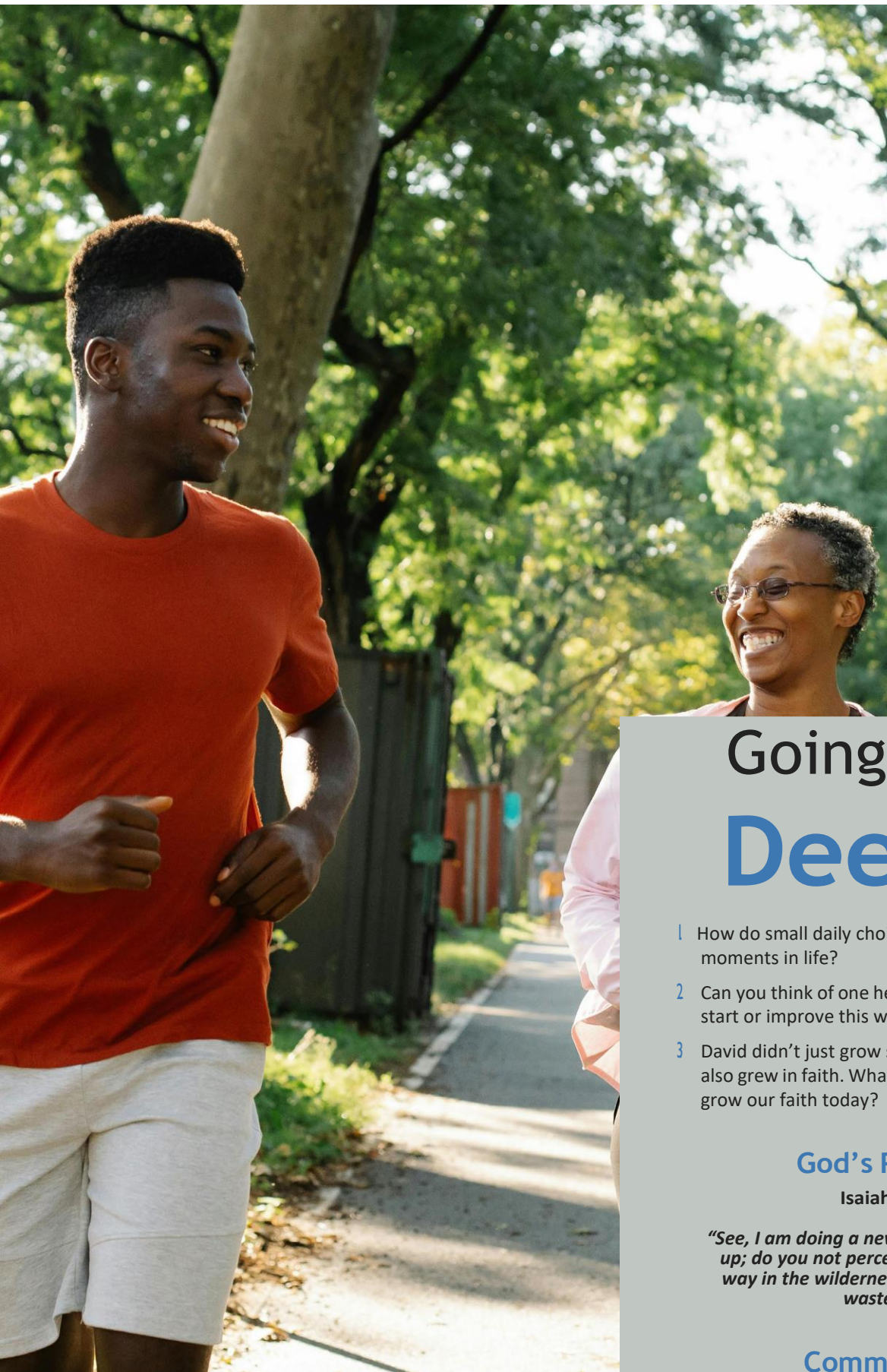
As believers, we share a common mission: to spread the good news of Jesus’ soon return to the world. Christians can contribute by helping others, preaching, and giving of their means. Yet many are waiting for a special calling or a big opportunity. In the meantime, are we slipping and sleeping into a “wait and relax” mindset?

