



DEVOTIONAL: JONATHAN AND THE ARMOR-BEARER

By Wendy Kautz

THE following is a devotional I gave to the choir a while back. I had read a scripture passage that really fired me up. As a literature professor and enthusiast, I get excited when God uses a literal Old Testament story to make a figurative point that applies to us today. The story, found in 1 Samuel 14, is about two men whose bold faith God used to do something powerful.

1 Sam. 14:1 says, "One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, 'Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.' But he did not tell his father." In verse 6 Jonathan goes on to say, "Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."

The people of God were in a time of battle, but Jonathan had



*Wendy Kautz & Family at the Beach
Continued on page 2*

DELTA'S CORNER: HOPE AND THANKSGIVING

By Delta Schrade



*Delta Schrade
Metro Pastor's Wife*

AT every Thanksgiving dinner I can remember, before we pass the turkey, butter the rolls, or spoon out the dressing, my family has always started the meal with

the corn ... with five kernels of corn to be exact. As a small bowl of dried corn kernels is passed, we each draw five and state the things for which we are most thankful. Many of the things shared never change ... the grace of God, our children, our parents, our spouses ... but then there are those unexpected blessings or graces that have been experienced in the last year that will often bring a tear to all. It has become a treasured and

tender time where we see into the hearts of those we hold most dear.

The tradition dates back not to the Mayflower but to a Thanksgiving Day for an American family who came upon very difficult times and found that they had but one ear of corn to share amongst themselves for the festive dinner. The father, in keeping with the spirit of the day, chose not to be bewildered or ungrateful,

Continued on page 3

O CHRISTMAS TREE, O CHRISTMAS TREE, HOW WILL I EVER AFFORD THEE?

By Gabby Griffin

I love Christmas for so many reasons: the spiritual significance, the family memories, the smells, the lights, the food ... all of it. What I hate is the stress over the financial end of things. Don't get me wrong—I love giving. What greater way to celebrate the life of the ultimate Giver than to bless those around you? If only we could all have limitless prepaid credit cards to give us a boost! Let me share a few helpful hints to help you get started on an affordable Christmas.

Continued on page 4

MONEY MATTERS: BUBBLES, SWORDS AND SHOE BOXES

By Joe Bryant

Sitting pool side in a long row of YMCA parents waiting for swim practice to end, I started thinking about the canvas bubble that covers the pool this time of year. It's tall, expansive, and held up only by air pressure.

Continued on page 5

"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness," Lamentations 3:21-23.

DEVOTIONAL CONT'D

the skills to thrive during a crisis. He was bold, and he believed in a big God, a God who could deliver them from their enemies. He also took action—he was willing to step out in faith. He wasn't sure what God was going to do (he says, "Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf"), but he was willing to be an instrument of whatever God's plan was going to hold.

I like Jonathan because he didn't put much stock in math. There were only 600 men in Saul's camp at the time, according to verse 2. They were camped, but they weren't fighting; no doubt they believed they were too few in number to march against the enemy. But young Jonathan and his young armor-bearer didn't let that stop them. They knew that if it was God's will, He could deliver the whole Philistine army into their four young hands. They had faith.

In addition, they were unified. In verse 7, the armor-bearer tells Jonathan, "Do all that you have in mind...Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." Their unity allowed them to take action and step out in faith together. No doubt each was inspired, encouraged, and emboldened by the other's faith.

In verses 8-10, *Jonathan said, 'Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.*

Jonathan and his armor-bearer were ready to go up to the Philistine camp, but they waited for God's guidance. They knew God could deliver the Philistines into their hands, but until they heard from Him, they didn't know His

sovereign will in this particular situation. They waited for a sign, knowing and believing that He would speak and guide them.

While they were waiting, however, they didn't just sit on their hands. They took a bold step, something extremely risky for two men alone. Verse 4 tells us that "On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross was a cliff." It certainly doesn't sound like there was much room for escape if things went wrong. Yet they were so full of faith in God that they were willing to trust Him in a seemingly impossible situation. "So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost" (v. 11). They risked their comfort and even their lives to see what God was going to do.

When they stepped out, they endured scorn from God's enemies: "'Look!' said the Philistines. 'The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in.' The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, 'Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson'" (v. 11-12). While being mocked, they continued to work hard: "Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him" (v. 13). If you have to use both hands and feet, that's a steep climb. But their faith kept them going even when it was hard. Jonathan said, "Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel" (v.

12). Their boldness was based on faith not in themselves but in a sovereign God who had given them a job to do and who was able and faithful to do something powerful through them.

