

JAMES J. HOLDEN



**MIGHTY
WARRIOR**

**God's Calling His Men To Battle.
Will You Answer His Call?**

**If You Enjoy This
Ebook, Then Look For More
Free Ebooks
From Mantour Ministries
In Coming Months!!**

**Feel free to make copies and distribute this ebook for use as curriculum in your
men's ministry. All we ask is you don't charge for copies. We gave
it to you for free, please pass on the blessing**

© 2013 by James J. Holden

All Rights Reserved

Printed in the United States of America

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International

Version, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society

Published by Mantour Ministries Books

If You Would Like To Donate To Mantour Ministries To Help Us Continue Providing Free Resources To Help Men Grow In Their Walk With God, You Can Send a Check To

James J. Holden Ministries

PO Box 24

Tower City, PA 17980

Or Click The Donate Button at www.mantourministries.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
1. A Call To Arms.....	11
2. Reconnaissance—Learning From Past Defeats.....	21
3. An Officer & A Gentleman.....	31
4. Secrets Of War.....	42
5. Marching Orders.....	50
6. War Memorials.....	60
7. Hell Week.....	70
8. Meet Your C.O.	82
9. Following Orders.....	89
10. Treason.....	98
11. Rallying The Troops.....	110
12. Down In The Trenches.....	122
13. The Axis Of Evil.....	131
14. Battle Fatigue.....	143
15. Battle Fatigue.....	153
16. The Green Zone.....	164
17. Final Thoughts Of A Warrior.....	175
18. A Question For The Ages.....	185

INTRODUCTION

I grew up in a small town in a rural area of Pennsylvania. My town sat in a valley surrounded by mountains. To get anywhere, you had to travel either over or around one of these mountains. One popular travel route went through a military base located just over the mountain.

As a child, I always looked forward to driving through this base and seeing the helicopters flying through the air. I think my fascination with the military started on these trips, and it only grew as I got older. In school, I would doodle pictures of tanks and fighter jets with big U.S. Army logos on them.

As a teenage boy, I was fascinated as our air force pounded the Iraqi army during the first Gulf War. It was spectacular to see the jets rocketing off the aircraft carriers and to hear of the incredible accuracy with which they struck their targets. I was awestruck as I watched the bravery of the young soldiers as they went about their mission of freeing the Kuwaiti citizens. I remember standing on the side of the road cheering for the local soldiers as they returned from the battle, bronzed from the desert sun and happy to be home.

On Memorial Day, my patriotic pastor gave special time to recognize the brave men and women who have served our country. They were greeted to thunderous applause as they stood to receive their much deserved recognition. At that moment, I noticed the look of pride on their faces. This caused my respect for soldiers to increase.

During my college years, I seriously considered becoming a military chaplain. The thought of ministering to our brave warriors appealed to me. However, because of my many physical problems, I realized that this was not God's will for my life.

Over the past few years, my admiration and respect for the military has only grown as I see the tremendous sacrifice they make fighting the War on Terror. They leave their family, friends, and all they hold dear to protect our country. Many of them even volunteer for additional tours of duty. They love doing their job. Most of them are disappointed if they don't get a chance to go to the battle.

My feelings about the military are not uncommon to men. Many had boyhood dreams of being a soldier. Some loved guns, some the awesome machinery and tanks, while others love the aircraft and naval equipment. While I am fascinated by all of these things, the one thing I love about the military is the attitude of the soldiers themselves. There is no obstacle they can't climb, no enemy they can't defeat. Surrender is never an option. Strength is exuded over weakness, confidence instead of doubt.

While studying the Bible, I have come to realize something. My lifelong dream of becoming a soldier has come true. The moment I confessed my sins and asked Jesus to become my Lord and Savior, I enlisted in God's army. Let me explain.

The greatest desire of my life is to become a godly man like Jesus. I long to become a man who is known for demonstrating godly character. I want to have the same heart, mind, and spirit as Jesus. This is my mission and goal in life. However, the deeper I go into this journey, the more I find myself dealing with areas of weakness, temptation and sin. What is going on?

Then God reminded me of a Bible study I started a few years ago. I always loved to read about Joshua in the Old Testament. He was an incredible man who was born in very difficult circumstances. He was a slave and a son of a slave. We will see him become the great leader who led the Israelites into the Promised Land, but we must remember he was born a slave.

Joshua's father's name was Nun. Nun was a slave in Egypt, living a life of forced labor under Pharaoh. We see Nun's trust in God to bring His people out of slavery by the name he gave his son, Hoshea, which means "Salvation". Later, it was changed to Joshua. Nun was a man of vision who felt salvation needed to come to the next generation, which is exactly what happened.

God called Moses to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt. After God performed many supernatural acts, the Pharaoh let the Israelites go. Joshua saw the mighty deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea. He witnessed first-hand the destruction of Pharaoh and His army. Joshua learned that the power of God was real, and that He used it to help His people. He learned as a young man when it is God's timing to act on our behalf, HE HOLDS NOTHING BACK!

Joshua participated in the first Passover celebration. He was one of the men circumcised in Exodus 13. He saw the pillar of fire and the cloud which led the people of Israel on the safest route out of Egypt (Ex. 13:17-18). He ate the manna and he drank from the rock (Ex 16). Joshua experienced firsthand the power and deliverance of his people from oppression and captivity.

God had a plan for this young man. He had Moses take Joshua under his wing and prepare him to be the man to lead the nation into the Promised Land. He saw the desire in Joshua to live in freedom. God knew a man like this could be used to help the rest of the people attain freedom in their lives. He could help them break from the enemies they encountered and take back their Promised Land. In the book of Joshua, we will see how God helped Joshua and the second generation go into their land and conquer it. We will see the different ways God led Joshua and the people of Israel into the Promised Land.

Like Joshua, we are all bound to slavery and sin. However, we are working toward obtaining the promises God has for us. The greatest promise is that we can be made into the image of Jesus. I know first-hand this is a tremendous battle. However, God has been helping me and showing me through the life of Joshua how to fight the enemy and gain victory on the battleground of a godly man. In order to become like Jesus, we have to grab our weapons and go to war with our enemies. In this book, we will dig into the book of Joshua and learn how to become godly warriors who let nothing stand in our way of becoming like Jesus.

To do this, we need to take on the mind set of our young military warriors. We need to feel there is no sin we can't defeat, no battle we can't win, and no stronghold we can't conquer. We can gain the victory! Nothing can stop us. All we have to do is engage the enemy and be willing to fight.

You may be thinking, "I understand what you're saying and I want to learn from Joshua how to overcome, but who am I supposed to fight? Who is the enemy?"

The Battleground's Beginning

To understand the conflict in which we are engaged, we must look “in the beginning”. In the book of Genesis, we see Adam and Eve, the first created humans, living in complete unity and harmony with God. They were perfect creatures without sin or fault. However, this doesn't last long, for we are soon introduced to our enemy.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”

⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the

garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:1-8

Satan came into the garden and deliberately drew Adam and Eve into sin. As a result, mankind is born with a sin nature. This causes separation from God. Our natural inclination and desire is to sin. We all have it. It is unavoidable. However, it can be conquered. This is the job of all godly men and women. It is also the battleground we face. It is the thing that rises up and fights us when we try and become like Jesus.

Satan hates to see anyone try to break free of their sinful nature and become like Jesus. He will always try and stop us. The Bible says he is like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. He will fight us tooth and nail. He will throw his entire arsenal at us; temptation, guilt, demonic attacks, condemnation, even persecution. He fights dirty. It is our job as men desiring to be like Jesus to follow His example and fight!

You may be asking, "Why exactly does Satan want to destroy us? Why is he our enemy?" In order to find this answer, we have to go back further in time.

Before the Beginning

We read in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 25:8:12-15 how Satan came to be our enemy. These passages tell us that he was once known as Lucifer. He was a mighty angel created by God to serve God. Lucifer was extremely beautiful and became impressed with himself. He decided to try a coup de tat against God. He and his followers lost and were banished from Heaven. One day they will all face the ultimate

judgment and be placed in the fiery pit. In the meantime, Satan is trying to separate all people from God. He wants to take as many people to Hell with him as he can.

The battle exists because we try to break free of our sinful nature and enter into a deep relationship loving and serving God. Satan hates God, and, as he did with Adam and Eve, he wants to destroy our relationship with God. It is our responsibility as godly men to fight against Satan, to kill our sin nature, and build our relationship with God. This is the battleground of a godly man.

In this book, we will discuss the basics of this spiritual battle and how to apply these principles to our lives. We will do this by examining Joshua and the Israelites as they enter the Promised Land. It is a fight to the death, but we can win!

In the image of our armed forces, we need to become strong, decisive men. We will conclude each chapter with our “Decision Time.” This part of the chapter will list some hard choices we must make. We will be presented with challenging questions designed to make us choose whether or not we will do what the chapter asked us to do.

At the end of each chapter, I will give something called “War Drills”. On bases across the nation, our soldiers practice maneuvers and drills to prepare for battle. The drills at the end of each chapter are designed for the same reason: to prepare us ahead of time to fight any enemies that come our way.

I hope you have caught the passion I feel for this book. Together we can become Mighty Warriors in God’s Kingdom.

CHAPTER 1

A CALL TO ARMS

A few years ago, God started making me deal with a major enemy in my life. Since I was a little boy, fear has been a major issue for me. Much of the fear came from the abusive way my father treated me, especially when we were alone. Along with this fear came an unwillingness to stand up for myself. These two issues came to a head when my father developed an injury to his foot which required medical treatment.

For most of my life, I experienced abuse from my father whenever we were alone. Car rides were one of the most frequent times for his abuse. As a result, I learned to fear going anywhere alone with my dad. Even as an adult, I found ways to avoid being alone with my dad in the car. However, this became difficult since he needed these appointments. These doctor appointments were also hard because my dad was being treated for a medical condition that I also have. Having to deal with this made me feel more fear about my condition. I hated answering their questions about my foot disability. Needless to say, I had to find a way out of this responsibility.

I pushed the responsibilities off to the other members of my family. After avoiding my father and these appointments, I began to think I had finally conquered this area. We didn't fight nearly as much. The abuse toward me had lessened, causing me not to react as much to his treatment. I had gone to great lengths to make sure I would never have to be alone with him again. I had planned, prepared, and strategized so that it would never again be an issue. As I settled into prayer, I relayed to God how far I had

come in dealing with my dad and being alone with him. I was sure that God would be thrilled and give me a good dose of “That a boy, Jamie.” I was wrong!

I arrogantly presented my self-praising evidence to God, confident He would be pleased. To my shock and dismay, God said, “You haven’t overcome this area. You ran away from it. You didn’t stare down your enemy and conquer it. You turned and fled, hoping it wouldn’t chase you. This is not My will for you. I will be pleased when you face this area of sin, stare it down, refuse to bend, and overcome it. I want you to defeat it once and for all.”

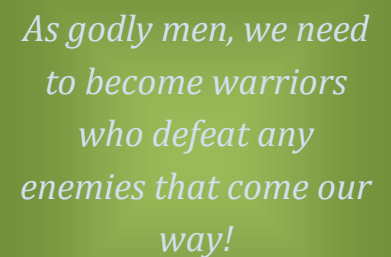
At first, I was stunned. I didn’t really see how avoiding my father’s abuse was sin. Then I got angry that God didn’t think as highly of me as I did. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized God was right. I didn’t gain a victory. The sin was not overcome and conquered. I had simply avoided it by running away. I had pushed the responsibility off onto another person. They were the ones who had to handle my father and endure his abuse. I passed the battle onto them. This was not the action of a strong warrior. It was the behavior of a wimp who was not willing to fight. I immediately repented for running away and for my arrogance. I asked God to give me strength to stare down this sin and overcome it. I want to live free from it.

Since that time, God has done tremendous work in me. He has shown me the need to face these fears and overcome. I had to begin to take my dad to the doctor. I had to risk being alone with him. I had to endure the doctor’s questions. God helped me face the fear and other enemies that kept me from being a servant to my father.

I am now able to go on these trips. I answered the doctor's questions. Not only that, but I even got to tell him how God had healed the one foot and promised to heal the other one. By engaging this enemy, I am able to be the man God wants me to be. I fought this battle and I made progress. This wasn't possible until I stopped running from my enemy, turned around, and faced it head on.

No where in the Bible does it say we are to run away from our enemy, except when dealing with sexual temptation. We are commanded to fight. We are told to resist the devil. We are told that when we have done all we know to do, we should stand firm and face it (Ephesians 6:13-14). This is God's will for us. Unfortunately, many men take the same approach I took. They choose to avoid the battles. They try to stay clear of dealing with the enemies in their lives. Instead, they push the responsibility off onto other people. They let them fight their battles.

This should not be! As godly men, we need to become warriors who defeat any enemies that come our way. As we begin our study of the book of Joshua, we see God giving Joshua words of encouragement as he steps into his place as the man to lead the children of Israel. These words will encourage us to step into the battle and defeat our enemies.



As godly men, we need to become warriors who defeat any enemies that come our way!

Joshua was an incredible man. We first read about Joshua in Exodus 17. However, Joshua story begins way before the Bible mentions him. Joshua was born a slave in Egypt. He was a slave and the son of a slave. However, God had other plans for Joshua. His will was not for Joshua to live out his days as a slave to a cruel

taskmaster. He wanted him to enjoy the freedom and blessing that God had promised the nation of Israel years before. God miraculously moved and set the people free from the chains of Egypt. He brought them out of their slavery. He used Moses to lead the people toward their own Promised Land.

God handpicked Joshua to be Moses' successor. Moses took Joshua under his wing and taught him everything he would need to know to lead the people into the Promised Land. One of the most important lessons Moses taught Joshua was how to fight against the enemy and defeat them.

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidem. So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered... So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

Joshua learned early on a lesson that is important for all of us to remember. While God is the One Who sets us free from the slavery of our enemies, there will be times when we need to fight to stay free. Joshua and the Israelites came under attack from the Amalakites. In the past, God had defeated the Egyptians, but this time He required them to fight to defeat their enemies. **God**

While God is the One Who set us free from the slavery of our enemies, there will be times when we need to fight to stay free.

helped them gain the victory, but they still had to fight. The same is true for us.

We are like Joshua. We are born as slaves--slaves to sin. When we accepted Jesus as our Savior, God forgave us of our sins and set us from the guilt of our sins. However, we still have enemies we will need to fight. We need to overcome our enemies. We must conquer them so we can live victorious. God wants us to fight these enemies and defeat them. He will be right there helping us along the way as He fought for the Israelites. He will empower us to move forward and win our battles just as He did with Joshua. How do I know this? Because God promises us that if we will engage the enemy, then He will help us give us the victory. We see this promise as we take our first look at the book of Joshua.

Moses Is Dead To Begin With

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant..

Moses, the great leader of the nation of Israel, has died. Joshua is now the leader of the people of Israel. As leader, his chief responsibility is to lead the people of Israel into war against their enemies. Joshua is an experienced fighter. He had led the Israelite army in the past when the nation came under attack. These battles gave him the experience he would need when it came time to defeat his enemies and take back their Promised Land. However, these battles would be different. In the past, Joshua had responded to attacks. Now he was to become the one leading the invasion into enemy territory. However, he knew what it had been like to be bound in slavery, and he was never going back to that again.

Enemies had overtaken their land while they were in Egypt. War had to be fought to clear these enemies of their territory. Joshua knew he was the man to fight such a battle. All he needed was the word from God to begin the campaign. It wasn't long after the time of mourning for Moses was over that God gave Joshua the go-ahead. As we study the commands of God, we will see that the words spoken by God to Joshua still apply to us today.

...the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ² "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.

God gives Joshua the orders to move forward. These verses are a direct word from God specifically to Joshua, but I feel they offer us great hope and motivation as we prepare to conquer our enemies. Let's take a look.

³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Joshua was well aware of the promises God had given to Moses. He knew God had promised to give them back their land. He knew in the past God had helped the nation win battles under Moses, and he could now be certain that God would help him in the same way. God always sided with Moses against his enemies. God is promising

Joshua that He would do the same for him. No enemy or army could stand against Joshua as long as God was beside him fighting on his behalf. No matter what enemies Joshua went up against, he would gain the victory. We have the same assurance.

We, like Joshua, have enemies standing between us and our promised freedom in Christ. We are all men who have given ground to sin in our lives. We must be willing to move and overcome it. Every time we commit a sin, it becomes a part of us. It is our job to take back those areas of sin and conquer them. We must kill the sin and replace it with godly character qualities and actions.

The Bible is full of promises that we will be able to do this. Jesus said He will give us a Helper, the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us no weapon formed against us shall prosper. It says we can be filled with the fruit of the Spirit and become like Jesus. I believe we can draw hope from God's Promise to Joshua that if we are willing to face our sin, then God will give us what we need to conquer it. In order to know how to go about winning these battles, we need to look at the rest of God's words to Joshua.

⁶ Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good

success.⁹ *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

God tells Joshua that no one will be able to stand against him and win. What a tremendous promise! Joshua is totally assured God will be the one helping him defeat the enemies standing between him and the Promised Land. This promise also holds true for us today. God promises us that He will help us fight our enemies. These enemies are demonic influences we face from generational sins as well as sins we have committed on our own. Also, Satan and his demons attack us with temptations designed to trap us in sin. God promises us if we will face demonic influences, we will defeat them! He promised this to Joshua, and He will do the same for us.

Joshua's response to God is immediate.

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,¹¹ Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, "Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess."

Joshua immediately obeyed God's orders. He had been trained for such a time as this. He was ready. He wanted to take the fight to his enemies. He wanted to live in the blessings of the Promised Land. He gave the order for the nation to break camp. He exhibited the strength and courage God had commanded from him. He demonstrated obedience by immediately doing what God said. He knew he had enemies to fight against, and he was eager to begin the battles.

