



Group Leader Guide

“When My Calling Gets Confusing” - Shawn Johnson

February 7, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Message Summary

This weekend, guest speaker **Shawn Johnson**, Lead Pastor at Red Rocks Church, reminds us that even in seasons of uncertainty, God has a plan for your life. We were never promised a calling from God that does not include difficulty, and this year has made it clear that we need to persevere through some challenging things. Instead of focusing on others' criticisms, or our own negative thoughts, we need to focus on what God thinks of us and be reminded that He made us on purpose for a purpose.

// Biblical Context: David and Goliath

Goliath: Goliath is described as a champion of the Philistines who was about 9 1/2 feet tall. His armor was bronze and weighed around 125 pounds. The head of his spear was iron and weighed another 15 pounds. Scholars suspect he was a descendant of the Anakim, large warriors who lived in Canaan before the Israelites conquered them during the Conquest in the book of **Joshua**. Another description of other “giants” from Gath (the city where Goliath was from) in **2 Samuel 21:20** notes that they all had 6 fingers and 6 toes on each hand/foot. This suggests that there may have been a common genetic defect that could have contributed to their enormous size.

Champion Warfare: Throughout history, sometimes individual warfare was implemented instead of having a full-on battle between armies. The individuals were

chosen based on their fighting ability and they were seen as representatives of the army as a whole. The outcome of the fight would be accepted as the outcome of the



A 10 century B.C. relief in northeastern Syria depicting champion warfare.

potential full-on battle because it was seen as an expression of the divine will. Champion warfare can be seen depicted on historical artwork from this time period (early 1st Millennium B.C.)

Lions and Bears Near Bethlehem (1 Samuel 17:34-35): Though lions and bears no longer live in the region of Bethlehem (where David lived, about 15 miles from where the battle



was taking place), their remains have been found from the early 1st Millennium B.C. in this region, suggesting that David was speaking from actual experience and not just padding his resume with legendary creatures.

Saul's Armor: The king's armor would have been very distinctive. It is possible that he tried to get David to wear his armor so that his army and the enemy would at first think it was the king himself going to battle the Philistine champion. The fact that no one from the Israelite army was volunteering to fight Goliath would have left that responsibility to Saul. Given Saul's fear (**1 Samuel 17:11**) and the time that had passed (**17:16**), it is clear that Saul was not willing to do take on this responsibility. David's victory, therefore, not only wins the victory for Saul and Israel, but shames Saul in the process. This shame and insecurity are evident in **1 Samuel 18:8-15**.

// References

Evans, M. J. (2004). *The message of Samuel*. IVP Academic.

Walton, John H., et al. (2004). *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. InterVarsity Press.



Group Discussion Questions

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// Bible References

Hebrews 12:1; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 Samuel 17:4-11, 28, 33-40; Psalm 139:13-14; Ephesians 2:10; John 15:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Romans 11:29

// Message Screenshots

1. God Has a Plan For You
2. Persevere Through Some Stuff
3. Throw Off Some Stuff
4. Run Your Race!

// Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a grasp on what your “calling” is? If so, describe it to the group.
2. Describe a time when it was hard for you to know or understand your calling. This could be in the past or right now.
3. Have you ever received harsh criticism from someone else? Tell the group about it and how it made you feel.
4. What are some of the critical messages that constantly run in your head?
5. Read Psalm 139:13-14, Ephesians 2:10, John 15:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, and Romans 11:29. How do your critical messages differ from what God thinks about you?
6. How and why do you engage with social media?
7. How do you generally feel about yourself after spending time on social media?
8. Where in your life do you judge yourself negatively based on comparisons to others (social media, work, finances, etc.)?
9. How can you start listening better to what your Creator says instead of what your critics say (even if that critic is yourself)?