"In that first attack

Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some 20 men in an area of about half an acre" (v. 14). But God was just getting started. "Then panic struck the whole [Philistine] army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God" (v. 15). "Saul's lookouts [...] saw the army melting away in all directions" (vs. 16) ... "the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more" (v. 19).

God used two men to create utter chaos in the enemy camp. And look what happened in the Israelite camp as a result: "Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords" (v. 20). Because of the bold, faith-driven action of two men, the whole army of God rises up and goes into battle.

But it gets even better. Here's my favorite part: "Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan" (v. 21). In other words, the people of God in the enemy camp, both those who were there willingly, who had betrayed Israel, and those held captive by the enemy, returned to the Lord. Verse 22 says, "When all the Israelites who had hidden

Continued on page 4

Thirst
Refreshment for Spiritually Thirsty Women

GIVE ME A BLESSING
Friday November 13
7 o'clock in the evening
NEW LOCATION
LDC Gym

DEVOTIONAL CONT'D

in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit" (v. 22). The people of God who were hiding out in fear arose and joined the battle. Verse 23 says, "So the Lord rescued Israel that day..."

The boldness of two soldiers taking a single step of faith was the catalyst God used to save, to embolden, to strengthen, to deliver His people from their own apathy, their own rebellion, their own fear, and from oppression and captivity by the enemy. Sister, what you

do in the battle is not for yourself alone. It is for your brothers and sisters, those who are fearful, those who are struggling, those who are backslidden and in despair. It is to release the captives from the enemy camp.

I love the fact that one of these two heroes is never even named. He was just an armor-bearer, just a servant in God's army. Yet with faith, unity, courage, perseverance, and the boldness to take action, he helped begin a mighty move of God. He worked not to bring glory

to his own name, but to the name of the Lord.

Here is what I'm praying after reading a passage like this: *Father, forgive me for all the times I have shrunk back from what you've called me to do or acted for my own glory. Embolden me, that I may embolden others. Help me to take steps of action motivated by faith in You and Your awesome plan. You have put me here for such a time as this. Use me for Your glory! In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.* ♦

DELTA'S CORNER CONT'D

but instead for each kernel that he found on his plate, with an attitude of gratitude, gave thanks to his God for a very specific blessing. The family, following the lead of their godly father, also continued in like manner until all had given thanks. The story goes on to say that in the years following, the meal around their Thanksgiving table was never again that lean, but it always began the same way...giving thanks with kernels of corn.

Hope and thanksgiving are inseparable for if one is lost, so is the other. As Christians, we are to always recognize that no matter what our situation, we are never...never...without either. In fact,

Paul in Ephesians (5:4, 20) twice admonishes us that it is our "giving thanks" that is a marked difference between us and those who are in darkness. He contrasts the spirit of gratitude not with ingratitude but rather with drunkenness, disobedience, filthiness, and foolish talking. He continues to remind us that we can be thankful because we walk in light, have an inheritance in the Kingdom of God, can be full of His Spirit, and have peace in our earthly relationships.

Earlier in the book (2:12), Paul again, emphasizing the marked difference between the believer and unbeliever, states that we have hope, but the unbeliever is without hope because he or she is

without God. Sometimes we can be blinded by our "dark" circumstances, but Paul prays that we will be enlightened knowing the hope of our calling, our inheritance, and our power in Christ.

I will venture to say that all of us who are reading this article will indeed have more than an ear of corn on our Thanksgiving plate. However, you may find yourself in a very "lean" place in life. Take courage! You have hope because you have Christ! You have a future because God knows the way that you take and because of that, you can be thankful! Indeed, my Christian sister, we do have hope...and because of that we should be filled with thanksgiving! ♦



MONDAY
November 9
 9:30 am
 Metro Commons

*We will make
 Christmas bows.
 Bring 9 feet of
 3" wired ribbon.*

O CHRISTMAS TREE CONT'D

1. First, don't be ruled by the list! I know most of us have children who start early with the "I wants" and they create this list that makes us feel a little scared and helpless. After all, we want them to have happy memories of Christmas. What we must remember as parents is to teach our children that it is not about the "list"; it is about the "life." That is why we celebrate. Trust me, I have a list for my kiddos, and sometimes I lust after the things I want them to have; but I also know that if I am focused on the Lord and not myself, He will bless my children's hearts whether they receive three gifts or ten.

2. Homemade presents rock! I know when we are giving we want to put on all the glitter and glamour because we want people to see how important they are to us by the gift we give. However, sometimes the best gift is blessing someone with your time. Make homemade ornaments (they can be beautiful and sentimental), bake (everyone has a sweet tooth), or just bless someone with a night of pampering in your home where you serve them. These are all fun ways to give without getting lost in the craziness of the shopping world. Most people are just happy to be thought of; they don't expect or want you to overspend.