We need to have the same attitude. We can no longer be content to simply have the basics of the Christian life. We can no longer settle for fire insurance from Hell. We need to become godly men who yearn for an intense, deep, and intimate relationship with Christ. We must long with every fiber of our being to break free of the enemies that keep us from obtaining this goal. We must yearn to defeat them and live free of their sinful bondage.

We can no longer be content to simply have the basics of the Christian Life!

God promises us that we can have this kind of relationship with Him. He will help us fight and defeat our enemies. He will allow no enemy to stand against us. He will give us any and all spiritual blessings we desire as long as we are willing to courageously stand up and fight these enemies.

It is time we answer this call to arms. It is time we rise up and say “Enough is Enough! I want all the freedom that is available to me. I am tired of facing the same old enemies over and over. I want to be free. I want to be a godly man with a deep, mature, and fruitful relationship with God!”

The freedom is there for the taking. Through the rest of this book, we will learn how to go about obtaining this freedom, but first we have to face the key decision before us.

Decision Time

This book is directed at men who want to be godly warriors. It is for men who are tired of being defeated by the same sins. They are sick of the direction there life is

going. They want to break the cycle they are in and go in a new direction. If you feel like your spiritual life is spinning in circles, or you just aren't living in the freedom you want in life, then this book can help. Before continuing on, you have to make a decision.

Will I obey God's command to go to battle against my spiritual enemies? Will I obediently fight to defeat these enemies? Will I choose to face the sins that hold me captive? Will I face areas of my life that I have avoided in the past?

I have made my decision. Like Joshua, I want to live in the freedom that is promised to every believer. I have decided to fight any wars and face any enemies that try and keep me from enjoying this freedom in Christ. If you are willing to be strong and courageous and engage your enemies, then let's continue on to learn how to gain victory and become Mighty Warriors!



War Drills

1. Decide if you will accept this call to arms. Take time to think about the questions listed above. Decide if you are content to settle for fire insurance, or if you want the deeper relationship described. If you accept the call to arms, then write the decision down. Include the date you made the decision.

CHAPTER 2

RECONNAISSANCE—LEARNING FROM PAST DEFEATS

Can you remember what you were doing on July 27th, 2001? Probably 99.5% of you would say no. What if I changed the date? Can you remember where you were on September 11, 2001? Most people can remember exactly where they were on the day that changed the world.

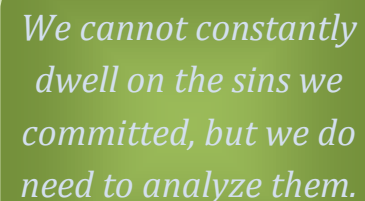
I remember getting up and turning on the TV to see if my beloved Denver Broncos had won their season opener on Monday Night Football. My mom and sister were in the kitchen baking a birthday cake for my dad. As I waited for a commercial, I flipped over to the local news to catch the weather only to learn that a plane had crashed into one of the Twin Towers. I thought at first a small plane had accidentally hit the building. After a few moments, I switched back to Sports Center to catch the highlights. During the few minutes I was gone, the second plane hit the second tower, alerting everyone that this was no accident. We were under attack!

It was a sad and frightening day for all Americans as we watched the Pentagon being hit. It was scary to hear of Flight 93 crashing in a field in my home state of Pennsylvania. It was also a day that changed everything.

Our government has changed the way it does thing as a result of this attack. It changed airport security and developed a Department of Homeland Security. It investigated any mistakes and weaknesses which allowed the attack to happen. We rallied our military and began fighting the War on Terror. We learned all we could and

made corrections to try and prevent future attacks. Our nation's motto became "We will never forget".

Being part of God's kingdom involves being in a war with Satan's evil kingdom. We as godly men should not view the battles we face daily as strange. Satan has been attacking us for years. Unfortunately, we have lost battles and committed sins. Many believe if we confess our sins they are forgotten and should be left in the past. It is true God forgives us and does not hold the sin against us anymore. However, it is irresponsible for us to try and put the memory out of our minds. We cannot constantly dwell on the sins we committed, but we do need to analyze them. There is too much knowledge to be gained about Satan's tactics as well as our own weak areas. Like our government after 9-11, we need to analyze our defeats and discover what we did wrong so that we can overcome and gain the victory in the next battle. As we return to the book of Joshua, we see Joshua doing just that.



We cannot constantly dwell on the sins we committed, but we do need to analyze them.

Joshua has been emboldened by the words God spoke to him. He is now preparing to attack the enemies standing between him and the Promise Land. Like any good general, he begins by gathering intelligence for the attack.

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

Joshua sent two men to spy out the land. His eyes are pointed forward toward the city of Jericho. However, I feel there is evidence that Joshua also has his eyes pointed backwards.

*Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out **two** men from Acacia Grove to spy **secretly**, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.”*

Joshua sent out two spies on a secret mission. Notice he doesn't tell anyone else in the camp what he is doing. In order to understand the importance of this we need to go back over forty years in time.

Forty years earlier Moses sent 12 men to spy out the terrain. He chose one man from each tribe, ensuring that all would be equally represented. Among these 12 men were Caleb and a younger Joshua.

The 12 men went throughout the Promised Land, gathering intelligence on the terrain and the people. They discovered their strengths and weaknesses. After a 40 day mission, they returned to the camp to deliver the report.

They relayed the great news that the land was rich and plentiful. They showed them the cluster of grapes they brought back with them. It took two men to carry one cluster of grapes! This was one great place they were heading toward!

You would expect the spies to be excited and anxious to begin their military campaign. However, ten of the spies would gravely sin against God by complaining, doubting, fearing, and not believing what God wanted for them. They had rebellion in their hearts to God's Will.

They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

Can you believe this? These ten men are discouraging Moses and the nation from going and conquering their promised territory! Not only that, but they are filling the people with fear. We see this through their description of the descendants of Anak, a race of people who had settled in Palestine before the Canaanites took possession. These were unusually large people, probably the forefathers of men like Goliath of Gath seen in 1 Samuel. Also, they refer to the Nephilim, a race of giants described briefly in Genesis 6:4. Their report spread panic through the camp.

It is at this point that Joshua and Caleb stepped forward and spoke.

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

What a statement of faith! Here is a man, who in the middle of the bad report, stands up and says, "We can do it!"

Caleb spoke the words of a man who believed God would fulfill His promise and give them the land. He had full confidence in God and was willing to follow Him no matter what. Unfortunately, his feelings weren't shared by the rest of the camp.

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

These words sent Joshua and Caleb into action. They were not about to go back to Egypt to become slaves again. They didn't care what trials or troubles lay ahead. They weren't concerned about facing a stronger army. They knew God had set them free and they were grateful to God for this freedom. NO ONE was making them go back again!

Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

You would think that the words of these great men would have stirred the people to repentance. However, the passage says the opposite.

But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

It is at this point that God put an end to the rebellion and killed the 10 spies who gave the bad report. Only Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the Promised Land with the second generation of Israelites. All the rest would fall dead in the wilderness over the next 40 years. What began as a glorious mission to spy out the land and begin the conquest turned into a day of death and loss for the nation of Israel.

I believe as Joshua planned for the new spy mission, he kept this day firmly in his mind. He learned from this loss and took the lesson into the next battle.

First of all, he did the mission secretly. He sent the two men without the knowledge of the rest of the camp. He wanted the report to come back directly to him without involving the rest of the nation. That way, an insurrection couldn't begin and the people wouldn't fall into rebellion and sin.

The second difference is that he only sent two men. Moses sent twelve men. It is much easier to keep two men in line and follow God than it is twelve men.

The final difference is Joshua hand-picked the two men, while Moses used delegates from each tribe. Moses picked them based on ethnicity while Joshua chose them based on their character. He had a job which needed done and he wanted men he could rely on. Joshua wanted his mission to be a success, so he analyzed the past defeat to make sure it didn't happen again. This is exactly what we need to do.

Backward Progression

We need to become men, who, like Joshua, are willing to look backwards and honestly analyze the sins we have committed. Satan is an extremely unoriginal enemy. He has used the same playbook forever. If you have ever faced an attack, the odds are you will one day face it again. The people and situations may change, but the tactics are always the same. Like a good spy, we have to look at the weak points, the areas of vulnerability, and the natural tendencies which cause us to fall to our enemy. I can think of 2 main areas we need to study.

Satan is an extremely unoriginal enemy. He has used the same playbook forever.

1. Generational Sins

The first area is our generational sins. Generational sins are the sins which were passed to us from our parents. These sins are inherent in all of us. They also come naturally because we observed our parents behavioral patterns. For example, the son of an alcoholic will have a natural weakness to becoming an alcoholic himself. A demon of alcoholism and addiction is passed from parent to child. This son needs to realize the generational sin is there, command the demon to leave through prayer and/or a deliverance session, and make sure he never takes a drink. He also must make sure you don't substitute alcoholism with another form of addiction such as being a workaholic, a control-freak, or a fanatic. This is how we analyze a generational sin.

One big generational sin I have had to recognize and destroy is being an emotional abuser, especially to women. I have a very abusive father who had an abusive father who had an abusive father. I saw him abuse me and my family. It was normal to me. I thought it was how a man acted. As a result, I developed into an abusive man.

Years later, God has made me face my father's abuse and the affects it had on me. I have had to face the generational sin, go through deliverance for the abuse demon, and stop being an abuser. Until I analyzed my sins and saw what I did wrong, I couldn't stop abusing and overcome.

Over the years, God has made me face many generational sins which I inherited from my father and his family. I had to defeat the generational sin of being moody. The men in my family are terribly moody. One day they are happy, the next day miserable. No one ever knew where they stood. Their moods set the tone of the entire household. I had to face this sin and defeat it. As a result, I make a conscious effort to be even tempered. I don't let my moods control me.

Analyzing generational sins is vital to winning victory over our enemies. Maybe your generational sins are being hot-tempered. Perhaps lying and deceit are prevalent family behaviors. Maybe it is the norm for your family to be self-centered, focusing on their own selfish interest. Perhaps living above your income through debt is a family sin. Your family may complain about anything and everything. Perhaps your ancestors hoard things, never throwing anything away. I know that I have had to personally face each of the above sins in my ancestors. I learned them. They were engrained in me. I

had to face these generational sins and destroy them once and for all. This is the key to gaining victory over our enemies.

2. Personal sins

Second, we need to analyze our own areas of sin and weakness. We must look at our past and see the areas of sin and weakness which make us most vulnerable to attack. What strongholds of sin are in our lives? Is there an area we struggle to really overcome?

Once we discover these areas, we need to remember the first time we committed them. What was going on? Why did we do it? What were we feeling? What inner need did this sin fulfill? These are tough questions, but they must be answered if we are to learn from our sins and defeat our enemies.

One area of sin in my life was a need to drive excessively fast. Driving way over the speed limit became a way of life for me. However, one day God convicted me of this sin. He showed me that it was sinful to break the law our government set in place. He showed me I had a heart problem and used speeding to cover it up.

Speeding met a need deep inside of me. I grew up with a physical disability that caused me embarrassment and shame. As a result, I never felt as good as other guys around me. I felt like less of a man. God showed me excessive speeding filled the void this pain left inside of me. It made me feel tough and manly and covered the inferiority and worthlessness I felt inside. I had to deal with the sin of speeding, and face my feelings of inferiority. I had to realize that physical limitations did not affect my

manhood. Driving fast didn't make me a better man, so I had to face the sin of speeding and the reasons behind the action. If I had never taken the time to analyze the reasons for my reckless driving, I never would have understood my weak point, the emotional pain and feeling of inferiority, and been able to defeat it and the sin of speeding.

What about you? Are you willing to take the time and effort and honestly examine your sinful defeats? Will you analyze the natural traps which your generational sins set for you? Will you look at the sins you have committed and reason that you committed them? It is a decision only you can make. However, it is essential that you make it so you can continue on becoming a Mighty Warrior.



War Drill

1. Write down a description of your parents. Be honest and thorough. Then ask someone you trust to give you an honest answer to write a description of you. Compare the two lists. See if there are any comparisons. Analyze them to discover generational sins and iniquities.
2. Analyze your natural sinful tendencies and weaknesses. Through the power of the Holy Spirit answer the following questions:
 1. When was the first time you committed it?
 2. What was going on?
 3. Why did we do it?
 4. What were we feeling?
 5. What inner need did this sin fulfill?

CHAPTER 3

AN OFFICER & A GENTLEMAN

Recently, I read a statistic that at first surprised me. It stated that 9 out of 10 men said sexual temptation and sin was the main thing that keeps them from a deep, meaningful relationship with God. While I was surprised by this number at first, on further thought I realized that it was probably true. After all, sexual thoughts and temptations are one of Satan's most used plays in his centuries old playbook. For years, he has used sexual temptations to sink many a man.

As of late, much in the Christian world has been written about the need to bounce our eyes and control what we look at as we flee sexual temptation. This has been a great help to myself as well as many men. Since so much has been written about this side of the battle, there is no need to re-address it now. In this article, I want us to look at another angle and learn how to change our way of thinking so we won't be hit so hard with this particular attack.

Let's face it: Because of the moral depravity and extreme level of sexual material available through many media outlets, our minds have become tainted and contaminated. They are no longer as pure as they should be. Our sinful minds have learned many degrading thought patterns which need to change.

Together we must learn new ways to think and feel about sexual temptation so we can become both an officer and a gentleman. We will do this by studying the

behavior of the two spy's Joshua sent into the Promised Land. They demonstrate to us the proper way to think and act toward women.

The Great Escape

When we last left our two spies, they were leaving under Joshua's orders for the Promised Land. It appears their mission went relatively well. However, this changed when they entered the city of Jericho.

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.² And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

³ So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

⁴ Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from."⁵ And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."⁶ (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)⁷ Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

We read here that the two spies' secret mission was discovered. In order to remain safe, they took refuge in the home of a woman named Rahab. Rahab helped the two men by hiding them and lying about their whereabouts. Once the soldiers who were searching for the spies were diverted away from her house, we read that Rahab went up to the roof to see the men.

How many times has Hollywood used this plot in their spy movies? We all know that the movies would have happen next as the secret agents are hid overnight by a woman, especially one deemed a prostitute in verse one. This thinking is exactly the type of natural groove which needs to be replaced in our heads. We cannot have our minds which are supposed to be becoming holy like Jesus' automatically degrade women and treat them as sexual objects. We must become men who see women as holy vessels and spiritual beings that should be loved, honored, respected, and protected. This is exactly how we see these two spies treat Rahab.

1. They trusted her instead of using her.

The first attitude we see these men display towards Rahab was one of trust. These two men had no idea who Rahab was or how she would treat them. However, instead of looking at her as a dishonest woman, they decided to put their lives in her hands. That is trust. They didn't let her occupation deter them. They didn't see her as a prostitute. They saw her as someone they could depend upon.

While on earth, Jesus was a model of a man who trusted women. When Jesus' mother came to Him begging Him to help the wine situation at a wedding at Cana, He trusted her opinion and did what she asked. We read in the Gospels that Jesus

entrusted His well-being to a group of women who supported Him financially. Jesus trusted Mary Magdalene to go tell His disciples that He had risen from the dead. Jesus always placed His trust in women and we need to do the same.

2. They treated her with dignity, not disgrace.

The second thing to notice about the two spies' treatment of Rahab was they treated her with dignity and respect. Rahab was a woman with a shady past and a bad reputation. She was not a pillar of virtue. However, these two men overlooked this and showed her nothing by dignity and respect. They listened to what she said. They didn't degrade her or look down on her. They were courteous, kind, and respectful.

This is an area in which we as men must grow and mature. I know it is an area of sin that God has shown in my heart. I learned from an early age from my father how to be disrespectful toward women. He is a man who is full of anger, hate, and disrespect toward women because of issues from his past that he refuses to face. I saw his treatment of women, especially my mom and sister. I learned to follow his sinful pattern. Now that I am an adult, I see the cruel and sinful behavior and the devastating affects it has on the women who are on the receiving end. As a result, I am working hard to kill this enemy and gain the victory.

God wants His men to treat all women with dignity and respect. It is the way Jesus treated women. Nowhere in the Bible will you ever find Jesus being disrespectful or condescending to women. It never happened. We need to come to the place where we see any disrespect or

Nowhere in the Bible will you ever find Jesus being disrespectful or condescending to women.

degradation of women as sin. Like these two spies, we must be respectful with all women no matter who they are or what they have done.

3. They valued her thoughts and opinions.

The third thing to notice is the two spies valued Rahab's thoughts and opinions.

⁸ Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

We read here that Rahab told the two spies what she thought about the Israelites battle plans. She told them about the moral among the people of Jericho. She shared what she thought their chances of victory would be. To see the men's response, we must skip ahead to the end of the chapter.

²⁴ And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

They basically told Joshua exactly what Rahab told them. They repeated her opinions. They listened to her. They heard her point of view. They took her seriously.

They worked with her in order to accomplish their mission. They didn't see her as inferior. They didn't look down on her for having strong opinions. They didn't feel they were smarter. They listened, learned, and followed what she said.

It is key that we as men learn this lesson from the two spies. In the book of Genesis, we read that God created Eve because Adam needed a helpmate. He was incomplete without her. Men and women think differently. Men think linear...A to B to C. Women have a greater ability than men to think more emotionally and see the entire picture. We need women to give us a different and sometimes better perspective. Unfortunately, Hollywood and the pornography industry portray women as unintelligent people who are only for sexual pleasure. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Women have the ability to see things in a situation that a man would never see. The wisdom and advice we get from the females in our lives help us get a 3D perspective on a situation, not just a one-dimensional male viewpoint. We must value and respect the opinions of the women around us. It is what these 2 men did, and it gave them the perspective they needed to successfully finish their mission.

4. They showed gratitude to Rahab

The fourth thing we learn from these two men is to show gratitude and appreciation for Rahab and what she did.

