

The Missing Link to Slaying the Giants in Your Life

To successfully fight our giants, not only must we align with God, but we must also align in covenant relationships with other people. I share about this principle in my new book, *Giant Slayers*, and how alignment is essential to slaying the giants that come against us.

Alignment between David and Jonathan

After his victory over Goliath, David began to serve in Saul's army, and during that time he became close friends with Saul's son and heir, Jonathan:

1 Samuel 18:3-4 says, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul. 4 So Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, even his garments, his sword, his bow, and his belt."

It was no small thing for the heir to the throne to give his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt to David. Jonathan seemingly recognized the call to the throne on David's life and pledged to be loyal to him, even though it meant giving up his right to the throne. As a result, when Saul attempted to kill David, Jonathan protected and assisted him (see 1 Sam. 19-20; 23:15-18). In David's battle against Saul, he needed not only alignment with God but also alignment with covenant friends—first Jonathan, and later his band of mighty men who fought alongside him in the wilderness (see 1 Sam. 22).

The same is often true for us. Often, we cannot defeat the giants in our lives on our own. We need the support found in covenant relationships with spiritual family.

The Power of Covenant Relationships

Several years ago, I experienced the power of covenant relationships helping me overcome a personal giant. After a ministry trip to the Philippines, I came home feeling very tired and ill. I felt dizzy and weak, and I had lost 25 pounds. Though I did my best to rest, even breathing was exhausting. When I went to the hospital, a CAT scan revealed that I had a severe case of double pneumonia, but that wasn't all. The doctor also found a baseball-sized tumor near my lungs. Further testing revealed that this was a parasitic tumor that was literally sucking the life out of me.

The news came as a complete shock. Other than the sudden illness at the end of my trip, I had been feeling fine. How could a tumor have been growing in me all this time? The spiritual and physical exhaustion was so severe that I hardly remember all the tests that the doctors performed on me. The only option was to operate immediately. Feeling very discouraged, I sent word to my close friends and colleagues from around the world. Immediately, I received an enormous outpouring of prayer and encouragement. People sent letters and emails and made phone calls. They had their congregations pray and sent me prophetic words about the plans God had for my future. I was completely blown away.

In particular, one of my spiritual sons, Paul Yadao from the Philippines, flew to be with me before the surgery. He soaked me in the presence of God for hours at a time. At one moment, as I received God's presence and peace from him, Paul told me, "You're going to live."

"How do you know?" I asked him.

"Look in the mirror," he said.

When I looked in the mirror, instead of the pale face I had grown accustomed to seeing since the start of the illness, I saw a face that glowed. At that moment, something shifted in my heart. In one night, I went from being certain that I was

going to die to certain that I was going to survive. I was so full of faith that I even paid the doctor to do one more scan right before the surgery. The scan revealed that the tumor had shrunk by one inch in diameter. We still went ahead with the surgery, but I felt nothing but peace as I entered the operating room. When the doctors removed the tumor, they discovered that it had become nonmalignant. This was a great miracle, and I believe it happened in large part because of my alignment in covenant with spiritual family.

The Supernatural Power of Alignment

There is so much power in covenant. In my time of unexpected pain and confusion I was saved by the encouragement of my covenant relationships. My close friends and family reminded me of the covenant I had with God. They reminded me of all the promises that God had made about my life and that no tumor could ever undo them. My dear friend Paul helped me to rest and abide in God's presence, even in the midst of the battle, and as a result, the enemy's attack was turned into a season of healing and spiritual upgrades in my life. It was not just the doctors and nurses who took care of me but also my spiritual family, who know how to pull from Heaven and change atmospheres. Because they fought on my behalf in the spirit realm, tremendous transformation took place—both in my body and in my heart—in the five months between when I was diagnosed and when I recovered.

During that season, as all of the love, prayers and prophetic words poured in, I was reminded of a story a friend of mine once told me. He said redwood trees, though they are some of the tallest trees in the world, do not have especially deep roots. Alone, a redwood tree would be in great danger of falling over. But redwoods tend to grow close to one another, and under the soil their roots bind together, adding strength and support. When a storm comes through, the roots tighten around each other, making redwood forests some of the most steadfast in the world. This is a beautiful picture of what

covenant relationships and alignment with one another can do for us.

We are designed to bind to one another and support each other when we face challenges. Some people think they are better off alone, that connection is too messy and painful. The opposite is true. We are designed for connection, just like redwood trees. We are built for covenant, not only with God but also with one another. {eoa}

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