3. Watch the sales. Don't get caught up in the panic of the

"must-haves"! There is so much more to buy than we will ever need. I love the buy-one-get-ones at Toys R Us, and all the sales in department stores. Watch and be patient, and start now so that you don't have to shop in a rush. We always spend more when we wait too late!

4. Give, give, give. This is a season to teach our children about giving. You may not have extra money, but you can have the kids go through their toys and choose three or four gently used toys to give away. There are plenty of places that will re-gift them; you can call local churches or Google toy drives to find a place near you. Get involved with the kids—clean out closets and give away clothes and household items that you just don't ever use, but still look brand new; we all have those things! Clean out and make room for all the new. Take the time to get the kids out and let them choose gifts for others, even if it is at the dollar store; that way they learn it is not just about them.

5. Go consignment. I can't tell you how many times I have



found awesome presents at yard sales and second-hand stores. I have a sister with seven children, and all together over 20 nieces and nephews, so I have to be creative! Kids never know the difference, they have just as much fun, and my budget thanks me! This year I was able to find several awesome gifts still in store packages!

I hope these tips help. Maybe this will be the first year where I won't find myself at some point going a little overboard. Hopefully this time I will remember it really is all about HIM, the one and only Christ our King! ♦



Hanging of the Greens

December 1 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon

*Bring your favorite Christmas treat and help us
"Deck the Halls" of Metro.*



Nothing of substance supports or sustains it. The same is true of economic bubbles. Inflated by pride, greed, and a covetous nature, the mania of financial speculation has built and destroyed many lives, fortunes, and nations.

Whether it be tulips, collectibles, dot-com stocks, real estate, or a shiny new car, the love of money and the desire for instant gratification block us from understanding the real, intrinsic value of things. Imbedded in the worth of something is its cost. America has not counted the cost of its uncontrolled and unsustainable

national spending. As our "credit bubble" continues to burst, a "monetary bubble" is being inflated by dollars created from our government printing presses. I fear this bubble. I fear the intense hardship its bursting will bring.

We were discussing hardship in Sunday school class this week.

Cary Miller gave us a vivid image of a warrior climbing a steep, treacherous slope. "There are times," he said, "when you have to take out your sword (the Word of God), drive it deeply into the ground, and tie off to it." Praise the Lord for such a powerful reminder that the sufficiency of His living Truth will sustain us in the difficult times!

Last time I mentioned funding for our dreams and goals. With such a gloomy economic backdrop as well as the looming potential for extremely high interest rates, it's unlikely that credit will be easily available anytime soon.

Therefore, we must plan and save for future purchases. There are several methods of saving, but all involve putting aside a regular periodic amount from each paycheck and placing it into a savings account, CD, envelope, or cookie jar specifically designated for that goal.

I once had a co-worker who wanted a \$1,800 dining room suite she'd seen in a magazine. She cut out the picture and taped it to a shoebox which she had sealed with tape. Each paycheck, she would drop \$50-\$100 into a slot in the top of the box. The picture was a constant reminder of her dream and it helped her remain focused. I still remember the day she asked to borrow my truck to pick up that table.

The patience of saving helps you to reflect on and evaluate goals and to objectively count the cost of an item before you make the purchase. Before you know it, you'll have enough... plus the satisfaction of knowing true financial stewardship. ♦

WOMEN'S MINISTRY LINKS

Metropolitan Church of God Come see what God is doing in our Metro family: <http://www.metrocog.org/home>

Metro Women's Ministries: Get plugged in at <http://www.metrocog.org/women>

"The Apple Seed" A daily Bible study for women found on our church website: http://www.metrocog.org/theappleseed_2

Bible Studies for Women Metro hosts a variety of Bible study

groups for women: <http://www.metrocog.org/biblestudies>

NOTE: This newsletter is meant to be shared with women who might enjoy its content. If this was forwarded to you, we would be happy to send Walking in Hope to you each month, along with other updates from Metro including women's events. Please contact Ann Vaughn at

avaughn@metrocog.org and ask to be included in our church e-mail contacts. If you'd like to receive the newsletter only, contact Wendy Kautz at kautz001@charter.net.

Metropolitan Church of God
Women's E-Magazine
 Editor: Wendy Kautz kautz001@charter.net
 2800 Metropolitan Way
 Birmingham, AL 35243
 205-795-4448 www.metrocog.org