

Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer
Godly Courage
1 Samuel 14

Introduction: Last week, Josh Sugg took us through 1 Samuel 13 and showed us the link between faith and obedience. That is, when we truly trust the Lord, we will obey Him no matter what, so much so that it is 100% doctrinally correct to say that every time we sin, it results from our lack of faith in Him. Manley Beasley wrote,

“When you see the principle and the nature of faith, you will find out that every sin you have in your life is the result of unbelief.”¹

Whether it’s surrendering to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life, whenever we say yes to sin, we do so because we lack the faith to say yes to God instead. A sin problem is a faith problem.

Today, we are going to see something else that is fundamentally linked to faith—courage.

If you paid close attention last week, you likely already saw the theme surfacing in 1 Samuel 13. After Saul’s son Jonathan led a thousand Hebrew soldiers to defeat a garrison of Philistines, the Philistines organized a massive army, causing the people of Israel to panic and hide. They lacked the faith to trust God to do what He said He would do, so they lacked the courage to organize for the fight. In addition, Saul’s lack of faith led him to lack the courage to wait on Samuel and obey God’s law related to burnt offerings, thus last week’s conversation about the correlation between faith and sin.

So, the scene is set, and it’s ugly. The people of God and their King lacked the faith to trust God to do what He said He would do, and as a result, instead of organizing for battle, they fled and hid. Even worse, you will see in a minute that some have even betrayed Israel and switched sides! There is no sign of courage because there is no sign of faith, that is until Saul’s son Jonathan shows everybody what it looks like.

Proposition: In 1 Samuel 14, we clearly see three aspects of Godly Courage.

The first aspect of Godly courage is that,

(1) Godly courage is a product of our confidence in God. (14:1-15)

- A. 1 One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father.**
- B. Note: Jonathan likely didn’t tell his father he was headed to fight the Philistines not only because he saw a panicked, fear-stricken man who would likely deny**

¹ Beasley, Manley. (1973). Faith Workbook No. 1 (p. 24). Port Neches, TX: Harvesters Publications.

his request and possibly even violently deny it. As we will see later in Saul's story, you can't really put anything past him, and given it was Jonathan and his crew that went and defeated a Philistine garrison and caused all this, Jonathan likely made the wise decision!

C. 2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, 3 including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. 4 Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba. 6 Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 7 And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul."

1. Notice that it wasn't just Jonathan who demonstrated courage; his armor-bearer was all in with him. His response to Jonathan wasn't just one of obedience as a servant but also of entirely buying into Jonathan's leadership and what they intended to do.
2. But the bigger point here, which I don't want you to miss, is that Jonathan didn't necessarily believe he would win, but rather that if God willed it, they would undoubtedly win. Either way, he wasn't going to stick around in hiding with his Dad and the rest of the terrified Hebrews, who were essentially just trying to delay being killed by the Philistines. Jonathan took his armor-bearer and left to fight the Philistines, believing God could save Israel with a huge army or a couple of dudes willing to fight. If the army of Israel was going to run away and hide like cowards, then he would go fight for them. He was saying, "God doesn't need anybody to win, so He can certainly win with just us two!"
3. Jonathan then gave him his plan,

D. 8 Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us." 11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." 12 And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his

armor-bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."

1. Faith in God is seen not just by what we say; for it to be faith, it must also include what we do and how we do it. R.D. Phillips noted, "**Oliver Cromwell famously commanded his troops: "Trust the Lord, and keep your powder dry!" Likewise, Jonathan was looking to the Lord for help, but he anticipated that this help would arrive in ways that would provide a practical advantage to his arms. ... Jonathan's sign amounted to a prayer that the Lord would give him a military advantage, and by expecting God's help he was ready to act boldly when it came.**"²
2. Jonathan's adrenaline just went through the roof! That was all he needed to hear to go with complete confidence that they were getting ready to destroy this garrison of Philistines. The LORD had given these Philistines over for destruction!
3. We know Jonathan was confident in God because of what Jonathan did and how he did it! In contrast to those hiding in the hills, look at what Jonathan did,

E. 13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him. 14 And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. 15 And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.

