

STUDY #5 IN THE LIFE OF KING SAUL

I Samuel 14:1-45

TEXT:

- v. 1 One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father.
- v. 2 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men,
- v. 3 among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.
- v. 4 On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh.
- v. 5 One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.
- v. 6 Jonathan said to his young armorbearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."
- v. 7 "Do all that you have in mind," his armorbearer said, "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."
- v. 8 Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us.
- v. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them.
- v. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands."
- v. 11 So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in."
- v. 12 The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armorbearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel."
- v. 13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armorbearer followed and killed behind him.
- v. 14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armorbearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.
- v. 15 Then panic struck the whole army--those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties--and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.
- v. 16 Saul's lookouts at Gibeah of Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions.

v.17 Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armorbearer who were not there.

v.18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.)

v.19 While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

v.20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.

v.21 Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

v.22 When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.

v.23 So the Lord rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

v.24 Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

v.25 The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground.

v.26 When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out, yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath.

v.27 But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.

v.28 Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be any man who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint."

v.29 Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey."

v.30 How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

v.31 That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted.

v.32 They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood.

v.33 Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it." "You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once."

v.34 Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with blood still in it.'" So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there.

v.35 Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.

v.36 Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive," "Do whatever seems best to you," they replied. But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

v.37 So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day.

v.38 Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today.

v.39 As surely as the Lord who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of the men said a word.

v.40 Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here." "Do what seems best to you," the men replied.

v.41 Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer." And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.

v.42 Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

v.43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him, "I merely tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now must I die?"

v.44 Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

v.45 But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die--he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

INTRODUCTION:

Alexander Whyte points out "We ourselves have gone out on an errand of duty or of pleasure and have come back with another heart. We were for the time like new creatures, very little more at that time would have made us new creatures altogether. Such surprises of providence, such opportunities of making ourselves a new heart are occurring continually. Sometimes it has been at a time of sorrow and sometimes at a time of joy and gladness--at the death of a father or

Do Yourself a Favor--Love your Wife by H. Paul Williams

I say Sam one day after a Bible class and he said, "Page, I know what I am now!"

"What is that?" I asked.

"I'm one of those die-hard batteries!" he exclaimed. "My old nature to rebel and resent my wife and children keeps coming back, Page," he said. "The old self keeps coming back alive."

"I know what you mean," I commented, remembering that even after years of Bible doctrine and theology, I was myself resisting the work of the cross in my outer man. This outer man is my natural nature to be self-sustaining, self-motivating, self-sufficient, self-loving, self-righteous. In other words, I (ego) like being "individualistic," and it is very, very difficult letting go of the comfortable position of ruler of my own life and destiny. I know this to be true in the life of Sam, who had so far to go in learning the ways of God.

The ways of God are always hard to learn, even for those Bible heroes that we amateurs have made more heroic than the Bible itself. I'm thinking now of the character of Jacob who required a lifetime of being "stricken" by God to finally wise up to the way God operates in this world of His. It is inspiring to me to read about the ancients who, so like myself, learned through their follies and circumstances of life that the providence of God alchemized them into "saints" and fathers of our faith. It was by their faith that they pleased God.

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SELF

While lecturing at Melbourne University some years ago, I was given a boomerang as a souvenir. In contemplating this gift I concluded that in a sense it symbolized human existence. One generally assumes that a boomerang returns to the thrower; actually it returns only when the thrower has missed his target. Similarly, man returns to himself, to being concerned with himself, only after he has missed his mission, only after he has failed to find meaning in life.

"ARE YOU NOBODY? p.26
by Tournier, Frankl, Lenvinson, Thielicke, Lehmann, & Miller.

Ken

#5

Doc + Dottie

Mondays

12:00 - 1:00

thanksgiving

Square

-4-

a mother, at the time of leaving home to take our place in a lonely world, or again at that happy time when our loneliness was so graciously dealt with by God."