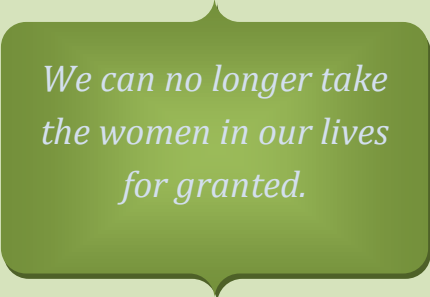
¹⁴ So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

Rahab had risked her life and all that she had in order to protect these two men. If caught, she would have faced a certain death. These men realized that they owed their lives to this brave woman and they made sure she knew how grateful they were to her.

Showing gratitude to the women in our lives is extremely important. It is something God has been showing me this is a major area I need to grow. I grew up around a father who never showed any appreciation to anyone for anything, especially women. He was never satisfied with anything anyone did for him. Instead of being appreciative and grateful to my mom for everything she did to run our house and family, he would constantly criticize her and put her down. He would even make her lists of additional things he wanted done on top of all she had to do, and he would call her from work and make sure she did them.

He was abusive and cruel, never showing her any gratitude. I grew up around this and I have come to realize I don't praise the women in my life enough. I am trying to improve in this area by being more thankful and complimentary. It is what a godly man needs to do.

When was the last time you showed your gratitude to the women in your life? I know I don't do it nearly as often as I should. This lack of gratitude and appreciation by men is a gross sin against God and the women He has blessed us with. We can no longer take the women in our lives for granted. We can't expect them to do what they do as if



*We can no longer take
the women in our lives
for granted.*

they are servants or lesser beings. We must appreciate them. We must praise them. We must let them know how grateful we are to them. We must even pitch in and help them and make their lives easier. To fail to do this is sin. It is also degrading and disrespectful to women. We must all work on this area.

5. They saw Rahab as a spiritual, not a sexual, being.

The final area to examine is one of the most important if we are to win the battle over sexual temptation. Look carefully at these verses.

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, and lodged there.

¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹² Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, ¹³ and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."¹⁴ So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

In the world in which we live, men are taught to always be seeking sex. That is as honest as I can put it. As a result, we can tend to look at women as sexual objects. We look at her body, her appeal, her sensuality, and we base our thoughts and opinions of her on these things. This is sin. It is degrading. It is wrong and it must stop.

We cannot look at women as sexual objects! It is sin, it is degrading, it is wrong, and it MUST stop!!

A godly man will act like Jesus acts. He will see women like Jesus sees them. These two spies never make any mention of Rahab's occupation. They don't view her as a sexual conquest like a Hollywood movie spy would. They see her as a spiritual being. They listened to her heart and heard her desire to follow their God. They insured her safety and security so she could become a convert of the one true God.

We are all guilty of heinous sin when we view women as sexual objects. We must change our thought patterns and mindsets so we can defeat Satan's favorite play.

Take a moment and think about it. If you are watching a tv show, movie, or porn video, are your thoughts about how the women in the video could make you feel, or about how she feels? Do you wonder why she places such a low value on herself by doing what she does? Do you wonder what happened in her life to make her feel so worthless that all she is good for is arousing men? Does it break your heart how hopeless and helpless she feels inside? Do you ever think about how deceived and in bondage she is to sin? Do you think that if she died while making this video she would spend eternity in Hell? Do you think how you would feel if she was your sister or daughter?

We need to wake up and think about these things. It should break our hearts to view women through these eyes. We should never see a scantily dressed woman in an enjoyable way. We also shouldn't see her as a dirty or sinful thing. We should see her as a spiritual being with thoughts, emotions, feelings, dreams, and desires. We should not think provocative thoughts. Instead our first thought should be to immediately ask God to save her and help her reach her full potential as a godly woman.

Do you find this teaching to be too extreme or hard? Then examine Jesus. He was a man with sexual urges and desires. However, he didn't exploit women in order to fulfill his needs. When the prostitute bent over to wash his feet, I am sure he didn't sneak a peek at her cleavage. When left alone with an alleged adulterous, he didn't make any advances. When alone at a well with a promiscuous Samaritan woman, he never tried to take advantage. Instead He always immediately recognized the oppression she faced from men and sought to help her break free. He always addressed her spiritual needs and sought to help her fulfill them. He was a real man. He is the man we must follow.

Decision Time

What about you? Did this chapter strike a chord in your spirit? Are there areas you need to face, change, and conquer? We must learn new ways of thinking about the opposite sex. We must learn to put our trust in the women around us. We must always treat them with dignity and respect. We must value their thoughts and opinions. We must express gratitude and appreciation for both who they are and what they do. Finally, we must look at women as spiritual, not sexual beings. When we make these

changes to our thinking and behavior, we will have gone a long way to overcoming Satan's most deadly torpedoes. We can then become both an officer and a gentleman in God's army. This choice must be made. Let's make it today.



War Drills

1. Make a list of every TV show, movie, magazine, or DVD you ever saw which degraded women. Analyze how they affected your view and image of women. Then repent of each time.
2. Make it a goal to daily find a way to show appreciation and gratitude to the women in your life.
3. TV and movies have contributed to forming unhealthy thoughts and images about women. In order to help cleanse your mind from these thoughts, take a one month fast from TV and movies. Use this time to renew your mind by reading the Bible. You will be stunned at the end of the month how much stronger your conscience will be and how much less you will be able to watch.

CHAPTER 4

SECRETS OF WAR

A few years ago, I turned on my TV and flipped over to the 24-hour news network. I was instantly greeted with a breaking news bulletin. Apparently, the Chinese government had hacked into the Pentagon's computers. I listened intently to hear exactly what, if any, secrets had been uncovered by this Chinese espionage. I was happy to learn they had only gained access to a few low-level e-mail accounts. The whole story turned out to be no big deal, but it was a quick reminder that many countries would love to get their hands on our military secrets.

Secrets of war are not a new thing. For centuries, opposing nations and governments have sought to gain inside information on their enemies. Every government across history has had secrets. Whether it is nuclear secrets, secret strategies and plans, or battle plans, all are matters of interest to opposing governments.

War secrets are not just something that exists in the earthly realm. They are also part of the spiritual war in which we are engaged. Our enemy, Satan, has secrets that he doesn't want anyone to know. Knowledge of his secrets would mean a serious blow to his kingdom. It would bring freedom to the captive, victory for the oppressed, and the ultimate demise of him and his demons. What are the secrets? We can find them as

Satan has secrets that he doesn't want anyone to know. Knowledge of these secrets would mean a serious blow to his kingdom.

we continue through the book of Joshua. They are contained in the conclusion of the two men's spying mission.

The World's Worst Kept Secrets

In the last chapter, we discussed how the two brave spies treated our heroine, Rahab. In this chapter, we need to re-examine these verses from a different perspective. We need to shift the focus away from the attitude of the two men to the words spoken by Rahab. We can learn a lot about the secrets of the war in which we are engaged.

One of the best ways to learn our enemies' secrets is to get them from someone from the opposing country who knows they are on the wrong side and wants to defect. This was a common practice during the Cold War. It is exactly what happens as Rahab tells the two spies exactly what her country is feeling. As we examine the passage starting with Rahab ascending to the roof, we see three secrets of war that apply both to the Israelites as well as us today.

Secret #1. Our enemy is already defeated and he knows it.

⁸ *Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,*

Before we examine the words spoken by Rahab to the spies, we must remember one important fact. Although Rahab seems to have a heart for God, she is still one of the enemy. The words she speaks and the way she feels are the way that all the people of Jericho felt. Notice what she tells the two men.

⁸ Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Rahab tells them that the people of Jericho already know they will be defeated. They heard of all the miracles God had done on Israel's behalf. They knew that God had defeated anyone who stood in their way. The people of Jericho knew their defeat was imminent because God was fighting for Israel.

Can you imagine the strength and courage Rahab's words gave these 2 spies? They now knew they were already victorious even before strapping on their swords to fight. Any warrior would have courage for the battle if he knows he will win. I would and I'm sure you would, too. Fortunately for us, we don't have to imagine it.

We, as followers of Jesus Christ, have the same assurance as these two men. Our enemies, Satan and his demons, are already defeated and they know it. Satan is well aware that he lost the war with God the moment Jesus rose from the dead. The resurrection destroyed Satan's power over mankind. Any power he has over the believer is

Our enemy is already defeated, and knows it!

because we allow it. This is why we must stand up and fight! Only then can we break free and enter the promises God has for us. This is why we need to know the first secret that our enemy is already defeated. Satan doesn't want you to know this. This brings us to secret #2.

Secret #2 Our enemy is afraid of us.

After Rahab tells the two men that the people of Jericho know they are already defeated, she tells them the second secret.

*⁸ Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, **that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.** ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ **And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.***

Notice what Rahab says to them. She basically says the entire country is terrified of the Israelites. They all knew it was a matter of time before they will reach their end. They have no courage to fight since they know they are already defeated. They knew God would hand them over to the Israelites and they were powerless to win.

This kind of fear will stop anyone dead in their tracks. However, we must not assume it will paralyze them. If we fast forward to Joshua 6, we see that, although the people of Jericho know they will lose and this has filled them with fear, they still get into position to fight. If they are going to lose, they will take as many Israelites with them as possible.

The same is true in our spiritual battle. Satan and the demons know they are defeated. They know their eternal fate has already been decided. They have been sentenced to eternity in the abyss, separated from God. They are scared to death of this fate. The last thing they want is for us to know this.

The enemy is scared to death of us realizing the power we have through the name and blood of Jesus.

They want us to stay scared of them. They want us to be too afraid to engage them in battle. **They want us to feel we can never break free. Their desire is for us to stay helpless, hopeless, and defeated.** They are scared to death of us realizing the power we have over them through the name and the blood of Jesus. They want their secret kept safe. Unfortunately for them, God has published the details of their demise in His Holy Word. It is our job to learn these facts, take them to heart, and realize that we have nothing to fear. The fact of the matter is Satan is the one who should be afraid of us. This should embolden us to take the fight to the enemy. It certainly did the Israelites. Let's look at it along with our third secret.

Secret #3 Even though Satan is scared and defeated, he will still fight. We need to have the will and desire to stand up and defeat him.

²² They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. ²³ So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. ²⁴ And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

After the two men returned to the Israelite camp, they immediately give their report to Joshua. They confidently tell him how scared and helpless the enemy feels. Notice Joshua's response in chapter 3:1:

Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.

Joshua immediately broke up camp and prepared the people to cross over to fight. He knew they would win. He was aware of the fear consuming the people of Jericho. He took this information and struck while the iron was hot. This is the response of a godly man. He realizes his enemy is defeated. He understands the enemy is scared of him breaking free. This knowledge emboldens him to take the fight directly to the enemy. We must do the same.

For too long, many in the Christian community have feared spiritual warfare. They have avoided it. They have run from it. Some have even denied the existence of demonic oppression. This is exactly what Satan wants. He wants us to keep thinking

this way. He wants us to avoid this topic with a ten foot pole. Unfortunately, many Christians do. As a matter of fact, I use to be one of them.

I never wanted to face this part of God's kingdom. I ran from it for awhile. Part of me didn't believe it was real, while another part was scared to deal with Satan and demons. When God started pushing me and my family into this part of Christianity, I wanted no part of it.

As I was forced to deal with it, I barely committed. I tolerated it, but tried to avoid it as much as possible. However, the more I learned about it, the more I realized the devastating effects demonic oppression has on our lives. It really does keep us from God's promises.

Eventually, I surrendered my will and began actively pursuing freedom from demonic oppression. Much to my surprise, it worked. The deeper I went and the more spiritual freedom I experienced, the more I realized that it really is not something to fear. Satan is a formidable opponent who cannot be taken lightly, but he has no power compared to Jesus. Satan also has no power over us once we began to fight the sins and oppression in our lives. Sure, he throws temptations and sins at us. He will fight to try and keep us bound so we spend eternity in hell with him. However, once we stand up and fight, he loses. If we resist the devil, he really must flee. We really are conquerors through the blood of Jesus! The question is: Will you be?

If we resist the devil, he really MUST flee! We really ARE more than conquerors through the blood of Jesus!

Decision Time

This is a decision we all must make in our spiritual lives. Do we believe we have areas of undealt with oppression and sin in our lives that are keeping us bound and unable to fully enter into God's Promises? Do we believe Jesus has defeated Satan and his kingdom on Calvary? Will we stand up and work to defeat Satan and the sinful control he seeks to hold over our lives? This chapter gives us all the secrets of war necessary to let us know we can be victorious. The question is this: Will you stand up and fight? If the answer is yes, then we can continue on together as brothers-in-arms. The victory is there for the taking. Will you take it?



War Drills

1. The final paragraph of this chapter asked some pretty hard questions. Take time alone with God and honestly consider what your answer will be.
2. Get a copy of [Fight](#) by Kenny Luck. It is an excellent book on the need to break free of Satan.

CHAPTER 5

MARCHING ORDERS

Have you ever observed troops marching in formation? There is no more beautiful sight than soldiers marching side by side in perfect unison, nor is there a more beautiful sound to hear than hearing them calling out their cadence. Troops in formation exhibit honor, discipline, strength, and unity as they march in step with each other.

Troops have been marching in formation for centuries. The Babylonian army marched across the entire Middle East conquering the territory for King Nebuchadnezzar. Napoleon marched his troops across Europe. Sherman marched through the south, destroying everything in his path. However, none of these infamous marches can compare to the march of the Israelites into the Promised Land. In this chapter, we will examine the two marching orders given to Joshua and the two benefits he received for obeying. We will learn from Joshua's example how we should march toward the promises God has for us.

Falling in Ranks

We ended our last chapter discussing the orders given by God to Joshua. Let's reexamine this passage one more time.

Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.

The people of Israel are getting ready to cross into the banks of the Promised Land! Can you imagine the excitement they must have felt! However, they couldn't just walk into this new land. They had to enter in an orderly manner. As we examine the orders given by Joshua to the people, I see two commands which we can apply to our pursuit of entering into God's promises.

1. We must follow the Holy Spirit's lead.

² So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. ⁴ Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure.

This passage is a beautiful promise for us as believers. Joshua's leaders tell the people to get ready to go! Notice what it says.

...the officers went through the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

The Ark of the Covenant was an important part of the Israelites worship. It was a long, wooden box, shaped kind of like a modern day coffin. It was completely overlain with solid gold. On top of the lid sat two solid gold sculptures of cherubim which faced each other. Their wings extended outward in an open direction.

The ark was kept in the Holy of Holies inside the Tabernacle. Whenever the Israelites set up camp, the Presence of God would descend on the ark and rest between the wings of the cherubim. The ark was Israel's symbol of God's Presence. By telling them that the ark would precede them, Joshua was saying the Presence of God would lead them.

For us, the Ark of the Covenant symbolizes the Holy Spirit. As we begin the journey into God's Promise, we must be led by the Holy Spirit. Why is this?

... that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before."

We are new to this battle. Like the Israelites, we have never gone this direction before. This is why we need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and deal with whatever sins He reveals to us. The Holy Spirit is the only One Who knows what areas of sin stand between us and the promises of God. He alone is able to convict us of these sins. He knows what causes the sins. He knows when they started. He alone can expose the demonic influences involved with the sin. We need to allow Him to point out our sins and enemies so we can properly deal with them and destroy them. This brings us to the second command.

2. We must repent of our sins and live a holier lifestyle.

Once the Holy Spirit convicts us of sins and points out enemies in our lives, we must thoroughly deal with these sins, repent, and live a different way. We see this in Joshua's next command.

⁵ *And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”*

Joshua commanded the people to sanctify themselves. The NIV uses the word “consecrate.” What Joshua is ordering them to do was cleanse themselves and abstain from anything that would defile them before God. In order to be in God’s Presence, they had to live holier lives. We need to do the same.

When the Holy Spirit brings an area of sin to our attention, we need to repent. However, this does not just mean asking God for forgiveness. It means a change in lifestyle. In the book of James, we read what true repentance means and how devastating it is to our enemy.

Repentance doesn’t just mean asking God to forgive us. It means a change in lifestyle.

James 3:7 Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

These verses are in direct correlation to how we should fight and defeat Satan. Notice James’ instructions.

First, he says we should submit to God. One way to do this is by being obedient to the Holy Spirit and dealing with whatever sins He exposes.

Next, James says to resist the enemy. How do we do this? By drawing nearer to God. This is done by acknowledging our sins and changing the way we live. We do this through proper repentance. What exactly is proper repentance? James gives us very pointed and specific commands.

James orders us to wash our hands and purify our hearts, or, in Joshua's words, consecrate ourselves. This is proper repentance. It is not just a flippant, "Please forgive me." James says that when we repent, we should grieve, mourn, and wail over how our sins hurt God. He says our laughter should be changed to mourning. This means we feel great sorrow over our sins. This sorrow should make us cry out to God to forgive us because we can't stand the way our sins affect our relationship with Him. This deep sense of sorrow should make us never sin in this way again. We then begin to live in a new, godlier way. This type of repentance shows a brokenness and humility, which is exactly the attitude James orders us to have in verse 10.

You may be thinking, "This is extreme. Why do I have to go to such lengths to prove I am sorry? Does God really want me to wallow in my sin like this?"

My answer to you is this: What I described is not wallowing in sin. It is true repentance. The good news is: God doesn't leave us brokenhearted. James ends this section by telling us that if we have this humble attitude of repentance, then God will lift us up and restore us.

¹⁰ *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

This is exactly what happens in the book of Joshua after the people consecrated themselves. Let's examine the passage and see the two rewards of following the Holy Spirit and repenting of the sins He exposes.

Results of Marching God's Way

1. Once we humbly repent of our sins, God restores us and makes us better than ever.

⁶ Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

⁷ And the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

Joshua and the people were led by the Holy Spirit. This led to their consecrating themselves, or humbly removing their sins. Once this was done, God could exalt them and take them into the Promised Land. He did it, in a way that showed it was done through His power because He was pleased with the Israelites. He didn't leave them wallowing in their sins. He forgave them and raised them up. He took them into the new land, and he exalted Joshua before all of the people and nations.

⁸ You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'

⁹ So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God." ¹⁰ And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. ¹³ And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."

