

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Text: I Samuel 14:1-15

Plain Truth

God is far more concerned about your _____ than your _____.

3 Keys to this Battle:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

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Life Group Lesson

Week of May 13

After the period of the Judges, Israel demanded a king. “Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations” they told Samuel, prophet, priest, and last judge of Israel. Samuel was grieved at their request and ask God for guidance. But the LORD said, “Do everything they say to you... it is me they are rejecting, not you. They do not want me to be their King” (1 Samuel 8:5b-7). God sends Samuel a man from the tribe of Benjamin, Saul son of Kish (1 Samuel 9:15-17).

Saul had the look of a king, “head-and-shoulders above anyone else” (1 Samuel 10:23b). Saul appeared to be humble (1 Samuel 9:21) and after winning the first battle, he did not retaliate against those who scorned his leadership (1 Samuel 11:13). But in time, Saul’s fears, jealousy, and disobedience robbed him of God’s special anointing. Saul’s pride surfaced as he rose in power and position. Saul failed to recognize that any position or authority is a gift from God.

Read 1 Samuel 14:1-15

Unlike Saul, his son Jonathan was a virtuous warrior and remained loyal to his father even when he disagreed with his father’s impulsive decisions and (later) hostile actions toward David. Jonathan demonstrated great faith. At Micmash, he and his armor bearer took on a Philistine outpost, and God caused panic to break out in the Philistine army.

1. Jonathan knew that God ultimately controls any battle: “...for nothing can hinder the LORD. He can win a battle whether He has many warriors or only a few!” (v6b). We can’t live by fear and faith at the same time. What do you learn from Jonathan and his armor-bearer (v7)—their faith *in action* and the courage they demonstrated?

In what ways does living *by fear* demonstrate our lack of submission to the LORD?

Battles are intended to teach us to trust the LORD. God is not intimidated by the fiercest foe. But darkness trembles before Him! As we call upon the LORD, *whatever* threatens to defeat us must submit before God. And even though Israel’s demand for a king was a sin in God’s eyes (1 Samuel 12:16-19), the LORD in His mercy gave them a leader to fight their enemies. You may be in a tough place right now, and truth be told, you have made your demands. But know this, God’s mercy is also greater than your mistakes. Perhaps you have found this to be true.

In 1 Samuel 12, we read Samuel’s ‘farewell address’ to God’s people whom he had faithfully led for many years. Samuel had served the LORD since he was a little boy—at first, by assisting the priest Eli (1 Samuel 3:1-10). Notice what Samuel tells the people in 1 Samuel 12, vv7 and 24.

2. Read 1 Samuel 12:7,24. How does remembering “all the great and wonderful things the LORD has done” prompt you to trust the LORD and submit to His authority?

As you read God’s Word and think about His goodness—His love, miracles, power, faithfulness—in what ways does His Spirit redirect your focus from fear to faith? How does *submission* then become your joy?

Don’t allow insecurities to become your undoing. Instead submit to God and those He has put in authority over you. Begin to see submission as a joy and gift from God. When we try to maintain a false image of strength, we fall. But when we bow to Christ and His will, we win. Samuel declares: “Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22b).

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