We have traced the life of King Saul from the providential happenings in our first episode that brought he and Samuel together to the coronation of him becoming king in study #2 to his battle against the Ammonites in study #3 and to the time when he could not wait for Samuel to come, but had taken matters into his own hands and offered the sacrifice before going to battle against the Philistines.

J. Vernon McGee points out "Once again Jonathan gains a great victory but Saul takes the credit for it and reveals his jealousy. He actually would have destroyed his own son. Chapter 14 gives us the strategy of battle that Jonathan used against the Philistines. It is said that this is the chapter which the British general Allenby read the night before he made his successful attack upon the Turks in World War I. To me this is an interesting sidelight. I am unable to give you the details of the strategy of this battle since I am not well acquainted with the geography of the region. On a trip to Palestine I wanted to go there but our time was limited. Neither am I a military man. I am sure that when General Allenby read this chapter it was a thrilling revelation to him to see how Jonathan executed his military tactics. General Allenby was a Christian who knew his Bible. Apparently, Jonathan's strategy was to take his men through a narrow pass. Here with the few weapons they had to fight with, Jonathan's army had a distinct advantage. A similar battle took place at Thermopylae, a mountain pass in Eastern Greece where the Greeks, although greatly outnumbered, were able to hold off the Persian army. In Israel's case this strategy certainly worked to their advantage since Israel was hopelessly outnumbered and almost unarmed."

"Man is only a creature runs for when he has lost his way Pass lessons a second time Slow learners have second chances learn from lessons

v. 1 One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

The scene of this chapter is very similar to the experience of David when he comes to find that Saul and his forces are lined up on one side of the valley with the Philistines across the way and the railing accusations of the Philistines against the Israelites, challenging them to send out one of their men to fight against Goliath. On this occasion David is the one who picks up five smooth stones and says the battle is the Lord's and wins an overwhelming victory.

Jonathan is much like David in this situation. He has a tremendous faith and the Lord honors that faith in granting him the victory, even as the Lord has granted victory on prior occasions in impossible circumstances by working through his people who are willing to trust Him.

- ① Moses
- ② Joshua
- ③ Gideon
- ④ Samson

God is famous for taking impossible situations and granting victory to those who will trust Him.

Saul never
learns the
battle is the
Lord's
David & Goliath

what a
friendship

A little
child shall
lead them!

can't wait!!

Jonathan in his youthful exuberance cannot stand the inactivity and seeming delay in going to battle. And so without consulting his father, who would have definitely been against the whole project, took the young man who was bearing his armor and they left together.

v. 2 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men,

Saul has seen many of his men leave and he now has but six hundred. He is frozen in fear and inactivity rather than being willing to step forward in faith and believe the God who with 300 men delivered the children of Israel from the Midianites.

Turn Trust + Triumph

This too could be a great day of victory if Saul were just willing to trust the Lord and turn to the Lord and allow Him to work in this situation to deliver his people.

Focus in the wrong place

The problem with Saul is that he believes that everything rests upon his shoulders and upon him making his own way and provision rather than trusting God to use him to be the liberator of his people.

v. 3 Among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.

Jonathan did not tell anybody about his intentions so they did not know that he had gone.

v. 4 On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh.

v. 5 One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.

Delitzsch points out "In verses 4 and 5 the locality is more minutely described. Between the passes through which Jonathan endeavored to cross over to go up to the post of the Philistines, there was a sharp rock on this side and also one upon the other."

v. 6 Jonathan said to his young armorbearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

Manoah + Samson

Jonathan sure speaks as a godly man here in this 6th verse. He calls the Philistines "those uncircumcised fellows" and then he makes a tremendous statement of faith: "Perhaps the Lord will act in our

Older we get the more calculating I Scrutinizing

limiting himself his own resources

Some people never know the joy of seeing what God can do

Pot of oil
staff
Lunch
Little Me
Open A S

we Act As Though

Statistics determine -6-
Salvation !!

behalf." And then he expresses great confidence in the Lord's ability. "Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few." He's still God! O, how we limit him.

