

# Jonathan's Fight And Saul's Oath

1 Samuel 14:1-46

## MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 14:6

“For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.”

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

The enclosed “sword and shield” template, several sheets of construction paper (various colors), paper plates, glue, scissors and markers.

## ATTENTION GRABBER!

### The Whispering Game

We will be learning today how important it is to trust the Lord for anything. In order to do that we have to listen to what He tells us to do. Have the children sit in a large circle in the middle of the floor. Choose a child to be first. Whisper into their ear the following statement, “**With God anything is possible.**” Have the children each whisper the message to the child next to them until it goes completely around the circle.

Have the last child say out loud what they heard. Congratulate them if they have the message correct. Let them know what a great army of the Lord they make.

If they don't get it, explain how important it is to listen to the Lord to determine what it is that He wants for us to do.

## LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson, we will see the strong faith of Jonathan, King Saul's son, and one of the greatest battle victories in the entire Bible. At the same time, we will see the foolishness of King Saul and his unreliability in ruling as king. What we will learn from Jonathan's faith is that **with God anything is possible**.

### 1 SAMUEL 14:1-5

Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men.

Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

Jonathan had a strong faith and confidence in God. He knew that God could give the victory in battle even with just a few men. So Jonathan resolved to attack the outpost of the Philistines at the

pass of Michmash, with just his armor-bearer and the Lord. **With God anything is possible.**

We see here that Jonathan did not tell his father what he was planning to do. Saul may not have approved of Jonathan's bold decision. We then find out where Saul was: he pitched his tent under a tree, and had 600 men with him. So Jonathan sets out on this adventure of faith, just him, his Lord and his armor-bearer.

### 1 SAMUEL 14:6-15

Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them."

"If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them."

"But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us."

So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden."

Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them.

That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling.

Now Jonathan speaks to the young armor-bearer, "come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised; 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." What a declaration of faith Jonathan has just made. We see that Jonathan had a very real relationship with the Lord. It was as if he had "fire in his bones." He knew that Israel was the chosen nation of God, and had in their relationship with Jehovah an omnipotent (all powerful) God. He also knew that God would not refuse to help His people in their time of conflict, if they would just trust in Him. **With God anything is possible.**

It's interesting to note Jonathan's description of the Philistines, these "uncircumcised." In 1 Samuel 17:26 we see a young David uses the same words to describe the enemy. It was almost as if he was saying, "Who do they think they are coming against God's

people?” We also have an enemy and we can have the same boldness when we trust in God to defend us against his attacks.

Jonathan’s armor-bearer was ready to follow Jonathan wherever he went. He must have had a trust in the Lord and in Jonathan’s leadership ability. How important it is for us to have support like that in our own lives and to be that kind of support for those around us.

Jonathan then tells him that they would look for a sign to see if the Lord would bless his attack. He said if the Philistines said, “Wait till we come,” they would not go up to them; but if they said, “Come up to us” it would be a sign that the Philistines were afraid and didn’t have the courage to leave their position and attack the Hebrews. It was not tempting God for Jonathan to look for this sign to determine the success of his venture, for he did it for the kingdom of God and not for his own personal gain. He was seeking God’s wisdom on whether he should do this or not.

When Jonathan and his armor-bearer finally showed themselves to the Philistines, they said, “Come up to us, and we will show you something.” That was all Jonathan needed to hear. The Philistines were making fun of them, even though they didn’t seem to have the courage to meet them and fight them. Jonathan received his desired sign and knew that the Lord had given the Philistines into his hands.

Jonathan wasn’t just open to God working, he had the confident faith that God would work! He then “climbed up the rock on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him; and the Philistines fell before him, they were smitten down by him, and his armor-bearer was slaying behind him.” The first blow of Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck killed about 20 men.

When the Philistines saw this, there was trembling among them. There was no visible cause for fear because there were so many of

the Philistines. They were bold and had the advantage over the two Israelites. But despite their strength, they trembled greatly. Matthew Henry said, "It is called a trembling, which they could not resist nor reason themselves clear of but that it was supernatural and come immediately from the hand of God. He that made the heart knows how to make it tremble." Then to add to the Philistines' confusion, the earth quaked, perhaps made them wonder if the very ground they stood upon would swallow them up. **With God anything is possible.**

### 1 SAMUEL 14:16-23

Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there.

Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there.

And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here" (for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel).

Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which was in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, and there was very great confusion.

Moreover the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the

camp from the surrounding country, they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle.

So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

Jonathan's heroism had shocked and frightened the Philistines. The spies of Saul at Gibeah saw how the "multitude in the camp of the Philistines melted away and was completely beat." Saul thought that this must have come about because of something the Israelites did so he commanded the people to find out who had undertaken this bold and independent action.

Saul then decides to consult God through the priest Ahijah as to what he should do; whether he should go out with his army against the Philistines or not. But while he was talking with the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines became greater and greater, so much so that he stopped the priest from seeking the Lord for direction. He went out on his own, so easily distracted from seeking God. Here Saul had the responsibility to lead God's people in battle, but he couldn't take the time to seek God.

It is interesting to note that in verse 18 we are told that Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring here the ark of God." Saul went into battle without the ark of God with him. As the confusion grew in the Philistine camp, Saul and the people who were with him came to the battle and saw the confusion. God had caused the enemy to turn on themselves and flee. The Israelites followed hard after them in the battle. Verse 23 tells us a precious truth of our loving God, "So the Lord saved Israel that day." It is the Lord God who saves us all in every battle we fight if we let Him. God gave them the victory by



using Jonathan and his armor-bearer, but without Him, they (and we) could do nothing. **With God anything is possible.**

## I Wanna Be an Armor-bearer

Demonstrate for the children a simple game of “shadow.” Have a child stand behind you. Tell them that your shadow follows you and does the same thing that you do. Begin to do actions and have your “shadow” follow exactly your every move. You can give commands as you go if you like, such as: move right foot, move left foot, side right, side left and have them follow as you move.

