

Little Strength, Big God

Discover a God Greater than Your Goliaths

DEBBIE W. WILSON



Discover timeless truths to slay your giants. Like the faithful in Hebrews, you can become mighty in battle. Loss and intimidation are not new to God's people. What if you had to choose between:—

- Drowning your baby or letting your worst enemy raise him?
- Bowing before an idol or being thrown into a fiery furnace?
- Compromising your convictions or being tossed to the lions?
- Living in fear or leading ill-equipped volunteers against an intimidating enemy?

The believers who faced these decisions felt their limitations. Yet they found strength in the Lord. You can too. Using the men and women highlighted in the last half of Hebrews 11, *Little Strength, Big God* will help you turn your weaknesses into strengths to accomplish God's purpose in your life. When trouble attacks, you don't need a bigger God- you need clearer vision. Discover the transforming power of a God greater than your Goliaths and live strong now.

CHAPTERS INCLUDE:

- 1.** How to Get the Most Out of this Book
- 2.** The Midwives and Jochebed- Strength to Resist Intimidation
- 3.** Moses- Strength to Obey God's Call
- 4.** Joshua and Rahab- Strength to Follow God's Lead
- 5.** Gideon- Strength for Shaky Faith
- 6.** Deborah and Barak- Strength from Teamwork
- 7.** Jephthah and Samuel- Strength from Dedication
- 8.** Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego- Strength from Conviction
- 9.** David and You- Strength in the Lord and His Armor
- 10.** Afterword- Stronger than Death

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ABOUT

Debbie W. Wilson

DEBBIE W. WILSON is a Bible teacher, former biblical counselor, and award winning author of *Little Faith, Big God* and *Little Women, Big God*. Debbie combines insight and encouragement to inspire readers to trust Christ with their lives. Her years with Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ) took her from Boston to Southern California with stops in Indiana, Oklahoma, and Eastern Europe. She and her husband, Larry, live in North Carolina with their two standard poodles and two adult children. Connect with Debbie and find free resources at debbiewwilson.com

For more resources including a book trailer, game, and Leader's Guide, visit:
debbiewwilson.com/little-strength-big-god/



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SPEAKING TOPICS:

1. How to Experience Soul Rest
(Can be a retreat)
2. How to Move from Messy Emotions to Mighty Faith
3. Stress Is Inevitable, Worry Is Optional
4. Rahab: Unshakable Faith
5. Naomi and Ruth: Trusting God When Life Stinks
6. Bathsheba: Beauty from Ashes
7. Help to Win the Battle in Your Mind
(Can be a retreat)

What Others Are Saying about
Little Strength, Big God

“This book reminds us that the challenges we face are not unlike what people of character have faced for all of history. With thought-provoking examples, Debbie gently guides us in making decisions now regarding our integrity and faith for the situations we are likely to encounter along the way. No matter your circumstances or position today, you will create a shield of protection by reading this book.”

—**DAN MILLER**, author of *48 Days to the Work You Love*

“In our world of ever-increasing antagonism, Debbie Wilson shows how those in the Bible faced similar challenges and found strength in the Lord. Like these heroes of the faith, we can triumph in crushing circumstances. *Little Strength, Big God* provides assurance, hope, and practical steps.”

—**PEGGYSUE WELLS**, best-selling author of 31 books, including *The Ten Best Decisions a Single Mom Can Make*, *Chasing Sunrise*, and *The Patent*

“I absolutely love Debbie Wilson’s latest book and see it as a great gift for our world at this moment in history when it is hard to stand strong for what is real, true, and good. Debbie’s personal anecdotes accompanying each topic are by far my favorite part of the book, bringing to life human stories of radical trust in God in a variety of situations and his ensuing fidelity to his children. I highly recommend *Little Strength, Big God* for anyone wanting to take their faith to the next level!”

—**JEANNE F. MANCINI**, President, March for Life Action

“Little Strength, Big God is a powerful reminder of the mighty strength of our God. Just as he was bigger than all the problems faced by the people in Hebrews 11, he is bigger than all our trials, challenges, and mistakes. While current issues have different names, many of the problems remain the same. This book is a refreshing reminder to view our problems through a God lens and not vice versa. *Little Strength, Big God* will strengthen you and your faith.”