Delitzsch points out "Jonathan's resolution arose from the strong conviction that Israel was the nation of God and possessed in Jehovah an omnipotent God who would not refuse his help to his people in their conflict with the foes of his kingdom if they only put their whole trust in him."

Jonathan must have known the history of the nation Israel for the Lord had never been limited in his ability to save his people, whether it was to cast the horse and rider into the sea, that the nation might be delivered from the Egyptians, or whether it was 300 men delivering the nation from the Midianites, or in war empowering Samson to slay a thousand of the Philistines, it was whatever the Lord would want to accomplish, nothing could hinder him.

Must have
Known the
History of

Jer. 33:3
" 32:27

v. 7 "Do all that you have in mind," his armorbearer said, "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

One is reminded of Samuel's words to Saul in (1 Samuel 10:7) *
"Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you."

One has to admire the armorbearer in this situation. He could have looked at these overwhelming odds and said, "No, that's not for me." Or, "Are you crazy? going against the whole army, just the two of us." But instead he says, "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

The armorbearer makes a tremendous commitment to Jonathan at this point.

v. 8 Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us."

Once the decision is reached and the two of them decide to go, and the armorbearer makes his commitment to Jonathan, Jonathan now leads out and says, "Let's cross over and let the Philistines get a look at us."

v. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them.

v. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands."

~~Gopher Guys~~
~~Bear Boys~~
~~Wooly Worms~~
~~Silly Snakes~~
~~Fearful Foxes~~

Delitzsch points out "The sign was well chosen. If the Philistines said, 'Wait till we come' they would show some courage. But if they said, 'Come up to us' it would be a sign that they were cowardly and had not courage enough to leave their position and attack the Hebrews. It was not tempting God for Jonathan to fix upon such a sign by which to determine the success of his enterprise, for he did it in the exercise of his calling when fighting not for personal objects, but for the kingdom of God, which the uncircumcised were threatening to annihilate. And in the most confident belief that the Lord would deliver and preserve his people. Such faith as this God would not put to shame."

v.11 So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of holes they were hiding in."

As they are revealing themselves to the eye of the enemy, the response of the Philistines is of a derogatory nature. "The Hebrews are crawling out of holes they were hiding in." The Philistines are manifesting a false sense of security that the battle is going to be won by them because the Israelites are so scared they have run away and hidden themselves.

~~Holy Man that's~~
~~Our Signal, let's~~
~~Go wail on~~
~~their Tails!!~~

v.12 The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armorbearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel."

Just as the Lord had used the dream in the valley of Jezreel to convince Gideon that the Lord had given the Midianites into their hands, so the statements of the Philistines are a definite indication to Jonathan that the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.

v.13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armorbearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armorbearer followed and killed behind him.

Immediately upon reaching the top of the cliff, the Philistines are taken by surprise in a similar way as was the terrorists at the raid on Entebbe, because none of them ever thought Jonathan and his armorbearer would start fighting against such overwhelming odds.

v.14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armorbearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

One has to be amazed at how the Lord can take an individual and move him by a strong sense of conviction and duty to carry out God's will against overwhelming odds. You think of David and Esther, Luther, William Cary, Saul of Tarsus, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Graham

it is God's sheer delight to provide victory in impossible situations

"God gets the Greater Glory".

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and a vast host of others whom God has used in a mighty way to the accomplishment of his task against insurmountable odds.

v.15 Then panic struck the whole army--those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties--and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.

Gideon
Samson
Slew 1,000
1 Chron 20:

It was just like the panic that broke out in the middle of the night as the faithful men blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers, and said, "For the Lord and for Gideon" as the Midianites began destroying one another in the valley. So the Lord caused the panic to take place to honor the faith of Jonathan and his armor-bearer as they went out to battle in the Lord's strength.