1. If you remember the previous chapter, like any oppressive regime, the Philistines had disarmed the Israelites. Only Jonathan and Saul had swords. So, Jonathan led the way, and as he did, he struck the Philistines with his sword. His armor-bearer, likely carrying some sort of sharpened gardening tool, came behind him and finished them off.
2. The big point here is that Jonathan's courage isn't simply because he's young, zealous, and overcome with a false sense of invincibility. Jonathan seemed fully aware at the beginning of all of this that he could be killed. His courage was completely a product of who he believed God to be and what He believed God had declared. Jonathan was confident in GOD; therefore, he had the courage to fight!

² Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., p. 213). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

3. And let me be clear; we aren't talking about foolish courage or self-glorifying courage; we are talking about the courage that influences people to know and follow Jesus no matter what—Godly courage! Godly courage is the exclusive product of faithful confidence in GOD, which is precisely what we see in Jonathan in this passage.
4. The narrative then takes us to an opportunity to learn something else about Godly courage.

The second aspect of Godly courage that is clearly on display in 1 Samuel 14 is that,

(2) Godly courage is contagious. (14:16-23)

A. 16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there. 17 Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count and see who has gone from us." And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. 18 So Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel. 19 Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

1. "Saul used the oracular ephod to obtain information from God as to what steps he should now take against the confused and helpless enemy. Although consulting God is usually a good sign in the Bible, Saul's hesitancy here—contrasted with his later rash haste and prohibiting his soldiers to take refreshment during the battle—shows his confusion. He is almost as panicky as the Philistines. He begins an oracular inquiry with the ark and ephod, but then, when the disorder and confusion in the enemy camp grows, he fears that he may be losing his opportunity for a stunning victory. So he aborts the inquiry, saying to the priest, "Withdraw your hand!" He appears to have thought, "We don't need to know God's will anymore!"³
2. "At this point, we see yet another contrast between Saul and his son. Saul no doubt remembered the trouble he had gotten into previously when he did not follow the proper procedures for dealing with the Lord. He knew as well that Israel was not to advance into battle without divine confirmation through the high priest (Deut. 20:4–5). "So Saul said to Ahijah, 'Bring the ark of God here'" (1 Sam. 14:18). We can imagine Saul pacing, casting his eye first to the priest and then across the wadi where Jonathan was routing the Philistines. Finally, "while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, 'Withdraw your hand'" (14:19), meaning that the priest should cease his activity. God was not speaking to Saul, and the priestly rituals were taking

³ Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 14:18–19). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

too long! By biblical standards, this interruption in divinely ordained procedures provided one more proof of Saul's spiritual incompetence. Gordon Keddie puts his finger on the problem: "Saul gives us the impression that he felt he was supposed to be 'religious' and observe certain conventions at the appropriate times, but really had not deep convictions of his own. He used religion, as opposed to living a personal faith in the Lord." What a contrast there is between Saul's religion and Jonathan's bold faith!"⁴

B. 20 Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. 21 Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. 22 Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. 23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.

1. While Saul hid with the priest, God used Jonathan and his armor-bearer to rout the enemy. God was at work so big that between what Jonathan and his armor-bearer were doing and the earthquakes, God was shaking the ground under the Philistines' feet; their garrisons, which were scattered around looking for Hebrews, completely panicked and started attacking each other!
2. All of this not only caused Saul to stop meddling around with needless religious rituals when God had clearly said go, but it also caused the men who had betrayed Israel and switched sides to switch back to God's side and attack the Philistines they encamped with! Furthermore, the Israelites who were scattered about the hill country saw what was going on, and it motivated them to get into the fight with such ferocity that the writer of 1st Samuel says, "They too followed hard after them in battle."

C. Courage is contagious, even to people like Saul, who greatly lacked it. He didn't have courage in and of himself, but even cowards can have courage when exposed to it because courage is contagious. And herein lies a problem. Courage is itself contagious. Therefore, when we expose ourselves to the wrong kind of courage, it gives us the courage to do the wrong kind of things! History is saturated with stories of people inspired by other people's courage to do all sorts of stupid and terrible things. Therefore, we must ensure we are being exposed to GODLY courage, which leads us to know and follow Christ!

D. For example, many people talk about the courage of Jim Elliot, who knowingly flew into the Ecuadorian jungle to try and lead an indigenous tribe to Christ that

⁴ Phillips, R. D. (2012). 1 Samuel. (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 214–215). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

was known to be highly unstable and violent. They killed Elliot and the four other men with them, and he left behind a widow and a ten-month-old baby girl. His act was nothing less than an act of courage driven by the leadership of the Spirit. Jim Elliott is credited for saying, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep gaining what he cannot lose," and he proved he meant it.

