



Winning!  
Winning in Relationships!  
Winning in Relationship To Your Father!

- The following story is recorded in I Samuel 31.
- It takes place between 1000-1100BC.
- Saul led his army into battle against his longtime nemesis, the Philistines
- The battlefield was a broad valley beneath a mountain range called Gilboa.



- Saul's army was at least 3000 men.
- The army of Israel and King Saul retreated. They took to the high ground on Mount Gilboa.
- One of the last lines of defense for King Saul was 3 of his sons who were leading different divisions of the army. Saul's oldest son was named Jonathan. Jonathan was a special ops guy in the army of Israel. But in this battle, Jonathan and his 2 brothers were all killed defending their father.
- The archers of the Philistines then had Saul in their sites. They shot their arrows over what remained of Saul's army and he was severely wounded.

- When Saul could see that all was lost, to avoid being tortured by the Philistines, he ordered his armor bearer to kill him with his sword.
- When his armor bearer refused, Saul took a sword, and fell on it. His armor bearer then fell on his own sword.
- When the news reached the surrounding towns and villages that Saul had lost, the people of Israel vacated their homes and their towns.
- The Philistines occupied those towns. One of them was Beth Shan.
- The Philistines cut off Saul's head and then they took his body and the bodies of his sons and hung them on the wall of the city of Beth Shan.
- When the Jews from Jabesh Gilead heard this news, they stole the bodies at night, burned them, and buried the bones under tamarisk tree at Jabesh.

### 1 Sam 31

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3 The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men died together that same day.

7 And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8 So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

11 Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. 13 Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

NKJV

A son died in battle with his father and for his father. This is not that unusual in world history. What makes this story so amazing?

What makes this story so amazing is that this son would die for this father.

- Saul pronounced a foolish judgment upon Jonathan.(I Samuel 14:44-45)  
Saul would have carried out his judgment if the men of Israel had not intervened.

- Saul betrayed Jonathan's best friend.(I Samuel 20)  
Saul became a proud man who rebelled against God. He became jealous of David, God's appointed heir to Saul's throne. He falsely accused David and tried to kill David and drove him out of Israel.

- Saul tried to kill Jonathan. (1 Samuel 20:30).  
Saul accused Jonathan of being disloyal and tried to kill him with a spear.

- Saul was a public embarrassment to Jonathan(1 Samuel 16:14)  
He was emotionally and mentally unstable. He was a public embarrassment to Jonathan and his family.

The rest of the story is what makes Jonathan's defense of his father so amazing. After all that his father did to him, his best friend, and to the reputation of his family, Jonathan dies in battle defending his father on Mount Gilboa.

What does this story tell us about Jonathan?

- Jonathan loved God

Ex 20:12A

Honor your father and your mother...NKJV

In spite of his Father's failures, Jonathan loved God and obeyed God.

- Jonathan lived for God's glory

He considered his life to be expendable for God.

**It was not about him!**

We see this in his relationship with David. We see this in his relationship with his father.

We don't know a lot about Jonathan's spiritual experience and how he became this kind of man, but we can see what kind of man he was by the fruit of his life.

What was amazing is that he was this kind of man with such a self-focused disloyal father like Saul.

In Israel a father's was responsible under God to be a good shepherd to their children.

As shepherds fathers were responsible to....

- Provide for their children

Included emotional, material, and educational needs

- Protect their children

Included physical and spiritual threats

- [Lead their children](#)

Leadership included being a good example of God's character to their children and teaching their children the law of God. (Deut. 4:9-10).

In Israel a child's responsibility under God to their father's was to be a good citizen in their father's household.

[As citizens children were responsible to...](#)

- [Honor their father](#)

For different cultures, honoring your father can mean different things. For Israel, to honor your father meant following the laws of God.

The command to honor your father was in a covenant that God made with the Jews called the Ten Commandments. The commandment to honor your father was preceded by 4 laws about how you should relate to God. It was followed by 5 moral laws about how you should relate to man. To honor your father and your mother meant keeping the other 9 laws.

That promise was connected to a promise.