God’s messenger, Ellen White, warns about the danger of this passive approach: “Many are waiting for some great work to be brought to them. Daily they lose

opportunities for showing their faithfulness to God; daily they fail of discharging with whole-heartedness the little duties of life, which seem to them uninteresting” (*Messages to Young People*, p. 148). Don’t wait for the perfect moment—start today.

Sharpen yourself spiritually, mentally, and physically. Take hold of this promise: “By faithfulness in that which is least, they acquire strength to be faithful in greater matters” (*From Eternity Past*, p. 148). Remember these words of apostle Paul: “For physical training is of some value” (1 Timothy 4:8). If you aspire to something great in life and in service to God, begin now by being faithful in the small things. And for some of us, that might mean pulling out that long-unused pair of sneakers from the back of the closet!





Going Deeper

- 1 How do small daily choices prepare us for big moments in life?
- 2 Can you think of one healthy habit you could start or improve this week?
- 3 David didn't just grow strong physically—he also grew in faith. What are some ways we can grow our faith today?

God's Promise

Isaiah 43:19

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Commitment

By God's grace, I choose to establish the following new healthy habit to better serve the Lord and others: _____

Use What Is in Your Hands / Day 8

Forty-nine years ago, two friends—both named Steve—had a vision to create a product that would revolutionize the world. To bring their dream to life, they started with the resources they had. One Steve sold his old Volkswagen Microbus; the other sold his calculator. Unable to afford a rented workspace, they set up their workshop in a modest family garage.

Before long, the Apple I was born, and the vision of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak—to have a personal computer in every home—began to take shape.

Today, we celebrate the brilliance of these two men, recognizing their innovative skills, determination, and business acumen. But perhaps one of the greatest lessons they taught us is this: Use what's in your hands. This simple truth is a foundational principle of breakthrough living.

Centuries earlier, David became a giant slayer, a hero in Israel, changing the path of the nation's history and his personal story because he used what he had in his hands. Today, let's appreciate how embracing what's in our hands can unlock the next step in our life and mission—and lead us into our own breakthrough moment.



Different, but Not Left Out

Let us return to the battlefield of Elah. David expressed his intention to take on the challenge of the giant. When King Saul heard this, he tried to discourage David from fighting Goliath, but he couldn't change his mind. Finally, Saul instructed his servant to dress David in the king's own royal armor and gave him his sword. After all, David should at least look like a small soldier going into battle.

But the armor was too big, and the sword was way too heavy!

David took a few steps but quickly came back. Seeing him returning, King Saul assumed that David had finally realized that this fight was not for him, that he did not have the right profile. David told the King: "I cannot go in these . . . because I am not used to them." He was not used to that kind of equipment, "so [David] took them off" (1 Samuel 17:39).

What would happen next? David was a shepherd, not a soldier like his brothers or King Saul. He was different from everyone else on the battlefield—he did not have their ability and experience. Would he quit? Not at all!

Instead, David embraced who he was and chose to act in his own way. He would fight differently, with what he was used to.

We read in 1 Samuel 17:40: "Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in hand, approached the Philistine." David used his skills and means: his staff (his shepherd's stick), his sling, and the smooth stones he collected from the brook. And with those simple tools, he became known as a giant slayer, a national hero.

David teaches us that each person is unique. And being different does not disqualify us from doing something great. Sometimes, we feel pressured to dress, talk, walk, study, or grow like others. When you try to mimic those who are different from you, you'll feel confused and frustrated. It is wiser to know your skills, talents, and means, and to do things in your own style. You will accomplish much more!

So . . . What's in Your Hands?

A staff, a sling, and some stones in David's hand changed history and his life. What do you have in your hands? What skills, talents, and gifts have you received to accomplish God's mission and to fulfill your life's aspirations?

There are four ways to discover your gifts and talents:

1. **Pray to God.** Every good gift comes from God. He is, therefore, the best one to reveal and confirm what we have received.
2. **Talk with Someone You Trust.** Your spouse, parents, colleagues, and friends who know you well know your qualities and strengths. Listen to what they tell you about your gifts and talents.
3. **Try Different Things.** Trial and error help us discover what we are good at and what we enjoy. Explore! Practice! Sometimes, we will fail or won't like something. That's fine, it's part of the growing process. We are acquiring experiences. Remember that a weak performance can be transformed through much practice. David likely took years to practice the sling.
4. **Do a Spiritual Gift Test.** Some surveys can help us discover what we're good at. Just be honest; there are no wrong answers. You can do an online spiritual gift inventory and discover your three top gifts here: <https://spiritual-gift.org/>.