—**LISA T. GRIMES**, author and cofounder of *Habergeon* and *Lead Wholly*

“Debbie Wilson’s *Little Strength, Big God* does not disappoint. She’s created a compelling study of God’s faithfulness to his people through engaging (and sometimes little-known) Bible stories. The format provides a strong and comprehensive understanding of Scripture as Wilson blends ancient examples from the Bible with modern-day accounts. I recommend this book for serious students of God’s Word and for those who long to go deeper. This is a book I will return to time and again.”

—**DEB DEARMOND**, award-winning author and writing coach

“Debbie Wilson has written an anointed book that overflows with the power of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. With her own stories and those of others, she shows us how we can stand in God’s strength for what is right. The most freeing statement came when Wilson wrote about David facing the Goliaths (giants) in his life in God’s strength, but as David. As a believer, I will face the giants in my life as Yvonne, ‘not as a soldier in someone else’s armor.’ Each of us has that privilege and blessing. I highly recommend this book for all who call themselves believers and for those who are searching for something worth believing.”

— **YVONNE ORTEGA**, international speaker, author of the *Moving from Broken to Beautiful* series, recently retired Licensed Professional Counselor, AWSA Coach

“The world tells us, ‘You can do it! Get brave and overcome.’ We do our best to fight the good fight of faith, but when we fall short in our strength, we feel like failures. In *Little Strength, Big God*, Debbie W. Wilson shows us how those we call heroes of faith found their strength when they didn’t think they had what it took to step into God’s calling. This book is an excellent reminder that we don’t have to have it all together. When our strength is little or we feel we don’t have any strength, our God is faithful to give us his strength in the battle and for daily living.”

—**PATTY MASON**, best-selling author of *Getting to Know God’s Heart*

“*Little Strength, Big God* is one of the best Bible studies I’ve ever done. It will help grow your trust in the immeasurable power of God, who is especially close to all who call on him—particularly the imperfect, those who feel weak or insecure, and those riddled with fear. This book will be at the top of my list of recommended studies!”

—**TARA FURMAN**, Founder and President of Knowing God Ministries

“Has God called you into the overwhelming? Are you intimidated as you face the seemingly impossible? In *Little Strength, Big God*, Debbie Wilson finds insightful and inspiring wisdom from Old Testament stories for facing our giants. Digging deep into the Word, she offers beautiful glimpses of the unfailing faithfulness of God. If you are seeking realistic expectations of God in the twenty-first century and want to find your strength in his power and ability, this book was written for you. Refresh your faith in the God of the impossible and read it!”

— **JULIE ZINE COLEMAN**, author of *On Purpose*, and managing editor of the AriseDaily devotional website

“Debbie W. Wilson’s vivid imagery seamlessly weaves biblical truth with the struggles of real people through the ages. *Little Strength, Big God* will take you by the hand and show you how your weakness is your greatest strength, placing your hand in God’s.”

— **RHONDA ROBINSON**, award-winning author of *FreeFall: Holding onto Faith When the Unthinkable Strikes*

An Excerpt from

Little Strength, Big God

Strength to Resist Intimidation

Fear of man paralyzes; fear of God mobilizes.

“OH, AMRAM, HE’S BEAUTIFUL.” JOCHEBED STROKED THEIR newborn’s soft cheek.

Her husband nodded and squeezed her arm.

She met his eyes. “We must protect him.”

“Yes, but how?” Amram threw up his hands. “What can two slaves do against Pharaoh and all of Egypt?”

Jochebed brushed away a tear. “We’ll ask Yahweh to make a way.”

“Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done.”

—Exodus 1:8 (NLT)

Exodus begins like a thriller. To forget Joseph meant to forget the debt Egypt owed his people. Joseph’s wise leadership and God-given ability to interpret dreams had saved Egypt from total devastation hundreds of years earlier during a great famine. The grateful pharaoh of that time gave the land of Goshen to Joseph’s family of shepherds. This new ruler disregarded Egypt’s history and debt to Joseph and Joseph’s God.

