

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsundered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Five – 1 Samuel 14:1-45

This book was written by Alan Redpath and in it he is talking about our relationships with each other, to reveal this nature, this self-nature that is always concerned about how it looks in front of people. And he asks several questions:

(Victorious Christian Service by Alan Redpath)

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 in 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 [them] to Christ?

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

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All of those things seem to focus upon the selfish individual, more concerned about that than they are their relationship to the Lord.

Saul is that sort of an individual. We've traced his life now through four different episodes.

In the first we saw Samuel and Saul miraculously brought together.

In the second we saw him being anointed and then being crowned as king.

In the third we saw him in his first successful battle against the Ammonites. And when he fought the Ammonites, he had a glorious victory and he said, "The Lord is the one who has rescued Israel today."

And then in our last episode we had that tragic, tragic experience with him when he just couldn't wait. He was disobedient, he went into the tabernacle and offered the burnt offering sacrifice because on the seventh day Samuel didn't get there quite in time. And after the sacrifice had been offered, he walked in.

Now we're going to see something that has been an enigma to many in scripture. And that is how a man, like Saul, can father a son like Jonathan.

Jonathan is probably one of the most beautiful characters in scripture. Jonathan and David had a very, very wonderful relationship of commitment and friendship. It is the epitome of a man having a friend. And Jonathan stood by him like a brother. And that has got to be a tremendous witness because he had to be ostracized from his father for the sake of that friendship.

Jonathan comes forth in this study as a guy who really has it all together. And he comes out of a home like this. It's an amazing thing that took place.

But to show us how bad Saul is, he took credit for the victory of the forces. Now he's going to take credit for a victory that his son won, and he's even so threatened by it that he's going to try to kill his own offspring.

Someone has said:

Man is the only creature who runs faster when he's lost his way.

(source unknown)

And there is another principle that comes out of our lesson:

When we fail to learn our lesson the first time around, plan on getting it in another cloak.

God has purposes to teach us things and if we don't learn it the first time or we're a slow learner, we're probably going to get several more shots at it.

And we can recognize some of the hassles and the difficulties in our life if they have a common tenant in that we hadn't learned it the first time. Now Saul didn't learn it in our last scene so he's getting another opportunity. He's getting another shot and he's going to get another shot in the study after that.

And sad to say, Saul never did learn, and that's the tragedy of his life, that the battle is the Lord's.

Of course, David is going to come on the scene. He's a man after God's own heart. He learned that the battle was the Lord's. We see that in many experiences in his life.

Let's pick up at verse 1 and see what we can get out of this story.

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.

“One day Jonathan the 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.”

As the scene of this chapter opens, all the forces are lined up. Philistines are over here and all the armies of Israel over here. It’s kind of like that familiar story of David and Goliath when the Philistines are on one side and the Israelites on the other side. Saul’s just sitting there on his duff and he’s the leader. And he should be doing something about this.

But there is another principle in scripture:

Sometimes a little child shall lead them.

Jonathan is not going to sit around and just let things continue to happen. He wants to do something about it.

Jonathan has a big God. And there is another principle and that is this:

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

All we have to do is talk to somebody like Moses, put in very

difficult straits but always lead to victory. Joshua had the same experience in his life. Gideon in his life, Samson in his. And Paul in his says, “Now thanks be unto God”—2 Corinthians 2:14—“who is always leading us in triumph.”

Jonathan is just like David. It’s easy to understand why they’re good friends. David was a man of faith, Jonathan is too. He believes that the enemies are fighting the Lord’s people. And enemies don’t come up against the Lord’s people without fighting the Lord. That is if those people are willing to trust Him. And Saul isn’t willing to do that.

Now Jonathan just can’t wait. He’s just so eager to see the victory take place. He’s not going to sit around in inactivity and all this delay. He grabbed his armorbearer and he didn’t tell his old man about it, because if he did, he’d put an axe on the thing and he wouldn’t be able to go. So he takes off and leaves. He’s not submitting to parental authority at this point. He just grabs the stuff and in faith he’s going to move out and see if something will happen.

Now the camera has moved back to dad.

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

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

Now there were a whole lot more men than that in our last study, but a bunch of these guys have gotten scared. He's found himself a shade tree and he's got his tent put up there and he's only got six hundred guys left. He had several thousand when he started.

