



Courageous and Sacrificial Friendship

1 Samuel 18:4

And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt (1 Samuel 18:4—ESV).

Under Israel's first king, only King Saul and his son Jonathan had armor and swords. The Philistines controlled the making of armor and the sharpening of tools for farming. King Saul reigned in fear, because he had rebelled against the LORD and the LORD had departed from him. Through Samuel, the LORD told Saul his dynasty would end. Then, Samuel anointed David as the future king.

When the Philistines oppressed the Israelites, Jonathan rallied the army to defeat them. Jonathan led the way because he acted with faith in the LORD. Before the battle, Jonathan stood with only his armor bearer and said, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will act for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6). The LORD was with Jonathan that day, and the garrison fell. Jonathan's success gave his father the courage to fight the Philistines, and Israel won a great victory, but King Saul did not act with faith in the LORD.

Before David became king he fought the giant Goliath, telling him, "This very day the LORD will deliver you into my hand....that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give you into our hand." (1 Samuel 17:46-47). After David killed Goliath, the Philistines fled in fear. Both Jonathan and David were men after God's own heart. As kindred spirits, their faithfulness to and love for the LORD drew them into a courageous and sacrificial friendship. Therefore, Jonathan gave David what he would need to lead all Israel as the captain of the LORD's army under his father, King Saul. Someday, David would reign as king of Israel, but only after the deaths of King Saul and Jonathan.