



# JONATHAN AND HIS ARMOR BEARER

1 SAMUEL 14:1-23

## GOAL

▶ **To help children understand what it means to place complete confidence in God.** In our story, King Saul did not listen to God for a solution in defeating the Philistines because he was confident enough in his own abilities, and he was more interested in his own glory. On the other hand, Saul's son, Jonathan, trusted God and put total confidence in Him. Sure, the Philistines had the advantage of being on higher ground, had thousands more fighting men, and had superior weaponry, but Jonathan refused to focus on these obvious factors. Instead, he placed his confidence in the promise and power of God, and the Lord delivered the Israelites.

## WORDS TO KNOW

▶ **1. Trust:** to be so convinced of what you believe that you are able to take bold, confident action based on that certainty.

Jonathan was so certain of God's promise and of His ability to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Philistines that he took bold and courageous action against them.

**2. Armor Bearer:** an officer selected by an important warrior who was responsible to carry his shield and weapons, and to provide support in battle.

Jonathan's armor bearer supported Jonathan "heart and soul." Not only did he help Jonathan with his armor and in battle, but he also supported with encouragement and undying commitment.



## CHARACTERS

**1. Jonathan:** The son of King Saul, the brave defender of Israel, and the loyal servant of God. He was so sure of victory over the Philistines that he battled against them with only his armor bearer and his confidence that God would deliver them. Jonathan would not place his trust in the dwindling Israelite army, weapons, or his own abilities. His confidence remained in the Lord God of Israel.

**2. Jonathan's Armor Bearer:** The faithful servant who demonstrated loyalty as he agreed to follow Jonathan into an impossible battle against the Philistines. He showed tremendous courage by following through with his intention to fight until victory was won.

**3. King Saul:** The first king of Israel, appointed in response to the people's request for a king to rule over them. He was exactly the kind of king the people wanted—tall, good-looking, and strong; however, his commanding appearance and acquired military skills offered little in overcoming the Philistine forces. He was left alone to fight an impossible battle because he placed his trust in numbers and military expertise, rather than in the promise and power of God.

## MEMORY VERSES

**I Samuel 14:6b:** It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.

**Romans 8:31:** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

## OVERVIEW

**Read 1 Samuel 14:1-23:** By all outward appearances, the people of Israel were set up for defeat. The Philistine forces were innumerable, and their position high on the cliffs gave them the definite military advantage. But Jonathan refused to focus on the dire circumstances. God promised victory, and he believed God. Jonathan was not alone—His armor bearer pledged to fight with him no matter what happened. He encouraged Jonathan, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul." Jonathan proposed a plan that would confirm whether God would bless their efforts. The test revealed that God was indeed with them, and this assurance gave Jonathan and his armor bearer the courage they needed to face the mighty enemy.



## SUGGESTIONS



**Review each character in the story and determine where each one placed his trust, then discuss the effectiveness of his decision.**

**1. King Saul:** King Saul continued to display a pattern of disobedience as his trust shifted from God to himself. He spent his time building an army and devising military strategy—his focus on glorifying himself as the king and commander of Israel instead of glorifying God as the King and Commander of Israel. The results were devastating. He watched as the numbers in his army dwindled from about 3,000 to 600 and he saw the enemy amass innumerable troops against them. When he finally reached the end of his own abilities, he was faced with losing to an enemy against whom God had promised he would be victorious, all because he would not acknowledge God in his efforts.

**2. Jonathan:** Jonathan believed God at His word. God said that Israel would have victory over the Philistines, so Israel would have victory over the Philistines. He did not spend his time figuring out a way to attract glory to himself, but he spent his time and efforts hearing from God and following His word. God blessed the plans of Jonathan and his armor bearer and allowed them to win the battle, which would ultimately set the Israelites up for complete victory over the Philistine army.

**3. Jonathan's Armor Bearer:** While many of the men of Israel were discouraged by the overwhelming odds against them, the armor bearer found courage in Jonathan's faith; and while others deserted their military posts to save their lives, Jonathan's armor bearer held to his promise and followed Jonathan into what appeared to be an impossible battle. His loyalty and perseverance were rewarded with victory in one of the greatest battles ever recorded.