We'll find a lot of times when people aren't moving out, people lose interest. And if there's not an intensity and a desire to get after it, people just get bored. And in this situation the men start leaving and he's only got six hundred left. A lot of them are frozen in fear. We saw them scared to death in the last passage. They're inactive, they're not stepping out in faith, they're not trusting God, and they're just sitting around.

When something happens, the man of God should be in front, turning to God, getting the people to trust in God, and then watch God triumph in those situations.

And he doesn't do this. This could be the same thing as what happened with the Ammonites in study 3 if he would just be willing to say, "Hey God, these people are enemies against You. I want to turn to You. I want to allow You to work in this situation. I want to see what You can do."

A lot of people, as Christians, never learn that lesson. Their whole thinking process is diseased. It's all selfish.

"Oh I'm no good. No, I can never do that." And they're sitting around with all kinds of excuses limiting God to their own

resources rather than really moving out and trusting Him.

Saul's problem is he's got his focus in the wrong place. And it's on the Philistines and he's counting noses. And as a result, he's going to make a horrible mistake by just sitting here. And some people never know the joy in their lives of what God can do.

Are we like that as Christians? Do we have one thing that has happened in our life that we can say, "Boy God did and I'm so excited I can't stand it."

Or are we feeling horrible because God never does anything for us? He just passes us over. And that happens to everybody. And we're blaming God for it. Sitting there and crying in our self-pity.

Ever seen God do anything? Here's old Saul sitting under a tree out there. He's got all the credentials. Probably eating pomegranates and doing nothing when he ought to be leading.

Now the next verse also tells us that he's got everything he needs.

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.

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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."

He said, "Wow! I've known him for a long time." What a family history.

One other thing we need to know about that verse is that he's the priest. He's got the ephod. The ephod means he's got God's instructions on how the leader is to lead the people.

With David, many times a crisis comes and he immediately goes to the priest, asks them to call upon God and make known His will so they cannot lose any time and move out. And God never fails to give them an answer.

Here's all the equipment! He's got six hundred men. We think that's not very many. Well with Gideon he only needed three hundred and they won against the Mideonites. Numbers are terribly insignificant to the Lord.

And here's the priest waiting to function if Saul was just humble enough to come.

And it says, "No one was aware that Jonathan had left." He took his armorbearer and they took off.

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.

“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.

“One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.”

So he's got to go through a pass here. Between these passes they're going to cross over and they're going to confront the enemy.

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.”

“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.’”

Why do they talk like that? Every Jew who was part of the Abrahamic covenant circumcision was a part of that covenant. It was a mark of the fact that they were God's chosen people. And anybody who wasn't God's chosen people they referred to

as “uncircumcised.” So these creeps are enemies, they’re outside the veil of God’s blessing, and “let’s go get them—let’s go over there.”

“Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf.”

And then that next one—what a statement:

“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.”

And we act as though sometimes in our lives, our salvation depends totally upon our resources. And what a mature approach to the whole thing.

He is still God and we limit Him when we think like that. As though God’s got to be poured into our little mold and He’s got to be limited to our way of doing it.

Go back and read the Old Testament. Takes a pot of oil and he takes care of Elijah. Remember that? Took a staff and led Moses and the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. He took five loaves and a couple of fish from a little kid in John 6, who was willing to share his lunch with the rest of the crowd. And He fed over 5,000 people with it. And He can open up a sea and let people go through.

And here Jonathan resolves that God is able to do this. “Nothing can hinder” Him.

Here are two verses:

Jeremiah 33:3

Call upon Me, I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.

Jeremiah 32:27

Behold I am the Lord God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for Me?

“Nothing can hinder” Him.

What does that phrase tell us? That tells us that Jonathan's been to Sunday school. That tells us that he is a student of Israeli history. He must know what has gone on to this point in the deliverance miraculously and also the Abrahamic covenant and the studies of lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All of these things he must be aware of because he makes a statement so bold like this: “Nothing could hinder Him.”

Look at this armorbearer. He's got to be a Christian too.

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

“Do all that you have in mind,” his armorbearer said. ‘Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.’”

That's exactly what Samuel said to Saul in that first study back in 1 Samuel 10:7. Remember that? He says:

1 Samuel 10:7

Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do for God is with you.

Now looking at the armorbearer. Some guy is getting ready to start a war. What is he going to say?