Little Strength. BIG GOD

Like Hitler, Saddam Hussein, and the Taliban, this pharaoh ruled with an iron fist. Approximately 1500 years before Christ, Amram and Jochebed started their family under his oppressive reign. When harsh treatment failed to slow the growth of the Hebrew population, he commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the baby boys as they were born. When that didn't work, he ordered all of Egypt to throw the male Hebrew babies into the Nile.

With no sonograms to predict the gender of a child and allow the family to brace themselves for what might follow, can you imagine the emotions that accompanied every Hebrew birth?

“It's a girl!” Exhales. Smiles. Embraces.

“It's a boy.” Hands cover faces. Sobs.

These mothers loved their babies. These fathers needed to protect their families. But how could a slave resist the power of Egypt?

In this dark setting, five brave women dared to defy a cruel dictator and his people.

Day One

Fear the Lord—or Fear the Worst

*“Fearing people is a dangerous trap,
but trusting the LORD means safety.”*

—Proverbs 29:25 (NLT)

Are you or someone you love embroiled in a massive struggle? Are you battling to save your health, marriage, child, or culture? The enemy is fearsome. Why did God choose you for this battle?

I've learned God chooses the weak. Weakness may be your greatest qualification. God's glory shines through the cracks we call limitations (2 Cor. 4:7). But he doesn't leave us in a fragile state. Describing some of God's heroes, Hebrews 11:34 says, “[Their] weakness was turned to strength.” As Moses's parents and the two

Hebrew midwives illustrate, our limitations become windows through which God's glory shines.

Shiphrah and Puah cherished their jobs as midwives. While other Hebrew slaves labored under ruthless taskmasters, they welcomed new babies into the world. Amid the desperate suffering of their people, Shiphrah and Puah thanked God for this joy and the promise held within each new life.

One day, Pharaoh summoned the midwives. He ordered them to kill the baby boys as they were being born. Shiphrah and Puah never imagined anyone—even one as cold as Pharaoh—would demand something so heinous.

His orders soured their stomachs. They couldn't do it—wouldn't do it. But did they have a choice? Shiphrah and Puah shuddered to imagine what would happen if they disobeyed. If Pharaoh killed infants without a qualm, what would he do to two disobedient slaves?

On the other hand, though compelled by their ruler, what would happen to their souls if they complied? Yahweh's presence swathed every birth. How could they offend him? Hadn't he said, "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind" (Gen. 9:6)? His sweet favor meant more than life.

Pharaoh wielded power, but, despite the Egyptians' beliefs, he was no god.

Recalling the Lord's character reminded them of their calling to protect life. Knowing what they couldn't do clarified what they must do. They would serve Yahweh whether he saved them or not. They would disobey Pharaoh and rescue as many infant boys as possible. And when—not if—Pharaoh called them to give an account of their actions, may Yahweh have mercy on them.

The dreaded day arrived. Shiphrah and Puah prayed to the one they served for strength as they answered Pharaoh's summons.

Little Strength, BIG GOD

Scripture Reading.....

EXODUS 1:8–21

ACTS 5:29

Study and Reflection

1. “Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done” (Exod. 1:8 NLT). Egypt owed Joseph, Abraham’s great-grandson, a great debt. Joseph’s wisdom and leadership kept Egypt from utter desolation during a seven-year famine. Pharaoh’s ignorance of history brought Egypt and the Hebrews great pain. From Exodus 1:11–14, list the words that describe how the Egyptians treated the Hebrews.
2. Consider what it must have been like for the Hebrews to live and labor under Pharaoh. From where did the midwives find the strength to resist Pharaoh (Exod. 1:17)?
3. How did God show his approval of Shiphrah and Puah (Exod. 1:20–21)?
4. Imagine a situation where your boss’s command violates your conscience or God’s principles. How can you apply the midwives’ story to such a challenge?

5. How do you know when to resist authority (Acts 5:29)?

6. Record any final thoughts or takeaways from today's lesson.

Destructive Fear versus Saving Reverence

Getting Republicans and Democrats to agree on something is about as easy as going off sugar during Christmas. Yet, according to Dan Heath, in his book *Upstream*, the two groups are more alike than you might think.

