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Introduction: Welcome to the Battle

Where Do Our Battles Come From?

Are you going through a battle right now? Yeah, me too. We all face them. They're all around us. They are hard. They keep coming. And we're all affected by them.

Battles can either **make us** or **break us**. Our success in the battle depends on several things: primarily, our understanding of God, our heavenly Father. Do we really trust Him? Will we obey Him no matter what? Secondly, our understanding of the purpose of the battle. Battles can either make us **better** or **bitter**. Let's start by understanding where battles come from.

- Some of our battles are brought on by **circumstances**.

Need some examples? Have you ever experienced any of the following? Layoffs at work that result in unemployment. Cancer and other health-related issues that change the course of our lives or the lives of our loved ones. Physical destruction wrought by hurricanes or other natural disasters that leave our world crumbled. Whatever the sources, our circumstances are turned upside-down and we have a battle on our hands.

- Some of our battles are brought on by **sin**.

We're all too familiar with these battles. Substance abuse that results in addictions. Marital infidelity that ruins a marriage. Child-abuse that harms innocent victims.

It didn't take long in human history for anger resulting in violence to rear its ugly head ... with devastating results. Four short chapters into the Bible, we read the record of the first brothers. There must have been animosity and sibling rivalry along the way. It finally culminated when "*Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him*" (Genesis 4:8).

Sin wreaks havoc. And we battle against it and its results every day of our lives.

- Some of our battles fall into an entirely different category. They are the result of **spiritual warfare**.

They come in the form of battles initiated by the Devil who seeks to steal and kill and destroy (John10:10). The apostle Paul himself wrote, "*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*" (Ephesians 6:12).

Jesus fought Satan all of His life. Before His public ministry began, *“Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil”* (Matthew 4:1). As followers of Jesus, we are not exempt from spiritual battle. That’s why Paul tells us to *“put on the full armor of God”* and be ready every day to fight the battles that are before us.

If God would somehow pull back the veil that separates the *“seen”* from the *“unseen,”* we would be shocked to see how much of the battle falls into this category of spiritual warfare. Satan is alive and well on planet earth. He does prowl about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He is the enemy of our souls. And he is after you. You must be on the alert (1 Peter 5:8).

If God would somehow pull back the veil that separates the “seen” from the “unseen,” we would be shocked to see how much of the battle falls into this category of spiritual warfare.

My first realization of spiritual warfare

As a young married man in college, I had just experienced revival in my walk with God. One day I grieved over a particular sin that God had convicted me of. I asked God to forgive me. I was sincere and looked inside for a feeling of assurance that I was forgiven. But I did not feel anything. I prayed again, with more intensity, asking God for forgiveness. Still I felt nothing. I then began to beg God repeatedly for forgiveness, thinking the more I asked, the quicker I would find forgiveness. But the feelings of forgiveness still did not come. Now I felt desperate and pleaded with God to forgive me with promises that I would do better. In the midst of this pleading my emotions were released with tears. After the emotional release, I felt better and free of the guilt. I went to bed thinking that God had indeed forgiven me.

The next day, out of the blue, I remembered my sin and felt guilty all over again. My thought was, *“Lord, I thought you forgave me last night.”* I walked around the campus that day with a cloud over my head, feeling condemned for my sin.

That night I got on my knees again and pleaded with God for forgiveness. Again I felt nothing. I tried to rationalize why I should feel forgiven, but still I felt guilty. It was not until I was able to have an emotional release of tears again that I felt forgiven. I went to bed thinking surely the Lord has forgiven me now. However, the next day the memory and guilt of my sin returned and once again I questioned if God had really forgiven me. That up and down process continued every day and night that week.

On Sunday I was alone in the worship center when the pastor came in early. I asked, *“How do you know when God has forgiven you for a specific sin?”* Instead of giving me an answer, he asked me a question: *“What does God’s Word say?”* Without hesitation I began to quote 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* In the middle of quoting that verse, I received understanding.

The way that I had been quoting 1John 1:9 all week was by placing the emphasis on my confession, *If we **confess** our sin He is faithful and just to forgive.* However, that Sunday morning the emphasis shifted from **confess** to the truth of God's character, ***He is faithful and just to forgive.*** I had been confessing my sin and then looking within myself to see if I felt forgiven, instead of looking to God and His promise and simply believing that I was forgiven by faith and not feelings.

I was forgiven the very first time I asked God – nearly a week earlier. Why then did I struggle with guilt needlessly? I was under spiritual attack. Satan was using my own feelings against me. I then realized that week of condemnation was spiritual warfare.

The next day my sin came to my mind again, but this time I recognized it as “A fiery dart of condemnation from Satan.” I refused to feel guilty for that which God had forgiven and forgotten. Simply believing God's promise caused the condemnation to cease. What a liberating truth!

Since learning this lesson about forgiveness, I have had many church members come to me who were repeating my same mistake. One of the questions I have learned to ask regarding discerning the difference between the sweet conviction of the Holy Spirit to His child and the condemnation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, is *“How many times have you confessed to God that particular one sin?”* Some have said they confessed the same sin not for a week, as in my case, but for months and even years. What liberty they found when they discovered the difference between the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the condemnation of the enemy!

My friend, we are all in this spiritual battle together, and we must put on the *“Whole armor of God.”* One of the purposes of this book is to identify the common tactics of our spiritual enemy and discover the victory that God has already provided for us in Christ.