“That’s not for me! Are you crazy? Man, we’re walking into a suicide mission. This is kamikaze pilot time!”

But what a tremendous commitment to Jonathan—a good friend. He picked his armorbearer right. And his armorbearer says, “Go...I am with you heart and soul.”

What does that tell us about Jonathan? He must be everybody’s friend. We really find our friends and who they are when things get rough and the wind starts blowing. People who are just around us for the sake of being around us are going to fold up and disappear like termites in the woodwork. When the going gets tough then our true friends are going to show up.

And Jonathan had to be an incredible, incredible friend. Not only to David, but here to his armorbearer. He made friends by what he did.

As soon as he sees David he takes off his sword and shield and makes a blood covenant with the guy that he's heart and soul with him in whatever he does. And recognizes that he is going to in fact be the next king in his dad's place.

And here he is again. He has made a friend with an armorbearer who would die in the trenches with him. What a friendship. We don't see much of that today.

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

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

Now as we're determining the Lord's will, sometimes we have to have a little signal to be sure we're on target. And they've got one.

Gideon had to throw out the fleece and say, "Well if the fleece is dry tonight and the ground's wet, I'll know that's Your will." And then the next day he had to throw out the fleece again and say, "If the fleece is wet and the ground is dry, I'll know it's Your will." And sure enough, both times it was. And after throwing out the fleece they fought the Mideonites and won.

Here in this situation, he has some conditions.

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."

“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.”

“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.”

Why?

If they’d have said, “Wait right there until I come,” that’s an act of courage. They’re going to grab a sword and wail on their tail.

“But if they’re saying, ‘Come on up to us!’”—their bark’s bigger than their bite. Go on up there and surprise them.

Courage would be, “Wait, we’re coming.”

Confidence, “Come on up you big chickens!” Like they would never dare come up. And they’re really the chickens.

And so that’s their signal.

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.”

“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.’”

Alright sometimes people get pretty derisive and pretty smart. And can penetrate with great sarcasm.

In the life of David, we find that once he becomes king the Jebusites on the walls of the city of Jerusalem say, “We are putting blind guards tonight for you David.” That was just enough to stir up his anger to fully take the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites.

And these Philistines are smart and all for the last time. Because us and God make a majority.

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.”

“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.’”

“Hey man, that’s our signal! Let’s go wail on their tails! Time for a victory!”

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.

“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.”

They were taken by surprise.

None of them ever thought these guys would start a war, but sure enough they did.

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

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

And fighting against overwhelming odds, talk to David, Esther, Luther, William Carey, Saul of Tarsus, Dwight L. Moody and Billy Graham.

It’s God’s sheer delight to provide victory in impossible

situations. If we want to delight the heart of God we must put ourselves on the cutting edge and give Him an opportunity to show us the victory. That is His greatest joy.

If there are two things that God loves more than anything, it's fruit that comes from our life because we're trusting and abiding in Him.

John 15:8

Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit.

But the other thing is to provide victory in impossible situations. Because He gets the glory for what takes place in that. And the greater the victory the greater the glory! So he's saying, "This is a task against insurmountable odds but Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, too."

Gideon did it—2 Chronicles 20—Jehoshaphat just had the choir singing and the lyres in wait stirring up the people in the valley and the victory was won. God is not limited in using His resources when we're willing to call upon Him.

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.

"Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and

the field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.”

He just sent an earthquake. The guys thought they were on the San Andres fault or something, getting ready to fall into the sea, and it shook the ground and that scared them even more and they started fighting each other. The battle took place.

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

“Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin”—this is the city of Gibeah. It’s on a high place—“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.

“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.”

That shows us something about that creep.

He is more concerned about who isn’t there than he is about the fact that God is providing a victory over the Philistines and to get with it and go with the battle. Instead of seeing God

at work, he's threatened and he needs to find out what's responsible for this.

When we're selfish and when we're ego-centered we're always threatened by somebody else coming around who's more appreciated than we are. And it's such a threat and we have to find out what they're doing so we can do it their way and get the blessing too and copy them.

And here instead of rejoicing, instead of mustering the army to go to battle, he's got to sit around and figure out who caused this mess. And he just as well shouldn't have found it, because he found out it was his own son.

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

“Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring the ark of God.’ (At that time it was with the Israelites.)”

