

GREAT LESSONS FROM THE LESSER KNOWN

Week 3: Powerful Proclamations:
Jonathan and His Armor-Bearer
1 Samuel 14

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Heroes often emerge from **unexpected places**, teaching us **important lessons** about what to do, and sometimes, what not to do. Many of these characters seem larger than life — overcoming unbelievable odds on their path to victory. However, some of the best lessons come from less prominent stories — people that appear, at first glance, easy to discount. **Great Lessons from the Lesser Known** looks more closely at these obscure characters. Learn how **God can use anyone** to accomplish great things. You don't need to be a powerful and wealthy leader **to have influence**. **Obeying God**, even in the small things, can impact history.

A significant life is not always the most noticed life or the biggest life but it is a significant life. It is a meaningful life. With this series, we'll look at some of the lesser known people in the Old Testament and what we can learn from them. In the Old Testament there's the Big Three. There's Abraham, there's Moses, there's David. We talk about these guys. **But there are many other men and women mentioned in the Bible who can help teach us some very significant lessons.**

This Week's Memory Verse:

"He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you. But to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

GREAT LESSONS – Day 57

This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord . . . But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.” Jeremiah 17:5, 7

UNWAVERING TRUST: THE LOVE WALK

FROM the first day when I began to hear the words, “Those who trust in the Lord shall not be disappointed”, and throughout the next year, I awoke practically every morning and went to sleep almost every night quoting this phrase. It became a personal motto. God was using it to prepare me to see how we all can learn how to walk in an exciting, peaceful state of victory we have never known.

I want to remind you of one secret that is paramount to everything else. There can be no real, lasting trust in God apart from a **love walk** with Him. We can and will ultimately release trust only to someone we have known and experienced personally – someone in whom we have invested enough time to know intimately. So here's the question. How well do you know Jesus? Have You had a personal encounter with Him? Have you shared your life, your thoughts, your desires, your longings with Him? Through His Word, He has shown us He is the way to know God, our Father. Have you recognized every good gift He has given you? Have you thanked Him for those gifts? Have you recognized the many ways He has guided your footsteps, protected you throughout your life, waited for you when you needed to talk, and walked alongside you every day of your life? Now is a perfect time to talk to Him about what is really on your heart! He longs to listen and build up a trust relationship with you. If you already have a well-established relationship with Him, take some

uninterrupted time today to really talk with Him. He's waiting for You.

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust in the Lord.” Jeremiah 17:7

TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, I desire to develop a deeper and closer walk with You. I want to grow in my understanding of Your character so I may know You better. I love You, Lord, and I want to be in a love walk with You so that You become my best friend. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 58

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17

UNWAVERING TRUST: TRUST IS A CHOICE

GOD gives good gifts to His children. He will take even the bad and turn it into good if we trust Him. When making repairs on a home, we may not know how to do what needs to be done, and since homes need constant work, there are many opportunities to trust God for the answers. From lumber, to bricks, window screens to concrete, carpet and more, each detail presents a new opportunity to trust God. At first glance at any home repair issue may, at times, be discouraging, but when we turn to God and ask for wisdom on what to do to get the job done, He provides the answer.

Likewise, in our lives, there will be times when listening to negative reports and looking at things in the natural will work to kill our faith and feed our disappointments. Our mind and emotions might be screaming one thing, but we have to constantly remember that God is able to overcome the impossible. In order to do so, however, we must stay in an attitude of trust in God and remind ourselves that we are, in reality, citizens of another world entirely. When that happens, we keep trusting by saying, “Lord, we don’t know what can be done, but we are going to trust You. And we **choose** not to allow feelings of disappointment to come in.”

When negative thoughts are bombarding the mind, it is more important than ever to run to God in trust and not away from Him in disappointment. When we do trust, in the future tense, we will never be disappointed.

Sometimes we have to wait a few hours, sometimes a few months, and sometimes a few years, but He will give the answer.

