

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

No doubt most everyone here is aware of the best selling book of the early nineties entitled, *All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum. I want to share a brief excerpt from the book if I may:

All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten. All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sand pile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

1. Share everything.
2. Play fair.
3. Don't hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. Clean up your own mess.
6. Don't take things that aren't yours.
7. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
8. Wash your hands before you eat.
9. Flush.
10. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
11. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
12. Take a nap every afternoon.
13. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.
14. Be aware of wonder.
15. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
16. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
17. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

I like that, don't you – especially the one about warm cookies and cold milk?

In spite of our best efforts though, it seems like some of us adults missed some of those early but critical lessons. They went over our heads. We were taking the afternoon nap that Fulghum wrote about, or maybe we were preoccupied with other things. Whatever, however, we missed it.

This is not a new problem. King David back in the Old Testament had to deal with a group of people that had obviously missed a few of these key kindergarten lessons as well. Let me tell you the story.

As you know, David was only the second king in the long history of Israel. Scholars tell us that he was born in 1085 B.C. and reigned from 1055 to 1015 B.C. – or for about 40 years. While his reign was marked by many great victories and included some of the golden years of Israel's history, his reign was also marked by much bloodshed and war.

In First Samuel 30 we find David engaged once again in some conflict. Notice with me the first two verses of the chapter, **“David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.”**

Ziklag was like Janesville to the king and his men. It was home. Their houses and families were there. Nonetheless, at the start of chapter, while David and his men were gone, the enemy came, burned

and plundered the city and captured all of the wives and children that were there including the two wives of David. Again, the women and their offspring were not killed, rather they were taken so they might be sold into slavery.

When David and his soldiers returned to Ziklag, they discovered their terrible loss. Verse 4 of the chapter notes, **“So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.”** Several weeks ago, we had a musical group from North Central University with us in our morning services. One of the girls in the group is a member of my former pastorate in Willmar, Minnesota. Her name is Bree O’Conner. Yesterday was Bree’s wedding day. Friday, her fiancé’s three sisters were on their way to a bachelorette party outside of Willmar. One of the girls – a fifteen year old -- was driving when she hit another vehicle head on. All three of the sisters were killed in the accident. The people in the van all lived. The three sisters were all to have a part in yesterday’s wedding. Wow! Sometimes life hurts – bad! Like David and his men, we cry until we have no strength or tears left.

Notice with me verses 6 and 8, **“David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God. Then David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?’ ‘Pursue them,’ he answered. ‘You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.’”** I like that passage. In spite of the terrible crisis that engulfed him, David **“found strength IN the Lord”, “inquired OF the Lord”, and heard FROM the Lord.**

Now on to verses 9-10, **“David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.”** In obedience to the word of the Lord, the king and his men set out after the enemy. Eventually they come to a place known as the Besor Ravine. A river ran through the ravine in a downward torrent as it emptied into the Mediterranean Sea.

It was there that some two-hundred of David’s fighting men declared that they were too weary to continue on or too feeble to try to cross the ravine. They had already marched some twenty miles and they still had a ways to go. Then too, just getting across the ravine would be quite a chore. Therefore, David had pity on these individuals and he put them in charge of the army’s supplies. He and the remaining men then left them, and continued on to find and fight the Amalekites.

In short order, David and his men found the enemy. Notice verses 17-20, **“David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, ‘This is David’s plunder.’”**

What a victory! What a swing in emotions. The brothers were no doubt all going around giving one another high-fives, screaming, “we’re bad,” and dancing a pretty good jig.

After a time of rejoicing and gathering up their spoils, the conquerors returned to the 200 men guarding the supplies. Does anyone remember the first lesson on Fulghum’s list? (Share everything.) I repeat, some of the men in David’s troupe had obviously missed that particular study. Listen to verse 22, **“But all the evil men and troublemakers among David’s followers said, ‘Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.’”**

It is at this point that David made this powerful declaration found in 1 Samuel 30:24-25, **“The share**

of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.’ David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.”

FOR THE REST OF THIS MORNING’S MESSAGE, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE TOO FEEBLE TO FIGHT; THOSE WHO SOMETIMES HAVE TO STAY BEHIND.

In doing so, I want to share with you three observations:

1. DAVID REALIZED THAT THE WHOLE ARMY WAS ENGAGED IN THE CONFLICT. THIS INCLUDED THOSE WHO STAYED WITH THE SUPPLIES.

Please believe me when I say, David knew his men well.

- They lived together.
- They fought together.
- They worshipped together.
- They ate together.