He should never have taken the ark out into the battle field. It was like a rabbit's foot to him. It was a symbol of God's presence, but he had no relationship. It should not have been there.

What he should have done, at the point of confrontation, was go to the priest, have the priest with the use of the ephod discover the Lord's will—whether it was right for them to go into battle and the Lord was going to give them to him, or whether the Lord wanted them restrained. He would have

made that clear. But he didn't do that.

Here in a superstitious manner, he says, "Bring the ark of God."

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."

"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.'"

There's a time to pray and there's a time to get with the program. And when we miss our time of prayer we usually foul up in our program because we don't have time to pray while the program's going on.

That's why it's critical for us every day of our life to spend time in the word and in prayer before we start that day, lest we get behind in our assignments and God can't minister to us when a crisis is already here.

We're so crisis-oriented.

Psalm 50:15

Call upon Me in the day of trouble
and I will deliver thee.

It's almost like panic praying when we're hunkered down like a jackrabbit in a hail storm. It's hitting us like crazy so we're praying! It's a little late. We should have gotten instructions a long time ago so we'd know how to relate victorious in the hail storm. Instead, here we are.

See all he's calling about now is God's safety, not his duty. He has neglected to call upon God for his duty. Now all he wants to know is whether he's going to be safe in all this mess and so it's crisis time. We have to get religious all of a sudden. And he doesn't need an answer.

"The battle is here, get with the program and go fight. Don't pray. Don't sit on your hands. It's a little late now to be praying Saul, you forgot to do that earlier." And he didn't need that.

So right in the midst of the priest, using the Ephod to discover what they're supposed to do, the battle is getting so hot Saul says, "Forget it! We're going!" And that's probably the right thing to say.

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.

"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."

Recognizing each other and hitting them with a sword. They're just knocking them down the valley all by themselves. Don't even hardly need to do anything there.

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.

“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.”

Isn't that terrible? These guys have been under such terrible leadership that they failed and went to the Philistine camp because they wanted to be on a winning team!

And now the deserters all of a sudden change camp because a young guy begins to believe that God can do something in an impossible situation.

Nothing happened over here so they all left, went down to the enemy. Now when they see the action taking place and something beginning to happen, they all come back.

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.

“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. Everybody wants to be with a winner.

And if we’re on God’s side we’re with a winner all the time, if God is the one who is leading.

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

“So the Lord rescued Israel”

Why is that upsetting?

On week three that’s exactly what it said after they had the victory with the Ammonites:

“The Lord rescued Israel today.”

And we said if he could have just laid down his armor and died, he’d have gone up to glory as a victorious general.

Now the writer—whoever this writer is of this historical record—has to say in answer to the faith of a young man who is the son of the king:

“The Lord today rescued Israel.”

What a delight.

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

Because Jonathan and his armorbearer are willing to step out in faith, the Lord answered.

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.

“Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul 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!’”

Circle all three of those so we can get the big picture.

“So none of the troops tasted food.”

“So I have avenged myself on my enemies.” These are enemies of God’s people. And we don’t put legalistic requirements on the army of God. He’s focusing on all of this restraint. He’s limiting the army by not letting them eat until they are avenged.

That’s like these pro football players who say, “I ain’t going to

shave until we win the Super Bowl.” They come in all bushy-faced, with long hair.

Well, Saul comes into the men. He’s flaunting his power and his authority. He says, “I ain’t going to let anybody eat until I have won the battle against the army of my enemy.”

There’s an interesting little statement in Hannah Whitall Smith’s book *The God Who is Enough* that’s classic and it illustrates the problem here:

(The God Who is Enough by Hannah Whitall Smith)

Have you ever watched a farmer plowing a field? If you have you have noticed that in order to make a straight furrow he is obligated to fix his eyes on a tree or a post in the fence or some object at the far end of the field and to guide his plow unwaveringly toward that object.

If he begins to look back at the furrow behind him in order to see whether he’s made a straight furrow, his plow begins to jerk from side to side and the furrow he’s making becomes a zigzag.

If we would make straight paths for our feet we must do what the apostle Paul said. We must forget the things that are behind and reach forth to those things which are before. We must press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

To forget the things that are behind is an essential part of the pressing forward toward the prize of our high calling. And I am convinced this prize can never be reached unless we will

consent to this forgetting.