- E. However, to me, Jim Elliot's courage was nothing compared to what his wife, Elisabeth, demonstrated. A few years later, she took her then three-year-old daughter and moved in with the tribe that killed her husband and taught them the Gospel! Knowing these were the people who killed her beloved husband, she went not to kill them, nor with fear of being killed by them, but to become their sister and offer them redemption through the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She believed God had called her family to lead this tribe to Christ, and that's precisely what she did. Courage!
- F. This leads us to the third aspect of Godly courage.

The third aspect of Godly courage that is clearly on display in 1 Samuel 14 is that,

(3) Godly courage isn't erratic or selfish but steady and selfless. (14:24-52)

- A. We will explore why Saul acted this way more next week, but for now, I want you to see the contrast between Jonathan's Godly courage and his dad's cowardliness in verses 24 through 52. Let's read through this passage and spend a couple of minutes fleshing out the difference between the clear testimony of Godly courage in the passage and its opposite.

- B. **24 And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people had tasted food.**

Note: Saul's motive is clearly his own glory! His "courage" is to protect his own name and throne, so much so that he issues the incredibly ridiculous order that nobody can eat any food until he is avenged. Now remember, these guys are on foot chasing people and then fighting them in hand-to-hand combat with adapted garden tools! Anybody who has ever done endurance athletics will tell you the only way you can truly be competitive is to take in calories along the way. If you don't, you will not only be unable to compete for a victory; you may not even finish!

- C. **25 Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. 26 And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it**

in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright. 28 Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. 29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great." 31 They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint.

1. The people were out of gas! If they had eaten some food or honey along the way, they would have had the energy to keep pursuing the enemy and had a complete victory! They defeated them, but it wasn't a "great" defeat. With the predictable eradicate and selfish behavior that comes from a coward, Saul had made sure they snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory!
2. However, things were getting ready to go from bad to worse. Possibly being motivated not only by Jonathan's truly ignorant breaking of his father's orders but also by his obvious criticism of an irresponsible order, the people did something that I'm sure Jonathan had no idea they would do. Saul's leadership was at fault, but Jonathan likely lit the match. The people were so exhausted that they not only defied Saul's order, but they defied the obvious law of God for the Jewish people!

D. 32 The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood.

Note: "In their frantic grab for food, presumably because of the desperation caused by Saul's oath, the people overlooked a long-standing, God-given prohibition. It went back to the days of Noah (Genesis 9:4). It was clearly written in God's Law for Israel (Leviticus 7:26, 27, etc.). They were not to eat meat with blood still in it. Blood represented life and was to be used in atoning sacrifices (Leviticus 17:11). But the people gave no thought to God's Law on this matter as they rushed to satisfy their craving for food. (you see this same overreaction with legalism that invents rules all on its own ... when people rebel against it, we often don't see them align with submission to the clear standards the Bible has for us, but rather, they toss out obvious standards). So obedience to Saul's silly oath had now led to mass disobedience to God's Law."⁵

E. 33 Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here." 34 And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and

⁵ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (pp. 251–252). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

slaughter them here and eat, and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood." So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. 35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

Note: "By constructing a makeshift altar from a large stone, killing the animals on it, and draining the blood, Saul was enforcing the laws of Moses. The troops' offense is termed "sinning against Yahweh" (חטא ליהוה, *cht' lyhwh*) and "acting unfaithfully" (בגד, *bagad*). The concept of faithfulness/unfaithfulness relates to breaking agreements, especially the covenant (ברית, *berith*) between Yahweh and his people. Obedience to the laws of Moses was the proof of faithfulness to that covenant. To accuse the people of acting unfaithfully (בגד, *bgd*) was to warn them that their status as Yahweh's people was threatened. With only slight changes, the same words are repeated in the negative in v. 34. There is no significant difference in meaning between אָכַל עַל הַדָּם (*akhal al haddam*) (Lev 19:26; 1 Sam 14:32–33; Ezek 33:25) and אָכַל אֶל הַדָּם (*akhal el haddam*) (1 Sam 14:34). Saul addresses those who have informed him of the situation (וַיִּגִּידוּ, *wayyaggidu*, v. 33, unfortunately paraphrased by the niv as a sg., "someone said") and includes them among those who have acted unfaithfully toward Yahweh. He first instructs them to roll the large stone into position to serve as an altar. He then sends them out among the troops to convey his orders."⁶

- F. 36 Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."**

Note: The priest says, "Saul, you need to slow your roll and find out if it's okay for us to continue this battle." Even though Saul set up a way for them to lawfully eat the meat, they likely feared God's retribution, given what had just taken place. So, Saul sought the Lord. So far, so good, right? Well, watch what happens.

