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**SERIES: 1 Samuel, Part 2 (Who Are You Most Like – Saul or David?)**  
**TITLE: Program 35 – Victory or Defeat?**

**FRIDAY**

**OPEN**

Death, it's not really something we really like to talk about. As a matter of fact, we want to avoid it. And yet I will tell you this: I have thought about my death. I have thought about the way I want to die. I want to die victorious. I want to die in the full run of the race. I want to cross over that finish line and I want to know that what I left behind I did well. I did it for God. What do you want?

**PART ONE**

I am so very very proud of you. Do you know why I'm so proud of you? Do you realize that we have come to the final chapter of 1 Samuel? Do you realize what we have done? We have studied this book; we have been reading it through chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse. We have observed the text to discover what it says. We have looked at truth for ourselves. We have encountered it, and you and I, Precious One, are learning how to live. We're

understanding God's precepts for life. And understanding God's precepts for life prepare you for death. And what we see as we come to end of 1 Samuel is we see a death that we don't want to emulate, a death that we don't want to define us and describe us. Now I don't know if you know it or not, but 1 and 2 Samuel were one book originally, and 1 and 2 Kings were one and 1 and 2 Chronicles were one. But they were such heavy scrolls that they divided them in half so that they could handle them easier. And so 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. But what a place to divide 1 and 2 Samuel, at the death of Saul, and I will tell you why. Because we're bringing closure to a man who shows us what it is like to walk in the flesh. I mean if we look at Saul and we look at David what you and I have Precious One, is we have a contrast, a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, between Saul, who claims to know God, whose been anointed by God, and yet who walks his own way and does his own thing. He lives up this close to total obedience and he's just partial obedience. And then we come to David, to David who has been wandering in this wilderness, who knows that he's been anointed by God to be king. But Saul has been after him and pursuing him and at this death David doesn't know it in 1 Samuel, but he sure finds out about it in 2 Samuel, chapter 1. But in this death, finally you and I know that David's wilderness experience has come to an end. David has passed the test. David has fought the good fight. David has kept the faith. David has waited upon God and now God is about to deliver. Well let's look at it and I want us to go to 1 Samuel, chapter 31, 1 Samuel, chapter 31. And as we go to 1 Samuel, chapter 31 we see, **"Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled...before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa."**(1Samuel 31:1) If you ever go to Israel with us, and I pray that you will, if you want a heavy Bible teaching tour. We have loads of fun. We form friendships that last for the rest of our lives and we just have a delightful time together, praying together, worshipping together, studying the Word of God together, growing together in the knowledge of the Lord.

But as we drive by we'll be saying, "Oh, oh, there's Mt. Gilboa. There's Mt. Gilboa. Do you see that?" And then we take you to Beth-shan, and we go into this marvelous city that has been unearthed and we stand in that city and some of the people run up to the top of where the walls were, and they look down and they remember the momentous event at Beth-shan and at Mount Gilboa. Well let's look at it now, because you've studied so well, because you've done so well; you've done your homework. You've gone online to *preceptsforlife.com*; you've downloaded the study guide and you have learned that you are to double underline in green every geographical reference. And so it says that **"...Israel fled...before the Philistines and [they] fell slain on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines...took Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan...."**(31:1-2a) I mean it makes my heart ache. And it makes my heart ache especially because I know what's going to happen in 2 Samuel, chapter 1 and what it's going to do to the heart of David. It says, **"[They] killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul."**(31:2b) Now they killed those three sons, but there is one son left, Ishobeth. And we're going to learn about him later, but not now. And it says, **"The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers."**(31:3) Remember that was their primary weapon of war apart from the sword, but this was for long distance fighting. And so an archer aimed at him and wounded him. **"Then Saul said to his armor bearer...."**(31:4a) Now remember the armor bearer is right at his side. The armor bearer has that shield. The armor bearer has that sword. The armor bearer has that bow. The armor bearer had those arrows. **"[And] Then he said to his armor bearer, 'Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me....'"**(31:4a-b) Now would they do that? O, wait until you see what happens. It says, **"...But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword...."**(31:4c) Saul just picks up his sword and

he holds it there; he is badly wounded and he just falls on it. I don't know what movies that you have seen. I don't know if you have seen the movies from the Roman Empire and others, but many times you see men falling on their sword. And you hear the expression, "That's not one that's worth falling on my sword for," you know. In other words, it's not one that I am willing to die for. So Saul falls on his sword. Now this is very important that you get these details. It's very important that you observe the text, because when you get to 2 Samuel, chapter 1 you have a different story. So which is the true story? Well, in this account, which is told to us in a very historical framework, we are told that, **"...Saul took his sword and fell on it. [And] When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him."**(31:4c-5) Now if you got your study guide you know that we're putting a little black tombstone over every reference to death. That's the way I mark dead, dying, killed, that's the way I mark it. **"Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all [of] his men on that day together."**(31:6) I mean it was quite a momentous victory for the Philistines because they got Saul and his three sons. They got his armor bearer. They got all of his men. I mean it was a cause of great triumph, of great rejoicing for the Philistines, but a great mourning for Israel when they hear about it. So who were those three sons? Well you want to go back up and look at them in verse 2. **"The Philistines...killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul."**(31:2) Now there is in the New Inductive Study Bible and in your inductive study course that you downloaded your study guide for this program, there is a description a diagram of Saul's family tree. And family trees are very important. David's family tree is important. Saul's family tree is important because all these people have a role and they're going to interact. You and I have to remember that this Book is about life and it's about death. It's a book that tells you how to live so that you are prepared to die. And in this book you're going to find genealogies because they're very important to God. It's important for you to

understand the who. Who is doing this; who suffered; who takes over? And understanding the who and the what and the when and the where and the why and the how, those are key words for observation. All right so it says in verse 7, **“When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley...,”(31:7a)** Now on the other side of the valley is on the other side of the Jezreel Valley. The Jezreel Valley is the same as the Plain of Megiddo. It’s where all the armies of the earth are going to be gathered together to make war against God. So all the armies in the last days are going to be there. This is where Napoleon stood and he looked out at that beautiful Jezreel Valley and he wept, he wept. He had never seen a more beautiful battlefield in all of his life. This is where Deborah and Barak fought Sisera. This is where God brought about a great victory. Well it says, **“When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan...,”(31:7a-b)** Now you have to understand that on the other side of the Jordan the Israelites lived there. Yes, now it’s Jordan and now it belongs to the Arab people, but it originally was given to Manasseh and Gad as they came over. And so what you have in the book of Joshua, in your New Inductive Study Bible on page 356 you see a map of the Jordan River. And you see Jabesh-gilead and you see that Manasseh settled on both sides of the river. You see that underneath him was Gad and underneath him, just to the east of the Dead Sea was Reuben. So there was a battle going on in Jezreel, but then you have those that are on the other side of the Jordan coming over. Now God is giving you all this detail, and He’s giving you all this detail because He wants you to understand the geographical setting of this passage. And it says, **“[They]...were beyond the Jordan, [they] saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, [and] they abandoned the cities and [they] fled; then the Philistines came and lived in them.”(31:7c)** That is so horribly sad. And it all came about because a man would walk in the flesh instead of in

the Spirit, and because of that many would suffer as a result. We'll talk about it more when I come back.

## **PART TWO**

Welcome back Beloved. The battle's over and our course is almost over. And I congratulate you so much on finishing this course. I am so proud of you and you have meant so much to me. And you don't know how much it means to me to hear from you. I mean I treasure those words. I love hearing from you. I love knowing what God has done and how you're pressing on towards that prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. And I'm so happy that we have discovered you, because we're looking for people who are looking for truth. Our vision for you is that you become an exemplary follower of Jesus Christ, studying the Bible inductively, viewing the world biblically through the eyes of the Word of God, and serving the church faithfully in the power of the Holy Spirit. We don't want you to be another Saul. We want you to be like David. Well, the battle is over. And in one day Jonathan dies and his two brothers Abinadab and Malchi-shua; they die. Saul dies. The armor bearer dies. It's over; it's over, and the battlefield is strewn with bodies. Now what happens? The next day the Philistines come. You know what they're coming for. They're coming to search the bodies. They're coming to take the spoils of war. They're coming to see whom they've killed. So it says, **"It came about,"** in verse 8, of the final chapter of 1 Samuel, **"It came about on the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa."**(1Samuel 31:8) Now you're better off fighting on a mountain than you are fighting in a valley, because you have the advantage of looking down on your enemy. But listen to what they did. **"They cut off his head [Saul's head] and stripped off his weapons, and sent them throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people."**(31:9) So they're going to go to the house of

