

**Devotional Guide for Aug. 24 – Aug. 30**  
*Nothing Can Hinder the LORD from Saving by Many or by Few*  
**1 Samuel 13:4 – 7; 22; 14:6 – 7; 12 – 15**

**Monday**

Judges 4:2 – 3, 14 – 14; 5:4, 21, 23

A major theme in the history of God's people is God's deliverance provided against overwhelming odds. Consideration of these incidents should increase our faith in God in the face of great difficulties. The Scripture references for today refer to the story of Deborah and Barak vs. Sisera and the Canaanites. Two women – unlikely heroines in a male-dominated culture – figured into God's deliverance: Deborah, the judge who instigated the confrontation with the Canaanites, and Jael, the woman who killed Sisera.

*Think About It:* Why had God allowed Israel to become oppressed by the Canaanites? According to Deborah's victory song in Judges 5, not all of the tribes of Israel responded to the call to fight. What does Deborah's song suggest were reasons for their unwillingness to fight? According to Deborah's victory song, what miraculous elements were involved in Israel's victory? What did Israel have to do in order to benefit from God's intervention? How does this apply to me?

*Prayer:* Lord, grant me the courage to play my part in Your saving work.

**Tuesday**

Judges 6:10, 13 – 16; 7:2 – 3, 7, 12

The account of Gideon vs. the Midianites begins with the Israelites sorely oppressed by the Midianites and Amalekites because they had feared the gods of the Amorites, contrary to the LORD's direction. God's power was magnified through an unlikely hero: Gideon, who was fearfully winnowing wheat in a winepress out of sight of the Midianites (Judges 6:11), and who was called by the angel of the LORD a mighty man of valor, although he was afraid of the Midianites, thought of himself as the weakest man in the weakest clan of Manasseh (Judges 6:14) and was afraid of his own family and the people of the town where he lived (Judges 6:27).

*Think About It:* What are other indications in the story of Gideon that suggest he was a fearful, cautious person? Why did the LORD winnow down the forces raised by Gideon from 32,000 to 300? What conclusions can I draw about God's deliverance from the story of Gideon? Who should get the credit when spiritual victories are won? Am I ever tempted to think "my own hand has saved me?"

*Prayer:* To You alone, O LORD, belongs honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving.

**Wednesday**

Judges 13 - 16

The LORD provided Samson as a deliverer and judge for Israel after they had been oppressed for forty years because they had done evil in the LORD's sight. Samson was set apart to be a deliverer from before his birth. God's power was revealed in a unique manner through Samson's superhuman physical strength.

*Think About It:* In the account in Judges 13 – 16 what impresses you about Samson? Was he an admirable spiritual leader? Did he ever set out specifically to accomplish something for the benefit of his people? How did God use Samson to provide deliverance? Does the term "collateral damage" apply in any way to this situation? How is God using my life and service – is it because of the nature of my relationship with Him, or in spite of the nature of my relationship with Him? How does Samson's story relate to God's sovereignty?

*Prayer:* Praise God that His grace is greater than all our sin.

**Thursday**

1 Samuel 17:26, 46 – 47

David vs. Goliath is the best-known account of God's deliverance against overwhelming odds. The Israelites were outnumbered and out-weaponed. Their entire army was equipped with two swords and two suits of armor; they used farm implements as weapons.

*Think About It:* What made David an unlikely hero? What made David so confident of victory? What was more significant to David, his ability to handle the sling, his previous successful encounters with wild animals, or Goliath's mocking of God's army? (See also 2 Kings 19:16). How does this story help strengthen me when I face spiritual opposition?

*Prayer:* Lord, help me to put myself and what skills and tools I have at Your disposal for the working of Your will.

**Friday**

1 Kings 20

The conflict of Ahab vs. Ben-hadad and the Syrians was a complicated situation. The Syrians vastly outnumbered the Israelites, but the Israelites could hardly expect God's help, since at this time they were living in an apostate condition under the leadership of a morally corrupt, idolatrous king. Yet the LORD twice provided deliverance from the hand of the Syrians for the Israelites and wicked Ahab.

*Think About It:* What sealed the fate of the Syrians? What does this account tell us about God? Should I conclude from this that it doesn't matter what I believe or how I live, that God is somehow obligated to help me? Did the LORD's deliverance of Ahab in these circumstances result in any spiritual change in Ahab's life? What should I conclude about God from this account?

*Prayer:* Praise the LORD because He alone is God.

### **Saturday**

2 Chronicles 14:9 – 12; 16:7 - 9

The history of Asa vs. Zerah and the Ethiopian horde presents an almost incomprehensible foe: a million man army coming in like a flood against Judah. God's power was displayed when Asa did two things. First, he went out to meet Zerah and the Ethiopians. Second, he cried out to the LORD, affirming "there is none like You to help between the mighty and the weak" and affirming also the utter reliance of the Jews upon God, "and let not man prevail against You." Asa put his faith in God into action.

*Think About It:* What happened years later is shocking. Threatened by the Northern Kingdom of Israel under Baasha, Asa did not turn to the Lord, but instead hired Ben-hadad of Syria to harass Baasha. (This is the same Ben-hadad who was later twice defeated by Ahab!) What should Asa have done about the threat from Northern Israel? Why didn't he do what he should have done? What did the prophet mean by referring to a heart that is perfect towards God? What will God do for those with a perfect heart?

*Prayer:* Lord, may I present to you a heart towards which You will show Yourself strong.

### **Sunday**

1 Samuel 14:4 – 7

The incident of Jonathan vs. the Philistine garrison is a paradigm for all the stories of God's few who stand against overwhelming odds. Jonathan sums up the essential truth: "Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6).

Jonathan went out to meet the foe on the basis of God's ability and willingness to save.

*Think About It:* Do I believe 1 Samuel 14:6? Where have I seen this truth demonstrated? When have I experienced it in my own life?

*Prayer:* Lord, I believe nothing can hinder You from saving; but increase my faith