**PRE-LESSON  
ACTIVITY**



**King of the Hill (Dodge Ball) | Supplies:** About six rubber balls.

This is a game just like dodge ball except that the advantage goes to the team on top of the hill. Pick an area on campus that has a definite higher ground and lower ground—like a grassy slope. Divide into two teams, assigning the upper ground to one team and the lower ground to the other team. Divide the balls between the two teams. At “Go,” have the teams throw balls at each other, below the waist. When a person is tagged by the other team, they are out. The first team to lose all their players, loses the game. Now switch advantage by having the teams switch sides.

Explain how the Philistines had an amazing advantage over Jonathan and his armor bearer; but God was with them so that the favorable position of the Philistines did not matter.

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**MEMORY  
VERSES  
MEANING**



**I Samuel 14:6b:** Jonathan believed in the promise and power of God—the promise that God would deliver the Philistines into the hands of Israel, and the power to overcome the odds against them. He knew God’s ability was not dependent on numbers and military might. It didn’t matter that there were only two of them. You are only one, but God is everything.

**Romans 8:31:** God has guaranteed victory over sin and death through Jesus. Trusting in sure victory means placing confidence in His work, not our own, for deliverance; and it means believing that there is nothing, and there is no one, strong enough to prevent His promise from happening.



## POST-LESSON ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Obstacle Trust Course** | **Supplies:** two blindfolds and several empty cardboard boxes, pillows, and chairs.

Create two obstacle course-style tracks from one end of the room to the other. Divide the class into two teams. Blindfold the first student from each team. Explain that the teams will have to guide their player around the obstacle course using only verbal directions, and the players will have to trust their teammates to get them safely to the other side. Repeat as time allows.

King Saul and the men of Israel put their trust in what they saw; Jonathan and his armor bearer put their trust in God in spite of the obvious odds against them.

## TAKE HOME

- ▶ How has God proved to us that He is trustworthy? (Discuss)
1. He keeps His promises.
  2. He has the power to actually do what He says He will do.
  3. He only speaks the truth because He is truth.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** What enemy did Israel face?

**A1:** The Philistines

**Q1b:** Do sports teams refuse to play against certain teams because they might lose?

**TN:** Of course not! Sometimes our favorite teams lose because the opponents are better at the game or because our team didn't play as well as they normally do. Sometimes we lose. Sporting matches are not as serious as life and death situations that happen during battle, so the fear some of King Saul's people were experiencing is understandable.

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### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** Who was Jonathan?

**A2:** He was King Saul's son.

**Q2b:** Who would win a spelling bee: A person who gets A's on spelling tests or a bad speller with a dictionary?

**TN:** The bad speller with the dictionary. There are a lot of words in the English language, and even if you're the best speller in school, it's so unlikely that you would be able to spell every word correctly. Just like that bad speller without the dictionary, Jonathan didn't stand a chance against the Philistines without God; but with God, Jonathan knew he would have everything he needed to be victorious.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** What was the sign that God would give them the victory?

**A3:** If the Philistines asked them to come up

**Q3b:** A friend invites you to swim in her heated pool in the middle of January. Do you test the water first or just jump in?

**TN:** What if they didn't turn on the heater that day? You could be in for quite a shock! Jonathan's plan does not show doubt; his plan provided confirmation that he was acting on God's will and not on his own headstrong ambition to defeat this enemy.

### SLIDE 4



**Q4a:** What did the Philistines say to Jonathan and his armor bearer?

**A4:** They called for Jonathan and his armor bearer to come up to where they were.

**Q4b:** Name something that others might be surprised to learn you're really good at doing.

**TN:** Maybe you're normally pretty quiet, but you have an amazing singing voice. When you get up on stage and sing, people who have never heard you sing before might be blown away by your talent. The Philistines were so confident in their ability to defeat Jonathan and his armor bearer, they laughed and taunted them. They even invited them up into their camp! With God on their side, the two men were more than enough to take them all down. The Philistines were in for quite a surprise!



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** What did Jonathan instruct his armor bearer to do?