TODAY’S PRAYER

Lord, You are worthy of my trust. When I face challenges, especially challenges in new areas, I know I may start to feel disappointed and discouraged, and when that begins to happen, remind me that I have a choice. I choose to run to You, to trust You, and Your Word promises me that I will not be disappointed. I will trust You with my salvation and with my daily life. Thank you for being completely trustworthy. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 59

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." Romans 5:5

UNWAVERING TRUST: CONTINUE TO TRUST

MUCH of life is a progressive journey and one in which we can't always see around every corner, but God can. We absolutely cannot lose if we'll trust today and continue to trust in God's faithfulness to us. Trust is a confident hope, a literal expectation of God's faithfulness. The Bible promises that the God-kind of hope will not disappoint. "Hope does not disappoint..." Romans 5:5. I am convinced, however, that we can negate the Word from God and never receive the promise that was intended if we allow disappointment to rob us of our trust and our hope in His faithfulness. Temptations will come, and when they do, we will miss out on God's promises if we embrace disappointment and become bitter.

Recently, our family made a covenant to live by Joshua 24:15, which says: "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

In the covenant, we asked God to protect us from any interference or harassment from the enemy, especially from all discouragement, doubt, fear, confusion, and human-reasoning from the world's standpoint. We committed to kingdom living that would reign in our house and asked for total freedom to result for all concerned. His Word says where two or more agree on anything in the

name of Jesus, it shall be done, so we believe what we have committed to. All glory, honor, and praise be to the Lord! Now, each night when we gather to pray at the close of our day, we pray that every single person who lives and sets foot into our house would be healed, restored, refreshed, and free.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, I will put my trust in You. I will continue to trust You. I refuse to allow disappointment, doubt, fear, confusion and human-reasoning instead of godly wisdom to take over my thoughts and emotions. I ask You to fill me with Your presence and help me to listen today when the Holy Spirit is guiding me to choose to trust You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 60

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” Romans 12:3

UNWAVERING TRUST: MIRROR, MIRROR

WHERE do we get an accurate view of ourselves? I have good news for you: *There is a mirror that never lies.* It's objective and truthful and will tell you who you are, how much you matter, and why you are here on earth. It will help you break free from deep-rooted mistaken beliefs, relational patterns that never seem to change, and internal struggles that seem without solutions. This mirror is given to you by God, and it is a divine one, given to help you see yourself as He sees you.

Despite what you've heard, despite what's been planted in your conscious and subconscious mind about who you are, what you're worth, and what others think of you, God declares that in Christ you are wanted, valuable, secure, competent, beautiful, and called for a purpose only you can fulfill.

Many false self-perceptions are too deeply rooted to be corrected with positive self-talk. We must identify the lies we believe in order to renew our minds with God's truth if lasting change is going to take place. Becoming humble and committing yourself to change will redirect the course of your life, and then whether you perceive yourself positively or negatively, acquiring a vision of your true self through God's eyes will be transforming. In Romans 12:3, the apostle Paul tells us not to think of ourselves falsely but in accordance with sober judgment and with the faith God gave us – in other words, think of yourself the way He

sees you. The really big implication of this amazing truth is that God loves you as much as He loves Jesus: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love,” (John 15:9).

A real and profound journey begins with salvation, and involves living as a son or daughter of God, as one who no longer has anything to prove. When you trusted Jesus as your Savior, you died with Him, your sins were forgiven, and you were made righteous. All your sins – past, present, and future – are forgiven. The moment you placed your faith in Christ, the righteousness of Jesus Himself was given to you, and God sees you through the lens of His Son. You are reborn in the Son's image; this is your new standing before our heavenly Father, whether you are living up to that image or not. To be in Christ is to be given our true identity. However, moving that reality from our heads to our hearts is no easy task.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Father, Thank You for my new identity! As I work to transform my mind, You promise to renew and reshape my identity as your child, removing the lies that keep me from seeing myself as You see me. Today, help me to remember Your promises about me are true as You continue Your transforming work in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 61

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

UNWAVERING TRUST: YOU ARE WANTED

WHAT is your image of God? A.W. Tozer said that, “what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” It is essential for us to have a high, holy, and clear picture of who God is because our perception of God powerfully affects our lives. If you agree that it’s vital to have an accurate picture of who God is to understand your identity, then another question of equal importance is, how do you see yourself?

For now, I’m not asking you to describe the person you *want* to be; I’m asking you to describe how you *actually* see yourself? This perception is your self-image. It is the mental image you have of your own identity and self-worth, and it is a composite of all the mirrors you look into to see who you are. This week, we are looking at how that picture of yourself differs from the true picture God holds you. If we are going to see God accurately, we need to know something about His perspective – what He thinks about when He looks at us. We need to learn what God had in mind when He created us, and what He wants and expects from us in our relationship with Him. God longs for us to see ourselves the way He sees us.