¹⁴ So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵ and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), ¹⁶ that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

The people, led by God's presence, were taken across the waters by the hand of God. The waters stopped up, allowing them to cross over on dry ground. God took care of the people. He forgave them of their sins. He did what He said He would do

and He did it in a way that proved to all the people that it only was done by His power. He gave them this power because they followed His lead, removed their sins, and humbly left the rest to Him.

The same is true for us. When we let the Holy Spirit point out the sins and enemies in our lives and then humbly repent of them, we can move forward in a new direction following God. Then we will experience the power of God in ways we could never imagine. To see what I mean, let's re-examine the passage one last time.

2. God will come through in unbelievable ways.

*So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,¹⁵ and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the **water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest),¹⁶ that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.¹⁷ Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.***

Not only did the people have to cross over the Jordan River, but they had to do it while it was running at flood stages. This made it even more treacherous. However,

the Spirit led them there, so they had to go through. Miraculously, God made a way for them through this difficult time by stopping up the water.

I want to be completely honest with you. Following the Holy Spirit's lead and dealing with the sins He points out can at times be extremely difficult. Sometimes the Holy Spirit shines His spotlight on areas that are too painful to look at. There have been times when I would have preferred to die than face the thing the Holy Spirit brought to my attention. It is at this point we have to completely humble ourselves and allow God to carry us through the pain. The good news is that, even though it is hard and painful, He will get us through it.

God will forgive us of our sins and release us from our enemies' grasp. He will stop up the waters of our sin and pain all the way back to the beginning just like He stopped up the water back to the town named Adam. He will get us through. All He wants from us is to stay open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, repent of whatever sins He reveals, destroy whatever enemies He exposes, and allow God to restore us to a place where He can use us.

Decision Time

As we bring this chapter to a close, we need to make a few decisions. Will we choose to march in step with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead us where He wants? Will we thoroughly deal with whatever sins He exposes in our lives? Will we have a humble attitude of repentance before God and confess the sins we have committed? Will we then begin to live a holy and righteous life before God, no matter how tough it

may be? We must all face questions and decide what we will do. If you decide yes, then tie up your boots and let's continue marching forward together.



War Drills

1. Daily spend time alone with God. Allow the Holy Spirit to point out areas of sin and enemies in your life.
2. When the Holy Spirit reveals areas of sin, stop and analyze them. Discover when it started. Realize why you do it. Make a list of every time you committed the sin. Realize the devastating effects it had on you and your relationship with God and others. Then repent of each time you committed the sin.

CHAPTER 6

WAR MEMORIALS

When I was a small child, my parents took me to see our nation's capital, Washington, DC. As my little head tilted upwards, I remember being awestruck at the height of the Washington monument. I remember seeing the Capital steps and thinking there was no way anyone could climb that many stairs. We went to the Smithsonian, where I recall seeing "the Swamp" from Mash and Fonzie's leather jacket. Most of all, I remember going to Arlington national cemetery and visiting the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

We arrived just as they were changing the guard. I was mesmerized by the precise, elegant way the soldiers marched back and forth. I especially enjoyed seeing them turn, clicking their heels together. At the time, I was too young to realize the importance of this place as our nation honored its fallen heroes.

Our country is excellent at making memorials to honor the sacrifices of our brave warriors. From the Vietnam Memorial to the new World War 2 Memorial, we always honor our soldier's bravery and courage.

War memorials are important to help us remember the sacrifices made by those before us so we can be free. They serve as visual images for future generations to learn what happened in the past. Even more important, they offer hope to our armed forces while in the heat of battle. It reminds them of past victories and gives them strength to carry on.

It is important for us as believers to erect our own war memorials. Let's face it: As in real life, spiritual war is hell. While we are promised victory by the power and blood of Jesus, we must be aware that there will be times when we will feel defeated, discouraged, and alone. At these times, it is important to look at our personal memorials of times when God came through and carried us to victory. These memorials give us the hope and strength we will need to continue on and defeat our enemy.

As we return to the book of Joshua, we will learn not only how to make our memorials, but why they are so important in our journey toward God's Promises.

Dry Rocks!

When we last left the children of Israel, they had just experienced God's miraculous power as He parted the waters of the Jordan River. This allowed them to cross over on dry ground. This was done as the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized God's Presence, into the middle of the River. Let's look at the passage one more time.

¹⁵ and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), ¹⁶ that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all

Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

God miraculously stopped up the raging flood waters, allowing them to cross over on completely dry ground. We read the entire nation crossed over without even getting muddy feet. However, notice that the chapter ends with the priests still holding the Ark in the middle of the river. While this seems an odd conclusion to a chapter, it is a perfect segway into our passage. Let's look at it starting in Joshua 4:1.

And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying:² "Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe,³ and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.' "

The reason the priests are still left in the middle of the river is because God isn't finished with the dry riverbed yet. He wants Joshua to send twelve men back in to grab a stone from the river. This may seem like an odd request to us; however, God always has a reason for what He does.

Each man obediently walked back into the dry river and carried back a large boulder. As they carried it back, I am sure they wondered why God wanted them to do this. Once on the other side, they got their answer.

⁴ *Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe;⁵ and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the*

ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, ⁶ that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

Here we see the first building of a war memorial. God wanted the twelve rocks from the river to remind the Israelites of His miraculous power. It is interesting to me that God wanted the stones to be from the river, not the shores of their new land. However, the more I thought about it, the more I understood God's reason.

A river stone is nice and smooth from years of water pounding on it. Using these stones instead of rough jagged ones from dry land would stop anyone from denying the validity of the miracle. Any doubts would be extinguished the minute you ran your hands over the smooth stones of the monument. It would be a lasting memorial for the children of Israel. While this explains why they used river stones, we still have not learned why God wanted them to do it in the first place. As we return to the passage, we see three reasons why we, like the Israelites, need to erect war memorials.

1. They remind us of God's Presence.

²³ *for **the Lord your God** dried up the waters of the Jordan **before you** until you had crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over*

The first reason God wanted the memorial built was to remind the Israelites that God was the one leading them. He was fighting for them and protecting them. These were key facts for them to remember as they began to enter a land they had never seen before. They would have to face new challenges and fight new enemies. Whenever they began to feel like they were in over their heads, they could look back at the memorial and remember the miraculous way God had made for them to enter their Promised Land.

Let me be honest with you. There will be times in your walk with God when you will feel abandoned and alone. You will wonder where God is and why He isn't helping you. Trust me, I know from experience. It is at these times we need to remember our war memorials. They will remind us that God was there in the past and He will be there in the future. If He came along side of us before, He will certainly do it again. This will give us faith to believe and continue on. However, this isn't the only reason to have memorials.

*Memorials remind us that
God was there in the past and
He will be there in the future!*

2. They remind us of God's Protection.

²⁴ *that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty,*

This passage says that the presence of the war memorial will remind their enemies that God is the one fighting for them. It shows them He is their Protector. They cannot defeat Him. This knowledge fills them with fear. The memorial is a defensive weapon against their enemies. The same is true for us.

Our enemy, Satan, is constantly trying to get us to doubt God. He wants us defeated, afraid, and separated from God. He fills our head with lies that God has left us, God isn't going to help us, God is angry with us, and many others. It is at this point we must pull out our memorials and praise God for all the times He helped us in the past. Praising God is a deadly weapon against our enemy. He can't stand it and he won't stay around where this happens. Thus, our memorial helps protect us against our enemies.

Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?'²² then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land';²³ for the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over,²⁴ that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

The people of Israel had a promise that the land they were entering would be theirs as long as they obeyed God and followed Him wholeheartedly. However, this promise would become void if they turned away and followed other gods. This is why it was important for their children to have this memorial. It was a reminder to them of God's promise to give them the land forever. It was also a stark warning that failure to obey God could result in not only the loss of their Promised Land, but also the favor of the Mighty God Who had performed this miracle. This teaching would instill a healthy fear of God and His promises.

We all have Promises from God. When we erect our memorials, we have the promise that God will never leave us or forsake us. We remember He is the same Yesterday, Today, and Forever. If He did it for us once, He can do it again. We can be reminded that when the enemy attacks, God will raise up a standard against him just like He did before. When sickness attacks, we remember that He is the God Who heals us. We need to make memorials out of the times God does mighty things in our lives. They help us remember God's presence, protection, and promises. We also need to teach them to our kids so they can learn to do the same.

When we erect our memorials, we remember that God will NEVER leave us or forsake us!

As With All Instructions, Assembly Is Required

Maybe you are thinking, "I understand the need to build my own war memorials, but I just don't know how. What should I do?"

Allow me to answer the question by describing how I erected war memorials. Then we will examine a few other ideas.

I began by writing down all the important times in my life with God such as the day I got saved. Then I wrote down times God performed miracles in my life such as the time He healed me from cancer in my wrist or when He paid for my college education without debt. I wrote down different commitments I made to God. These are the memories I used to make my memorial. In the future I can add to them for special occasions like getting married, ministry experiences, answered prayers, or special moments with God.

Now that we know what kind of events are memorials, allow me to describe the way I make my war memorials. Being the eccentric that I am, I have literally gathered memorial stones. My house is surrounded with decorative white river stones. I gathered a few of them that were 2-3 inches. Then I took a permanent marker and wrote the date of the event as well as a brief description.

For example, one rock says 4-20-97 and the word “pneumonia.” Whenever I feel discouraged or distant from God, I look at this rock and remember my 11 days in a hospital when I almost died from pneumonia (I will tell this story in a later chapter.). As I was sick and near death, I cried out to God and He healed me. Never before had I felt God’s Presence as strongly as in that moment. Looking at this rock gives me strength to continue on.

Another rock says “3-29-99 Surrendered life to God”. Whenever I begin to question why God is making my life so hard, I look at this rock and remember the intimate moment I spent with God in a college chapel service. I went forward to the altar and told God I would go wherever and do whatever He asked. This memorial reminds me that God is in control, and that I handed the reigns over to Him.

Currently, I have stones with memorable events written on them and stones for future events. I keep them in a small basket. One day I plan to display them on my desk. If anyone asks me what they are, I can share my memorials with them. If God blesses me with children, I look forward to holding them in my lap and showing them my rocks. I will use them to instill a love, faith, and trust in God in them. These rocks are

precious to me. I will cherish them forever and look forward to adding to them in the future.

When you develop your own memorials, you don't have to use real rocks like I did. You could keep a memorial journal. It could be a special book in which you could write down your memorials. You could write down the date and the memory on index cards and keep them in a box. You could write on blocks of wood and keep them in a special container. You could take photos of your memorials and make a collage. There are many different ways to make your memorials. Be creative, but make sure you do it.

Decision Time

In this chapter, I have tried to be honest with you about the struggles we all face in our spiritual war. I can't emphasize enough the necessity of making your own memorials. It is vital to gaining victory over our enemy. The question is this: Will you do it?

Will you go through the effort to make memorials which you can look back on during the heat of battle? Is it too much trouble? Do you have the creativity to think of a unique way to make memorials? Will you share your memorials with other people? Will you use them to teach your children to trust and depend on God? I see no downside to building your war memorials. The question remains: Will you do it?



War Drills

1. Find a way to create your own memorial stones. However you do it, make sure it contains the date of the event and a description of what God did. Keep them in a place where you can display them and show them to others.
2. If you have children, be sure to include them in your memorials. Tell them about your memorials so they too can learn to depend on God.

CHAPTER 7

HELL WEEK

A few years ago I watched an interesting show about soldiers who wanted to become Navy SEALs. As I watched, I was stunned at the extreme physical testing these recruits went through during the time they referred to as “Hell Week”. They went through food and sleep deprivation while enduring grueling physical and mental challenges. Those who couldn’t hack these extreme conditions could quit at any time. All they had to do was ring the camp bell. You would think most would have quit under these intense conditions. However, very few actually rang the bell in defeat. Most endured the extreme physical pain in order to receive the privilege of becoming a Navy SEAL.

Our military men and women understand that physical pain is part of becoming a warrior. As one Marine’s t-shirt read “Pain is weakness leaving the body.” They know that pain will only make them stronger and better fit to do their job. The same needs to be true for us. As warriors in God’s army, we need to realize that every amount of pain we endure only makes us stronger. As a result, we become more capable of defeating our enemy.

One of the most painful parts of Christianity is facing the sin in our lives. However, it must be faced and destroyed so we can be free to enter into God’s promises. Our sins cannot come along with us. We need to get to the place where we will accept the pain and remove the sin so we can be free to live holier lives. We need

to take the slogan from the Marine's t-shirt and realize that spiritual pain is sin leaving the body.

In this chapter, we will examine the painful experience God put the Israelites through so they could be free to engage their enemy and fully enter into their Promised Land. As we do, we will see the need to remove our sinful tendencies so we can be free to live a holier life. Only then can we enter into God's Promises. Let's get started.

Welcome to Spiritual Hell Week

When we last left the children of Israel, they had just crossed the Jordan and entered into their Promised Land. God had miraculously parted the Red Sea and brought them safely to the other side. As the nation stood at the banks of the Jordan, I am sure they felt excited about going in and conquering their land. Those feelings probably increased as they learned of the attitude of their enemies.

So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

Their enemies were paralyzed with fear! They had no courage or strength to fight. They knew that if the Israelite's God could dry up a flooding river, then He could certainly conquer them. It seemed like the perfect time for Israel to begin destroying their enemies. Obviously Joshua thought so, for we read that he went to seek God's

will about where to begin the attack. However, he didn't get the answer he was expecting.

An Unthinkable Command is Given

² At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time."

You got to be kidding me! The people were finally at the foothills of their Promised Land. They had just miraculously crossed the Jordan. Now they were ready to kick some Canaanite butt! However, as they prepared to begin conquering their promised land, God stopped them and said, "Wait! Do you remember forty years ago how you were commanded by Me to circumcise yourselves? I wanted the things from your old life removed. You can't enter into My full blessing until all of the old things are gone. So, right now, circumcise yourselves."

We can only imagine what the Israelite men were thinking now. "Uh God, don't you think you could have mentioned this on the other side of the river? Right over that rise is an enemy city. Back there we were safe from any kind of attack. This is gonna hurt really bad. It would have been a lot easier if we had done it back there." I am sure this was their reaction. It certainly would have been mine.

Think about it. Circumcising a fully grown man causes devastating pain. The man is left weak and delirious with fever for days. If the enemy attacked them in this weakened condition, they would be annihilated. Why would God possible make this command? As we continue on, we are given the explanation.

³ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord—to whom the Lord swore that He would not show them the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” ⁷ Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

⁸ So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed.

We read here that Joshua obediently did what God asked. Then we are given the explanation why God wanted it done. After God had judged the first generation of rebellious Israelites and told them they would never enter the Promised Land, they stopped obeying God’s command to circumcise their children.

For an Israelite, circumcision set them apart as God’s children. It was what made them different. It was the sign that they followed God and He would fight for them. Now, as the next generation of Israelites prepared to enter their Promised Land,

they needed to be circumcised and set apart as God's children. They couldn't enter the battle until this happened. The same is true for us.

While God doesn't require us to circumcise ourselves physically, he does want us to circumcise our hearts. We read in Romans 2:29 that we need to allow the Spirit of God to circumcise our heart. This means we allow the Holy Spirit to point out areas of sin in our lives that must be destroyed. We must then kill the sin so we can live a holier life.

Holiness seems to have become a dirty word in the Christian community. People are too busy making sure they don't offend anybody. A theology of becoming like the world so we can reach the world seems to prevail. We have to stay up to date with the latest tv shows and movies so we can relate to the people. We have to dress like the world in order to reach them. We need to talk like the world so we can understand them. We certainly can't criticize the sinful way the world lives so we don't offend them. These attitudes have done little to reach the world, but they have done a lot to make us less holy and spotless before God. This must change. A friend of mine recently said the following: "Instead of being embarrassed and ashamed for being a strong Christian, our lives should embarrass the world for the shameful way they live." We do this by living a holier lifestyle.

"Instead of being embarrassed and ashamed for being a strong Christian, our lives should embarrass the world for the shameful way they live."

I am not saying we need to attack the unsaved for the way they live. What I am saying is we need to live a different way than they do. Our lives need to reflect that we follow God. We do this by taking out our flint knives and cutting off areas of sin in our lives. We then need to begin living a godlier lifestyle. Only then can we live in God's Promises.

I know from personal experience the need to do this. I also know that it can really hurt. The Holy Spirit has pointed out lots of areas of sin in my life which needed to be dealt with before I could even attempt to destroy my enemies.

One area of sin He exposed was my unhealthy addiction to sports, especially football and the Denver Broncos. While watching football is not in itself a sin, I literally had made it a sin by giving it too important of a place in my life. I lived and breathed for the Denver Broncos. I could name the players, their stats, and even the plays in their playbook. I was obsessed. I even skipped church services in order to watch their games.

The Holy Spirit pointed out the sinful way I had made the Broncos a god. He then made me go cold turkey on football for awhile. It was hard, especially since that very season the Broncos had an excellent year, making it all the way to the AFC Championship game. It killed me inside not to watch those games. It was so hard. That year God didn't even let me watch the Superbowl. I spent it in my room while my dad watched the Pittsburg Steelers win the Championship.

I know this sounds ridiculous. I mean, it is only football. However, for me, it was more than that because I made it more important than God in my life. It became a sin

and I had to kill it. Now years later, it is no big deal to miss a game. As a matter of fact, the few times I have sat down to watch a game, I find myself bored. However, I never get bored spending time with God and studying His word. This is only possible because I took a flint knife and circumcised the unhealthy attachment in my heart to football.

Another area of sin my life which I had to kill was lying. For me, this was a huge generational sin. My father is a diagnosed pathological liar, so lying came very easy to me. However, in order for me to enter God's Promised Land for me, I had to cut this sin out of my life.

God required me to speak nothing but the absolute truth. If I told someone I drove five miles and it was actually 5.6 miles, then I had to go back and tell them the absolute truth. I remember one day the Holy Spirit reminded me of a time years earlier when I had lied in college to avoid paying a fine. He required me to write a letter, confessing what I had done, along with a check for the money I owed. Events like these are embarrassing and painful, but the pain is just sin leaving my body.