In a speech, Heath explained the results of a poll conducted in Charlotte, North Carolina, with Black women who identified themselves as Democrats and White women who identified as Republicans. While the political pundits want us to believe we are worlds apart in our healthcare needs and desires, the poll results from these two groups showed otherwise. Their answers showed a 1 percent difference in priorities. The pie charts were virtually identical. Healthcare is not a Democrat, Republican, or race issue. It's a human concern.

Satan wields fear to divide and manipulate people. To secure power, leaders like Pharaoh use race, religion, ideologies, and even masks and vaccines to pit groups against each other. Worst-case scenarios spun through Pharaoh's mind. "Look, he said to his people, 'the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country'" (Exod. 1:9-10). Ironically, the more Pharaoh oppressed the Hebrews, "the more they multiplied" (Exod. 1:12).

Someone described FEAR as False Evidence Appearing Real. Have you ever been manipulated by disturbing what-ifs? What if I

Little Strength, BIG GOD

can't pay my bills? What if my child gets involved in an unhealthy relationship? What if cancer returns? Our spiritual enemy plants dark scenarios in our minds hoping to control us with fear.

The late R. C. Sproul said you can't have courage without fear. You don't need courage if you aren't afraid. It's natural to *feel* fearful. But the faithful obey God anyway. In Revelation 21:8, God shuts the cowardly out of heaven, not the fearful.

Need Courage? Look Up

Where did Shiphrah and Puah, two female slaves, find the strength to defy a dictator the Egyptians called a god? They "feared God."

Perhaps standing in Pharaoh's throne room reminded them of another throne. Yahweh, not Pharaoh, determined their destinies.

God provides grace for real trials, not for imagined what-ifs. Rather than focus on what Pharaoh might do to them, the two women conquered the dread of their enemy through reverence for God.

The Bible says, "Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment" (Prov. 9:10 NLT). The midwives' fear of God provided the wisdom and courage they needed to act in this tough spot. When Pharaoh summoned them, perhaps God reminded them of one of the Hebrew women who had given birth before they had arrived to attend the birth, and they relayed that story. Miraculously, Pharaoh sent them home unharmed. God rewarded Shiphrah and Puah with families of their own.

The Protection of Holy Awe

Have you ever been jarred awake from a dream where it feels like you're falling? When I visited Yosemite, I learned that for some who ignore a healthy fear of heights, that nightmare becomes a

sickening reality. The fear of plummeting over the side warned me to stand away from the edge.

Similarly, I grew up near the coast. I learned the patterns and characteristics of the sea and avoided strong undercurrents and being afloat during storms. The more familiar I became with the ocean, the more I respected its power.

We might compare fear of God with a respect of the ocean. The better we know God, the greater our awe. A healthy fear of God saves us from the destructive fear of people, no matter how high their position.

A friend I'll call Zeke experienced that protection when his boss told him to manipulate the numbers on two sales representatives so the company wouldn't have to pay the bonuses they had earned. Zeke refused, and his boss fired him on the spot.

Ironically, or should we say providentially, a recruiter telephoned that night to ask if he would interview for a new job.

"How did you know I was available?"

"I didn't," the recruiter said. "I just know your qualifications."

Jesus told his disciples not to worry about how to defend themselves when they were arrested (Matt. 10:19). The Holy Spirit would give them what to say. Jesus hasn't changed. There is no need to live in dread. Those who fear the Lord have a counselor and comforter to guide them on earth and eternal glory awaiting them in heaven (2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:12).

Today's Strength Builder

What persistent fear do you face? What truth about God could help you counter this fear?

Q&A with
Debbie W. Wilson

1. Q: LITTLE STRENGTH, BIG GOD LOOKS AT THE MEN AND WOMEN IN HEBREWS 11 WHO “BECAME STRONG IN BATTLE.” HOW DO THESE STORIES APPLY TO US TODAY?

A: Their stories help me reframe how I look at my battles—whether relationship, health, financial, or work related. That changes how I live and parent. For example, we want to protect ourselves and our children from physical and emotional pain. But does this protective instinct ever weaken us and them? A friend stunned me when she was thankful for the time her husband left her. They’ve since reunited, but she’s convinced her children have the faith they do because, as they processed their own loss, they watched their mom walk with God through her pain. David was probably fifteen when he faced Goliath. Where does a youth get the skill and confidence to face a towering giant warrior? From years of fighting bears and lions. David’s father obviously trained him how to safely wield a slingshot before he left him alone to protect the flock. In other words, David wasn’t sheltered from battles, he was equipped for them. And what about Jochebed, Moses’s mother? She gave her toddler to her enemy’s household to save him. In a few short years, she poured a lifetime of faith into Moses. These stories show the importance of instilling strength into our children beginning at a young age—and how we need God’s strength to train and release them.