Take a moment and do some serious reflection. Grab a pen and write out a list of the battles you are facing *right now.* Ask the Father, *“What are the battles that are going on in my life right now?”* Some will come to your mind immediately. To remember others, you may have to reflect for some time to be able to put a name on them. Once you do that, ask yourself, *“Which categories do each of these battles fall in? What is their source? Are they circumstantial? Are they caused by sin? Or are they best described as a temptation and trial caused by Satan?”* (Note: some battles may fall into one or more categories.)

Battles I'm Going Through Right Now

The Battle

The Source

When You Are In a Battle, Don't Forget ...

Whatever type of battle you are facing, you can know three things:

1. The battle is real.

Don't get caught off guard. Don't fall asleep. Don't think *"This is just life. It's no big deal."* The battle is real. Your soul is at stake. If you don't know you're in a battle, you're going to lose.

2. Your response to the battle is critical.

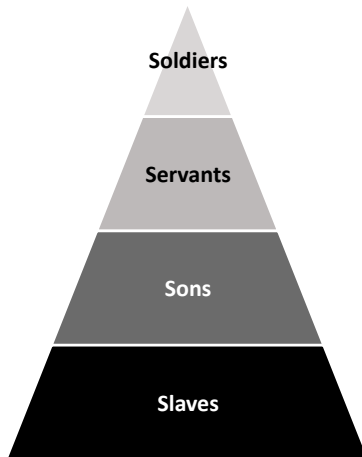
Whenever you get serious about growing spiritually, Satan will take notice. He will deploy demons and other people to stop you. You must be prepared. God calls you to trust Him in the midst of the battle. He calls you to obey Him no matter what your feelings are. And He calls you to learn the lessons from each battle that He wants to teach you.

3. The battle belongs to the Lord.

He's in control. He is sovereign. He is working His purposes for your good, your growth, and His glory. Trust Him.

How to Grow Through a Battle

God's Word gives us specific instructions to prepare us for the battle. If we were to view the characters of the Bible as our examples, we would find that their lives could be outlined in seasons of their lives as **slaves, sons, servants, and soldiers**.



All were first and initially **slaves** to Satan and sin. Then God came and redeemed them and called them into a personal relationship as His **sons** and daughters. As His children, they all learned the lessons of humility and submission to God as His **servants**. They all were sent on mission as God's soldier to advance the kingdom of God.

God illustrates men of faith in the Old Testament fighting God's battles against their strong enemies, not in their own strength, but in the power of God. In the New Testament, we see that our warfare is spiritual. We lay down the swords of steel for the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

These soldiers and the battles they face illustrate for us principles of spiritual warfare today. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Gideon, David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and many others fought the battles of the Lord not in their own strength but by faith through both the instructions and enabling of God.

If God's commission to the church were given in a closed system with no opposition, then spiritual warfare would not be so critical. But the world, Satan, and our own flesh oppose every advancement of the Kingdom of God in this world of darkness. We're in a very real battle.

But the world, Satan, and our own flesh oppose every advancement of the Kingdom of God in this world of darkness. We're in a very real battle.

For over twenty years, I've been intrigued with the battles in the Old Testament. Yes, they were physical battles. But they were so much more. As we will see, they were primarily spiritual battles. And they have great lessons for us today.

What you have in your hands is the first book in a series of books that will examine the battles recorded in Scripture. Though many Bible characters illustrate the role of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, this book will center on Joshua and how God used Moses to prepare him for leadership battles later in his life.

Joshua Our Role Model

Joshua is perhaps the best illustration of how God prepares His sons to be servants and then to be soldiers on mission with God.

Chronologically, we see Joshua as a slave to Pharaoh, then as he spends forty years as a servant to God and Moses. Finally, he is sent by God as His soldier to fight the battles of the Lord in the conquest of the land of Canaan.

God very clearly instructed Moses to mentor Joshua and prepare him for his mission as a good soldier of God.

*Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. **Encourage him**, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it (Deut. 1:38).*

*But **command Joshua**, and **encourage him** and **strengthen him**; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see" (Deut. 3:28).*

We're going to look at a section of Israel's early history and see how God took the nation from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. We'll see how Moses mentored Joshua to be the next-generation leader for Israel. We will begin in the book of Exodus and go all the way up to when Israel was prepared to conquer the Promised Land. A future book will pick up in Joshua chapter one and follow Joshua as he commands the troops to conquer the Land.

Joshua Trained for Warfare

Moses knew how to develop leaders. He knew that part of his calling was to train and develop a godly leader who would chart the course for the nation after he died. We are going to look at the stages and seasons of Joshua's training and preparation for warfare. And then we will focus on his leadership through the battles that occurred after Moses died.

How did Joshua fight battles? What did he learn? Joshua was trained in warfare by nine battles under Moses' leadership:

	The Battle	The Lesson
1	The Battle at the Red Sea against Pharaoh	The Soldier's Foundational Battle and Salvation by Grace
2	The Battle with Amalek	The Battle of Intercession: How the Lord Fights the Battle with us
3	The Battle Within	Putting to Death our old, sinful desires
4	The Battle at Kadesh-Barnea	The Battle of Retreat and the Danger of Fear Instead of Faith
5	The Battle at Arad	How Unexpected Attacks Can Bring Unexpected Blessings
6	The Battle with Sihon	How God Expands our Territory
7	The Battle with Og	A Pattern of Faith and Victory for the Future Battles
8	The Battle with Balak and Balaam	The Unseen Battle Behind the Scenes
9	The Battle with the Midianites	The Soldier's Bounty

Are You Ready?

