

“Let’s go across to the outpost of those pagans,” Jonathan said to his armor bearer. “Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. **He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!**”

-1 Samuel 14:6

It’s easy to read this passage and think, “Wow! Johnathan must have been brave! Look how determined he was to fight.” But the reality is, this passage was never about Johnathan’s courage or even his physical abilities. Likewise, his armor bearer, we’re told, didn’t even own a sword! If this passage were about their heroics, they would have easily been killed!

What this passage is clear about though, is Johnathan’s (and his armor bearer’s) faith in God’s ability. The Hebrew word for faith is emunah (אמונה). Unlike our modern day definition, emunah faith is not so much about “believing” in something, as much as it is “partnering” in a cause. So, when Johnathan says that God can win the battle with many or few, he’s declaring his resolve to be on the side of the Lord.

In your marriage, you will likely come up against impossible situations: “No win” moments, that seem too big to defeat. Is it enough to just trust in your spouse to not fail the impossible, or are we called to come alongside them and face it together. The same is true as we walk as the bridegroom of Christ. He will call us into situations that we cannot see a solution to; but it will be your resolve in the Lord, your FAITH, that will determine how you go into that battle.

**Questions to think on:**

- What does your faith currently look like? Is it simply a “belief” or do you have the resolve to “partner” with God?
- How can you prepare yourself in the peaceful times to have faith in the hard moments?
- As your spouse’s armor bearer, how do you support the “faith declarations” they make?

**“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,** but in humility and regarding others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

-Philippians 2:3-4

I want you to do me a favor: re-read that verse again. In fact, read it a few times! What sticks out to you in this passage? When I think about Johnathan’s armor bearer, I think of someone who looked to the interest of his companion before himself. We read yesterday that this young man didn’t even carry a sword, and yet, he still held his own in attacking and killing Philistines.

Since this man is never named, he won’t go down in history for his part in this battle, but because of his role, the entire Philistine army was sent into pandemonium. We’re told in 1 Samuel 14:20 that by the time Saul and his army show up the PHILISTINES WERE KILLING EACH OTHER!

We might never know who this man was, but Johnathan did and trusted him. More importantly though, God did and partnered with him. There will likely be times in you and your spouse’s life when God calls you to stand up when no one else wants to. What will your response be? Will you cower in fear because you don’t feel that you are properly equipped, or will you charge forward trusting that God is partnering with you too?

**Questions to think on:**

- Think of a time when the choice between humility and selfish ambition arose. How did you respond?
- How have you supported your spouse, that others may never see?

“Always be **joyful**. Never stop **praying**. Be **thankful** in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Throughout scripture we see a constant emphasis placed on our heart posture. In a sense, these words from 1 Thessalonians describe the resolve God wants us to have as we move forward in the battles of life: with joy, prayer, and thankfulness.

In connection with the story of Johnathan and his armor bearer, we see a theme of not just partnering with each other in the battles of life, but more importantly partnering with God. When we choose to follow God and His ways, we choose to do things boldly and unlike the rest of the world. Joy is not a battle cry the world is used to hearing, nor is thankfulness. Likewise, prayer can often seem like a last-ditch effort.

Being an armor bearer for your spouse will often go against what the world tells us is right. And it can be easy to listen to the voices that tell us to take time and wallow in pity during the hard times. However, when we choose to walk forward with God, we need to trust that His ways might look strange to the world, but they bring blessings that go far beyond earthly understanding!

**Questions to think on:**

- How can you incorporate joy and thankfulness into the daily battles of your life?
- What bold prayers do you feel God calling you to make in your marriage that the rest of the world might not understand?

“Moses’ arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, **holding up his hands**. So his hands held steady until sunset.”

-Exodus 17:12

This passage of scripture comes from the story of Israel’s defeat of the Amalekites. In it we have four main characters, split into two groups. The first character is Joshua. He is sent into the battlefield to defeat the Amalekites. The other three characters, as mentioned in the scripture above, are Moses, Aaron, and Hur. We’re told that as Joshua fights, these three go up the mountainside to observe the battle and intercede on Israel’s behalf.

As the story goes, as long as Moses holds his staff above his head, the Israelite army advances, but as soon as his arms get weary and lower, the Amalekites gain victory. Knowing the importance of Moses’ posture, Aaron and Hur come alongside him and physically hold his hands up to maintain Israel’s victory. Though these three were not in the physical battle, they none the less served as spiritual arm bearers to Joshua and the Israelite army.

When it comes to marriage, the battles we face may not always be side by side with our spouse. Work related disputes, family situations, and physical ailments might pull us or our spouse onto the frontlines of battle, and sometimes we are not always physically able to join them. But like Moses, Aaron, and Hur we can take comfort in knowing our prayers and intercessions go a long way in aiding those on the battlefield.

**Questions to think on:**

- What steps can you take to intercede on your spouse’s behalf today?
- Who do you know that can come alongside you in prayer for your marriage?
- Can your spouse depend on you to intercede for them in their daily life?

“To reach the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky cliffs that were called **Bozez** and **Seneh**. “Let’s go across to the outpost of those pagans,” Jonathan said to his armor bearer. “Perhaps the Lord will help us, for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!”

“Do what you think is best,” the armor bearer replied. “I’m with you completely, whatever you decide.”

-1 Samuel 14:4,6-7

In the story we’ve been reading about Johnathan and his armor bearer were given specific locations of the Philistine army. Situated on a hill above a main thoroughfare, the Philistines had the tactical advantage. They often would send out raiding parties into the surrounding towns and countryside and prey on any who crossed by. Geographically speaking, their outpost was situated smack dab in the middle of the Israelite nation, effectively cutting the country in half.

As Johnathan and his armor bearer take on their daring attack, they first must hurdle two cliffs: Bozez and Seneh. Rough translations of these two cliffs are “slippery” and “thorny”. In essence, one cliff was sheer, smooth rock and the other was covered in underbrush and thorns. The armor bearer would have known the type of terrain and potentially even had questions about the effectiveness of such an attack. And even though he may not have known the whole plan, it was his faith in Johnathan that led him to ignore whatever doubts were right in front of him and place full trust in God and his master, no matter what the path looked like.

In marriage, the enemy will often camp itself at a central crossroad of our relationship, picking off our patience, resolve, or hope. We can count on the enemy to attack us every time we pass by! Like Johnathan and his armor bearer, our attack on the enemy might take us through some “slippery” or “thorny” situations that seem less than ideal; but when we press into God and trust His guidance, as they did, we can move forward knowing that God will get the glory for our efforts.

#### **Questions to think on:**

- Take some time to locate where the enemy might be camping out in your marriage. What do those crossroads look like?
- What “slippery” or “thorny” situations have you dealt with in your marriage that required complete trust in God to overcome?
- How is God calling you to be like Johnathan or his armor bearer when it comes to attacking the enemy’s stronghold?