

Characteristics of a Kingdom Revolutionary

Session #9 - Endurance

Conclusion: This is finally the last week. But it is also an important week. We are going to move on in the story of Jonathan and the Philistine's and we are going to move on with the assumption that this is the last week in the entire curriculum. If you have been following with us, from the beginning of the year, we have had an exciting time together. It is our prayer that your ministry has grown deeper, and more radical over the course of this past year! When we look at the Characteristics of a Kingdom Revolutionary, we must always consider the ending – does a revolutionary end well – do they carry on for the remainder of their lives.

Session Objective: In youth culture there is a recurring quote, “it is better to burn out, than to fade away”. Let’s help our young people to see that this quote is absent another possibility – the possibility that people like oak trees can grow stronger every year! Can we help our young people to discover that the pieces of their spiritual journey that they put into place now, will greatly impact their life and ministry for the duration?

Preparation: Extensive Use of McManus is required this week. You must read the book pages listed and the Chapter titled the same.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

Read I Samuel 14:13-23

- 1. What happened when Jonathan and his armor bearer reached the top of the hill?**
- 2. In verse 15 it says the ground shook, and that this was a panic sent by God. Why is this an important verse? What does it tell us about Jonathan’s actions?**

Leader Say: *Interesting chain of events aren't they? We will next look at how Saul clearly disobeyed...but God had led the Israelites to war...Saul wasn't leading the people into battle, so his son Jonathan is led (we can say "by God") to pick a fight himself. And so against all odds, knowing that if this truly was God's desire for him, God would go with him...he stands against 20 Philistines. And God was waiting for this exact moment. He was waiting for someone to trust him enough to engage the enemy and when Jonathan obeyed...God took over.*

We read that the ground shook – there was an earthquake at just the time of this battle, and it terrified the enemy.

Leader Note: On pg. 204 McManus does a great job explaining the problem with Saul. This is something that you can walk your students through rather than dialoging at this point!

Leader Teach:

Let's trace Saul's steps:

1. Saul impatiently decides to take action when it appears like Samuel wasn't coming (13:8-10) – he acted when he should have been waiting.
2. Saul then makes an offering – he performs the sacrifices, which were Samuel's responsibility. (13:8-12) – He was controlling when he should have been praying. (He could have consulted God without making the offering).
3. Jonathan goes to war while Saul was resting under a tree (14:2). Saul was resting when he should have been moving into battle.
4. When it is clear that Jonathan has started something important, and that God was with him (the ground was shaking after all), Saul doesn't jump into battle, but rather calls the priests to bring the ark of the covenant, and talks with the priests (14:18). Saul was consulting when he should have been fighting.

Poor Saul he never got it right did he? But this wasn't because things were unclear.

1. He was told to wait 7 days – but he grows impatient.
2. He knew that the offerings were to be made by Samuel, but he made them instead.
3. Saul was king. His job was to engage the enemy, trusting in God. Instead he stayed at Bay, Between 13:2 and 13:15 his army dwindles from 2000 – to 600 men
4. God was clearly at work through Jonathan. But Saul decides to get religious. Note the word – religious, not spiritual. He calls for the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was the symbol of God's presence with His people. God was already at work through an earth quake and Jonathan's bravery, but instead of joining in God's work, first Saul gets religious, he calls for the Ark

The problem in the end was: "Saul knew to wait on Samuel, but he didn't. He knew to go to war, but he didn't. It wasn't because God's will was so difficult to understand that he kept missing his divine moments. IT was simply because he chose not to trust God and act on his word. Don't miss the point: God has not remained silent."