They weren’t some rag tag bunch of “Johnny-come-latelys.” No, the general remembered the times when these very same men who were now guarding the supplies used to lead the battles. Why, they were not just soldiers, they had been the best of the best!

These 600 men are mentioned a number of times in the Scriptures. We know something about them. They were heroic men, loyal and faithful. They had stood with David during some of his most difficult times. Think Special Ops today.

Then too, David remembered that the 200 wanted to be a part of the battle. They didn’t stay behind in Ziklag. No. They had the best of intentions. They started out on the journey fully expecting to engage the enemy once again as they had so many times in the past. They still loved the fight, the sound of sword on sword, the thrill of victory!

This time though, old age, health problems, and their physical strength failed them. They were not cowards, deserters, or quitters; they were simply too exhausted to go on. They had been through too many previous battles. The wear and tear was now beginning to show.



They remind me of one of my favorite cartoons. I showed this to my marriage class once, but I don’t remember showing it to you. This is a picture of a number of the super heroes in a retirement home:

- Wonder Woman
- The Hulk
- Bat Man
- Captain America
- Elastic Man
- And Superman.

They are all there. Nonetheless, their get up and go has obviously gotten up and went!

David knew the value of a strong support team, and he assigned these men to fill that role. They were to make up the rear guard.

2. DAVID REFUSED TO OVERLOOK THE EFFORTS OF THE FEEBLE AND THE WEARY.

Speaking of being feeble and weak, I want to share with you some quotes that were supposedly taken from actual medical records dictated by physicians. They appeared in a column written by

Richard Lederer, Ph.D., for the *Journal of Court Reporting*. As you listen, please understand that these are the people who operate on your heart:

- By the time he was admitted, his rapid heart had stopped, and he was feeling better.
- Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year.
- On the second day the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.
- The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 1983.
- Discharge status: Alive but without permission.
- The patient refused an autopsy.
- The patient has no past history of suicides.
- The patient expired on the floor uneventfully.
- Patient has left his white blood cells at another hospital.
- The patient's past medical history has been remarkably insignificant with only a 40 pound weight gain in the past three days.
- The patient left the hospital feeling much better except for her original complaints.

Back to my story. The Bible really isn't into calling people names. However it comes pretty close here in my text. Do you remember? It calls the soldiers who wanted to cheat those who had watched over the supplies "**evil men and troublemakers.**" I like the way *The Message* puts this, "**But all the mean-spirited men who had marched with David, the rabble element, objected: 'They didn't help in the rescue, they don't get any of the plunder we recovered. Each man can have his wife and children, but that's it. Take them and go!'**" Did you catch the descriptive phrases?

- **the evil men**
- **troublemakers**
- **the mean-spirited men**
- **the rabble element,**

The terms actually mean, evil and worthless. Was that how the writer Samuel viewed them, or was that God's opinion? I would dare say that the answer is both.

That gives you something of a hint of those whom the Lord esteemed and who He didn't esteem. The Lord as well as David realized the powerful contribution that those who stayed with the supplies made to the overall effort. He honored them while he put down those who would have been selfish and stingy.

As I read this story, I immediately remembered many of those great soldiers of the Lord who had fought the enemy of our souls along side you or along side me through the years.

H. A. THOMAS is one of my all-time heroes. He was the pastor that helped launch me into the ministry. He was a powerful preacher and an outstanding pastor. What a soldier of the Lord. What tremendous victories he wrought in his prime.

Much of his ministry was spent pastoring one church. When he went there, the fellowship was small and struggling. The building was involved in a lawsuit. When Thomas left the church years later, the church was strong and growing. The building had been expanded time and time again until it stretched from the alley in back to the street in front, from the side street on the left to the parsonage on the right. It was a great church, a wonderful church, a thriving church. Brother Thomas made a great deal of difference in his years as pastor. The last years of Brother Thomas' life though were spent in a rest home before he finally went home to be with the Lord.

We have a number of people in this church today that no longer are able to serve in the same way that they served years ago. Health issues, age, or just a general lack of strength has taken it's toll on these folks.

- Think of Jerry and Vera Dymtras.

- Marge Lemberg.
- Fran and Esther McCumber.
- Dave Worthington

These are yet great men and women of God who now on occasion have to stay back with the stuff. While the desire to continue marching forward is just as strong as it ever was, the strength to do so just isn't there like it once was.

I remember calling on a saintly couple in the hospital a number of years ago. Orville was there as a patient. Evelyn, the wife, was there visiting him. He was to die shortly after the visit and I was to preach his funeral. During my visit, Evelyn apologized to me because the two of them had had to miss so much church over the previous months due to Orville's declining health. She obviously felt bad. She was embarrassed.