How to Use What's in Your Hand?

Having a sling and some stones won't help if you don't know how to use them. David did. The same goes for the gifts that God has given us. We need to use them the way God has designed. Apostle Peter encouraged believers to use their gifts "to serve others" and to give glory to God (1 Peter 4:10, 11), while apostle Paul wrote about using our gifts "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

One special gift that we have received is money. Ellen White, God's messenger for our time, wrote: "[God] has placed in the hands of his servants the means wherewith to carry forward his work in home and foreign missions" (*Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890). So, how can we use our financial resources to make the biggest impact on God's mission and enjoy the abundant life He desires for us?

Apostle Paul shared a practical model for the Christians in his time: "Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

From this passage, there are five timeless principles to ensure that our resources make the biggest impact on the mission today:

1. **Plan Ahead ("Set Aside a Sum of Money").** Don't wait until the last minute or until you're in church fumbling through your pockets. Plan during the week or as soon as you receive an income. Prayerfully decide in advance what proportion of your income you'll give as offerings. Even better, form the habit of planning your offerings before earning anything. It can be done for the upcoming year.
2. **Give Regularly ("The First Day of Every Week").** Make giving a consistent part of your financial routine. One way of acquiring this habit is by including giving as an item in your family or personal budget. Our generosity must not depend on our emotions or circumstances.
3. **Everyone Can Give ("Each One of You").** Whether your income is small or large, all are invited to support God's work. Do not wait until your financial situation improves to give; start where you are.
4. **Give in Proportion ("In Keeping with Your Income").** God does not ask for an equal amount from everyone, but equal faithfulness. It is 10% for tithe, and each one decides the best percentage for their offerings as God impresses—illustrating our gratitude and spirit of sacrifice.
5. **Think Globally ("For the Lord's People").** Do not limit your giving to local needs or your local church. Seek to support God's mission around the world. We should be careful not to fall into the trap of "selfish" generosity—to give only if I can get something out of it.

When God called Moses to help rescue His people, Moses was scared. But God asked him one simple question: "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "A staff," his shepherd's rod (Exodus 4:2). God used that ordinary shepherd's rod to perform many miracles, including parting the Red Sea. If God could use a stick, He can definitely use what He has placed in your hands.

Jesus told a story of a master who distributed his wealth among his servants before going on a trip. After some time, the master came back and wanted to know what they had done with the money. After receiving their reports, he rewarded those who wisely used what they received.

Jesus is coming soon, and to those who have used their gifts, talents, and money wisely, He will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23). Use wisely what is in your hands.





Going Deeper

- 1 What are some gifts or talents you think God has already placed in your hands?
- 2 Have you ever tried something that didn't feel right to you?
- 3 Why do you think it's important to plan how we give our money to God's mission—even if we don't earn much?

God's Promise

Mark 11:24

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Commitment

By God's grace, I choose to dedicate a regular percentage (____%) of my income as a freewill offering to the Lord.

GOD FIRST

I PROMISE:



To SET APART the first moments of each day to commune with the Lord through PRAYER, the STUDY of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Sabbath School lessons, and in FAMILY WORSHIP.

☐

To IMPROVE my RELATIONSHIPS: growing in faithfulness, forgiveness, and loving by principle.

☐

To ESTABLISH one new HEALTHY HABIT, to better serve the Lord with my mind: _____

☐

To DEVOTE regular time each week to WORK for God, spreading the good news to others through Bible studies, small groups, etc. (TMI).

☐

To KEEP the SABBATH, preparing for it accordingly on Friday, keeping its limits, right thoughts, and activities.

☐

To FAITHFULLY RETURN the Lord's TITHE (10% of my income).

☐

To DEDICATE a percentage (____%) of my income as a regular OFFERING to the Lord.

☐

WITH GOD'S HELP: _____ DATE: _____



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

GOD FIRST



ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES