

Battles that we face in Life

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The Old Testament contains many historical accounts of the battles that God's children waged against their enemies. When the Children of Israel left the land of Egypt, they had to fight many battles before they could enjoy the blessings of the Promised Land.

The principles that they learned in physical warfare are the same that we face in spiritual warfare in this life. God uses the pictures and parables in his Word to teach people how to overcome the temptations from the influences of the world, the flesh and Satan so we can live victoriously in Him.

Some of the heroes in the Scriptures that we can learn from are as follows: Joshua, Gideon, Jonathan, David, and Elisha. Their character and values are important for us to imitate if we are going to be victorious in our walk with the Lord. Joshua was the leader of the Children of Israel following the death of Moses. He spoke to the multitude and told them that they needed to choose who they would serve. If God is God then serve him. If Baal is God then serve him. But for Joshua, he had made up his mind that he and his household would serve the God of Israel and they would not serve any idols made with man's hands. We all choose the road we are going to travel in life and we also choose a master to serve. The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23.

There is a payday coming at the end of time for each and every soul that has ever been given the gift of life. The rewards will depend on the choices that each one had made while they were here on earth.

Joshua was a faithful leader and followed the commands and directions of God. However, one of the battles that he ordered brought about a surprise defeat and when he cried out to the Lord to learn the reason; he found out that one of his men had disobeyed the orders that were given to the soldiers prior to their attack. After Joshua had communed with the Lord he obeyed the instruction and the guilty party turned out to be a man named Achan. In Joshua 7:19-21 and 1 Chronicles 2:7, the account is written. The order had been that no one was to take anything of material value away from the battlefield. However Achan coveted and stole a Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, a wedge of gold weighing 50 shekels, and he hid them in his tent. This resulted in Israel losing 36 men's lives and a decline in morale among the army. They had been confident that the battle was going to be easily won and yet they had been soundly defeated because of one man's sin. After Achan confessed and brought the items to Joshua, he and all that he possessed were stoned in a valley and then burned. The valley is named the Valley of Achor. Sin in a person's life affects more than just that person. Sinful lifestyles affect the family unit, the

community and finally the nation. Psalms 9:17 says that the wicked will be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.

Gideon was captive to the Mideonites because of the rebellion of the Israelites against the LORD. He felt that God had deserted his people and all the stories that he had heard about God's great compassion and deliverance of his people seemed like past events never to be repeated again. Yet while he was threshing wheat and hiding it from the enemy, an angel of the LORD visited him and gave him instructions concerning delivering the Children of Israel from captivity. The instruction was given for Gideon to tear down the altars of Baal and to erect altars for sacrificing to the LORD. Gideon obeyed and though the men of Midian desired to kill Gideon, Gideon's father spoke to them and asked that they allow Baal to take revenge on Gideon for if he is a god than he should have the ability to fight his own battles. God then proceeded to prepare Gideon to overcome the multitude of Midianites with only 300 men. The first step in a Christian walk with the Lord is to forsake the sinful habits of this world and to replace them with godly behavior.

In 2 Timothy 2:15 it admonishes the believer to "study to show yourself approved unto God a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." If you read this chapter, Paul speaks about staying away from profane and vain babblings for they lead to more ungodliness. Words from false teachers eat away as a cancer and they will overthrow the faith of some. The foundation of God stands sure having this seal; the Lord knows those who are his. Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from evil. There are in great houses, vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth; some to honor and some to dishonor. A man who purges himself is suitable for the master's use and prepared to do good works. Flee youthful lusts and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace and them that call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Jonathan had great faith in God. See 1 Samuel 14:6. He had his armor bearer go with him to intrude in the enemy camp trusting God to deliver them into his hands. He stated that God is not limited in power for numbers do not mean anything to him. He can deliver his people with a few men as easily as if they were many.

Young David said to Goliath, "You come to me with a sword, spear and shield, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the army of Israel, whom you have defied." See 1 Samuel 17:45.

When Elisha's servant looked out his window early one morning, he saw horses, chariots and soldiers that had encamped around Elisha's house. He was frightened and asked Elisha what he was going to do. Elisha prayed that God would open his servant's eyes and God answered. The servant saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Elisha prayed that the army be blinded and then he approached them and told them that he would lead them to the man they were seeking. He took them to the king of Israel and then their eyes were opened. Elisha asked the king to feed them some bread

and give them water to drink and to send the Syrian army home. There was peace between the nations after that.

God has the answer to life's problems. We must learn to trust and believe and follow God's instructions.

In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul said, "I'm appealing to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I am humble when I am with you, but bold when I am away from you. I dare to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards. Indeed we live as humans, but we don't wage war according to human standards. The weapons of our warfare are not merely human but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God and we take every thought captive to obey Christ."

Ephesians 6:10 admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God that we might win the war against the enemy of our souls. He tells us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against rulers, against authorities, against cosmic powers of the present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Take up the whole armor that you may be able to withstand on that evil day and having done everything, stand firm.

The pieces of armor are as follows: Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Shoes that are ready to take you to proclaim the Gospel of Peace, Shield of Faith so you may quench all fiery darts that the evil one hurls at you, the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Pray in the spirit! Keep alert! Persevere in supplication for the saints!