I don't know what your areas of sin you deal with in your life. It could be deceit, hate, anger, or sexual sin. It isn't important that I know. What is important is that you allow the Holy Spirit to show you what areas of sin are keeping you from living a holy life. Then you need to grab your flint knife and circumcise your heart. Only then can you receive the rewards of those who circumcise their hearts. What are these rewards? Let's look at the passage again to see how God rewarded the Israelites for being obedient to Him.

Unbelievable Rewards are Given

As we return to Joshua 5, we see that God gives three rewards to the people of Israel for obediently circumcising themselves. The good news for us is that the same rewards are available to us if we obey the Holy Spirit's lead and kill the sin in our lives.

1. We receive a renewed relationship with God.

⁹ Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. ¹² Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Once the Israelites obeyed God and circumcised themselves, they entered into a deeper relationship with God. They experienced God's forgiveness. They broke free of the shame of being slaves to someone else. They could once again celebrate the Passover with God. Finally, they began to eat from the fruit of their new land. They were now back to a right relationship with God as they lived in His promises.

As we kill the sin in our lives, we, too, will experience a renewed relationship with God. We will no longer be seen as a man who struggles with porn. We won't be known as a liar. Whatever our sin, we will be forgiven by God and viewed as His holy child.

Then we then develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This allows us freedom to worship God and experience His promises.

2. We gain open communication with God.

The second benefit of circumcising our heart is we can speak freely with God.

¹³ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”

¹⁴ So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.”

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”

¹⁵ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

We read here that Joshua was confronted by a man holding a sword. Who was this man? It was Jesus! By circumcising the nation, Joshua was prepared to speak to God face to face. The two events are not a coincidence. As a matter of fact, it is not the first time it happened in the Bible.

In Genesis 17, we read of the first time God commanded the people of Israel to be circumcised. It is also the place where the original promise is given to Abraham that the Israelites would be given their Promised Land. In Genesis 17:9-14, God commanded Abraham to circumcise His descendants. Abraham did it immediately.

On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen; ²⁶ Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that same day. ²⁷ And every male in Abraham's household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.

Abraham was obedient to God and circumcised his entire household. Immediately after doing this, we read in chapter 18 that Jesus appeared and spoke to Abraham face to face. Now, over a hundred years later, we see the same thing happen to Joshua after he circumcised the nation of Israel.

We, like Abraham and the Israelites, need to remove the sin from our lives. It will hurt, but in the pain, God will come to us and we will experience God in our lives in a way that we previously could only imagine. God longs to be with us. But we, through holding onto the past and the sins which are familiar to us, are keeping God away from us. He is there waiting to embrace us and give us what He promised.

We can now communicate openly and freely with God. We can hear His voice as He leads and guides us. The sin is no longer there to separate us. We can now have open lines of communication with Him.

3. We receive victory over our enemies.

The third benefit to killing our sin is it helps us defeat our enemies.

Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. ² And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.

Jericho was the immediate city standing between Israel and the Promised Land. The Israelites could probably see Jericho as they crossed the Jordan. They were fresh off victories on the other side. Then God miraculously brought them across the Jordan by parting the turbulent waters, allowing them safe passage across. In their minds, Jericho was next. As they crossed the Jordan, the Israelites probably thought that within 48 hours that fine city would be theirs. However, at that time they didn't have God's blessing. Now that they had removed their iniquities, God not only gave them His permission to go forward, but His solemn word that they would be victorious. We, too, have this promise.

When we circumcise our hearts by removing sin, we deal a death blow to our enemies. The only way demons can influence is because we are grounded by sinning. When we remove the sins, we take away any rights or power they have. They have no ability to stay. We can then kick them out by the power of Jesus' name. This is only possible when we are willing to go through the pain of removing the sin in our lives.

Decision Time

In this chapter, we have taken an honest look at the need to remove the sin in our lives. I have tried to be honest with you about the pain involved in this process. However, the pain we will experience in no way out shadows the rewards of

reconciliation and open communication with God. The pain is also worth enduring in order to destroy our enemies. The question is: Will you go through it?

Will you face the pain and allow the Holy Spirit to work with you to remove the sins? Will you be open and honest about your sins? Will you do whatever it takes to change your lifestyle in order to live a holier, more righteous life before God? Will you deal a death blow to your enemy by putting down your sword and picking up your flint knife? Is a little pain worth having the sin leave your body? I guarantee the pain is more than worth it. The question is: Will you endure it?



War Drills

1. Chapter 5's War Drill required us to daily spend time alone with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to point out areas of sin. Now we need to take out our flint knife and cut the sin out of our life no matter what it takes. Replace the sin with a more godly activity.
2. This chapter contained the following quote: "Instead of being embarrassed and ashamed for being a strong Christian, our lives should embarrass the world for the shameful way they live." Analyze yourself. Are you ashamed to be different, or are you willing to live a holier life no matter what others think?

CHAPTER 8

MEET YOUR C.O.

One thing I love about the military is its chain of command. Everyone is accountable to someone. Each soldier takes his orders from someone above him. A private must answer to a sergeant, yet this same sergeant must answer to a lieutenant. No matter what your rank, you always have a commanding officer over you. A good soldier always does what his C.O. tells him to do. If he tells you to jump, you always answer “How High, Sir!!”

Having a C.O. insures that no soldier will ever overstep his boundaries. He can't abuse his fellow soldiers. He can't give an illegal order. He can't even become proud about the power he wields because he knows he can only do what his C.O. commands. If he oversteps his boundaries, he knows his butt belongs to his commanding officer. There is almost a sense of security in this system.

The good news for us as soldiers in God's army is that we have this same sense of security. We, too, have a commanding officer to Whom we answer directly. When He gives an order, our answer needs to be “Yes, Sir!”

There is no room for disobedience or insubordination in God's army. As we return to our study of Joshua and the Israelite's venture into enemy territory, we will learn exactly Who our C.O. is and what He expects from us.

Ten Hut!!

In the last seven chapters, we have seen Joshua go from a scared, intimidated man to a strong, respected, and feared leader. He was a man who terrified his enemies while being held in awe by his people. Joshua was on the cusp of military greatness as he prepared for the conquest of the Promised Land. However, before he could begin the attack, he had one more lesson to learn. This lesson was not only key to Joshua's victory over the Canaanites, but it is also important to us as we begin gaining the victory over our enemies.

What is this lesson? Joshua needed to learn that he was in no way responsible for the great success he was enjoying. The credit for the victory could only go to his commanding officer. In order to understand what I am talking about, we need to re-examine part of the passage from the last chapter.

¹³ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand.

We read here that Joshua had gone off by himself to analyze the city of Jericho, which was the first city to be attacked. Jericho was known as an undefeatable city. It was fortified by a massive wall. The wall was so thick that houses were built on top of it. I am sure Joshua was stumped about how to go about defeating this formidable city. As he stood there deep in thought, he suddenly became aware that a man had approached him. Not only that, but he came at Joshua with weapons drawn. Joshua, a true warrior at heart, jumped into action and confronted the man.

And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”

Joshua asked the man the logical question, “Are you on my side or their side?” However, as we look at the man’s response, we see that Joshua’s simple question received an unexpected answer.

So He said, “No,

Joshua, expecting an answer of “I am on your side” or “I am the enemy” received the answer “no.” It wasn’t really a yes or no question. What was going on? As we continue on, we see the explanation for the answer of “no”.

but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.”

How’s that for an introduction! This was no ordinary foot soldier standing in front of Joshua. It was Jesus in the flesh! Realizing that He was standing face to face with his Commanding officer, Joshua does what any soldier does. He snapped to attention. However, instead of saluting as a soldier normally would do, Joshua does what a godly soldier does before his C.O.

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”

Joshua fell to his knees in reverence. He realized he was in the presence of One much greater than Him. He then asks his C.O. what message He has for him. Notice the words he uses.

*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my **Lord** say to **His servant**?"*

Joshua's perspective has changed. His initial question was if the Man fought for him. However, after hearing his C.O.'s introduction, his focus is back where it should be. Joshua now knows that He fights for God, not the other way around. Any successes or victories he has experienced were a result of God's power, not his. The same will be true in the future. Any victories he may gain are only because he fights for God. God is the C.O.; Joshua is simply an obedient soldier.

Jesus is obviously pleased with Joshua's humble response, for He answers Joshua in a positive way.

¹⁵ Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

Jesus tells Joshua to remove his shoes in recognition of being on holy ground. Joshua immediately did so. While this may seem an odd event, it was greatly significant to Joshua. It was a flashback to the time when God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush.

God told Moses He would use him to lead the people out of slavery. As Moses stood talking to God, he was told to remove his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. God then went on to give Moses his marching orders. Moses was told by God that the people of Israel would be set free by God's power. All Moses had to do was follow God's orders. Now, over fifty years later, God does the same thing for Joshua.

Joshua now knew that if he obeyed God's orders and did exactly what he is told, then the nation of Israel would be able to defeat their enemies. It could only be done by the power of God. While it would appear that Joshua was the military genius, He now knew that nothing he did could ever be done without God's Help.

In the next chapter, we will see the rest of God's message to Joshua, but for now I want to concentrate on this passage. As we begin to engage our enemies, it will be very easy for us to become impressed with ourselves. We will see the power we have through Jesus and will begin to think nothing can stop us. We need to be on our guard at this time so that we don't fall into a trap of pride. Remember, the reason Satan became God's enemy in the first place is because he became very impressed with himself. He didn't give God the proper reverence He deserved as his commanding officer. We cannot fall into this trap. We must always keep in the front of our minds that any victories we gain are only possible because of Jesus' work on the cross. He deserves all the glory and praise, not us.

We must always keep in the front of our minds that any victories we gain are only possible because of Jesus' work on the cross.

Another thing I want us to look at is the humble, submissive attitude Joshua had. He knew his place in God's army. God was the 4-star general, and any orders given by Him must be followed. The same is true for us.

God is our 4-star general. When He gives the orders, we have no choice but to obey. He may allow us to question the order, but in the end we have no choice but to

do what God says. Not doing what God asks is disobedience and sin which causes separation between us and God.

If you are a real follower of God, this is not as hard as it sounds. You will learn to submit your will to God. I am not going to lie to you...at first it will be hard. Our sinful nature doesn't like to be told what to do. After all, we as humans have a natural rebellious streak a mile wide. However, the more we intentionally submit our will and desires to God's will, the easier it gets. Eventually, we reach the point where it will feel unnatural to disobey God.

The concept of submitting my will to God's will has been an ongoing struggle for me. I am a strong-willed man by nature. However, this is not a character trait that is beneficial to my Christian walk. Many times God has forced me to learn to submit to His will. There have been times that God has allowed my body to be injured in order to get me to bend my will to His will. Eventually I learned that His way is the best, and that true happiness is only available when I bend to what He wants. As I submitted more and more, it became easier. Now I have come to the place where I seek God's will on everything, even small things like what clothing style He wants me to wear. I have learned that God's way is always better than mine, so I want to do what He wants. You need to do this as well.

Decision Time

As we bring this chapter to an end, we have to once again make some decisions. Will we, as soldiers in God's army, be willing to humbly give God the praise for any and all victories we experience in battle? Will we be man enough to admit we are too weak

to do it alone? Will we humbly surrender our strong will to God and do whatever He asks? Will we jump when God says jump and go where He says to go? Will we do this in with a humble and grateful attitude? Unless and until you make these decisions, you cannot take the fight to the enemy and gain the victory. However, if you choose to do these things, you can confidently follow God's orders into battle, knowing that He will give you the victory. I have made my decision. You need to do the same.



War Drills

1. Every morning begin your day by telling God you want to surrender your will to His will today. Ask Him to make clear to you what His will is for you. Then do it.
2. Make a list of all the times you can remember not submitting to God's will for you and ask Him to forgive you. Be specific.

CHAPTER 9

FOLLOWING ORDERS

A soldier in the military basically has one job. He has to follow orders. All soldiers have a Commanding Officer directly above him. When the C.O gives an order, it is the job of a soldier to obey. It is important for a soldier to trust his commanding officer. He has to believe the CO knows what he is doing. He must know the CO has his best interest in mind and will do all he can to ensure that the soldier is kept safe. However, there are time when a soldier can't see right away that the CO's plan will actually work. At this point, He must put his trust in the CO and obey the orders.

There will be times while serving in God's army when our CO will give us an order that we find unbelievable and impossible. Sooner or later, we will get in over our heads and stuck in a position where there seems no way out. It is at this point we need to obey our C.O's command and trust that He knows what He is doing. In order to understand exactly what I mean, we need to rejoin the discussion Joshua was having with his Commanding Officer just outside the city of Jericho.

Mission Impossible

We last left Joshua bowing on his knees before his Commanding Officer. Previously, he had been off by himself trying to figure out how his men could go about defeating their enemies in the city of Jericho. This seemed like an impossible task because Jericho was a well-fortified town. It boasted a massive wall which completely surrounded the city. The wall was well over 65 feet high and thick enough to race

chariots and build houses on the top. It seemed an impossible task to find a way into this city. As we look at 6:1, we find the task became even harder.

Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.

The people of Jericho were afraid of being defeated by the children of Israel. They had heard of God's power as He defeated the Israelite's enemies on the other side of the Jordan. Then they saw firsthand the awesome miracle of God dividing the water in the Jordan. This act sent them fleeing to their city. No one left the city out of fear. Because of this, Joshua couldn't slip some men inside to begin the attack. The nation of Israel was stuck outside the walls of the city.

As far as they could see, it was impossible to defeat this enemy. However, it is in impossible situations that God does His best work.

It is in impossible situations that God does His Best Work!!!

² And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.

God told Joshua that He would defeat the enemy living in Jericho. He laid out a battle plan for Joshua. All Joshua had to do was obey. However, as he heard God's plan, obedience became a little difficult.

³ You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. ⁴ And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵ It shall come to pass, when they make a

long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

If anyone else besides God had come up with this plan, Joshua probably would have thought they were crazy. It seemed absurd to march around the city in total silence. To do it six times seemed suicidal.

Think about it. The enemy was hunkered down inside their fortress. Israel couldn't get at them, but they could easily pick off the Israelites one by one from the top of the wall with their archers. This plan seemed impossible. Even if they survived until the seventh day, how could this massive wall crumble simply because they shouted? The only reason to even consider such a plan was because God said it and so far He had been faithful to His Word.

Joshua had to make a decision that we all have to make at some point in our lives. Did he believe God would do what He promised He would do no matter how impossible it seemed?

Jericho was an unbeatable city. God said He could beat it. All Joshua had to do was follow God's odd plan, believe God could do what He said, and leave the results to Him. This is exactly what he did.

⁶ Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord." And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the Lord."

⁸ So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. ⁹ The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. ¹⁰ Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." ¹¹ So he had the ark of the Lord circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

¹² And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. ¹³ Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. ¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

Joshua obeyed God's commands to a T. For six days, He and the people of Israel marched around the city of Jericho in complete silence. As they did, God didn't allow their enemies to harm a single one of them. However, they had one more hurdle to pass. Would God be able to destroy the wall simply by their shouting?

¹⁵ But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And the seventh time it happened,

when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!”²⁰ So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets.

And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.²¹ And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

²⁴ But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.²⁵ And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶ Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, “Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.”²⁷ So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

God did what He promised! He did the impossible! Israel didn’t have to knock out one stone in the wall. God knocked it down flat. All they had to do was obey God’s orders and trust Him to do what He promised. The same is true for us.

Let’s face it: there are two types of people in this world. There are people facing difficult circumstances and there are liars. Everyone faces hard times in their lives. Christians are certainly no exception. We face hard times and impossible situations,

and our enemies usually exploit them. Like the people of Jericho, our enemies take refuge in our hard times and try to defeat us. They don't want us to believe God can conquer our impossible problems. It is at these times we need to trust in God.

The Bible tells us that nothing is impossible with God. It says God will make a way where there seems to be no way. It states that no weapons formed against us can prosper. It tells us that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Nothing is impossible or too difficult for Him.

We can receive words of encouragement directly from God. Just like Joshua, we can speak directly to God. We can hear His voice. He can tell us what He wants to do. He can tell us what He expects from us. If we obey His voice and believe His commands, God will do the impossible in our lives.

If we obey God's voice and believe His commands, God will do the impossible in our lives.

You may be thinking, "Jamie, you make it sound so easy. You have no idea how impossible my circumstances are. I don't know if I have the strength to believe God will do what He says?"

I totally get what you're saying. However, I do understand the difficulty. I am writing this chapter as much to me as I am to you. I am currently going through an extremely rough time in my life. I feel trapped by my circumstances and like there is no way out. The wall before me seems like it reaches to the Heavens and stretches as far as the eye can see. I see no way to move forward and I have nothing to go back to. The only thing I can do is look to God for help.

While spending hours in prayer before God, I felt Him speak to me. I felt He told me what He was going to do. I felt Him say He is going to move with such speed and power it will make my head spin. He told me to gather extra memorial stones because He was going to do mighty things in my life. He told me a few other things to do as I wait on His timing. Writing this chapter is one of them.

I am basically in the same shoes as Joshua. I am in an impossible situation and see no way out. God told me He can help me by doing the impossible. I must decide to believe I heard God speak to me, believe He will do what He said, and learn to trust completely in Him. My controlling nature wants it to end right away. I want to know exactly what will happen and make sure it turns out exactly as I want. However, I have to let go, obey God, and let the rest to Him, believing He will do what He promised. Like Joshua, I have to get up each day and do what I felt God told me to do and depend on Him for the rest. It isn't easy, but it is what I must do to enter His promises and defeat my enemies.

One thing I have done to help me is assemble a CD of songs that helps bolster my faith. As we bring this chapter to a close, I want to share with you the words of one of the songs that has given me great strength and hope. It has helped me to believe God will do what He promised. It is called "Believe Me Now" by Steven Curtis Chapman. As you read the words, imagine God speaking them directly to you.

"I watch you looking out across the raging waters, so sure your only hope lies on the other side. You feel the enemy is closing in around you. I know you don't have the strength to fight, but do you have the faith to stand."

And believe Me now, believe Me here, remember all the times I told you loud and clear

'I am with you, I am for you.' So believe Me now.

I AM the One Who waved a hand and split the ocean. I AM the One Who spoke a word and raised the dead, and I loved you long before I set the world in motion. I know all the fears you're feeling now, but do you remember Who I AM?

Do you believe Me now? Believe Me here? Remember all the times I told you loud and clear that I AM with you, I AM for you? Do you believe Me now? Believe it's true? I never have, I never will abandon you? The God that I have always been will I forever Be. So believe Me now.

I AM the God Who never wastes a single hurt that you endure. My words are true and all My promises are sure. So believe Me now. I AM with you. I AM for you,

Believe Me now."

Decision Time

We have looked a tough issue in this chapter. It is a topic that doesn't come easily to any of us. We all face impossible situations, yet we all serve a God Wwho says nothing is impossible to Him. This chapter boils down to a few simple questions we must all answer so we can defeat our enemies, be free of our impossible situations, and enter into God's promises.

Will we believe God will do what He promised to do no matter how impossible it seems? Will we seek God's deliverance from our impossible situations? Will we obey any and all commands He gives us no matter how ridiculous or impossible it seems?

Will we obey God and submit to His commands, leaving the rest to Him? We all need to make these decisions. No one can make them for us. Will you believe God now?



War Drills:

1. Spend time seeking God's will concerning your impossible circumstances. Then obey His commands and trust Him to do the rest.
2. Assemble a CD of songs or a list of Scripture verses that you can turn to when feeling down or weak. Allow them to encourage you and give you strength.

CHAPTER 10

TREASON

I have always loved studying history. I especially enjoyed U.S. History. It is full of so many fascinating people.

For example, if you were to study the American Revolution, you would learn about one of America's greatest generals. This man bravely fought to defeat the British at Ridgefield and Dansbury. He helped Capture Fort Ticonderoga. He led the invasion of Canada. He single-handedly rallied the troops at the Battle of Saratogo while enduring a crippling leg injury. This man was General Washington's most trusted officer. Without his leadership and military contributions, few believe we would have won our independence.

Who is this man? General Benedict Arnold.

Benedict Arnold is never remembered for any of his outstanding military achievements. Because he betrayed his country by attempting to sell West Point to the British, his name became synonymous with the most heinous acts of betrayal. This once great general is only remembered as a traitor to his country. What a sad waste of talent, ability, and potential!

We, as soldiers in God's army, need to be so careful that we do not commit treason against God. We want our legacy to be mighty warriors and godly men in God's army, not men who committed treason against our C.O. This is why it is important to understand exactly what it means to commit treason against God. As we return to the

book of Joshua, we will see not only the act of treason we must avoid, but also the devastating effects committing treason has on our lives and the lives of those around us.

To The Victor Goes No Spoils

In the last chapter, we saw an amazing victory for the children of Israel as God single-handedly destroyed the walls of Jericho. Once the wall was gone, Joshua and his men were able to rout the city. However, before they entered the city, they learned exactly what it was God wanted them to do.

¹⁸ And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. ¹⁹ But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”

God made it perfectly clear to them that they were not to loot the city of Jericho for personal gain. They were to kill all of the people in the city except Rahab and her family. They were also supposed to burn everything in the city, except the silver, gold, and bronze which were supposed to go to the Lord's treasury. Sounds easy enough, right? As we continue on, we see it is harder than we think.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.

One of Joshua's men, Achan, disobeyed the orders of God. He committed treason by disobeying his C.O.'s commands. However, his actions were unknown to Joshua. All Joshua knew was that they had just won an amazing victory. Now was the time to strike again.

² Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

Joshua set his sights on the city of Ai. After the stunning victory at Jericho, he was sure the people could defeat this tiny city. The report from his spies only bolstered that opinion.

And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few."⁴ So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai.⁵ And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

What?! This wasn't supposed to happen. They lost the battle! What was going on? What happened to God and his power? These are the questions we naturally would ask, and they are exactly what we hear from Joshua.

⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.⁷

And Joshua said, “Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!”⁸ O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies?⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?”

Joshua did what many of us would do. He blamed God. He told God He had failed. He felt God had set them up only to have them be defeated by their enemies. Basically, He told God that He made Himself look bad.

However, Joshua didn't know the whole story, but God did. He quickly put Joshua in his place.

¹⁰ So the Lord said to Joshua: “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face?¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you

God basically said to Joshua, “Listen Sparky, this is not My fault. Your people disobeyed Me. They committed treason against Me. I can't fight for you when you disobey Me. Until you make things right, your enemies will defeat you.”

We can now see what it means to commit treason against God. Achan, one of God's children, deliberately disobeyed God. He did exactly what he knew he wasn't supposed to do. Anytime we willfully disobey God, it is treason.

Disobedience is deadly to a soldier in God's army. Like the Israelites, we cannot defeat our enemies if we are living in disobedience before God. We will never be free to love God if we don't obey His commands. God demands total obedience. Anything else is treason. Just like with treason on the battlefield, disobedience against God affects us greatly. If we don't deal with our disobedience, it will destroy us forever. Let's continue on with the passage to see what I mean.

We will encounter spiritual defeat.

¹³ Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you"'

God commanded Joshua to remove the sin from the camp. If Joshua didn't deal with the sinner, then Israel would never defeat their enemies. The same is true for us. If we have willfully disobeyed God's commands which He gave to us either through His Word or a direct revelation, then we are guilty of treason before God. Until we consecrate ourselves and remove the sin, we won't defeat our enemies. As a matter of fact, they

Anytime we willfully disobey God, it is treason!

will gain strength and begin to defeat us. Thus, spiritual defeat is the first consequence of treason against God.

We will cause those around us to suffer.

Treason against God will not only destroy us, but it will affect those around us. It certainly affected those around Achan. We already read that 36 men lost their lives and the entire nation's military reputation was ruined. However, the effects didn't end there.

¹⁴ In the morning, therefore, you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man. ¹⁵ Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' ”

¹⁶ So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. ¹⁷ He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. ¹⁸ Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

Achan's sin caused his entire tribe to suffer. They were all placed under suspicion because of his act of deliberate sin. Eventually, Achan's family is put to death

because of his acts of treason. Our disobedience can have a far-reaching affect.

However, the consequences don't end there.

It causes hardness of heart which can eventually separate us from God.

¹⁹ Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."

²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done:²¹ When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

Achan tells Joshua the great sin he had committed. However, it was not a repentant confession. Achan doesn't show the sorrow or remorse that accompanies true repentance. He never willing stepped forward and confessed. He was simply caught. He had no choice but to state the facts of what he had done.

Deliberately sinning against God causes someone to harden their heart. The more they do it, the easier it gets until they feel no remorse and see no shame in what they have done. It is at this point they lose any ability to

Deliberately sinning against God causes someone to harden their heart.

defeat their enemies.

Achan seems to have reached this point. He showed no concern for the 36 lives he had caused to die. He shows no regret for what he put his family through. He doesn't care that he offended God, causing God to stop fighting for Israel. He just coldly states the *facts of his sin*.

Joshua is now furious. He sent men to examine the facts to see if Achan was telling the truth. Once the story is confirmed, Joshua took Achan outside the camp and pronounces his judgment.

Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor.²⁵ And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day

Achan, along with his family, was put to death and all of his possessions were burned. What had begun as a week of joy and victory for Israel had turned into one of defeat, sorrow, and judgment. Treason certainly has its price.

This story cannot be taken too lightly or passed over quickly. We must take it very seriously. Achan was a man just like us. He was a follower of God. He

experienced God's power. He had promises on his life. However, because he committed treason by willfully disobeying what God told him to do, he lost it all.

He never defeated his enemies. He never built his home in the Promised Land. He never grew old with his family. He lost any relationship with God. He lost all of his family and possessions. He died as a rebellious traitor. All of this happened because he chose to disobey God. We need to be careful we don't do the same thing.

We must be careful to always obey God and do exactly what He commands. To know to do right and choose not to do it is sin and high treason against God. To do so leads to separation from God, defeat from our enemies, a hardened heart, and eventually spiritual death. How do I know this? I have seen it first-hand.

A Modern Man's Treason

I know a man who is guilty of treason in much the same way as Achan. He was given direct orders from God, but he refused to obey them. This man grew up in physical and sexual abuse from a family member. However, instead of hating this person, he formed an odd bond with them. He was loyal to the end with this family member.

When the man entered his twenties, he began attending church with his wife. As he attended, he claimed to become a Christian. He went to church every Sunday, served on boards, and even became an elder. It looked like he was quickly moving through the ranks in God's army. However, it wasn't genuine. He was only playing games. His entire life was a lie. His true allegiance was still to his abuser. No one

knew this fact because he kept the abuse and allegiance a secret. Only God knew the truth. That is, until some twenty years later when He started exposing the man for what he really was.

God began to reveal the truth. He exposed all the man's secrets. The man was stripped bare before God and his family. However, God didn't want to leave the man like this. He wanted to free him and make him into a godly, usable man. God laid out specific instructions for this man to take in order to break free and enter God's Promises. He told him how to break the bond with his abuser. He laid out clear steps on how to change, overcome his past, and grow into the man he had the potential to become.

However, this man said "No" to God. He refused to obey God's commands and do what He asked. He rejected God's will and thumbed his nose at God's offer of freedom. He chose to stay bound in the sin and pain of his past. He committed treason against God. Like Achan, this decision cost him everything.

The man lost the blessing of God on his life. God stopped fighting for Him. As a matter of fact, God started fighting against him. God took away all that the man held dear. God continually allows demonic attacks against the man in hopes he will cry out to Him for help. God stripped the man of his reputation and esteem. God caused a total separation between the man and his abuser.

The man has lost everything. However, his treason has not only affected him. His family suffers daily. They daily feel the hurt and rejection from this man because they love and serve God. He hates God and persecutes them because of Him. They

have seen an active man become practically disabled because of his sin against God. They watched daily as a once-smart, capable man slips into mental sickness because he refuses to deal with the pain of his past. His treason has left them in emotional dismay, all because he refused to obey God.

The effects of this man's disobedience stretch to even more people. He had a call on his life to minister to other abused people. However, because of his treacherous decisions, he never learned how to live free so he could help others. Who knows what good he could have done if he had just obeyed God and dealt with his sin? At any moment he could change his mind, repent, and begin to obey God. However, the constant choice to sin against God has hardened his heart to the point that he feels no need to repent. He sees nothing wrong with his life and behavior.

I've seen this man as he descended downward in rebellion and disobedience. I've seen the horrendous pain it causes him and his family. I know the ultimate price he will pay as he moves closer to facing God's final judgment. I pray he comes to his senses so he can make it to Heaven.

have witnessed the price treason against God costs. I implore you. Take this chapter seriously. Surrender to God. Do whatever He asks. Strive to always live in obedience to His Word. Granted, we all sin, but immediately, repent. However, we are talking about something deeper. The treason of disobedience we are discussing is when we know what God wants us to do but we deliberately choose not to do it. It is willful and sinful rebellion against God. It will destroy you and all those around you. We must choose to obey God and follow His commands.

Decision Time

As we bring this chapter to a close, we must face this head on. Some of you reading this are facing a time when you must decide if you will continue to follow God and obey His commands. I have tried to lay out a clear argument of why you need to stay in a state of obedience; however, only you can make the decision. Will you choose to stay loyal to God and obey whatever He asks, or will you decide to willfully disobey Him?

Others of you may be like the man at the end of the chapter who is living in disobedience to God. If you are, I want you to know it is never too late to turn around and do what He asks. God will forgive you for committing treason against Him. There still may be consequences for your disobedience, but they in no way can compare with what you will face if you don't turn around today. You need to decide today if you will confess your sin, humbly repent, and begin to once again serve and obey God. There is hope for you. Please decide today.



War Drills

1. Analyze yourself. See if there are any areas of your life that you are committing treason against God by willfully disobeying Him. Make a list of any areas. Write down

when you made the decision and why. Then repent and get back into formation with God.

CHAPTER 11

RALLYING THE TROOPS

Have you ever stopped and thought about all the different cliques we have for people who have failed or been defeated? We have heard many of them since we were children.

- If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
- When you fall off your horse, you need to get right back up again.
- Winners never quit, and quitters never win.
- We may have lost the battle, but we will win the war.

These phrases are so common and clique that we seldom realize the wisdom they actually possess. They teach us that we can't give up and stay defeated simply because we suffer setbacks. We need to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps (I still had one more in me ☺) and overcome the enemies that defeat us. This is especially true for a soldier in God's army.

Because we are men with naturally sinful tendencies, there will be times when we suffer defeats from our enemies. Try as we may, we will not always gain instant victory. How we handle our defeats goes a long way in showing what kind of a soldier we will be in God's army.

In this chapter, we will learn what God expects from us when we do suffer defeats and setbacks in our battle against our enemies. It is an important lesson for all of us to learn as we fully enter into the godly man's groundwar. Let's get started.

If at first you don't succeed...

In the last chapter, we saw how the nation of Israel suffered a devastating defeat against the city of Ai. We discussed the need to guard against committing treason against God. We focused specifically on Achan and his sin. In this chapter, we need to refocus our attention from one man's sin to the effects the defeat had on the entire nation. In order to do this, we must briefly re-examine Joshua 7.

And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. ⁶Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. ⁷And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!" ⁸O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? ⁹For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

Up until this point, the nation of Israel had experienced unparalleled military success. No one could stand against them. They defeated any and all enemies they encountered. This streak came to a streaking halt when the people of Ai beat them

back in defeat. This loss caused a panic in the camp of Israel. The people felt afraid, helpless, hopeless, and betrayed by God. This is the natural response after suffering defeat.

So how do we overcome and renew our fight against our enemies? Let's examine Joshua 8 to find out.

...Try, Try, Again

1. *We must remove the sin that caused the defeat.*

We know from the last chapter that the source of Israel's defeat was the sin which Achan committed. In order to be able to begin the battle again, Israel had to face the sin and remove it from their midst.

²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

The entire nation worked to remove the sin from among them. Once they did, God's anger stopped. They were now free to continue the war.

Each of us is like the nation of Israel. The entire nation wanted to defeat their enemies and enter God's Promised Land. However, they had one part that was corrupt and keeping them from being able to defeat their enemies. Each one of us wants to defeat our enemies. Unfortunately, we all have an Achan inside of us that allows our enemies to keep us defeated.

99% of our heart wants to love and serve God, but the 1% is sinful. We need to identify and destroy the 1%!

99% of our heart wants to love and serve God, but the 1 % is sinful. We need to identify the 1% and destroy it.

I know in my life I fully want to love and serve God. I want to follow His will and totally belong to Him. However, because I have a sinful nature, I find myself unable to 100% reach this place in my life. This is because I have hidden enemies that try and stop the process.

Over the years, I have had to identify these enemies and deal with them. Fortunately, we serve a forgiving God Who will speak to us and show us what we are doing wrong. We saw that in the last chapter when God told Joshua that Achan was the source of the sin. Like Joshua, we can show our sin no mercy. It must be completely destroyed and we must begin to go in a new direction. That brings us to step #2.

2. *We must accept God's forgiveness and begin again.*

Now the Lord said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. ²And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves.

Lay an ambush for the city behind it.” 3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai;”

Once Joshua removed the sin, he had to accept God’s forgiveness and begin fighting again. God saw the earnest desire Joshua had to be free from the sin that held him and the nation back and He forgave them. Then, He encouraged Joshua. Notice what He said.

Now the Lord said to Joshua: “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed;

These are the exact same words God used when He originally called Joshua to the battle. It is as if God was saying, “You were My man then and you still are now. Get back in there and make Me proud!” He wanted Joshua to know he was forgiven. He wanted Joshua to accept this forgiveness.

This step sounds easy enough; however, it is more difficult than one would think. Our enemy will try and convince us that God hasn’t forgiven us. He will tell us that we have no right to get back in the fray. He will try and convince us that we aren’t fit to fight in God’s army. He will try to make us afraid that we will be defeated again because God is still angry with us.

This is why we must accept God’s forgiveness. We must realize He does forgive us and He will help us overcome. Only then will we be able to take it to our enemies.

3. *We must fight our enemies with everything we got.*

After we face our sin, remove it from our lives, and accept God's forgiveness, we must take the fight to the enemy with everything we got.

³ So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night

This time Joshua meant business. He sent 30,000 men to the battle. Remember, last time he only sent 3,000. He sent only enough to do the job. He toyed with Ai. He didn't take them seriously. As a result, He was defeated. This time, he understood the risk in the battle and fought with everything he had. We need to learn this lesson. I know I certainly did.

When I first entered into spiritual warfare, I didn't take it all that seriously. I basically did it in hopes of appeasing God so He would do what I wanted. As a result, I gained few victories and suffered many defeats.

It wasn't until I got serious and realized how pathetically bound to sin I was that I began to gain victories. I wanted to break free, so I gave it all I had. I spent hours in prayer. I made endless lists of sins I had committed. I repented continuously. I went through hours of deliverance. I went after my enemies with everything I had. Only then did I begin to experience victory.

We cannot enter this battle against our demonic enemies lightly. We can't halfheartedly fight. We must take it seriously. We must realize it is spiritual life or

death. It must be our #1 priority. We must attack it with as much force and vigor as possible. This brings us to our fourth point.

4. *We must use the defeat to our advantage.*

So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. ⁴And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. ⁵Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. ⁶For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. ⁷Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸And it will be, when you have taken the city, that you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the Lord you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

I find Joshua's plan fascinating. He made the men of Ai think they were winning again. As the men of Israel retreated, the men of Ai naturally chased them. When the city was empty, the men waiting in ambush attacked. They burnt the city and destroyed it. The men of Ai knew they were done. Israel could now attack them from all sides. This plan never could have happened if they had never suffered a defeat.

We need to use our past defeats to help gain future victories. We must analyze what we did wrong and do it right. We need to use the memory of the defeat to inspire us to gain new victories. Also, when our enemies try to throw lies and attacks at us, we

need to remind them that we repented, God forgave us, and He will give us the victory over them. Joshua used the defeat to his advantage, and so should we.

5. We must persistently defeat our enemies.

The fifth step in rising from our defeats is to fight until our enemy is completely defeated. We see this when Joshua and his men finish off the men of Ai who find themselves surrounded.

So all the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. ¹⁷There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

¹⁸Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.” And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city. ¹⁹So those in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire.

Joshua gave the predetermined signal. The ambushers set the city on fire and quickly helped the rest of the Israelites in the battle.

Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were caught in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down; so that they let none of them remain or escape. ²³But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

²⁴ And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.

Israel thoroughly defeated their enemies. They fought until they were completely destroyed. Notice the persistence Joshua and his men displayed.

So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. ²⁶for Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. ²⁷ Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua. ²⁸So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, desolation to this day. ²⁹ And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day.

They left no survivors. They killed everyone and everything. Notice Joshua had his arm and spear raised the entire time they fought. He never wavered until it was done. We must do the same.

*We must go after our enemy
with everything we got!*

We must go after our enemy with everything we got. We do this by not only addressing the way the sin affects us now, but also looking back and seeing the long-term effects.

When did we first commit the sin? Is it generational? Where did I learn this sinful behavior? When do I usually commit this sin? These are all questions we must face. We must make lists and repent. We must make amends. We must go through deliverance so we can kick out the demon. We must be persistent and fight until the demon and behavior are no longer part of our nature. Only then will we gain complete victory and be able to move on to step six.

6. *We need to grow deeper in our relationship with God.*

Once Joshua and his men totally destroyed the city of Ai, they rededicated themselves to God.

Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal... And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.

³⁴And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

Joshua and the people built an altar, which signified entering into prayer and worship to God. Then they dove into the Word of God. We need to do the same.

Once we defeat our enemies and gain victory over the area of sin, we must fill the space with a new, godly way of living. Jesus explains the reason why in Luke 11:24-26.

*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'*²⁵ *And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.*²⁶ *Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."*

We need to fill ourselves with God's Word. It is truth to replace the lies of Satan. We need to spend time in prayer, hearing God's voice instead of our enemies' lies. Doing these things will help us re-groove our hearts and minds so our enemies can't come back into us. Also, doing so helps us see additional enemies we can defeat. In future chapters we will go into greater detail, but for now we must face this topic head-on.

Decision Time

We began this chapter by discussing the fact that we all lose battles from time to time. Your measure of a warrior in God's army is what you do after the defeat.

Will you choose to stay down and defeated, feeling helpless and hopeless to begin again, or will you rise up and deal with the defeat?

Will you take action to kill the sin that caused the defeat?

Will you accept God's forgiveness and begin again?

Will you fight your enemies with everything you got?

Will you take the lessons from your defeat and use it against your enemy?

Will you be persistent until your enemy is totally destroyed?

Will you then take steps to deepen your walk with God so the enemy cannot return? We all need to make our own decision. I have made mine. What will you decide?



War Drills

1. We listed a lot of questions in this chapter's Decision Time. Take time and analyze each step. Decide what you will do, and do it with all you have in you.
2. Re-read Luke 11:24-26. Figure out exactly what you need to do so your enemies can't return.

CHAPTER 12

DOWN IN THE TRENCHES

Since the beginning of time, soldiers have dug trenches to hunker down in while in the heat of battle. These trenches, also known as foxholes, have been the source of protection and shelter to many a fighting man.

They say the best friendships are formed inside of these trenches as men bond together simply trying to stay alive. Men talk, laugh, cry, sing, and fight together. However, it is the one activity that men do alone in the trenches that we need to discuss today. What is this activity? Prayer.

Many men have said they learned to pray in their foxholes. In the heat of battle, their natural response is to cry out to God for help, safety, and protection. The same needs to be true for a soldier in God's army. When we are engaged in battle with an enemy that seeks to devour us, we need to cry out to God for help. Praying in the trenches needs to become a way of life for us. Without prayer, we stand wide open to the lies and attacks of our enemies. To understand this, we simply need to look at the events immediately after the Israelites defeated the city of Ai. As we do, we will see the devastating effects that not praying can have on a soldier in God's army.

The Need for Trench Knees

We last left the nation of Israel standing victoriously before an altar built to God. Behind them lay the city of Ai, a smoldering heap which was completely defeated. A few miles back the road lay a pile of rubble which was formerly the grand walls of

Jericho. To the onlookers around them, Israel seemed an unstoppable military machine. Action by the surrounding cities needed to be taken if they were to survive. As we look at Joshua 9, we see this is exactly what happens.

And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard about it, ² that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

The enemies of Israel were all gathering together to make a united stand against them. They knew what their chances of survival were alone. They saw what happened to Ai and Jericho. They felt their only chance was a massive, joint campaign to defeat Israel.

This is an important lesson for us to learn. Just like these cities, our demonic enemies are scared to death of us. They know we have the strength and blessing of God to utterly destroy them. They know if we gain too many victories, then nothing can stop us. They will attack us with everything they got in order to take away our mojo.

We're especially vulnerable after we overcome a defeat and gain a victory. When we are feeling great and invincible, they try and use this against us. We see this in the following verses.

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, ⁵old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was

dry and moldy. ⁶And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”

Let's reset the stage here. We have Joshua and the victorious Israelites' on one side, and a massive army gathering on the other. Joshua's objective seemed clear. He had to fight and defeat the gathering army.

One of Joshua's neighbors, the city of Gibeon, saw an opportunity to save its own butt. They planned an elaborate ruse to take advantage of Israel's good feelings after the victory. They approached Joshua and both lied to Joshua and flattered him to keep from being defeated.

⁷Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?”⁸But they said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” And Joshua said to them, “Who are you, and where do you come from?”

⁹ So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroath. ¹¹ Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”’ ¹²This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. ¹³And these wineskins which we filled were new, and

see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”

The men of Gibeon had thought of every angle. They only made mention of Israel's early victories on the other side of the Jordan in order to make them think they began their trip well before Israel defeated Jericho. They flattered Joshua and his men. They flattered God and His Might. They patted Israel's ego. They tried to make them feel proud.

They went so far as to bring stale bread and broken canteens to make it appear they lived far away. They had a great, foolproof plan to save their own skins. However, they forgot one thing. They didn't realize that Joshua had the ability to talk to God and have God tell him if they were really legit. It was an oversight that would cost them their lives as soon as Joshua fell to his knees in prayer.

*¹⁴Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; **but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.** ¹⁵So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.*

Can you believe it? Joshua and his men never considered asking God what to do. Instead, they trusted their own instincts and knowledge. They made a treaty with the men and sent them on their way. It was an arrogant and presumptuous mistake that would end up biting Joshua in the butt.

And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. ¹⁷Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities

were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. ¹⁸But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel. And the entire congregation complained against the rulers.

After three days, Joshua found out he had been duped. He had made a vow not kill the people of Gibeon. These enemies of Israel would not be destroyed. Joshua and Israel would never be free of this particular enemy. All they could do was try and subdue them.

Then all the rulers said to the entire congregation, “We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. ²⁰This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.”²¹ And the rulers said to them, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.”

²²Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, “Why have you deceived us, saying, ‘We are very far from you,’ when you dwell near us?²³ Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves— woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.”

Joshua announced their fate to a people of Gibeon. Because Israel had made a vow using God’s name, the men of Gibeon would not die. They would instead serve the people of Israel as forced labor. The people of Gibeon respond as you would expect.

²⁴ So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the Lord your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much

afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. ²⁵*And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us.”* ²⁶*So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them.* ²⁷*And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.*

They didn't care. They lived another day. They were not destroyed by Israel. They were content to live out their days alive in the Israelite's camp. Israel was forced to endure their presence because they failed to ask their Commanding Officer what He wanted them to do. Complete deliverance was not possible because Joshua and his men didn't hit their knees in the trenches. We need to be careful to not make the same mistake.

Our enemies, the demonic oppressors in our lives, know we have the power to defeat them. They know their final fate is defeat and an eternity in the abyss. The longer they stay near us, the longer they delay their judgment. They will lie, deceive, trick, and connive us in order to stay undetected and out of the abyss. This is why we need to stay in prayer before God.

Prayer is one of our greatest weapons in the war on the dark kingdom. Through prayer, we receive words of truth from God. He alone can shine the spotlight on our enemies. Only He can speak truth to combat their lies. He has the knowledge we need to discern and uncover the enemies in our lives. This can

Prayer is one of our greatest weapons in the war on the dark kingdom.

only happen through prayer. Trust me, I know of what I speak. As a matter of fact, I had an experience recently where the only way to discern an attack of the enemy was to hit the deck and get God's outlook on the situation.

Getting On Our Knees to Fight like a Man

I was born with a neurological disease that affects my feet. It has been a problem my whole life. One summer a few years ago, I attended a service at a summer retreat. During the service, a woman came up to me and told me that God had told her I had a generational disease that affected my feet. She said God would heal them and the disease would stop with me. It would not be passed on to another generation. After the service, I never saw the woman again. I wouldn't be able to pick her out of the crowd if I tried.

Years later, God miraculously healed one of my feet. It is now normal. The healing was confirmed by doctors. It was healed. However, I still had one bad foot. It is not healed, but God has promised me that He will heal it. All I have to do is trust and obey Him.

This past summer, a situation presented itself when I was offered a shoe orthotic to help my bad foot. It seemed like a good thing. However, the deeper I got into making a decision, the less peace I felt. The Pedorthist started telling me that my good foot wasn't really healed. He said it was only in remission. Then he said my feet could never be healed and would continually get worse.

I was faced with a decision. Would I believe the woman at the retreat who said God would heal me, or should I believe this trained professional who sincerely wanted to help me? I didn't know what to do. Was God opening this door, or was the enemy trying to get me off track? The only thing I knew to do was hit the floor and ask God.

I got on my face before God in prayer. Normally, I pray sitting up or laying down because of physical problems. However, on rare occasions such as this, I endure the pain and lay prostrate on my face before God. When I am face down on the floor, I mean business.

I spent several hours on my face for days. I've eventually realized it was a trap from the enemy to get me off track with God. I decided I would believe God's promise. I would trust that the healed foot would stay healed, and I would keep following God as He eventually completed the healing of my other foot.

I have come to realize that I need to seek God's will about every decision I face. I can no longer make snap decisions based on my own thoughts. I have enemies who will try to use any and all situations to try and trap me. They want me out of God's will so they can enter me and regain the control they have lost. I need God's wisdom to know what His will is and what are traps.

We need to seek God in prayer about everything. Joshua didn't and he was never free of this enemy from Gibeon. I know I don't want this to happen to me. I want complete freedom. I hope you feel the same way.

Decision Time

We live in a fast-paced world which places a low priority on time spent in prayer. I know I struggle to take time alone in prayer. However, this chapter is a stark warning about the cost of not seeking God's will in prayer. Lack of prayer can keep us bound and unable to defeat our enemies. It makes us susceptible to the lies of our enemy. It is a high price to pay for such a small sacrifice of time. Yet it is a decision we all must make for ourselves.

Will you set aside time each day to stay in contact with your C.O.? Will you seek His Will and direction for each decision you face in life? Will you daily pray for the discerning of spirits so that you can detect when something is demonic and not from God? Will you allow God to speak to you, giving you direction and guidance? I've made my decisions. What will you decide? Will you get on your knees in the trenches and fight like a man? Decide today.



War Drills

1. Daily ask God for spiritual discernments so you can detect Satan, his lies, and his traps.
2. Began asking God about each decision you face.

CHAPTER 13

THE AXIS OF EVIL

Shortly after the attacks of 9-11, President George W. Bush addressed the nation to discuss what actions needed to be taken to protect our country from future attacks. During the speech, he spoke about three nations he felt were a threat to our country. The three nations, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, were working together to build nuclear weapons to use against the United States and Israel. President Bush labeled these three countries the “Axis of Evil”.

Since that speech, we have overthrown the Iraqi government and liberated its people. Once the Iraqis began working with our country, the other members of the “Axis of Evil” began to stir up trouble by carrying out attacks inside Iraq against innocent civilians. They hope to destroy any progress and stop the people of Iraq from working with their enemy, the United States. They fear we will attack them next. They don’t want to meet the same end as Saddam Hussein, so they attack the Iraqi people.

This behavior by the “Axis of Evil” is nothing new. As we continue on with Joshua and the Israelites, we see the original Axis of Evil. As we study their actions, we will learn exactly how our enemies work together to defeat us. We will learn how we can break up their evil teams and destroy our enemies. Our spiritual battle is about to heat up. Let’s get started.

The Original Axis of Evil

So far we have seen Joshua and Israel destroy two of its enemies, Jericho and Ai, and place another enemy, Gibeon, in servitude. While Israel didn't completely annihilate Gibeon, they did force a surrender, which is a form of defeat. However, Joshua and his men still had enemies to fight. The huge, multi-national army was preparing to attack Israel. This force was none too pleased when they heard that Gibeon had struck a deal with Israel.

Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it— as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them,² that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.

The city of Gibeon was an important city in the land of Canaan. It was a large city with great wealth. Its army was made up of well-equipped, mighty warriors. Above this, it was a key land area. It was situated in a key location in the mountain regions. Once conquered, Israel had split the Canaanites in two and established the high ground. They gained this great military advantage without even having to fight. The five nations needed to re-capture Gibeon if they had any chance of defeating Israel.

³ *Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying,⁴ “Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and*

with the children of Israel.”⁵ Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

Gibeon thought they had saved their butt. However, they now faced annihilation from another enemy. Panicked, they cried out to their new best friend for help.

And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.”

After being alerted of the Gibeonite’s situation, Joshua did what he failed to do the last time he dealt with these people. He sought God’s direction through prayer. God didn’t fail to answer.

⁷ So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. ⁸And 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.”

This is an important lesson to learn. The demonic enemies we fight against daily all work together to defeat us. They all work in different ways, but their common goal is to keep us bound. Like the city of Gibeon, one demon is usually more powerful than the others. This one is usually the head demon of the group. The other demons in the group are less powerful, but equally dangerous. When we go to war with our enemies, we usually fight the head demon first. Once it is defeated, the remaining demons will

panic. They know they are next. These demons will attack with even more vigor. They will try to regain control of us and also seize the post of new head demon.

I remember going for deliverance once and dealing with a particular area. I found myself afraid of men. I always felt that, when left alone with a man, he would hurt me, reject me, and eventually, abuse me. I went for deliverance and was set free from a spirit named Fear of Man.

It entered me through years of abuse from my father. I knew the abusive way I was treated, and I expected the same treatment from all men. I would literally be panicked if I had to deal with men I didn't know. As you can imagine, this was a bad problem to have with the particular calling on my life to minister to men. After the deliverance, I was set free from the Fear of Man demon and thought this problem was over.

A few days later, I found myself still fearful. It turned out that fear of man was the head demon, but I still had other enemies that worked along with it. I was delivered from demons named Torment, Torture, Punish, and Cower. My father's abusive actions allowed Torment and Torture to abuse me. Punish made me feel I deserved it, and Cower made me stay away from men. While I had experienced some freedom by getting rid of Fear of Man, full freedom only came when I dealt with the whole Axis of Evil.

To many people, this idea of fighting multiple enemies at once seems overwhelming. However, it isn't as bad as we would think. As a matter of fact, just like

when facing one enemy, God promises us victory. He promised it to Joshua, and He will give it to us as well.

⁸And 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.”

God told Joshua that He not only allowed the attack, but He arranged it so Israel could defeat their enemies. Israel would destroy them and gain even more land. Once this battle was over, Israel would have entered even more into God's promise land. As we continue on, we see that God not only promises victory, but He also fights so that they receive it.

*Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. ¹⁰ **So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that **the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.*****

God fought and killed the enemies for Israel. He bombed them with hail. He caused chaos so that they killed each other. He held nothing back from helping Israel. Just like the New Testament says, when the enemy came in like a flood, He raised His standard against them. He went so far as to do a once-in-a-lifetime miracle to assure Israel's victory.

Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."¹³ So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.¹⁴ And there has been no day like that, before it or after it that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.

God left no doubt in anyone's mind whose side He was on. I love that last sentence.

*And there has been no day like that, before it or after it that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for **the Lord fought for Israel.***

God left no doubt that Israel's victory was because of Him. However, He did require action from Israel. They had to do their part. The same is true for us. As we continue on, I see four things we need to do as we fight our Axis of Evil.

1. When the enemy exposes itself, engage it.

¹⁵ *Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.* ¹⁶*But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah.* ¹⁷*And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."*

¹⁸*So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them.* ¹⁹*And do not stay there yourselves, but pursue your enemies, and attack their rear guard. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has*

delivered them into your hand. Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities.²¹ And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

Joshua and the Israelites fought their enemies until they were completely destroyed. They didn't stop until complete victory was obtained and they fully possessed their enemies' territory. We need to do the same.

We cannot be content to simply defeat a problem area of sin. We must allow God to expose all the enemies responsible for the sin. Like with Joshua, He will do whatever it takes to help us gain the victory. We must identify our enemies and engage them. We must be faithful to take God's help and completely destroy the enemy. We can leave no survivors.

2. We must fight the enemies using God's Word.

Once Joshua and his men defeated the armies, they dealt with the five trapped kings. They hauled them before Joshua, and he passed sentence.

²⁴ *So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.*

Joshua publically humiliated the kings by having his men place their feet on their necks. However, the punishment was not over yet.

*Then Joshua said to them, “Do **not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.**”²⁶ And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.²⁷ So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave’s mouth, which remain until this very day.*

These words are the exact words God used in Joshua 1 when He initially called Joshua to lead the people. Joshua is now using these same promises to defeat His enemies. We must do the same.