Next, have the children pair up and play their own game of “shadow.”

Explain to the children that it was important for Jonathan’s armor-bearer to follow Jonathan and serve him. He was willing to do whatever Jonathan was because he saw the faith that Jonathan had in God. We need to help and serve others who are serving the Lord.

### 1 SAMUEL 14:24-36

And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

Now all the people of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground.

And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the

end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened.

Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day.' " And the people were faint.

But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

"How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint.

And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood.

Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day."

And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with

the blood.' " So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered it there.

Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

Here we find the men of Israel distressed because they were hungry. Saul had commanded all his men to fast until they had been victorious over the Philistines. Even though the men were hungry, they refused to eat anything, even some honey in the forest because they feared the curse that went along with their vow to fast.

Jonathan had not heard his father's oath, so he dipped his staff in the new honey, and put it to his mouth in his pursuit so he would not have to stop. We are told that "his eyes became bright." His lost strength, which showed in his eyes, came back to him from eating the honey. When the people told Jonathan of his father's oath, Jonathan condemned his father's restriction on the people.

We all need food for our bodies for all we do everyday. And more importantly, we need our spiritual food for all we do everyday. God gives us His Word to nourish and refresh us all of the time. We must take the time to read and pray, and it will show in our eyes. It has been said, "Show me a man with a worn-out Bible, and I'll show you a man who is not worn-out."

The people continued the battle even though they were weak. But, unfortunately they became so weak that after the victory they took the Philistine animals, slaughtered them and ate them without

properly draining of the blood. They were so hungry that they killed the animals and just started eating. When Saul was told what had happened he rebuked them for the sin. But what Saul didn't do was realize that he was the one who had caused them to sin with such a foolish command. He was so alarmed that he built an altar there to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.

Saul was beginning to make some mistakes in his reign as king. He didn't continue to seek the Lord as he should have. He also gave a very foolish command, out of his pride, to keep the people from eating. This only caused the people to sin. Truly, Saul was to blame for the actions of the people.

#### 1 SAMUEL 14:37-46

So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day.

And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today.

"For as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him.

Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped.

And Saul said, "Cast lots between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken.

Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!"

And Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

Now Saul is determined to pursue the Philistines and to pick up all the spoils. This time he decides to ask for direction from the Lord, but he gets no answer. Saul believed that someone had violated the fast, and was determined to find out who it was by lot. To find the guilty one, he made the people stand on one side, while he and his son Jonathan went to the other and the lot fell on Jonathan.

When Saul asked his son what he had done, Jonathan confessed that he had tasted a little honey and was willing to take the punishment of death as so decreed hastily by his father. Saul would have killed him but the people interceded saying, "Shall Jonathan die, who has achieved this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As truly as Jehovah lives, not a hair shall fall from his head upon the ground; for he has wrought the victory with God today." So the people delivered Jonathan from death.

We must remember that Jonathan did not hear the oath Saul made, so he did not violate it out of rebellion. The sentence of death was

not given to Jonathan by God, but by his father. Saul had given the restriction without God's authority and made the people commit to it with a solemn oath. The people had conscientiously obeyed the command, but Jonathan disobeyed it without being aware of it.

Saul's judgment was death; the people intervened, claiming Jonathan innocent because of his being unaware of the king's command, and proclaiming the victory he gained for Israel with God. Here we see God's verdict. Saul now sees that it was not Jonathan but it was himself who had sinned and through his oath caused God to not answer him. With a feeling of guilt Saul gave up any further pursuit of the Philistines. And the Philistines went back to their own land. All the time and energy this situation took stopped the pursuit of the Philistines, losing an opportunity of completing the victory against the enemy.

How often our enemy wants to get us sidetracked with issues that don't have anything to do with the battle at hand. If Satan can get our mind off of the important things and onto silly things, like our own selfish pride, then he can escape as the Philistines did this day.

Warren Wiersbe said concerning this, "Saul tried to impress people with an oath, but Jonathan did what was necessary to fight the battle. Saul weakened the army; Jonathan strengthened the army and challenged it to new victories." We must seek the Lord always so that we may be a strength to our brothers and sisters and not one to weaken them. We are in a very real battle, but we have a wonderful commander, the Captain of the Armies of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. **With God anything is possible.**

## A Sword and Shield

For this craft you will need the enclosed template, construction paper, paper plates, glue, scissors and markers. You will be making a sword and a shield like Jonathan and his armor-bearer used.

On one sheet of construction paper help the children draw blades for their swords. You may use the enclosed template or allow them to draw free hand. On another sheet of construction paper help the children draw the base of the sword. Cut out both items and have the children glue them together to make a sword.

Next, have the children decorate a paper plate to make a shield. You can have them put the memory verse or the theme on the shield. Cut out one or two strips of construction paper and glue or staple onto the back of the paper plate (in the form of a loop) to form a handle for the shield.

As an option you could have a couple of volunteers pretend to be Jonathan and his armor-bearer and the rest of the class pretend to be Philistines and allow them to act out the story.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be bold. To be willing to do anything the Lord asks of us, even if it sounds impossible. Ask the Lord to help you to trust in Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template - A Sword And A Shield

