



## **The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall**

Adapted from “Giant” series by Rod Loy.

In an article about shocking upsets in sports, Jussim writes:

Everyone loves the underdog. Unless your beloved team is the favorite, few sports stories capture an audience's attention like the plucky underdog who somehow, somehow, reaches the pinnacle of their sport. Whether it's an upstart team knocking off an established champion, or an unheralded athlete pulling off a massive upset over what looks like an unbeatable opponent, underdog stories can resonate for months, years, and decades—and inspire others to attempt the same astonishing feats. Sometimes the best moments happen when no is expecting them to—and that's what makes upsets and underdogs stories so magical.

### **Super Bowl XLII**

The New York Giants came into the Super Bowl as 12-point underdogs against the undefeated Patriots, who cruised to a 16-0 record during the 2007 regular season and set numerous offensive scoring records. The Giants, on the other hand, had limped into the playoffs as a wild card team with a 10-6 record. The Giants had overcome long odds to even make it to the Super Bowl—at the time, no wild card team had ever won the championship. The two teams only scored a combined 10 points when the game entered the fourth quarter, but that helped set the stage for one of the most exciting games in sports history. The Giants took a 10-7 lead after Eli Manning hit David Tyree (don't forget that name!) for a touchdown, but the Patriots countered with a Randy Moss touchdown reception from Tom Brady to reclaim the lead. That set the stage for one of the best finishes—and one of the biggest upsets—in sports.

The Giants got the ball back down 14-10 with 2:39 left on the clock and went on a drive that included one of the most memorable plays in NFL history. On third-and-5 from the Giants' own 44-yard line, Manning escaped the grasp of three different Patriots players before launching a 32-yard pass to Tyree—who leapt up and caught the ball with one hand, securing it by pressing it against his helmet. The unbelievable play kept

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the drive alive, and it culminated in Plaxico Burress catching the winning touchdown to give the Giants a 17-14 victory. The Giants won the Super Bowl and kept the Patriots from having a true undefeated season.<sup>1</sup>

Men like to see the little guy, the underdog pull off an amazing victory. Sports announcers still use the story of David and Goliath when they discuss an underdog victory. When a team is outgunned, outmanned, and has no chance at victory excitement, shock, and disbelief are the result. Men can learn a valuable lesson from David and Goliath.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Jussim, "The 15 greatest underdog sports stories of all time," *Men's Fitness*, May 5, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2017/02/25/oklahoma-qb-baker-mayfield-faces-four-charges-including-resisting-arrest/?utm\\_term=.27b39428eadf](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2017/02/25/oklahoma-qb-baker-mayfield-faces-four-charges-including-resisting-arrest/?utm_term=.27b39428eadf) (accessed July 7, 2017).

## COURAGE

**C1:** What are your top five life victories? Why?

**C2:** What has been the greatest obstacle you have overcome in your life? Write out your story.

**C3:** Read and answer the following.

**1 Samuel 17:45–47 (ESV)** Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”

- What are some reactions you think the Israelite army might have had after David’s speech?

## STRENGTH

**S1:** After his speech, David ran to meet Goliath. Read and answer the following.

### 1 Samuel 17:48–49 (ESV)

- What were the odds of David's shot hitting Goliath?
- How do you think the stone hitting Goliath happened?
- From these Scriptures, what can you glean about battles?

**S2:** What do you think the environment was like after David defeated Goliath? Why do you celebrate after victories?

**S3:** Read and answer the following.

### 1 Samuel 17:51 (ESV)

- From this verse, what powerful observation can you glean about facing giants?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Israel wins the battle by killing one man, the toughest man. Read and answer the following.

### 1 Samuel 17:52 (ESV)

- From this verse, what is an important principle you can learn about killing a giant?

**E2:** After a giant is defeated, celebration is in order. After celebration comes an important component. Read and answer the following.

### 1 Samuel 17:53 (ESV)

- From this verse, what happens after a giant is defeated?
- How important is the correct order – first the giant, then, enjoy God’s abundant rewards?

**E3:** Read and answer the following.

### 1 Samuel 17:54 (ESV)

- Why do you think David took Goliath’s head to Jerusalem?
- Why do you think David put Goliath’s weapons in his tent?