When we do consent to it, we come near to putting an end to all of our self-examinations. For if we may not look back over our past misdoings, we shall find but little food for self-reflected acts.

(source unknown)

Plowing a straight furrow means:

Hebrews 12:1, 2

Laying aside the sin which so easily besets you and run with patience the race that's set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Keeping our eyes on Him is going to let us plow a straight furrow and head to the house. And forgetting what's behind and pressing toward what's in front.

Saul is plowing a crooked furrow here. His main concern as the leader ought to be in the comfort of his men. If these men need water, if they need food, granola bars or whatever, give them nutrition! They're in the battle! Get the stuff to them, organize the supplies so these men are taken care of. They're God's instrument! Don't muzzle the ox that's treading out the corn! Free them up to do what they can do! That's the responsibility of good, effective godly leadership. Don't flaunt it by denying them.

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

honey on the ground.

“The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground.”

Evidently some bees had been working in a little hollow log and they’ve got a bunch of honey here. And this wild honey poured out.

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.

“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.”

Honey can do miracles, especially if you’re running a marathon or doing some great exertion. It can give a momentary high to help the person get through the activity. Here’s the provision. None of them did it because of 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.

“But Jonathan”

He'd been away when dad had given the instructions out there exercising faith to get ready to win the battle so he's totally innocent.

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 honey. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.”

Fatigue is taken care of. That was something he really needed. He probably had a whole mouth full of honeycomb.

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.”

“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.”’

Here’s a guy saying, “You know you just disobeyed your dad. And the reason all of us are about ready to fall over a log here is because your dad said none of us could eat.”

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.

“Jonathan said, ‘My father has made trouble for the country.

See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey.”

So many times when we’re selfish we’ll manifest our personal power by denying privileges to our followers.

Ever notice how many times parents say no to their children? And it’s no without even thinking about it. It’s just if they have to say yes it’s going to mean they’re going to have some responsibility so the answer is “no.”

It’s easy to say no. “No you can’t go there,” “No you can’t do that,” “No you can’t do it.”

It’s easy and just flaunts our power, just irritates the fire out of them. And so they’re a new generation, they say to their kids “no, get down, no, don’t do that, don’t do this.” Because it’s going to mean doing something else.

The farther we are from fellowship with our Father, the more we act like this. Look at what Jonathan says. Here comes spiritual wisdom from a spiritual guy.

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?”

“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?”

“We’d have had a greater battle if these guys had been fed and taken care of.”

He’s just stating the facts the way they are.

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

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

Wiped out.

Someone said:

We drench ourselves with the grace of exhaustion and the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it.”
(source unknown)

These guys are wiped out! Somebody comes along and sprays them with a hose, gives them some honey, a little bit to eat, now they can get up and fight some more. They’re totally, physically exhausted. And Saul’s responsible for that.

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.

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

They were so hungry. They were eating rare meat right on the spot.

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.”

“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 stone over here at once.’”

That is so creepy. Saul can always blame somebody else. It’s so comfortable. It’s so infallible. It’s so perfect. And he justifies his actions by saying, “They’re the ones who are wrong. You’ve broken faith,” he said.

These last verses just show us how bad he is in these rash actions.

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.

“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 them there.’”

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

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

One of the tragedies of his life is that he’s always too late. He’s going to get it done but he doesn’t get it done till it’s too late.

He should have been building this altar a long time ago and had been in fellowship with His Lord, but he didn’t do it.

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.”

“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.'"

And the religious guy says, "Hey Saul, hold it. I know you're getting religious. I know you're getting excited. Your son's exercised faith, God's given the victory. Let's not make another mistake by all of a sudden doing what you think's right. Let's talk to the Lord about this before we go another step further, because the Lord's hand of blessing has got to be upon it."

It's just like the restraining voice of God saying, "Hold it up. Back off. Wait."

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.

"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."

Saul is no longer in fellowship with the Lord because of his prior disobedience. And so there is no answer given.

This is so different from the prayers of David.

Psalm 25:4, 5

Show me Thou ways, O Lord,
Teach me 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,
Oh that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes,
Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect
unto all Thy commandments.

Why is he a man after God's own heart? Because he seeks God's face all day long, to walk in company with Him, to be in the center of His will.

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

Self-righteous.