One has to be completely amazed at the results of one man's faith and the national impact that is made as a result of Jonathan and his armorbearer just believing God.

Blaikie says, "We may learn from this narrative that the true secret of all spiritual success lies in our seeking to be instruments in God's hands, in our lending ourselves to him to do in us and by us whatever is good in his sight. Thus it was eminently with Jonathan. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord--to save by many or by few. It was not Jonathan that was to work, with some help from God. It was the Lord that was to work by Jonathan. It was not Jonathan's project that was to be carried out. It was the Lord's cause that was to be advanced. Jonathan had no personal ends in this matter. He is willing to give up his life if the Lord should require it. It is a light consecration on all spiritual service that brings much blessing and success. Men that have nothing of their own to gain are the men who gain most. Men who sacrifice all desire for personal honor are the men who are most highly honored. Men who make themselves of no reputation are the men who gain the highest reputation."

v.16 Saul's lookouts at Gibeah of Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions.

Those who were standing on guard spotted the confusion and saw the armies of the Philistines fleeing in every direction.

v.17 Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armorbearer who were not there.

*Instead of
Seeing God
At work
He is threatened
And Needs to
find out who is
responsible.*

Immediately Saul wants to find out who is responsible for this confusion and the battle that is taking place. And so he calls the forces together to discover who is missing, rather than jumping into the middle of things and recognizing that the Lord is at work and assisting in the battle.

So Many Threatened

v.18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.)

J. Vernon McGee points out "Saul should not have taken the ark to the battlefield as we have seen before in the days of Samuel. The children of Israel used the ark in a superstitious manner, thinking it would help them win their battles. Apparently Saul had the same reason."

v.19 While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

little late to be praying Saul!!
Many will consult God about their safety that would never consult Him about their duty. But perceiving by his scouts that the noise of the enemy's camp increased, he commanded the priest that officiated to break off abruptly. Consult no more, wait no longer for an answer. It is rather a prohibition to his inquiring of the Lord either because now he thought he did not need an answer, the case was plain enough, or because he was in such haste to fight a falling enemy that he would not stay to make an end of his devotions.

v.20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.

Just as been done on prior occasions as the Lord sends confusion into the camp of the enemy and causes them to fight themselves, so as Saul and his men come to battle they find the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.

v.21 Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

Delitzsch: "Those Israelites whom the Philistines had incorporated into their army are called Hebrews, according to the name which was current among foreigners, while those who were with Saul are called Israel, according to the sacred name of the nation."

deserters changed camps
The fact that the Hebrews who were serving in the army of the Philistines came over to Saul and his host and turned their weapons against their oppressors naturally heightened the confusion in the camp of the Philistines and accelerated their defeat. This was still further increased by the fact that the Israelites who had concealed themselves on the mountains of Ephraim also joined the Israelitish army as soon as they heard of the flight of the Philistines.

v.22 When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.

"Nothing ventured Nothing gained" ..
Now that there was a real break in the action and it looked like the armies of Israel were going to win, all of those who had lost their courage came out and were willing to join in sharing the victory.

v.23 So the Lord rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

Saul said this about Ammonite battle!
Because Jonathan and his armorbearer were willing to step out in faith, the Lord answered that faith with the rescue of the nation Israel against overwhelming odds in granting victory over the Philistines on this occasion.

v.24 Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

Heb.12:2
One needs to just emphasize the "I", "myself," and "my" in verse 24. Saul has his eyes upon himself rather than upon the Lord.

Plowing a Crooked Furrow!
Blaikie points out "Saul was now suffering in character under the influence of the high position and great power to which he had been raised. Saul had now begun to disregard God's will in his public acts and was now beginning to reap the penalty."

Delitzsch points out "This command of Saul did not proceed from a proper attitude towards the Lord but was an act of false zeal in which Saul had more regard to himself and his own kingly power than to the cause of the kingdom of Jehovah, as we may see at once from the expression "till I have avenged myself upon my enemies."

Ridout points out "Saul, having taken charge, soon turns a glorious victory into a very limited one, and instead of the joy of conflict in God's cause, gives the people heavy hearts. He occupies them with himself rather than God and pronounces a curse upon anyone who may taste food until his enemies are overthrown. He does not see God in his honor and accordingly all takes color from this. He makes the hearts of the people sad at the very moment when they should be experiencing the joy of the Lord. Poor Saul! Even his religion is a gloomy, selfish thing. Like the elder brother in the parable, his service to his Father is unaccompanied even by the joy of a kid and his friends are confessedly not his Father's. All legality is like this. Self is the center and not God. Where this

is the case, what can there be but depression? And its misery and discomfort is all that such a soul has to share with others. What a libel upon God's love! What a misrepresentation of Him in whose presence there is fulness of joy!"

Blaikie points out "It was cruel of Saul to impose a fast at such a time, all the more that being commander-in-chief of the army, it was his duty to do his utmost for the comfort of his soldiers. But it was unwise as well as cruel, with energies impaired by fasting, they could not continue the pursuit, nor make the victory so telling. Perhaps he was under the influence of the delusion that the more painful a religious service is, the more is it acceptable to God. Saul, as we have seen, grew up with little acquaintance with religious persons and little knowledge of divine things. And now, that perforce, he is constrained to attend to them. It is no wonder if he falls in many a serious error, for he probably has no idea of that great rule of God's kingdom, I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

v.25 The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground.

Blaikie points out "The folly of Saul's order becomes apparent when the army came to a wood where, as is common enough in the country, a stream of wild honey poured out, probably from the trunk of a hollow tree."

v.26 When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out, yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath.

Everyone was obedient to the oath of the king, although there was a real temptation in the honey that was being provided.

v.27 But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.

McGee points out "It is interesting to note that Jonathan did not know about his father's strange order that no man was to eat until the battle was won. Actually, Jonathan had already won the battle. Now we are beginning to see the real nature of Saul. Jonathan gains the victory and Saul takes credit for it. He is not willing to give the credit to his son. His modesty is gone and his jealousy is revealed.

Jonathan's fatigue from the battle which would be revealed in the dullness of his eyes is changed as his strength is restored and his eyes begin to brighten as a result of taking the honey.

v.28 Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be any man who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint."

McGee points out "It was a foolish command Saul had given. The men were weary. They had fought a battle and won. They needed something to eat. Saul said, 'I will not let anyone eat anything until I am avenged of my enemies.' His modesty was absolutely gone."

v.29 Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey."

Ever Notice how easy it is for Parents to say "No" without reasoning

Blaikie points out "We must bear in mind that Jonathan was a true man of God. He had set out that morning in his wonderful exploit in the true spirit of faith and full consecration to God. He was in far nearer fellowship with God than his father and yet so far from approving of the religious order to fast which his father had given. He regards it with displeasure and distrust. Godly men will sometimes be found less outwardly religious than some other men and will greatly shock them by being so. The godly man has an unction from the Holy One to understand his will. He goes straight to the Lord's business. Like our blessed Lord, he finishes the work given him to do."

v.30 How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

Jonathan points out the fact that it would have been a whole lot better if the men could have had something to eat from the army of the Philistines and would have been able to continue in the battle even with greater haste and more effectiveness as a result of satisfying their physical needs.

v.31 That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted.

Because of Saul's unreasonable demands upon his army, they are totally and physically exhausted at the completion of the day.

v.32 They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood.

Because of Saul's poor judgment and the restraining of the people, they become disobedient in the satisfaction of this hunger and exhaustion by eating meat that has not been drained.

"We drench Ourselves with the Grace of Exhaustion
And the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it."

~~Self Always Justifies Its Actions.~~

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v.33 Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it." "You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once."