Are you ready to learn how to fight? Grab your sword (that's the Word of God), put on your armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) and let's learn what it means to *fight the good fight*. And remember ... *the battle belongs to the Lord*.

01 The Battle at the Red Sea – Part 1

First Things First

“You can’t put the cart before the horse.” This old-time saying reminds us of a very important principle: order is important. Horses aren’t very good at pushing carts. It works much better if you have them *pull* the cart.

In the same way, order is important in God’s work. Here’s a critical principle to remember: *God must work **in us** before He can work **through us**.*

*Here’s a critical principle to remember: God must work **in us** before He can work **through us**.*

As we look at how God progressively prepared Joshua to be God’s soldier-leader, it is important to get a sampling of Joshua’s first two battles as an overview of how God recorded these battles for our learning today as soldiers of Christ called to advance God’s kingdom.

Lessons from Joshua’s First Battle at the Red Sea

You’ll see this diagram replicated throughout the book as we go through each of the battles Joshua faced. It gives us a visual reminder of what has happened in Joshua’s progression of faith.



We will first look at the principles of spiritual warfare through the experience of what Joshua learned as God prepared him and led him in the conquest of the inheritance that God promised Abraham and his seed.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” (Exodus 17:14)

It is clear that God was preparing Joshua to be His soldier. And did you notice what God specifically told Moses to do? *“Recount it in the hearing of Joshua.”* Moses was to write this battle down and remind Joshua of it over and over.

Israel wrote down all of their battles in what is called *The Book of War* (Numbers 21:14-15).¹ Israel’s leaders were to study *The Book of War*. It is clear that David studied previous battles of Scripture (2 Samuel 11:20-21). Throughout history, great generals of war have studied the battles of history past to learn strategy for war tomorrow. And like Joshua, we must also learn the principles of spiritual warfare by studying the battles that God recorded for us in Scripture.

By the way, it is important to note that Joshua also presents to us a “type” of Christ in His victory over Satan. The book of Joshua with its theme of conquest and dividing of the inheritance after victory finds a parallel in the book of Ephesians with its declaration of our victory in Christ and His blessing our inheritance in Him.

The book of Joshua with its theme of conquest and dividing of the inheritance after victory finds a parallel in the book of Ephesians with its declaration of our victory in Christ and His blessing our inheritance in Him.

The first battle that Joshua experienced in his training with Moses was the most important battle of all. It was the foundational battle for all future battles he would face. The lessons we apply from this battle are also foundational to all our spiritual warfare. No soldier of Christ can advance the kingdom of God without understanding its principles.

The context of the first battle

When God first began to fulfill his promise to Abraham, He sent Moses to deliver the Hebrews from the bondage of Pharaoh. Pharaoh challenged God, *“Who is the Lord that I should obey him?”* and with a harden heart, he refused to release his slaves. That wasn’t a smart move. Going against the King of heaven and earth resulted in a series of plagues and devastating events that would demonstrate the power of Almighty God. And everyone took notice: the Egyptians, the Israelites, and the nations of Canaan whom Joshua would later conquer, all realized that God was all-powerful and going up against Him was useless. The ten plagues of God devastated Egypt. And finally, Pharaoh released the Hebrew slaves.

¹ *The Book of the Wars of the Lord* is one of several non-canonical books referenced in the Bible which have now been completely lost. They were not part of God’s inspired and true Word, but they were books of history that certainly captured the works of the Lord in that day.

After the Israelites fled, Pharaoh hardened his heart again. He regretted releasing the Hebrews and sent his army to make them turn back or be destroyed.

Enter the obstacle.

Every battle starts with something. This one started with an obstacle – a wet one. As Israel marched forward, they saw the water. Perhaps they heard the waves. The Red Sea.

Technically, it is a seawater inlet of the Indian Ocean, lying between Africa and Asia. But emotionally, it was a crusher. It took the Israelites' dreams of freedom and hope and dashed them against the shoreline.

The Israelites' dreams of freedom and hope were dashed against the shoreline of the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:4 gives us a “behind the scenes” insight that we wouldn’t have expected. God said, “*Thus I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after (the Israelites).*” Don’t miss that: **God Himself** engineered the circumstances. **He** hardened Pharaoh’s heart. **He** initiated the chase.

Was this some sort of cosmic joke? Did God have a bad day and say, “*Hey Israel. Forget all My promises. I’ve changed My mind. You really angered me and I’m going to let you die in the wilderness.*”

NO! God knew what He was doing ... and He knows what He is doing in your life.

God knew what He was doing ... and He knows what He is doing in your life.

The question is ... how will you respond when you can’t explain the inexplicable? What do you do when you can’t fathom the unfathomable?

Joshua walked in faith, but most in Israel were fickle and walked in fear. When they saw blessings, they praised God. But when they were tested, they murmured against God. This was true at the Red Sea, as the praise of God for their deliverance quickly turned into fearful complaints.

So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exodus 14:10-12).

