

Unconventional Winning Strategies

The story of David and Goliath is one example that shows us that the strategies God uses, and gives us, are often unconventional and even seemingly foolish in the eyes of the world. Worldly wisdom would say that we should do something quite different from what God says.

- Take a little time to look at how God's strategies can be unconventional using either the example of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17 v1-8, 38-40, 50 covers the key points) or another example from the Bible or your personal experience.

Two key, unconventional strategies that we are called to use as Christians are:

- Giving undeserved respect
- Offering undeserved forgiveness

Undeserved Respect

Read 1 Peter 2 v18-19 and Ephesians 6 v5-7.

- What does undeserved respect look like in practice?
- How does this contrast with worldly wisdom (our natural instincts)?
- Do the worldly strategies work? See James 1 v20-21.

Undeserved Forgiveness

Read Luke 23 v33-34 and Acts 7 v59 - 8 v1

- What is God's strategy in these two passages? And what are the consequences in these cases?

Look at the following description of forgiveness given during the sermon. Try to give some examples that illustrate what the points in this description mean in practice:

- Forgiving others does not mean that we:
 - agree with or approve of bad behaviour
 - pretend that wrong was not done
 - pretend that we were not offended
 - are required to forget that the offence ever occurred
 - do nothing to prevent repeated harm or abuse
- Forgiving others does mean:
 - I will no longer dwell upon the incident
 - I will not bring it up or use it against you
 - I will not talk to others about the incident (in a way that maligns you / makes you look bad)
 - I will not allow the incident to stand between us (harm our relationship)

Our Strength for Following God's Unconventional Strategies

Following God's strategies will be impossible unless we are fully surrendered to Christ and we rely on the strength He gives us. Evaluating our own sinfulness and understanding the consequences of unforgiveness / fruits of forgiveness can help motivate us to surrender fully and rely on Him:

- Read Romans 3 v23 & 6 v23, Matthew 6 v14-15 and Colossians 3 v13. What do these verses tell us?
- Read Hebrew 12 v15 and 1 Peter 2 v21-24. Where do "bitter roots" come from and what do they lead to? What brings healing?