Saul is not willing to accept the responsibility for the rash actions of his army and rather puts the blame upon them for what has been done.

v.34 Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with blood still in it.'" So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there.

v.35 Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.

~~built it too late~~
How much better it would have been to have had an altar from the very beginning, but now as is often the case when things seem out of hand and all else seems to be in total chaotic confusion, then comes the time to build the altar.

~~Psalm 50:15~~ "And call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me."

v.36 Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive." "Do whatever seems best to you," they replied. But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

There is a restraining voice and that is, Let's be seeking the Lord's face before we go into further battle. The priest obviously feels that things are not all right and so he makes this restraining comment about seeking the Lord first.

v.37 So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day.

God is not using Saul anymore and fellowship has been broken because of all of these previous actions.

McGee points out "Saul, you see, is not willing to take the blame himself. He says that someone else has sinned. The army stood silently. They knew the victory was Jonathan's and now Saul was saying the reason God did not answer me was because someone did not obey me and broke the oath. The army knew that Jonathan had tasted the honey and they knew that Saul was putting up a tremendous front at this time. They stood in silence because he was the king."

Blaikie points out "Who does not see what a fearful thing it is to leave God and his ways and give one's self up to the impulses of one's own heart. Fearful, for even the humblest of us, but infinitely fearful for one of great resources and influence, with a whole people under him. How beautiful some prayers in the psalms sound after we have been contemplating the wild career of Saul. 'Show me thy ways O Lord. Teach me in thy paths; lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation. On thee do I wait all the day. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.'

Psalm 25:4

v.38 Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today."

Saul feels himself very confident and self-righteous in this situation and that God's delay in answering has nothing to do with what he has done.

v.39 As surely as the Lord who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of the men said a word.

He's the one who started the whole thing!

Saul evidently had some inkling of the fact that Jonathan had been disobedient and therefore he finds a scapegoat in Jonathan to explain the reason why the Lord has not answered.

v.40 Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here." "Do what seems best to you," the men replied.

Disrespect for Sov
v.41 Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer." And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.

The army is standing silently by as these things are beginning to unfold. Naturally, their respect for Saul is beginning to decrease. First of all because of what Saul is doing to his own son, and then the fact that Jonathan is a hero in their eyes because he is responsible for the victory.

v.42 Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

v.43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him, "I merely tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now must I die?"

Sure Jonathan was guilty of doing what Saul had not wanted him to do because Saul had said, "Cursed be the man that eats any food this day." But was this something to die for? Especially since it had been done in ignorance.

v.44 Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

McGee points out "Saul would actually destroy his own son is he stood in his way. Why? Because Saul is jealous of Jonathan. He wants all of the glory for himself. The army had remained silent through all of Saul's rantings and ravings, but when Jonathan's life is at stake, they no longer keep quiet. We are now seeing the true character of Saul. Later on we will see how he will act in direct disobedience to God. He is going to do something that will bring tragedy to the nation Israel. Had not God intervened it would have meant the extermination of the nation. Saul is revealing that he is not God's man at all. He is actually Satan's man. We will see in the next chapter that Saul is not obeying God any longer. He is following his own devices. Finally the Spirit of God will no longer speak to him. God will no longer give him leading and he will turn from God to the demonic world. Then we will study that remarkable incident when Saul actually consults the witch at Endor. It is a section with a great lesson for us in these days in which we are seeing the manifestation of demonism, the occult, the worship of Satan and astrology. God help America today because there are many Sauls abroad."

v.45 But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die--he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

Delitzsch points out "that the people opposed it. They not only pronounced Jonathan innocent because he had broken the king's command unconsciously but they also exclaimed that he had gained the victory for Israel with God. In this fact Jonathan's victory there was a divine verdict and Saul could not fail to recognize now that it was not Jonathan, but he himself who had sinned and through his arbitrary and despotic command had brought guilt upon Israel, on account of which God had given him no reply."

CONCLUSION:

What are the lessons that come out of this particular study?