Murmuring and complaining became Israel's consistent refrain, one that Moses and Joshua would have to deal with all of their lives. Oh, and just in case you didn't make the application, we face the same challenges today: *to fully trust God, to remain positive, and to not despair*. Here are two critical points for us to remember as followers and leaders:

1. It is so easy for us, as Jesus-followers today, to fall into the same trap of murmuring and complaining. We see God work. He miraculously delivers and answers our prayers. And two days later, we forget all about those blessings and go back to being negative and against start fretting about the future. The hymn-writer said it well, "*Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.*" Quit complaining! Stop the murmuring! God's got it. He's in control.

The hymn-writer said it well, "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love." Quit complaining! Stop the murmuring! God's got it. He's in control.

2. As leaders of people that are prone to wander, we have to keep calling them back to the faithfulness and greatness of God.

Joshua learned that he not only had to battle the enemies outside the camp like Pharaoh, but he would have to battle those within the camp in God's own people, who say: "*Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.*" (Young leaders, you must quickly learn that there are not only battles *outside* of the church, but *inside* the church as well. And the battles *inside* are much more deadly.)

The battle instructions that God gave Moses place the focus entirely on God for victory. It wasn't on the soldiers. It wasn't the strategy that would save them. *It was the Lord*. When we say that the battle belongs to the Lord, there is no better illustration of this principle than here in Exodus 14:13-14.

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

Israel watched as God divided the Red Sea and they went over on dry ground. As they were pursued by Pharaoh and his army, God let the wall of water collapse upon the Egyptians. Israel stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord. He fought for them and they watched the Lord defeat their enemy. They did *nothing*. God did *everything*. Imagine the kind of faith that was built in Joshua who was being prepared to do the same thing at the crossing of the Jordan and at Jericho. The more Joshua rehearsed that day in his mind, the stronger his faith became.

Imagine the kind of faith that was built in Joshua who was being prepared to do the same thing at the crossing of the Jordan and at Jericho. The more Joshua rehearsed that day in his mind, the stronger his faith became.

God has given us a similar experience through our salvation. The longer we stand still and remember the great work of Christ on the cross and at the empty tomb, our faith grows as well to experience victory over Satan.

The First Battle was Foundational for all Future Battles

This first battle gave Joshua foundational principles of warfare for trusting God in the conquest of the Promised Land. We should see some spiritual principles for us as well.

1. *"Fear not"* is the attitude of the soldier in spiritual battle.
2. *"Stand still"* is the position of the soldier in spiritual battle.
3. *"See the salvation of the Lord"* is the object of the soldier's faith.
4. *"The Lord shall fight for you"* is the promise of the soldier in spiritual battle.
5. *"You shall hold your peace"* is the soldier ceasing from his own strength to enter into the victory of "God's rest."

This battle is foundational for all future battles that Joshua would face. It is much like our salvation. We do not fight **for** victory first, but **from** the victory already won for us through Christ. Let's look at each of these principles individually.

1. "Fear not" is the attitude of the soldier in spiritual battle.

Fear was the natural state when Israel faced its many battles. Fear is also a real emotion that we all face. Fear was present at the Red Sea and it was present when the ten spies gave an evil report because they saw the giants of Canaan. In the battles Israel faced, God raised up a leader who faced his fears with faith and calmed the fears of the army. Joshua was such a man, and he would repeat these words to Israel (Numbers 14:9).

All of us will face circumstances that will bring out fear. We also have our emotions that go up and down with circumstances. This does not mean that you are disqualified for battle. But it does mean that we can be disqualified if we do not overcome fear with faith (Duet. 20:8).

It is up to us to make a choice to resist this fear and stand on God's word and exercise faith. "Fear not" is not a *suggestion* but a *command* from God. When God commands, He gives enabling grace to obey. One key to overcome our natural fear is to fear God more than the enemy we face. We do that by believing and putting our trust in God (Ex. 14:31).

*Thus Israel saw the great work, which the LORD had done in Egypt; **so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD** and His servant Moses (Exodus 14:31, emphasis mine).*

God is aware of the natural fear we face when our circumstances look overwhelming. Consider the sampling of just a few of the many passages where God encourages us to make a choice of our will between fear and faith.

- Moses was a man of faith, but God continually encouraged him not to fear.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon (Numbers 21:34).

- Moses encouraged Joshua not to fear.

*And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. **You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you**’ (Deut. 3:21-22, emphasis mine).*

*Be strong and of good courage, **do not fear** nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6, emphasis mine).*

- God encouraged Joshua not to fear.

*So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the LORD said to Joshua, “**Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you**”(Joshua 10:7-8, emphasis mine).*

- Moses encouraged Israel to drive out the nations of Canaan, but they feared and turned back.

*And I said to you, ‘You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; **do not fear or be discourage.**’ (Deut. 1:20-21, emphasis mine).*

- God reminded them not let the large numbers of the enemy cause them to fear.

*When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, **do not be afraid of them**; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt (Deut. 20:1, emphasis mine).*

- God reminded them not to faint, be afraid, tremble, or be terrified in the day of battle because the Lord was with them to fight for them.

*And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, **do not be afraid**, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you' (Deut. 20:2-4, emphasis mine).*

- If a soldier could not overcome his fear with faith, he was disqualified to be in God's army and was sent home.

*The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man is there who is **fearful** and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart' (Deut. 20:8, emphasis mine).*

This fear became contagious on the battlefield.

- The soldier learns to fear God more than his enemy. As he learns about God in the Word, he grows in faith by his obedience to it.

*If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, **that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD** (Deut. 28:58, emphasis mine).*

Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law (Deut. 31:12).

The first time I shared the Gospel one-on-one, I was nervous and afraid. When God called me to preach, I used the excuse that I could not speak well. I was afraid. I have now preached for forty-seven years and I still face fear before I stand in the pulpit. The same could be said for personal evangelism. After all these years, I still have to battle fear before I go. Perhaps this natural fear should remind us all that we must, as an act of our will, exercise faith in the Lord and be dependent upon Him and not our own strength.

I am sure that soldiers who went into battle were afraid, but they chose duty over their fears. The soldier must learn the difference between fear as a part of our flesh, fear as an emotion, and the faith that obeys God in spite of our emotions. "Fear not" is a command. And what God commands He enables us to do. We must use our will to say *no* to our emotional fears. Do not let fear become an excuse to keep you out of service to the Lord.

Do not let fear become an excuse to keep you out of service to the Lord.

2. **“Standing still” is the position of the soldier in spiritual battle.**

Our flesh drives us to either *flee in fear* or to *rush ahead in pride*. The soldier must overcome both of these reactions. God taught Joshua that victory is all about the grace and power of God. When God lays the foundation of victory by salvation, we have no part in it but to stand still and see the salvation of God. We cannot lift our swords in this battle, for we are told to do *nothing*. And the glory from this victory cannot be claimed by us, for it is God’s doing. We are saved by grace alone and by God alone.

Our flesh drives us to either flee in fear or to rush ahead in pride.

Joshua stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord. And it was the foundation for all his future victories and conquest of the Promise Land.

As Joshua stood there and watched God defeat his enemies, it created faith to defeat his fear, humility to battle his pride, and resulted in praise to God to quench the future praise from men for his future victories.

Most who were there with Joshua would not be permanently impacted as he was. They stood still and observed ... but they were not changed as he was. That generation would be tested ten times from that day until their final act of fear and unbelief at Kadesh Barnea as they believed the evil report of the ten spies and rejected the report of faith from Joshua and Caleb. Because of their unbelief, God let them live in failure for forty years in the wilderness until that generation had all died.

There is a time to fight ... but it follows learning the principle of first standing still. Joshua will indeed fight in the next battle, but it will be with dependence upon God.

The Pattern of Salvation

This first foundational battle in grace carries the pattern of our salvation in grace as well.

- We are saved by grace and not by our works (Eph. 2:8-9).
- We cease from our works to enter His finished work and enjoy the rest of salvation (Hebrews 4:10).
- Jesus became the Last Adam to represent us and it was by His obedience alone that we were made righteous (Romans 5:18-19).

God has given us a firm foundation in Christ and it is on this foundation that we build and battle in the future.

God has given us a firm foundation in Christ and it is on this foundation that we build and battle in the future.

- We now stand because we were justified by faith.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:1-2).

- Christ freed us from the slavery to Satan and sin. We stand in that victory that He obtained for us.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1)

Stand Still and Wait on God

This concept of first *standing still* means that we wait on God in prayer and read God's word before we rush ahead. God must speak first ... and then we move.

Joshua learned that God had instructed Israel that its commander should stand before the High Priest and ask direction from God. Later, we will see that when Joshua waited on God, God directed him in battle. But when he forgot, when he did not ask counsel of the Lord, he was defeated by his enemy (Joshua 9:14).

When Joshua waited on God then God directed him in battle, but when he forgot, when he did not ask counsel of the Lord, then he was defeated by his enemy.

To wait on God is to be dependent upon God for direction and for power.

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

There are still three more principles to learn from this incident – and we'll continue this study in the next chapter.



Application

Spiritual warfare and the assurance of salvation:

Every believer will face the common spiritual battle of being attacked over the assurance of salvation. After a great salvation testimony is given at church, some have come to me with doubt, “I do not remember all the specific details of my salvation testimony like him.” After a great sin, some have asked, “How could I be saved and have done such a thing.” The attacks of the assurance of salvation are many.

To win this battle we must always, “Stand still at the Cross.” We must not try to prove that we are saved by remembering every detail of our salvation testimony. The battle would be endless: “How do you know you were sincere enough? How do you know that you really repented? How do you know your feelings were not just emotions?”

Instead we find assurance on a sure foundation in Christ finished work in our behalf. Our focus must not first be on any part of what we did but simply believing and thanking God for what Christ did in our place.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you died for sinners. I am a sinner. Thank you that your death saved me.

Write below a statement in this section that spoke to you.

02 The Battle at the Red Sea – Part 2

A Quick Review



We began our study of the Battle at the Red Sea in the previous chapter, where we talked about the first two critical principles:

1. “Fear not” is the attitude of the soldier in spiritual battle.

The soldier must learn the difference between fear as a part of our flesh, fear as an emotion, and the faith that obeys God in spite of our emotions. “Fear not” is a command. And what God commands He enables us to do. We must use our will to say *no* to our emotional fears. Do not let fear become an excuse to keep you out of service to the Lord.

2. “Standing still” is the position of the soldier in spiritual battle.

Joshua learned that God had given instruction to Israel before going to war that its commander should stand before the High Priest and ask direction from God. We will later see that when Joshua waited on God then God directed him in battle, but when he forgot, when he did not ask counsel of the Lord, then his enemy defeated him (Joshua 9:14).

To wait on God is to be dependent upon God for direction and for power.

But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Once we know that our victory is in the Lord alone, then we are ready to enter into spiritual warfare. Not before.

