

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

**MONDAY** The Philistines put up quite a fight, gathering 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen. The Israelites also prepared for battle, but couldn't fight until Samuel offered a sacrifice first. He was delayed and the people panicked. Finally, Saul offered the sacrifice himself. No sooner did he finish doing so than Samuel showed up!

### **I Samuel 13:5-10**

In a casual reading of these verses, it seems as if Saul grabbed the bull by the horns, so to speak (or perhaps literally so) and offered a sacrifice so they could move on to the actual fighting. But in fact, Saul was a great leader only by the standards of the world, and not by God's standards. A great leader in God's sight is one who is most concerned with following God's path and God's timetable. He will never go against what God has said, and God said that only priest in Aaron's line could offer sacrifices. Whether on the job, in Church, or at home, God calls us to follow His path.

**TUESDAY** Samuel asked Saul what he had done - that is, why he had offered a sacrifice (since only priests could do that). Saul defended his action saying it had been necessary for him to do so in order to avoid a military disaster. Samuel rebuked Saul for not obeying the Lord, and told him that his family line would not stay on the throne.

### **I Samuel 13:11-14**

In many ways, Saul is typical of all people. We are so prone to apply the laws of human logic to the things of God! Yet, human logic will fail us. It is beyond all reason that God would forgive our sins, is it not? It's beyond all reason that he would send His son to die for those who are in rebellion against Him. Yet, we know that God has done that. We need to learn to live with eyes of faith, seeing things as God sees them.

## **WEDNESDAY**

Samuel leaves. Meanwhile, Philistine invaders divide into three groups to plunder the land. Yet again, King Saul and his army were terrified. Because the Philistines had taken all the blacksmiths as captives, no one in the entire army of Israel, except King Saul and Jonathan were armed with actual weapons.

### **I Samuel 13:15-23**

This episode gives us another hint of how unqualified Saul was to be king. It was inexcusable that the King of a country could allow its citizens to remain unarmed and still expect them to go out and fight. With leadership comes responsibility. It's a universal principle. But when we are talking about leadership in the church or in the family, and the realm is a spiritual one, the responsibility is even higher because what's at stake is eternal. May we strive always to be the leader God wants us to be.

## **THURSDAY**

Saul and his discouraged men delayed in Gibeah in a pomegranate orchard. His son Jonathan initiated a daring plan: he and one servant sneaked away from his father's army incognito and climbed across the rocky ground to the camp of the Philistines.

Their plan was to attack them at night, confuse them, and defeat them.

### **I Samuel 14:1-10**

Jonathan's bravery and piety shine through here. He knows his father would not permit him to lead such a desperate attempt so he goes incognito. He invites a servant to join with him in the attempt and in the process of inviting him, Jonathan speaks clearly of his own confidence in the Lord and the Lord's care. vs.6b *There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.* What great faith this young man had! How well he knew the ways of God! "It's not the size of the army," he is saying; "it's the power of our God that's the issue!" That, my friends, is still true.

## **FRIDAY**

Jonathan and his armor bearer cross the rocky ground between the two armies and find themselves in the middle of the Philistines! The Philistine anticipate an easy killing but it didn't happen that way. Instead, Jonathan and his armor bearer slaughter twenty enemy soldiers in some fighting that covers a half acre of land! The enemy is terrified, and even more so when an earthquake rattles the whole battlefield.

### **I Samuel 14:11-15**

There have been bigger and more spectacular battles in history, but if you had been there, you would have remembered this one! The Philistine soldiers defy the two young men: *Come, and we'll show you a thing!* They never doubt their superior strength. But Jonathan speaks with assurance: *The Lord has delivered them into our hands.* He never doubts the goodness of God and the victory which He gives. What victories God gives to those who trust Him!

## **SATURDAY**

Saul's guards detected fighting in the enemy camp so King Saul orders a count to see who's missing. Jonathan and his armor bearer were found to be missing. Saul sends for the Ark of the Covenant which is back in the village and instructs the priest to pray. But as the sounds of the battle intensifies, Saul tells the priest to stop praying, and he orders an immediate attack. It turned into a complete and glorious victory for Israel! **Samuel 14:16-23**

Notice: every Hebrew, even those who had gone over to the enemy, now turn and fight against them. Even those who had fled from the battle in days past; deserters and cowards. Even the so-called valiant 3000 whom Saul had earlier chosen as his special guard and who, in the heat of battle, had faded away. Every Hebrew joined the battle and shared in the victory. Yet *it was the Lord who saved Israel that day.* Without Him, they had failed. Never forget: *the battle is the Lord's.*

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