- G. 37 And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel? But he did not answer him that day. 38 And Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today. 39 For as the LORD lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.**

Note: Saul thought God was not answering him because of the sin the people had previously committed, and as a result, he vowed to kill whoever was responsible for leading them to do it! Invoking memories of how Joshua exposed

⁶ Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 14:31–33). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Achan, he's decided to use a system of casting lots to determine who the guilty party was. Now, even though we will see he included himself in the lot casting, it is telling that he has yet to acknowledge the complete foolishness of his decision not to let anybody eat anything as the opportunity for the people to fall into sin in the first place.

H. 40 Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." 41 Therefore Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. 42 Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die." 44 And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."

1. "Urim and Thummim. It is not entirely clear how this worked, but these objects were kept in the priest's breastpiece (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8) and were used in seeking God's guidance on important matters (see Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65)."⁷
2. Saul is going to kill his son rather than own up to his own responsibility in this! But courage is contagious, and Jonathan's GODLY courage looked very different to the people than Saul's cowardliness, so it was no surprise that the people ran to Jonathan's defense.

I. 45 Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die. 46 Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

Note: Ironically, after all that, Saul decided not to pursue the Philistines! He had them on the run, but, possibly out of the embarrassment that the people gave credit where credit was due (Jonathan) and then ransomed Jonathan, Saul decided to call it quits and let the Philistines off the hook. It could have been an enormous victory, but Saul was sure to put the final nail in the coffin to ensure that didn't happen, all because of cowardly actions. Godly courage shows up in the steadiness and selflessness of Jonathan's actions, and cowardness shows up quite the opposite—erratic, selfish behavior!

⁷ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader*](#) (p. 252). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

- J. I won't take the time to read the final verses of chapter 14. I invite you to read them on your own. But they do let us see that cowardness can live right beside courage. Saul won many victories, and the author of 1 Samuel noted he performed valiantly in many of them. The author also notes that Saul made sure to bring any strong or valiant man into his inner circle, setting us up for what will happen a few chapters later with a young teenager, a sling, and a stone.

Note: 47 When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. 48 And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. 49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn was Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. 50 And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51 Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. 52 There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

So, to wrap this up, let me bring you back to the most essential aspect of Godly Courage, the very thing we discussed at the beginning of this story. Godly courage is a product of a person's confidence in God! It is a truth presented in different ways all over the Bible. For instance, when Jerusalem faced Sennacherib, king of Assyria, the most significant Army of their day, Hezekiah said to the people,

"8 With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." (2 Chronicles 32:8)

King David wrote,

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

In the New Testament, we read,

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15)

7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

So, here's the challenge.

Challenge: Is your life a testimony of fear or courage? What areas of your life are testimonies of fear instead of courage? “Continually revise your relationship to God until the only certainty you have is the certainty that God is faithful, not you.”⁸

When you know you can't control tomorrow but know God does, you will live with courage.

When you believe He who began the good work in you will complete it, you will live with courage.

You will live with courage when you believe the Father holds you in His hand and will never let go.

You will live with courage when you believe Jesus gives you the right to stand before God.

You will live with courage when you believe God has adopted you as one of His favored children.

When you believe the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive, you will live with courage.

When you believe Jesus is coming to make all things new, you will live with courage.

When you believe your future is guaranteed eternal glory, you will live with courage.

When you believe GOD, the creator and sustainer of the Universe, the sovereign ruler who accomplishes all He wills, unconditionally and forever LOVES you, you will live with courage.

So, listen, if you are struggling with courage, if fear is raising its ugly head, fight it the only way you can, with faith in the only one who gives us the only logical reasons for having courage! Godly courage, the kind of courage that truly resembles the character of God, only comes from HIM! Therefore, if you want His courage, then you have to have HIM, you have to know HIM, you have to RUN TO HIM, AND HIDE YOURSELF COMPLETELY IN HIM! It may be fear that makes you run to HIM, but I assure you, when you find yourself truly living IN HIM, fear will never again define your experience in this life!

⁸ Beasley, Manley. (1973). Faith Workbook No. 1 (p. 24). Port Neches, TX: Harvesters Publications.