Three More Lessons from Joshua's First Battle at the Rea Sea

3. ***"See the salvation of the Lord" is the object of the soldier's faith.***

Standing still is linked with *seeing*. Standing still is not empty inactivity. It is not making soldiers passive for the battle. It is part of the grace and faith process to prepare the soldier for victory.

Standing still is not empty inactivity. It is not making soldiers passive for the battle. It is part of the grace and faith process to prepare the soldier for victory.

Our standing still in a posture of faith must be connected to *"seeing the salvation of the Lord."* Unless we have the proper object of faith (God Himself), then both our standing still and seeing are in vain.

Seeing a miracle does not guarantee that the end result would be lasting faith. The multitudes saw the miracles of Jesus and ate the multiplied loaves and fishes, but rejected His message and left Him. Moses delivered God's promise of deliverance and the signs God gave him and Exodus 4:31 reports that the Hebrew slaves believed and worshipped. However, when Pharaoh reacted to God's message by increasing their labor and suffering they complained to Moses. Their faith was fickle.

That generation had the same fickle-faith at the Rea Sea. They had seen God's victory over Pharaoh. Like Joshua, they stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord. However, most of them did not see what Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and other faithful Hebrews saw. Joshua saw with the eyes of faith and perceived. He saw deeper, beyond the surface, and understood what God was doing.

He saw deeper, beyond the surface, and understood what God was doing.

Some "see to believe." Some see and cannot believe their own eyes. Some see and do not perceive. God summed up the majority history of Israel's seeing this way,

The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house (Ezek. 12:1-2).

And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive'" (Isaiah 6:9).

Moses reproved those who stood that day at the Red Sea. They saw what Joshua and Caleb saw, but did not believe like they believed.

Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: “You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day (Deut. 29:2-4)

Some “believe to see,” by making the Lord the object of their faith.

Joshua made the Lord Himself the object of his faith, while most of Israel only focused on their physical deliverance from slavery. They demonstrated their unbelief over and over in the wilderness journey. And when they came to the border of the Promise Land, they saw giants who were so big that they could not see the salvation of the Lord.

Joshua had double vision. He could see what the evil spies saw, but he could see what they could not see. He had discovered the deep lesson of believing God’s promises and seeing beyond the circumstances to the Lord Himself.

Once Joshua had the proper object of faith, he had 20/20 spiritual vision. While the evil spy’s saw themselves as grasshoppers compared to the giants, Joshua and Caleb saw the same God they saw at the Rea Sea. They had a foundation for every battle and changing circumstances they would ever face. They settled the issue in one moment at the Red Sea that their God would be sufficient for all that they would face in the future.

If God could open the Red Sea and defeat Pharaoh and his army, then for Joshua it was settled forever and for every situation that he would face. God would be to Joshua at the Jordan and at the battle of Jericho what he was at the Red Sea- the Lord of salvation.

Seeing with the eye of faith is explained by this quote from A. W. Pink,

Heb. 11:29 tells us that it was “by faith they passed through the Red Sea,” and faith is the opposite of sight. The mistake arises from jumping to the conclusion that “see the salvation of the Lord” refers to physical sight. It was spiritual sight that Moses referred to, the exercising of the eyes of the heart. Faith is a looking not at the things which are seen, but a looking “at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:18)... And of Moses we read, “he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:13) that is, seeing Him with the eyes of faith. To “see the salvation of the Lord” we must first “stand still”—all fleshly activity must cease.²

*To “see the salvation of the Lord” we must first “stand still”—
all fleshly activity must cease.*

² Pink, A.W. (1964). Gleanings in Joshua (pp. 177-202). Chicago: Moody Press.

With every attack, temptation, or problem, we should first stand still for a moment and stand on the foundation Jesus has already laid for us by His victory. We are strengthened in our faith as we remember the day of our salvation. We see and perceive again and again what Jesus accomplished for us.

Our victory took place at the Cross. We should stand there often and remember:

- Jesus' obedience and righteous life made Him God's perfect sacrifice. He was worthy.
- His perfect substitutionary death took our place in judgment. The Gospel can be summed up in four simple words: *Jesus in my place*.
- His conquest over death through the resurrection proved His victory.
- His faithful position of Advocate and High Priest for us in heaven gives me confidence in prayer.

The true soldier of Jesus Christ must never forget what he saw with the eye of faith and understanding when the Lord saved him.

4. *"The Lord shall fight for you" is the promise of the soldier in spiritual battle.*

Why did the Lord fight for Israel? Why will He fight for you?

The answer is very simple: because of His grace and His great love for you. Remind yourself of that truth often ... but especially when you are in the midst of the battle. Never forget that.

Why should the Lord fight for Israel? Why should He fight for you? The answer is very simple: because of His grace and His great love for you.

The Lord shall fight for you because He chose Abraham and made a promise to him and this day of battle is part of that great promise of deliverance from Egypt.

In preparation for his commission as a good soldier, Joshua is told to *"Stand still and hold his peace."* It would be like a commanding officer telling a soldier, *"Soldier, stand down and do nothing."* In our context, Joshua was told that the Lord alone would fight for him. He was not supposed to take any action in this battle ... only to believe.

Why did the Lord choose to fight this battle alone? Because there was no one else capable of accomplishing what God desired. Who else could open the Red Sea, so that Israel might be set free? Who else could send ten supernatural plagues on Egypt to get Pharaoh's

attention? Joshua learned to trust God completely, so much so that in a future battle he would command the sun to stand still in the heavens.

This was a faith-building day for Joshua. It was also a glory-getting day for the Lord. Everyone everywhere would hear of His great power to deliver His nation.

At the Red Sea, Joshua forever settled in his mind that God was the God of the impossible. What God promised to perform, He accomplished. That which He commanded, He enabled Joshua to obey. Where He sent His soldier, He provided.

There are some things that only God alone can do. He doesn't need our help – and besides, we are powerless to help Him anyway.

- Only God could create the world out of nothing. We cannot.

O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth (Isaiah 37:16).

- Only God is immortal and eternal. We are finite and mortal.

He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen (1 Tim. 6:15-16).

- Only God deserves honor and glory for His great work. We do not.

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day (Isaiah 2:11).

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (1 Tim. 1:17).

- Only the Lord could die to save us from our sins. We cannot save ourselves.

(Jesus), who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3).

Joshua learned that with God nothing is impossible.

Joshua stood still and saw the Lord fight for him and do the impossible. He believed that no matter what great enemies and obstacles he faced in the future, the Lord could do the impossible and fight for him.

God asked Abraham, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14)

God asked Jeremiah the same question. *"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? (Jer. 32:26-27).*

When Mary wondered how she could give birth to the Messiah while a virgin, God answered: *"With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).*

From the Red Sea battle to the Battle at the Cross

Just as Joshua stood still at the Red Sea and saw the salvation of the Lord, we must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord at the Cross.

Jesus alone fought for us to obtain our salvation. He alone is unique and qualified to be the one to fight for us and obtain for us eternal salvation. He alone is fully God. Yet He was also fully man to represent us. The Messiah had to be born of a virgin with no earthly father so as not to inherit the sin nature of our father Adam.

In this unique role, He did for us what we could not do. He faced Satan and temptation and never sinned. As God's sinless man, He alone qualified to be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous (Romans 5:18).

As God's sinless man, He alone qualified to be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

The soldier of God must stand still and see the great salvation that the Lord Jesus alone obtained.

- We could not defeat Satan. But Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil.
- We could not free ourselves, for we were born slaves to sin. But Jesus came to redeem us with His blood.

- We could not live sinless lives and stand before a Holy God. *“But Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Cor 5:21).
- We could not pay the penalty for our sin, which is death. *But while we were sinners Christ died for us* (Rom 5:8).
- We could not conquer death but on the third day Jesus arose to become our Resurrection and Life.

We must stand still and see that salvation is impossible to us, but possible only in the Lord Jesus.

The rich young ruler came to Jesus, questioning how to obtain eternal life. *“What good thing shall I do that I might have eternal life?”* (Matt. 19:16). Jesus answered that salvation was too hard for man. In fact, it was impossible.

And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:26-27).

As soldiers, we stand at the Cross and, in deep love and humility, acknowledge these great truths – that the Lord alone saved us, and that we could do nothing but receive this gift of grace from Jesus Christ by faith.

The Lord alone saved us. We could do nothing but receive this gift of grace from Jesus Christ by faith.

Like Joshua we must have that deep foundation laid before we enter into spiritual warfare. We fight from victory to victory on this great truth.

Grace demands that God does it all and we are the recipients of His favor by faith.

The soldier who has this foundational principal built into his life will:

- Be confident in Christ’s victory over Satan.
- Be under the authority of the Christ therefore will have authority over Satan.
- Stand still and wait on God’s instructions.
- Place more emphasis on prayer than he does on programs.
- Seek to rescue those lost in Satan’s kingdom
- Lay claim to their inheritance in Christ.

5. “You shall hold your peace” the soldier ceasing from his own strength to enter into the victory of God’s rest.

The phrase “*You shall hold your peace*” can also be translated *to remain quiet or silent*. It pictures God amplifying His grace in which the work of salvation is His alone. It is not the soldier offering to help God with his feeble weapons, or speaking up and giving God a battle strategy. God does it all. The soldier does not lift one finger on his own behalf to save himself. He stands still and sees with the eye of faith God’s so great salvation.

Joshua will indeed fight with all his might in the second battle as **the Lord fights with him** against Amalek. However, in this foundational battle, **the Lord fights for him**.

Every fiber of our flesh will struggle against the principle of grace alone. We feel that we must do something to help God save us. Consider the great Gospel truth of Romans 4:4-5.

*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. **But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness** (Romans 4:4-5, emphasis mine).*

If Joshua had not learned this principle of resting in silence before God, he would not have been able to obey God with His unusual instructions at Jericho to march around the city in silence for six days. Joshua had learned to wait before God and receive God’s wisdom before he battled Jericho. Joshua by faith obeyed and had seen the salvation of the Lord before the shout of victory on the seventh day when the walls of Jericho fell.

Our human nature wants to do something in order to earn salvation. We attempt to “establish our own righteousness.” Imagine saying to a drowning man, “Stay still; don’t fight!” But that is exactly what he needs to hear. Until he stops fighting and flailing, it is nearly impossible to rescue him. That’s true for us, also. Until we stop fighting God, and stop trying to save ourselves, we will never be able to be saved by Jesus.

Until we stop fighting God, and stop trying to save ourselves, we will never be able to be saved by Jesus.