A GARDENER LOOKS AT THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT
by W. Phillip Keller

Wherever Christ moved, whomever He met, whatever circumstances He encountered, the remarkable aspect of His life was that He was always in control. He was never taken unawares, never caught in a crisis. Jesus was never manipulated, nor was He ever at the mercy of the mob. Even during those desperate, diabolical last hours from the time of His betrayal until His battered body hung on a cruel Roman cross, He moved in quiet strength, enormous dignity, and majestic might. Before the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, even Judas His betrayer, the high priests, the Sanhedrin, cunning King Herod, the political opportunist Pilate, the brutal Roman soldiers, the blood-thirsty mobs of Jerusalem, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, was supremely in control.

And this was because He was God-controlled. I have written at great length on this theme in Rabboni. It will not be elaborated here. But it must be said with great emphasis that if some of us wonder why our lives are such a tangle; if we wonder why we seem to live in an inner jungle; if the soil of our souls seems to be buried beneath a bramblelike growth of unchecked, uncontrolled wild vines, it is because we have not allowed ourselves to be brought under the control of the Good Gardener. We simply don't want Him interfering in the grounds of our lives. We prefer to go our own way, to carve out our own careers, to do our own thing, to grow our own sour grapes, to live lost in the briars and brambles of self-determination. In our stupidity we seem to think we can control our own destiny only to discover that our lives are unmitigated disasters. *4*

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What about my relationship with men?

Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am a better man than I really am? Is there the least suspicion of hypocrisy in my life? Am I honest in all my words and acts? Do I exaggerate?

Am I reliable? Can I be trusted? Do I confidentially pass on what was told to me in confidence? Do I grumble and complain in the church?

Am I jealous, impure, irritable, touchy, distrustful? Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying? Am I proud? Do I thank God I am not as other people? Is there anyone I fear, or dislike, or criticize, or resent? If so, what am I doing about it?

What about my devotion to God?

Does the Bible live to me? Do I give it time to speak to me? Do I go to bed in time and do I get up in time?

Am I enjoying my prayer life today? Did I enjoy it this morning?

When I am involved in a problem in life, do I use my tongue or my knees about it?

Am I disobeying God in anything, or insisting upon doing something about which my conscience is very uneasy?

When did I last speak to someone else with the object of trying to win him for Christ?

Am I a slave to books, dress, friends, work, or convention? How do I spend my spare time?

Victorious Christian Service, Redpath, p.161

LESSON #1: Jonathan is a man of God, moving ahead in faith, believing that God wants to give him the victory.

LESSON #2: God still uses individuals to accomplish great things in his purpose.

LESSON #3: Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.

LESSON #4: As Jonathan and the armorbearer act in faith, God provides the victory.

LESSON #5: Saul's good judgment has been short-circuited by his pride and jealousy over Jonathan's success.

LESSON #6: Saul's uppermost concern should have been the comfort of his men. His should have been one of servant leadership.

LESSON #7: The Lord delivers Jonathan from the Philistines in the first of the chapter, and from his father in the last of the chapter.

Rw. 3:20 hamar Muse

Most of us live like normal, regular, Smith-and-Jones kinds of people until crisis hurtles in and shatters our routine. People can learn a great deal about you by watching how you react in a moment of crisis. All the outward window dressing is jerked aside, revealing the reality of your walk with God. What are people learning about the sufficiency of Jesus Christ from observing your responses under sudden pressure?

When things are going smoothly, most of us can swing it. We can quote verses, sing hymns, show up at church and stay more or less on tune. But when an emergency washes across our tranquil landscape — what then?

Ray Stedman likes to say, “Woe to the man who has to learn principles at a time of crisis.” He should be learning those truths *before* the walls collapse. Otherwise, he’ll be confused, overwhelmed and constantly bullied around by his circumstances. His first reaction may be a long and bitter complaint directed against God.

“Oh, Lord . . . how could you allow this to happen? How