- They had at one time taught Sunday school.
- He had served as an usher,
- helped build the church building,
- worked in the prayer ministry and had proven himself to be a powerful man of God. He had fought and won many a spiritual battle on his knees.
- She too had been faithful in several areas of the church.
- Yes, Orville and Evelyn had been there on the front lines for years.
- Pastors and the church had long counted on them.

In an effort to encourage Evelyn, I told her of this passage in 1 Samuel and of those who had to stay back guarding the supplies. I then told her that the Lord had not forgotten the previous battles, her and her husband's long-standing faithfulness, their desire to still be out there on the frontlines. However, He also knew of the weariness of age and the exhaustion that goes with illness.

I love and appreciate young people. I enjoy their energy and their zeal. However, I would hate to have to build a church without the wisdom and maturity of those who are older in the faith. Maybe they can't run quite as fast, but they certainly know where the potholes are. They also know the enemy and his evil tricks and they are able to warn and instruct the younger ones less they fall prey to his wicked devises.

I find it interesting that in the Kingdom of God all of the various parts of the body of Christ blend together to bring about the advancement of the Kingdom. Missionaries, pastors, teachers and leaders may be in the forefront; but the mothers who train children, widows, and even sick and weary ones who in the solitude of their bedroom offer daily prayers for the hosts of God--render a great and valuable service to the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes all the saint is able to do is give cups of cold water in the name of the Lord, pass on a word of encouragement to some fellow soldier, or intercede on behalf of some missionary in some far away place. God knows these things. The Bible commends them. He says that they are worthy of reward!

Speaking of reward...

3. DAVID RULED THAT EVERYONE WAS TO SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE.

Listen again to verses 24-25, **“The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.’ David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.”**

Every one of the soldiers got his own wife and children back. That was never in doubt. However David saw to it that those who had stayed with the supplies also got to share in the animals, the gold

and silver, as well as the fine clothing that the enemy had left behind. David's law stands to this day.

I am confident that the Lord is equally fair. The young and the old, the strong and the weak, will equally be blessed by the generosity of the Lord when it comes time for Him to give out rewards.

"But pastor, I am not able to do what I once did. I just can't. The will is present, but the strength is gone." **"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."**

"But pastor, my income is down. I don't make nearly what I once did. I am just not able to give to the church what I gave years ago." **"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."**

"But pastor, my husband now demands so much of my time. He is in such poor health. I feel that I have to be with him. I trust God understands." **"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."**

"But pastor.... No, dear friend. Listen to me. **"The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."**
Do you hear me now? Are you getting the point?

Think back with me to the little widow lady in the Bible who gave two mites in the offering. Her gift was about a half-penny in today's economy. The state didn't provide public assistance then as it does today. She was simply **"one poor widow,"** implying both loneliness and poverty. She quietly walked in to the temple without any fanfare, gave her offering, then turned and left.

Jesus was evidently standing nearby and he saw her as she gave. He was so moved by this selfless act of worship that He gushed out the truth that the little widow lady gave more that day than anyone else who had given in the offering. He measured the gift, not by the amount given but by the amount each giver had left over. In that light, the Lord noted that her gift was actually priceless. He noted that she gave not just two little copper coins, but rather He said that she had given her all. What I want you to understand here is, God gauges things differently than does men.

The evil men, troublemakers, the mean-spirited men, the rabble element all were motivated by selfishness and greed. That is not the case with God.

Will the little widow in the Lord's story get a portion of the spoils? I believe that I am safe in saying yes!

Do you realize that if her two little copper coins had been deposited at the First National Bank of Jerusalem, and that it drew only 4% interest compounded semi-annually, the little lonely widow's account today would be something in excess of \$1 quintillion! If a bank on earth could multiply the widow's offering to such an extent, just think of what the Bank of Heaven can do!

"But pastor, God doesn't figure things like that!" Really? How do you know the ways and the means God is going to use in order to reward His saints for their faithful labors of love and sacrifice? To be perfectly honest, I really don't know if the widow will get \$1 quintillion when she gets to heaven. However I do know that...

- she will live on glory avenue,
- walk on streets paved with gold,
- live in a mansion,
- have a brand new body,
- live forever,

- and never be in want or lonely ever again even throughout the whole of eternity!
She will share and share alike in the spoils of her victory in the Lord!

I WANT TO CONCLUDE with Hebrews 10:35-37 which promises: **“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.”**

Not only are we to share and share alike. It is comforting to know that the Lord abides by the same rule – He too shares and shares alike forever!