Dagon. Now remember in 1 Samuel at the beginning of the book, in those first day, that when they once again, take the ark of the covenant, which they steal from Israel, and they take the ark of the covenant and they put it in the house of Dagon, their god, they come in and Dagon, their god has fallen flat on face, and then his hands are broken off and his feet are broken off, and God says, “That’s what I want to tell you about your god.” But now they’re going back in triumph. And they’re taking their weapons, Saul’s weapons and the weapons of his three sons and this is the head; this is the king, this is his son; and so they’re carrying them into the house of their idols. And they’re showing see, you, the idol caused us to triumph over our enemies. We have their weapons. What is this saying? This is saying that God is not strong enough to protect His people. But is that true? No, that’s not true. God is judging Saul in his death. And consequently, because Saul is not dying a noble death, so to speak, because we’re going to see why he died in just a minute, then God has allowed His name to be shamed, has allowed His omnipotence to be brought into question because God is more interested in individuals than He’s interested in His reputation. God does not have to defend His reputation; he is God. We are to defend it. We are to live it out; let me say it that way. But Saul did not live it out. So they cut off his head. Verse 10: **“They put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroath, and they fastened his body [on] the wall of Beth-shan.”(31:10)** on this glorious glorious city that is just absolutely awesome and incredible. They take off his head; now I’m going to tell you what they do with his head. But they take the body and they nail the body to the wall of the city. So there is Jonathan. There is Abinadab. And there is Malchi-shua and there is Saul, and there are their bodies fastened to the wall of Beth-shan, but no heads on the tops of their bodies. It’s very gross, really. And then it says in verse 11: **“Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul...,”** then it says, **“...all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and they took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from**

**the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and [they] burned them there. [And] They took their bones and [they] buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and [they] fasted seven days.”** Now what had they done with the head of Saul? Well they’ve taken the head of Saul to all the cities and they’re holding up Saul’s head by a yank of hair in their hand and they’re showing them we are victorious. And do you know why they were victorious? Well I want us to go to 1 Chronicles, chapter 10. And in 1 Chronicles, chapter 10, remember I told you this is that little ho-hum book that really turns out to be dynamite. But in 1 Chronicles, chapter 10 we have the account of the death of Saul. We have an account of this battle. The year is 1011 B.C. The year is 1011 B.C. and this is a parallel passage to 1 Samuel, chapter 31. And we come down to the end of the chapter and I want to read it to you. And it says, **“It came about...,”** verse 8, **“...[on] the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. So they stripped him and took his head and his armor and sent messengers around the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to their people. They put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the house of Dagon...,”** [Dagon the false god.] How ashamed Saul would have been had he known it. And it says, **“...When all Jabesh-gilead heard that the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and [they] brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their [bodies] under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord...,”** Why did Saul die? **“...[because of] his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord, which he did not keep...;”(1Chronicles 10:8-13a)** Why have you and I studied this? We have studied this Beloved, so that you might know the Word of God, so that you might keep the Word of God, so that you might live well, so that you know how to die well. And it says, **“...and also**



**because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it...,”(10:13b)**

You know what we do? We don't always go to mediums, but we go to other books, we go to other people, we go to other educational institutions to learn about God, but we do not go to the Book. Shame on us. If you want to live well and you want to die well, remember this is truth, pure, unadulterated truth. That's what the Word of God is. It's the very bread by which you live. [“It is a light unto your path. It is a lamp unto your feet.”] (Paraphrased, Psalm 119:105) It is through His precepts that you get understanding. And in Psalm 19 it says, [“The Lord Himself taught me.”] (Psalm 19:7 Paraphrase) And that's what happens when you open the Word of God. It says, “**...he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it, and [he] did not inquire of the Lord....**” Contrast that with David. “**...Therefore He [God] killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.**”(1Chronicles 10:13b-14) He says, [“**I have sought for a man, a man after My own heart.**”] (1 Samuel 13:14 Paraphrase) God is doing just like He said He would do in 1 Samuel 28:19, “[Saul ,you're going to die on the battlefield,]” (1Samuel 28:19b Paraphrase) and he did. And he died an ignoble death because he did not live a noble life for God. Live nobly and die nobly.