You are chosen by God. Every spiritual blessing begins with this truth. He wants you. You were not an accident; you did not come into His family as an intruder or an unworthy visitor. You were handpicked by God for a

relationship with Him: “For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight” (Ephesians 1:4).

Let the truth of belonging to God and being wanted by Him gradually sink into your heart. This process takes both time and a willingness on your part, but something wonderful and new will happen deep inside you when you accept God’s truth of who you are. You will begin to see life differently. Your need to perform and gain others’ approval will gradually dissipate. You will, over time, discover your true self, the self God created you to be.

TODAY’S PRAYER

Lord, Thank You for choosing me before the creation of the world. Some aspects of how I see my identity are distorted and, over time, I have embraced them to the point of seeing them as reality. Help me to see these perceptions as lies and help me to replace the lies with the truth of Your complete acceptance of me. Thank you for creating me, loving me, and wanting me as Your child! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 62

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." Ephesians 1:7-10

UNWAVERING TRUST: YOU ARE VALUABLE

WHERE do you look for your significance? Our search for identity is closely related to the search for significance, because we cannot know how valuable we are until we know **who** we are. From time to time, we all look for our identity in certain people or things. Breaking out of this trap of performing to gain people's approval demands we identify false patterns in our beliefs and behavior. One of the most most beautiful, liberating things that can happen to us is to realize that God made us the way we are for a reason and, as a result, we have no need to be anything or anyone else. We are free to say no to the lies. When we realize this, we grow into our unique selves and become very attractive simply for who we are. That is God's design for us!

In addition being chosen and adopted through your relationship with God, you are also redeemed. Ephesians goes on to say, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7-8). Redemption means that you are purchased by God and are His infinitely precious and treasured possession. Redemption is not about your performance,

nor does it have anything to do with other people's approval. Only your heavenly Father's opinion matters.

But what defines you? Is it experiences or feelings, or is it the truth that God declares above them? God's opinion of you is reality, so if you want to know your true self, you must anchor yourself in His Word. Radical transformations take time and require an intentional, systematic process. This process is a journey for all of us, an ongoing, replenishing process of identifying the lies, calling them what they are, and replacing them with truth. The more we engage in this process, the more the truth sinks into our hearts. Mental assent is just the beginning; we change when the truth affects us emotionally and works its way into our words and actions.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Father, Thank you for redeeming me! I thank you that I am your precious treasure, and I am loved and valued by You forever. I know that my future is not dependent on what anyone else thinks, what anyone else does, or what anyone else says is right. I know that, in Christ, I am holy, beloved, blessed with every spiritual blessing, chosen, and adopted. Thank you for the freedom found in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!

GREAT LESSONS – Day 63

"Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

UNWAVERING TRUST: YOU ARE SECURE

GOD offers us the kind of security that cannot be disrupted by any person or circumstance -- not by the threat of illness, natural disaster, terrorist attack, violent crime, death of a loved one, a broken relationship, or anything else. We can be completely secure in Christ.

How do we know this is true? Peter tells us that Jesus suffered once and for all for all of our sins – the righteous in place of the unrighteous, for the specific purpose of bringing us to God (1 Peter 3:18). His death in the flesh and His resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit resulted in our restored relationship with God and life in Jesus. We have already seen the implications of this message: we are wanted, valuable, chosen, adopted, redeemed, and significant. So it naturally follows that, if we are treasured so much by God and restored into a relationship with Him at so high a price, He would not hold us loosely. In fact, Paul wrote that nothing can separate us from God (Romans 8:38-39).

What actually happens when we receive Christ is enough to undo all of our insecurities. Our understanding affects the way we think and feel; our thoughts and feelings prompt our actions; and our actions shape our lives. So knowing the truth about our salvation – that it addresses

the root of our fears and anxieties – has everything to do with how we experience God and live securely.

One of the fundamental lies that undermines our security is this: those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished. I believed that lie for a long time, and it drove me to try to earn love, prove myself, and perform perfectly. For others, this lie causes them to avoid failure by withdrawing and never putting themselves on the line. Neither response enables us to receive the love of God and live in the security He promises. We are secure because we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit: “In Him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed” (Ephesians 1:13).

TODAY’S PRAYER

Lord, Help me today to move this truth that I have learned from my head to my heart and live in its freedom. I thank You that I am secure in my relationship with Christ, in my daily safety and well-being, and in my future outlook, whether on earth or in heaven, because I have been covered by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Love the way Jesus loves!