

Read 1 Samuel 14:1-23. A great contrast is shown here between Jonathan's faith and actions, and those of his father, King Saul. In the previous chapter, Saul allowed fear to dictate his actions. As his army dwindled and Samuel delayed, he took matters into his own hands and offered a sacrifice that belonged only to the priest. Rather than trusting the Lord, he tried to force the outcome. Jonathan, however, responded to the same crisis very differently. Quietly, courageously, and full of faith, he turned to his armor bearer and declared, "Perhaps the LORD will work for us, because the LORD is not limited to saving by many or by few!" Jonathan knew that victory was never determined by numbers, resources, or human strength. The weightiest reality on the battlefield was the presence and power of God.

Jonathan's faith did not make him passive, however. God's path to victory required climbing a steep, rocky hillside straight toward the enemy. The Philistines, secure in their pride, invited the two Israelites to come up, convinced they would make short work of them. Jonathan saw something different. Their arrogance became the very sign that strengthened his confidence in the Lord. Step by step, hand over hand, Jonathan climbed toward the battle. He trusted God completely, but he also gave every ounce of strength he possessed. Faith is never an excuse for laziness. We work diligently, we persevere through difficult paths, and we pour ourselves into God's work, not because we trust ourselves, but because we trust the God who works through willing servants.

Just as encouraging is the response of Jonathan's armor bearer: "I am with you heart and soul." What a beautiful picture of unity. Both men desired the same thing, to honor the Lord, and both embraced the same course of faithful obedience. Their shared purpose allowed God to accomplish far more than either could have done alone. The same principle strengthens the local church today. When God's people are united, not only in their desire to glorify Christ but also in humbly pursuing His ways together, the Lord delights to work through them. Personal ambition gives way to shared mission, and individual preferences are gladly surrendered for the good of God's Kingdom.

Jonathan's life exemplified what the King of Israel was supposed to be: faithful and trusting in the Lord, upholding the God's will and God's honor. Sadly, because of the transgressions of his father, Saul, the kingship was taken from his family line. But even here Jonathan serves as an example of humility and trust. Rather than grasping for power, Jonathan honored God's decision, and loved and served David until the end of his life. Like Jonathan, we are called to measure success not by whether we receive recognition or position, but by whether we faithfully trust, obey, and support God's purposes. The Lord is still able to save by many or by few. He simply asks for hearts that are wholly His.

Prayerfully consider the following: When I face uncertainty or pressure, am I responding more like Saul (*trying to control the situation*), or like Jonathan, trusting God's power while faithfully doing my part? What *uphill climb* has God placed before me that requires both wholehearted effort and complete dependence upon Him? How can I help cultivate the kind of unity Jonathan and his armor bearer shared so that my church family may more effectively accomplish the Lord's work together?

Weekly Memory Verse:

"the Lord is not limited to saving by many or by few!"
1 Samuel 14:6

Weekly Affirmation:

**I'LL GIVE ALL MY EFFORT WHILE
DEPENDING ON HIM!**

JULY 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- ☐ Read the Book of 1 Samuel
- ☐ Watch the Bible Project video on 1 Samuel (*available on the website*).
- ☐ Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- ☐ Consider each week a new way of intentionally using your resources (*money, mind, skills, etc.*) to another's benefit.