In one of his books, Watchman Nee told the story of a lifeguard saving a drowning man. At first, the man panicked and wildly beat the water with his arms and legs. The lifeguard did nothing. He simply stood on the shore and watched the man grow weaker and weaker. When it seemed that the man had no strength left at all, the lifeguard went to his rescue.

Watchman Nee asked the lifeguard why he waited so long to save the man. I have never forgotten the answer: “*The best time to save a drowning man is when he stops trying to save himself.*” That’s exactly what Paul said in Romans 5:6. “*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*”

Like the drowning man, you and I struggle to save ourselves. Surely there is something we can do to earn salvation. But there is not. Christianity is not a self-help program to make you better. It is a rescue plan designed to save you. Man's best attempts at religion tell him to "do." Christianity proclaims "done." It is only by the finished work of Christ on the cross that we can be saved. Notice the common elements in entering into God's rest of salvation:

- Stand still (Exodus 14:13)
- Hold your peace (Exodus 14:14)
- Cease from your own works (Hebrews 4:10)
- Without strength to save yourself (Romans 5:6)
- Not according to our works (Romans 4:2)

Once the foundation of faith is laid in our life, God builds on that same principle of faith as we live the Christian life. We go forward and fight – but we do not fight in our own strength.³

The soldier never forgets his salvation was by grace through faith. All future battles build on the principles learned in Christ's finished work on our behalf.

The soldier never forgets his salvation was by grace through faith. All future battles build on the principles learned in Christ finished work in our behalf.

Summation of the Soldier's Foundation Battle

God can do more through us in one day as we rely on His power than we can do in fifty years of self-effort. This should invigorate our prayer life, as we realize that God can work if we just believe Him.

- We must first stand still, ceasing from our own works.
- We must believe in Christ's salvation victory on our behalf.
- We must not be afraid; we must not rely on self-efforts, but trust in God's Spirit and leadership.
- We must stand still on that which God has already established as His pattern and finished work.
- We do not fight for victory, but we enter into that rest of the victory that has already been won by Jesus. Then we fight from the victory that Jesus has already won.

³ For a fuller explanation of this principle, see Truman Herring, *God's Greater Purpose in Christ*.

- The faith-rest life is able to praise God for tomorrow's victory today and is able to praise God for victory before the actual battle.
- When we cease from our own works, we will see God do more in a moment than we could ever do.
- We must stand still, believing that the battle is not ours but God's.



Application

God's battle plan at the Rea Sea is the pattern for our salvation. When we are awakened by the Gospel and the Holy Spirit to our helpless lost state, we are also to understand that the Lord Jesus has done for us what we could not do for ourselves.

1. *"Fear not"* is the attitude of faith in salvation.
2. *"Stand still"* is the position of ceasing from our own works to enter into the finished work of Christ.
3. *"See the salvation of the Lord"* is the proper object of faith in salvation that the Lord Jesus has provided by His righteous life, His death on the cross, and His victory over death by His resurrection.
4. *"The Lord shall fight for you"* is the promise of salvation that Jesus alone is God's representative man as the "Second Man" and "The Last Adam" who has defeated sin and Satan for us.
5. *"You shall hold your peace"* is the repentant lost sinner having no faith in himself, transferring his trust instead to the finished work of Christ for salvation.

Do Not Lift One Finger

There is spiritual warfare when we present the Gospel, whether it is one-on-one evangelism or preaching to a crowd. Satan does not stand by idle as we seek to rescue people from bondage. What God said to Paul at his conversion is our mission as well: *"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins"* (Acts 26:18). The Gospel is first hidden from the lost by Satan, who blinds the eyes of those who do not believe (2 Cor. 4:4).

We are told that the natural mind cannot comprehend the things of God and that His Spirit must reveal them to us. (1 Cor. 2:14)

I was in South Carolina and had the privilege of meeting with a woman who was under deep conviction of her need for Christ by the Holy Spirit. I shared the Gospel and Christ's finished work on her behalf and still she was in a struggle just to trust Christ. In an attempt to find her stumbling block to grace, I asked her to tell me in her own words what she must do to be saved.

She responded, *"Before I can be saved, I must quit my job as a waitress at the restaurant."* I asked her where she got that idea. Apparently, another preacher had told her that because she served alcohol with the meals the customers ordered, repentance would require her to quit her job before trusting Christ. I am amazed at the ideas people have about the requirements of salvation. In her mind, she had turned *"repent and believe the Gospel"* into a self-righteous work that kept her from Christ.

I told her she misunderstood the Gospel. As I sat in my armchair, without moving my hand I lifted just my little finger slightly. I ask her if she could do what I just did and lift her little finger. She did. I asked her how much effort did it take to just lift her little finger. She responded that it took almost no effort at all.

I then explain that even lifting one little finger to save yourself must be rejected. *"If you have to get out of your chair to do anything in order to be saved then you have the wrong object of your faith. Jesus cried from the cross that It is Finished."* I said, *"All you can do is to trust Jesus now where you sit in your chair without lifting one finger."*

In that moment she saw it. God opened her eyes to the truth of *"by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone"* and the burden of her soul was lifted. She understood the Gospel and *"ceased from her own works to enter God rest of salvation."*⁴

Write below a statement in this section that spoke to you.

⁴ *"Repent and believe"* is the change of mind from *self-works* to *faith in the finished work of Christ alone*. The good works that follow salvation are the fruits of repentance that prove a change of heart in salvation.