**A5:** Jonathan told him to come up after him.

**Q5b:** Tell us about a time when you felt really confident.

**TN:** Maybe you studied really hard for a test and went in knowing you were going to ace it. Whatever the situation, that is exactly how Jonathan and his armor bearer felt at this moment. They knew God was capable of delivering the Philistines into their hands, and they now knew for sure that this was the right time to strike. Nothing could stop them!

### SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** What did Jonathan and his armor bearer do when they reached the Philistine camp?

**A6:** They pulled out their swords and fought.

**Q6b:** Are you afraid of bugs?

**TN:** While two men may seem as insignificant to a number of soldiers as one small, non-poisonous spider is to us, we all still run away. Our fear of the spider may seem a little silly, but the men in the Philistine camp were running away from two men filled with faith and conviction. They had God on their side, and that is a fearsome thing to come up against.





## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What caused the enemy to run around in confusion?

**A7:** An earthquake

**Q7b:** Do you think you would win more basketball games if you had a professional player on your team?

**TN:** If we had LeBron James dominating on our teams, many of us would love to play because there is no way we could lose. When King Saul saw what God was doing through Jonathan, he and his army thought the same thing: there is no way we can lose.



**MEMORY  
VERSES**

▷ **1 Samuel 14:6b:** It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.

**Romans 8:31:** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? With God on our side, nothing can stand against us!

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**BIG IDEA**

▷ With God on our side, nothing can stand against us!

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**CLOSING  
PRAYER**

▷ Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for proving time and time again that You are trustworthy. Help us to respond to this attribute by taking bold and confident action to do what You say, no matter what other people do, or how things appear. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



Israel's recent attack on the Philistines had stirred up this mighty enemy against them, but now the people were in no shape to fight back. King Saul had made godless and arrogant decisions, which led Israel into confusion, distress, and fear. The people were focused not on the victory God could provide, but only on an enemy that outnumbered them by the thousands. Many of King Saul's armies had deserted him, and the few who remained lie hiding in caves, tombs, and cisterns.

### SLIDE 2

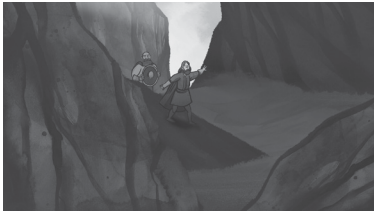


But among the faithless, there lived one courageous young man who would not submit to defeat—his name was Jonathan, and he was the king's own son. Jonathan knew that if God was for them, it didn't matter how many stood against them. He pointed to the top of the cliff as he spoke to his armor bearer, "Let us go up ourselves against these dreaded Philistines, it may be that God will fight for us." The servant replied, "Do what you must do. I am with you heart and soul." So the two began to make their way toward the enemy.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 3



As they paused at the opening of the narrow and treacherous canyon, Jonathan presented the plan: “We must be sure that today is the day God will give Israel victory over the Philistines. We will cross over to the enemy and make our presence obvious to them. If they tell us that they will come down to where we are, then we will not go any further; but if they ask us to come up and join them, then this will be a sign that God will give us the victory.”

### SLIDE 4



The Philistines watched as the two approached the clearing. Amused by the pitiful contest the situation presented, they called down to Jonathan and his companion, “Come up here! We’d like to show you a thing or two!”

### SLIDE 5



Despite the taunting voices of the Philistine guards and their obvious advantage, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not intimidated. Jonathan knew that God was with them. “Come up after me,” he called out to his armor bearer, “for the Lord has given them into the hands of Israel.” So the two made the treacherous journey up the jagged rock wall toward the Philistines.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 6



When Jonathan and his loyal armor bearer reached the Philistines, they pulled out their swords and began to fight with the courage and determination of a thousand men. The Philistines were taken completely by surprise, and in no time at all, Jonathan and his armor bearer had killed 20 enemy guards. Panic spread quickly through the Philistine camps.

### SLIDE 7



Then God sent a mighty earthquake that sent the enemy into such confusion that they ran every which way to escape the unseen enemy. They were so filled with terror, they began fighting anything that moved, including each other. Soon King Saul and all the men of Israel came out from hiding and began to chase after them in battle. And it was on that day the Lord saved Israel!