2. Q: YOU TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORKING FOR GOD AND WORKING WITH GOD. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

A: I associate working for someone as completing a task in my own strength and according to my understanding. When I work with God, He sets the direction and pace. For example, Moses thought he was working for God when he killed the Egyptian. After all, he was defending God’s people. But that was not God’s way of deliverance or timing. His misdirected actions created a mess. Paul thought he was working for God when he hunted down Christians and threw them in prison. Later both did a 180. God wants to work through us. Those who work for God ask Him to bless their goals. Those who work with Him, seek Him, His will, His way, and His timing. We invite His Holy Spirit to empower us for our part and leave the results with Him. Working for God bruises people and leaves us exhausted. Working with Him bears eternal fruit and joy.

3. Q: MANY OF THE BIBLE CHARACTERS IN LITTLE STRENGTH, BIG GOD HAD RULERS PRESSURING THEM TO DO THINGS THAT WENT AGAINST THEIR FAITH. HOW DO WE RESPOND WHEN POWERFUL PEOPLE PRESSURE US TO DO SOMETHING WE FEEL IS WRONG?

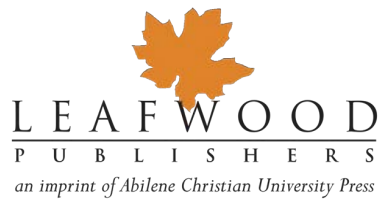
A: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego provide one inspiring example. King Nebuchadnezzar hauled these youths to Babylon and drafted them into his service. Imagine receiving indoctrination in Babylonian education, religion, and law and having your names replaced with names that praised Babylonian gods. They must have felt powerless. But they didn't act like victims. Daniel negotiated a plan that showed concern for the overseeing officer and that gained them permission to adhere to their Jewish diets. In other instances, the four flatly refused different kings' commands even when doing so brought terrifying consequences. Three were thrown into a fire. One into a lions' den. But the story didn't end there. The midwives in Exodus provide another example. Pharaoh commanded these two slaves to kill the Hebrew boys that were being born. But like the Hebrew youths, they feared God more than human authorities. And God honored them. These exciting stories provide concrete examples of when to draw the line and how to compromise when appropriate. Knowing what we can't do in good conscience illuminates what we must do. Often the worst scenes of our lives become the best setups for God's Glory.

4. Q: WE KNOW GOD DOESN'T CHANGE, BUT SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO EXPERIENCE A BIGGER GOD THAN OTHERS. HOW DO WE MINIMIZE AND MAGNIFY THE LORD?

A: Good question because I've certainly done both. God doesn't shrink. But how many times has my problem felt bigger than God? The sun is 100 times wider than the earth, and yet I can block the sun by holding a pebble in front of my eye. When we focus on a problem, the problem grows and blocks our view of God. That happened to King Saul and his army when Goliath taunted them. But teenaged David, whom the Bible describes as a man after God's heart, shows up with a different perspective. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine next to the Lord? He tells Goliath, "Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head." David's God was so much bigger than this giant that terrorized Israel's armies and king. When we have a small view of God, every problem looks huge. Conversely, when we see God as He truly is, our Goliaths shrink to size.

5. Q: HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE MADE GOD SMALL? WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

A: We are anxious, fearful, and distracted. We see pitfalls instead of opportunities and feel it's up to us to bring about the desired outcome. Like Gideon when the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, we grumble over the problem, what God hasn't done, and our weaknesses. Like Moses when God appeared to him, we focus on "Who am I?" instead of the great I Am. However, those symptoms remind us to bring our burdens to the One who can win our battles and deliver rest. The Psalmist said, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You" (Ps. 56:3 NASB 1995). Gideon, Barak, and Moses decided to trust God in their overwhelming circumstances rather than trust their concerns. In the process, they experienced a big God. We can too!



ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

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