[Ex 20:12](#)

[Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. What does this story tell us about Jonathan?](#)

- [Jonathan loved God](#)

[NKJV](#)

As long as the nation loved God and honored their parents by keeping God's law, it would go well with them and their families in the land God had given them. Go well means prolong. If they did not obey these commands their families and their nation would lose the land. For families to prosper you had to have good land.

Just as honoring your father meant different things to different cultures then, it can mean different things to different people now.

We live in an immoral society full of immoral men who are fathers. One man told me how his father encouraged him to be sexually immoral when he was a young teen ager. Another man told me that when he was a young man his father encouraged him to steal from his uncle. Men encourage their sons to be bullies. They encourage their sons to be liars. They encourage their sons to be racists. They encourage their sons to love the world.

We live in a nation in which there are a lot of fathers who are like King Saul. We live in a nation in which there are a lot of fathers that are worse than King Saul. They have forsaken their children and are absent.

[How do you become a man like Jonathan who loved God and lived for God's glory in spite of his father?](#)

- [Get out of the current that your father created.](#)

Our father's sinful behavior can create a powerful current that can carry us to the wrong destination. History is replete with stories of men who followed their father's evil example. They got caught in the current and never got out.

Don't believe the lie that you cannot escape that current.

History is replete with the stories of people who rose above their circumstances to become a great person in spite of their father. History is also replete with the stories of people who were raised by a great father who became someone you would not want as your friend.

Never use your father's failures as an excuse for your own. Don't believe you are a victim and there is nothing you can do to change your destiny.

It is apparent that Jonathan did not believe that what his father did to him or who his father was would define who he was. Jonathan rejected the lie that he was a victim and escaped his father's current.

- [Get into the current that God has created.](#)

Jonathan believed the truth that God had a plan for his life. He surrendered himself to God's plan and got caught in the current that God had for Him.

God has a wonderful plan for your life. That plan is for Him to become your Father. That plan is for Him to transform you into His image. That plan is to use you and your story to make disciples for Him. Get into the current that your heavenly father has created.

[How do you get into the current that God has created?](#)

[Mark 1:14-15](#)

[14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."](#)

[NKJV](#)

- [Repent of your sin](#)

Turn away from your sin and the sins of your father. The current that you are in is due to your father's sins but it is also driven by your own fallen nature. There is a battle going on within you. Turn away from your sin and your father's sin.

- [Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and Follow Him](#)

Like Jonathan, Jesus Christ was the Son of a King.

Like Jonathan, Jesus Christ loved God's law and lived for God's glory.

Like Jonathan, Jesus Christ was killed on a battle field on a hill for the honor of his Father.

The death of Jesus on Golgotha justified His Father's plan to forgive mankind for their sin.

The death of Jesus on Golgotha provided the way for mankind to experience a new life in Him. He gave His life so that you might be born again. He gave His life so that His Father could become your Father. He gave His life to save you from the current of sin that you are in. He died for you.

To receive His life you must believe Jesus died for you and follow Him. If you will, Jesus will deliver you from your sins and the sins of your father.

- **Forgive your father**

It is obvious that Jonathan forgave His father. When you are bitter, that bitterness keeps dragging you back into the current created by your father's sins. Bitterness causes you to focus your thoughts on your father's sins. Those thoughts will keep dragging you back into the current of your father's sins.

Forgive your father in the same way that God has forgiven you in Jesus. Jesus paid for your sins. Jesus paid for your father's sins. Don't expect your father to pay for sins that Jesus had already paid for. Forgive your father.

- **Find friends that are in God's current**

Jonathan befriended David, a man after God's own heart, who loved God's law and lived for God's glory. David also honored King Saul by obeying God's law. He could have killed King Saul twice but he would not lift his hand against God's anointed. When you have a father like Saul, you need friends like David.

Those friends can be found in our church. In our church there are people who will disciple you. They will share life with you and share truth with you. They will encourage you and support you. You can find those people in our small groups.

Invitation

- Repent of your sin and Follow Jesus
- Forgive your Father
- Get connected to friends that will help you stay in the flow of the current of Jesus.
- Become the kind of father that will honor your children.

Some fathers are better shepherds than others. One of our goals as a church is to disciple men to be good shepherds to their families.