"We're going to hold court right here and find out why we're not getting an answer!"

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.

"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 obviously had an inkling that Jonathan was responsible for this because he was missing and he missed the muster call earlier in the day.

He says to those guys, “If my son is involved in this,” and he has broken faith with God. Isn’t it easy to point the finger? Jonathan hadn’t done anything. He’s just acted in accordance with the Lord’s will. But Saul is pointing the critical finger to put the ball in his court so it doesn’t make him look so bad. “And none of the men said a word.”

It’s interesting when Absalom, David’s son, rebels against him. When they go out to battle David says, “Whatever you do, don’t hurt my son Absalom.” Family blood runs deep. And Saul is so selfish here when he says, “If it’s my son, you’re going to watch him die.

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.

“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 [sir],’ the men replied.”

“Just do what you think is right.”

**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.**

“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.”

What’s wrong with that? We don’t ever tell the Lord what He’s got to do. This is why we take issue with these guys that are praying in faith, telling God He has to heal them if He’s God. Telling God that He has to do anything because He’s God, we surrender the lordship and the reins of our lives when we come to know Christ as Savior. We ASK HIM, we don’t TELL HIM.

And God acts on our behalf as we present our requests before Him. What a disrespectful attitude toward sovereignty. It’s almost like he’s playing God here.

“Give me the right answer.”

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

“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?”

“Then Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ So Jonathan told him, ‘I merely tasted a little honey [sir] 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.”

“Saul said, ‘May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan.’”

He is so jealous of the faith of his own son, the victory that’s been won, that he’s going to be willing to take his own son’s blood.

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.

“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.”

It's nice to have some friends when we're getting shot at.

Somebody ironically said:

God delivered Jonathan out of the hand of the Philistines in the first of the chapter and out of the hands of his dad in the last of the chapter.

(source unknown)

There's a lot of truth in that. They were not going to allow this to happen.

Now that's a dramatic passage of scripture. There are these lessons that we gathered from this study.

Lesson #1: Jonathan is a man of God, moving ahead in faith.

Jonathan is a man of God, moving ahead in faith, believing that God wants to give 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.

Romans 8:37

May all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us.

Philippians 4:13

I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who indwells me.

Colossians 1:11

Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.

2 Timothy 1:7

God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Lesson #4: As Jonathan and the armorbearer act in faith, God gives the victory.

Lesson #5: Saul's good judgment has been short-circuited by his pride and jealousy.

We'll never make good decisions when our heart is filled with pride and jealousy.

When that happens, we're out to hurt somebody, out to do something to somebody else. And when we do that, we'll never make good, sound decisions.

Lesson #6: Saul's uppermost concern should have been for the comfort of his men.

It's known as servant leadership in the Bible. Christ took the towel and washed the feet of His men in the upper room.

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.

This statement serves as a good conclusion, since we've been talking about selfishness and being self-controlled.

(A Gardener Looks at the Fruit 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... 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 bramble-like 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.

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Father, we are so selfish. We're so concerned about ourselves; it's a miracle that we can think of others. Enable us to have the stability and strength that comes from the control of the Spirit, to be people who are moving from victory to victory. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way. Though he falls he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with His hands. Solomon said, "Trust in the Lord with all your might. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He'll direct your path." Lord, may we sense that still, small voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it. When we turn to the right hand and when we turn to the left." Lord, we would pray that out of these studies we might be utterly and completely amazed at how real to life these characters are and

how practical the principles are that come from their experiences. We know that not a word is put into the Bible in a way that it would just be there as meaningless. But there is a purpose for it, there's a lesson to be learned. We love You and thank You for the sense of Your presence working in our lives as we have studied this passage together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsundered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Five – 1 Samuel 14:1-45

NOTES

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.”

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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 armorbearer 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 in 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.

NOTES

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.

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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.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Samuel 14:1-45 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Summarize Jonathan’s words in verse 6.

3. What is the armorbearer's response in verse 7?

4. Describe Saul's response to the panic among the Philistines

5. Who gets the credit for the victory, according to verse 23?

6. Describe your feelings about Jonathan's actions in verses 24-34.

7. What does Saul do, according to verse 35?

8. How does Saul handle a lack of response from the Lord in verses 37-45?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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 saying, whether by many or by few.

LESSON #4: As Jonathan and the armor-bearer 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.