- 3. Based on the lessons we have just learned, why is it so important that we do what God asks, when we hear Him speaking to us?**
- 4. What is the life-long result of Saul's disobedience (see 13:15)**

Leader Teach:

Saul's disobedience, pride and idolatrous (religious) heart led him away from God. His actions and commands became irrational. After the battle we learn that Saul's men grow afraid for Jonathan's life because he disobeyed an order from his father by eating before evening. Jonathan now speaks against his father for the first time. He sees the foolishness of his father's command. Soon after 14:37, King Saul isn't sure what course of action to take...and so he asks God...but we learn that God does not answer him. Saul seeks out what must be sin to discover that Jonathan had disobeyed an order of the King. His punishment should have been death, but Jonathan himself comments now on how ridiculous the entire scenario has become. Saul's tragic disobedience has led to irrational commands, which leads to a confrontation with his son – the one who risked his life to follow God's leading in his life. This story ends with Saul's own men rescuing Jonathan from Saul's hands, as they realize (14:45) that God had helped him. Finally (14:46) we discover that this entire scenario ends the war, with the Philistines driven back but not defeated. Even bigger picture, we know that the end of Saul's life is a tragic story of jealousy, anger and ego – as he walks further away from God. In a final scene of failure, Samuel anoints David to be King while Saul still lives.

- 5. What was the life-long result of Jonathan's faithfulness?**

Leader Say: *Jonathan did not inherit the throne of Israel. This was not because of his own sin, but rather the sinfulness of his father. In I Samuel 20 we read the story of Jonathan and David and their deep love for one another as friends. Jonathan remains a humble and righteous man. Imagine the scenario – the prince of a nation, commits treason against his own father, by allying himself with the man who is to be king in Saul's place. Jonathan continues to show great risk and great courage. We learn that Jonathan dies alongside his brothers in I Samuel 31, but as a result of his courage, his faithfulness, and his willingness to listen to God, King David assures the protection of Jonathan's family (II Samuel 9).*

- 6. “I am convinced there have been many times in my life when I experienced God's blessing and became God's instrument, not because of my talent or capacity, but because of my willingness to be there.” In Isaiah 6:8 God says, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Isaiah answers that question, “Here I am. Send me”. Take a moment alone with a sheet of paper and ask God the question: “Where do you want to send me?”**

Leader Say: *Isaiah as a young man when he uttered those 5 words, yet the open-ness of his heart, and his willingness to step out into risk impacted the rest of his life.*

Leader Note: If you are doing this session last you are coming close to summer. Summer can be a very difficult time in the lives of your young people. Statistics show that more young people get pregnant during the hours of 3-6 p.m. every day (when mom and dad are at work) or in the summer time....All the rules are thrown off...and it is a time of freedom. How can you help your young people remain strong through this coming summer? How could this series prepare them? Only you can best answer this question.

There is a great message that many of us have given to young people in late spring. Paul Carter entitled it, "David's worst summer". The lesson is a study of King David and Bathsheba. It is the story of a man walking head held high into sin. He could have turned back and repented at least 8 times, but he keeps walking brashly into sin. The message to young people is that often times we will be tempted by sin. We may even begin to walk the road of sinfulness. But if we have a heart open to God, we will be convicted of our sin, and turn back before it is too late. After studying the life of Saul, we discover that it is possible for a person to harden their heart so deeply that they are no longer sensitive to the voice of God, and in fact, turn the other way. King David's story is tragic. His actions cause death and deep despair.

Sin has consequences, faithfulness has deep rewards.

McManus ends his book with a number of paragraph titles... What a great message:

The legacy of a faithful kingdom soldier:

- a. You will ignite the apathetic (I Sam. 14:20)
- b. You will reclaim the rebellious (I Sam. 14:21)
- c. You will bring healing to the broken (I Sam. 14:22)

And lets end with a final quote from Erwin McManus:

"So the LORD rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Avon,' which is a good reminder to all of us that no matter how profound or dramatic a divine moment may be, no matter its significance or its breadth of impact, even if at the end of the day we are able to look back and reflect on the amazing experience we have just encountered, we must never forget that the battle moves on."

Be a kingdom Revolutionary! Change Your World!