When in the heat of battle, God’s Word is our only weapon. We must speak the Scripture against our enemies. It cripples them. It humiliates them. It makes them unable to fight. They are completely defeated by God’s Word. Like Joshua, we need to speak the Bible against our enemies. Only then can we weaken them and move onto step three.

We must speak the Scripture against our enemies...They are completely defeated by God’s Word.

3. We must remove the enemies.

Once we have waged war against all the enemies that God reveals and speak His Word to destroy their power, we must remove them from our lives. This is exactly what Joshua does in verses 27-41. To save time, let's summarize these verses.

On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them—all the people who were in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah... Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish;... Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish... From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon,... went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron... Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it.³⁹ And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who were in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

⁴⁰ *So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded.⁴¹ And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon.⁴² All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time,*

Joshua and the men of Israel defeated all the enemies in the “Axis of Evil”. Not only that, they conquered all the surrounding neighbors. After each city, it states that

Joshua and Israel totally destroyed the enemy. No one was left, leaving Israel free to possess their Promised Land.

We, too, need to completely remove our enemies. Once we expose them and weaken their power by speaking God's Word, we must order them out of us. We do this by saying, "I have repented for my sin and been forgiven by God. I now take back the ground that I gave to the demonic spirit of _____. In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of His Blood, I command the demonic spirit of _____ to leave me right now. You must go straight to the abyss for all eternity. In the name of Jesus Christ, Go!"

We need to do this for each demon in the group. The demons must leave us. They are defeated. They cannot stay. It may be helpful to work with a pastor who is trained in spiritual warfare and deliverance, but either way they must go. Once gone, we can experience new freedom and joy as we live in God's promised freedom. Once this happens, we go on to step 4.

4. Once we obtain freedom over strongholds of demons, we give praise and glory to God.

After Israel defeated their enemies, they returned victoriously to their camp. Notice there is no attitude of pride or arrogance among the men of Israel.

*⁴²All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, **because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.** ⁴³Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.*

The people of Israel knew the only reason they had been victorious was because God had fought for them. At least 7 times in this chapter Joshua says victory came from the Lord. God was the reason they defeated this huge army of enemies. Joshua knew this and gave all the glory to Him. We must do the same.

We need to realize that we are unable to defeat our enemies on our own. It is only possible because of Jesus' victory over the enemy on the cross. We are free because of this one act. Without Jesus' death and resurrection, we could never stand against our enemies. Any freedom we experience is because of Him. Thus, we need to give Him all the praise and glory.

Our victory is only possible because of Jesus' victory over the enemy on the cross.

Daily we need to thank Him for our freedom and victory over sin. We need to acknowledge we couldn't have done it without Him. We must ask Him to continue to lead us to freedom by pointing out our additional enemies and helping us defeat them. We will learn more about this in later chapters, but as we end this chapter, we once again have decisions to make.

Decision Time

If you have made it this far in this book, then you have already decided you want to break free of your enemies and enter into God's Promises. However, now that we have learned that we may face multiple enemies that work together to defeat us, we must decide if we will stand and fight our "Axis of Evil".

Will you allow God to expose the way demons work together to try and destroy you? Will you trust in Him for deliverance? Will you use God's Word as a weapon

against them? Will you command them to leave you and go to the abyss? Will you then give all the glory and praise for the victory to God?

Many people shy away from this part of Christianity. If we want to be mighty men of God, we must answer these questions and defeat our enemies. I have made my decisions. I have fought my “Axis of Evil”, and I have entered into greater freedom. What will you decide?



War Drills

1. Daily spend time in prayer asking God to expose any demonic enemies in your life. If He exposes any, use the four steps in this chapter and defeat them.
2. As you daily read the Bible, begin writing down verses that can be used in future battles against our enemies. Memorize them so you can speak them when the attack comes.
3. Daily praise God for the freedom you are beginning to enjoy.

CHAPTER 14

BATTLE FATIGUE

During World War 2, the U.S. was engaged in battle with both Germany and Japan. There was great fear that fighting on two separate fronts would cause our troops to be stretched too thin, causing fatigue and low morale among the ranks. Once Germany surrendered, many soldiers arrived home from Europe only to be redeployed to Japan. While these men were tired from the battles in Germany, their C.O.'s knew that they still had the strength to do battle on another front. The men would get a brief time of R&R, and then be shipped back to the trenches. Once we finally forced the Japanese to surrender, these brave, yet tired, soldiers got a chance to enjoy peace and a break from war.

A good commanding officer always knows how far he can push his men. He can get the most out of them without totally exhausting them. We serve such a C.O. He understands how tired we get, yet He knows the necessity not to relax before the enemy is defeated. As we return to our study of Joshua, we will see why God makes us continue to fight even after we obtain victories. As we do, we will receive the desire to continue on no matter what until our enemies are defeated. We will realize that partial victory is not the goal. We will settle for nothing less than totally possessing God's promises.

The War of Horses

So far, we have seen Joshua and Israel take possession of the undefeatable city of Jericho. Next they overcame defeat and possessed Ai. After that, they gained the high ground by subduing Gibeon. This action revealed a co-op of enemies whose daunting size and strength could not stand up against God's miraculous fighting. Israel now owned the entire mountain region in the land of Canaan. However, complete possession of God's promised land was unattainable until they went into the low country. As we turn to Joshua 11, we see that God pushed Israel to fight the enemies in this territory despite the fact that they were much stronger and well equipped than the exhausted, battle fatigued Israelites.

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard these things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph,² and to the kings who were from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west,³ to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah.⁴ So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots.⁵ And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

Israel was about to face its most daunting enemy yet. For the past seven years, they had fought nations of equal strength and weaponry in hand-to-hand combat in the rugged hill country. Now they faced an army which was made up of enemies in the flatlands. They were innumerable. Not only that, but these soldiers were stronger and better equipped. They had horses and chariots. Joshua and his men had swords. It would be like one of our soldiers going to fight against tanks using a six shooter. Victory seemed impossible, especially to the battle fatigued Israelites. However, it is in impossible situations that God does His best work.

⁶but the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”

God promised Joshua total victory. Not only that, but He said he would destroy the weapons used against Israel. What a promise! It must have given Joshua the strength and encouragement he needed, because he took instant action.

⁷So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. ⁸And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. ⁹So Joshua did to them as the Lord had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

Once again, God did what He promised. Joshua and his men were able to defeat this massive army. They destroyed the weapons and fighting machines. Victory was won and the land was conquered.

You may be thinking, “Great story, Jamie. God came though and defeated the enemy. However, we already got that message. Why do we have to go through it again?”

I perfectly understand this point of view. However, I do feel it is important to keep going through. Let me explain why.

I have come to realize that, while victory is promised, it does get tiring to always be fighting our enemies. We will eventually come to a place where we feel like we gained enough victories. We won't want to fight anymore. While this is an understandable place to reach, it is also a dangerous place.

We fight an enemy that will never, ever give up. They know their final destination. They have nothing to lose in the long run and everything to gain now. The more victories they gain the more power they receive in Satan's kingdom. This is why our enemy never gives up. We must know this and avoid becoming complacent. As we continue on, we will see four reasons why we must continue to fight.

1. Continuing to fight removes sin, making us holy.

¹⁰Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. ¹¹And

they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

Joshua fought until all the enemies were destroyed. Israel could now dwell in their land without fear of the Canaanites corrupting them. When we completely destroy our enemies, we get a step closer to a holier life. The sinful pattern that the enemy used to gain control is exposed. We can see our sinful behavior and begin living a different way. If we lose interest and don't defeat all of our enemies, we won't become as holy as is possible.

2. Continuing to fight shows our level of obedience.

*¹²So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded. ¹³But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. ¹⁵As the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. **He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.***

Joshua was given orders at the beginning of the campaign. He knew exactly what God wanted him to do. We read here that he obeyed God fully. Complete obedience wouldn't have been possible if Joshua had been content to own only the mountain region. He had to defeat all of his enemies in order to be totally obedient.

I know in my life there have been enemies I have not wanted to fight. Let's face it; dealing with many of these enemies requires us to deal with painful memories. There have been times when I was tired of the pain. I was tired of seeing how much of a mess I was. I didn't want to face anything else. I felt I had fought enough enemies. I was content with the progress I had made. I didn't want to face anymore. I was done! However, God had other ideas.

He made me deal with the painful areas. I had to face the awful wreck I was. I had to choose to be obedient to His Will. I had to decide if I loved Him enough to put aside my desires and feelings and face what He wanted me to see. While it was agonizing going through it at the time, in the long run I was glad I obeyed. I entered a deeper level of freedom because I obeyed God and continued to fight. It was what happened to me, it happened to Joshua, and it will happen to you if you are obedient and destroy your enemies.

We have to decide if we love God enough to put aside our desires and feelings and face what He wants us to face.

3. Continuing to fight allows God's master plan to be accomplished.

*¹⁶ Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, ¹⁷ from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. ¹⁸ Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. ¹⁹ There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. ²⁰ **For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord had commanded Moses.***

This passage is quite clear. God caused the enemies of Israel to attack so that Israel would destroy them. It was God's way of passing judgment on a pagan and idolatrous people. If Israel had been content to stay in the mountain territory, then God's plan to judge the sins of the Canaanites would not have been carried out. The same is true for us.

In the last chapter, we discussed the need to command our demonic enemies into the abyss for all eternity. This is part of God's judgment on the fallen and rebellious

angels. If we fail to destroy our enemies, we will never get to the point where God's plan of judgment happens. Instead of being placed in the abyss now, these enemies will be free to continue influencing us and others around us. This causes greater sin in our lives. It delays their judgment longer than is necessary. By submitting to God and fighting until the end, we help complete God's master battleplan. This brings us to reason four, which is one of the best of the group.

4. Continuing to fight allows there to be peace.

As is true in the natural realm, we must have war if there is to be peace. We see this in the conclusion of Joshua 11.

²¹And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. ²²None of the Anakim was left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

*²³So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. **Then the land rested from war.***

I love that last sentence. Once Joshua and the Israelites had defeated all the enemies that God had exposed so far, they could take possession of their land and enter a period of peace. They were given a rest from war.

We serve a merciful and loving God. While He does push us to fight our enemies more than **we think** is possible, He never makes us fight longer than **He knows** is possible. He will not push us to a point where we lose because of exhaustion. He will bend us so we grow deeper roots in Him and trust in Him for deliverance, but He will never push so far as to break us. He will give us rest. True peace can only be found after we defeat the enemies God wants us to defeat. Only then can we fully enjoy God's promises for our lives.

While God does push us to fight our enemies more than WE THINK is possible, He never makes us fight longer than HE KNOWS is possible.

We must be willing to keep fighting. We must face all the enemies God exposes. By doing so, we will remove sin from our lives, develop an attitude of obedience toward God, ensure God's will is carried out, and gain a sense of peace in our lives. The question is, "Will you continue to fight?"

Decision Time

We have already discussed the struggle I had making these decisions, yet they are decisions that have to be made. Will we fight our enemies until they are completely destroyed, or will we settle for partial victory? Will we obey God's commands to fight, or will we give into our own state of complacency? Will we say, "I already dealt with areas of sin", or will we realize that there still areas of sin to defeat? Will we trust in God to give us the victory even when we don't feel we can achieve it? Will we allow God to us to carry out His plan of judgment on the demonic world? I have been honest about my struggle and my ultimate decision. Now you, too, need to decide.



War Drills

1. We have just faced some serious questions. Take time alone and make your choice. If you choose to continue on, then daily ask God to strengthen you and equip you for the battles He has for you.

CHAPTER 15

R&R

I recently watched an episode of M.A.S.H. which featured two army doctors. The fatigue of constantly treating the wounded had left them exhausted and in need of rest. Their C.O. sent them off for a few days of R&R. They were to go attend a couple lectures on the latest medical procedures. The rest of the time they were to get some rest. However, the two doctors decided to skip the lectures and spend their time drinking and womanizing. As a result, they got no rest.

Once they returned to their unit, they were faced with a complicated surgery. Neither man had a clue what to do. They were too tired and hung over to think straight. They didn't know how to treat the man. Their C.O. was understandably upset. The conference they had skipped would have taught them how to perform the procedure. The rest would have given them the focus they needed. The R&R was useless because the two men had wasted it.

In the last chapter, we saw that God gives us R&R from our spiritual war. He allows us times of decreased warfare so we can strengthen our spiritual ability to fight. However, we cannot be like these two doctors who wasted their R&R. We must use this time to strengthen ourselves for the upcoming battles. In this chapter, we need to look at what we should and shouldn't do during our rest time. We will see the correct attitude to have during R&R, and how we can come out of it ready for battle.

The Tale of Two Rest-Stops

So far in this book, we have studied the book of Joshua one chapter at a time. There have even been multiple chapters on a single chapter from Joshua. However, in this chapter, we are going to look at 7 chapters at once.

You may be thinking you will need some R&R just from reading this chapter. I assure you it won't be that bad. The 7 chapters are mostly paperwork. It is about as interesting as reading the census' in Numbers or the "Begets" in Matthew and Luke. However, tucked away in this tumultuous detail, we get a glimpse of both how we should and shouldn't act during periods of rest. Although the good behavior comes first in the text, I want us to start with how not to respond. This begins in Joshua 17.

Rest turned to Complacency

The people of Israel had gone for quite some time without a battle. During this time, they divided up the land they had conquered. Each of the twelve tribes was given its share of the Promised Land. However, not all of them were pleased with their portion.

¹⁴ Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the Lord has blessed us until now?"

The people of Joshua had grown to such a size that they didn't fit on their land. God had blessed them so much that they were about to burst. Instead of dealing with

the situation themselves, they complained to Joshua. However, instead of pampering them, Joshua tells them to take care of the problem themselves.

¹⁵ So Joshua answered them, “If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you.”

This seemed like a reasonable solution. Get out of the state of rest and conquer more land. They needed to drive out more enemies to live more comfortably. However, they preferred to stay in a place of rest.

¹⁶ But the children of Joseph said, “The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel.”

The time of rest had made them complacent. They had forgotten that God had the power to defeat the iron chariots. They simply didn't want to start fighting again. They had gotten fat and lazy. Warring was not on their agenda. They wanted Joshua to fix it for them. However, he refused.

¹⁷ And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, “You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, ¹⁸ but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong.”

Joshua gave them a little tough love. He encouraged them to fight. He reminded them that God would help them. However, the fighting was their responsibility. More land was theirs for the taking. Unfortunately, their complacency won out.

16:10 And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

17:12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.

The people of Joseph didn't destroy their enemies and gain more freedom in the Promised Land. Instead, they tolerated them. This was a sad state for a well-rested Israelite tribe to reach. Unfortunately, they weren't the only tribe to be complacent.

18:1 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. ²But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.

³Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?"

In total, eight of the tribes did not totally possess their territory. They enjoyed the rest from war too much. They never roused themselves to begin again. Fortunately, they had a strong leader who was willing to kick them in the rear to motivate them.

We need to make sure our brief rest from war does not keep us from gaining full freedom. We can't let our hearts get complacent and content. Instead, we need to use

this time of rest to get ready for the next battle. Luckily, we have a man who shows us how to act during our time of R&R. His story is found in Chapter 14. We met him earlier in this book. He now re-emerges to show us what God wants us to do during our time of rest. He is one of my favorite men in the Bible. Who is he? He is none other than the legendary Caleb.

The Heart of a Rested Hero

Caleb's story is found a few chapters before the narrative of the seven complacent tribes. Caleb, one of the men of Judah, didn't wait around for Joshua to point out his land. He took the bull by the horns and approached Joshua.

^{14:6} Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. ⁸Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. ⁹So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'

Joshua and Caleb were old war buddies. They were the only two men from Israel's slavery days in Egypt who were allowed to enter the Promised Land. However, they had to wait over 40 years until all the other Israelites died.

Caleb didn't waste any of this time of rest. He didn't allow himself to get complacent. He made sure that, when the time came, he was ready to enter into full possession of God's promises. As we continue on, we will learn from Caleb's example three things we can do to stay battle ready.

1. We must keep ourselves in fighting condition.

The first thing Caleb did was ensure that he was physically able to fight his enemies.

¹⁰And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. ¹¹ As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me;

That is quite a statement this 85 year-old man makes! He had kept himself in shape. He ate right, he exercised, and he stayed active. Whatever fighting ability he had then he still had now. He did this by staying active and fit. He still felt that he was a lean, mean, fighting machine. We need to do the same.

Like Paul says, we need to stay prepared both in season and out of season. We have to stay strong and battle ready even during times of rest. However, we aren't striving for a physical fitness. We need to stay spiritually fit. We have to continue to grow spiritually. We need to strengthen our relationship with God. We need to spend time in prayer. We need to gain Biblical knowledge. We need to become strong in the

Lord. We cannot become spiritual complacent. Instead, we must grow deeper roots with God. Then, when the battle comes, we will be spiritually fit to fight.

2. We must stay enthused about the battle.

Even though Caleb had to wait about 50 years until he got to fight his enemies, he never lost the desire to destroy them and break free.

I am just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. (NIV, verse 11b)

I looked up the word “vigorous” to find out it meant “to be full of vigor”. That’s a big help! Then I looked up vigor and found that it means “active strength or force, intensity, energy”.

Caleb says he was as vigorous now as he was some forty years ago. He still felt the same intense desire to destroy his enemies. His energy and strength was focused on staying ready to fight and defeat them when the time came. He was as excited about doing battle during his time of rest as he was when in active duty 40 years earlier.

We need to keep the same level of intensity during our time of rest from spiritual war. We cannot feel relief that we don’t have to fight. We need to understand that this is a temporary rest and there will be more fighting after we gain strength. Our desire to destroy our enemies and live in God’s freedom and promises must increase during our times of rest. This ties in with our third reason.

3. We must turn our hatred into passion to destroy our enemies.

While Caleb had kept himself physically fit and mentally enthused, he did something that was equally important. He allowed his hatred of his enemies to burn inside of him.

¹²Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”

Caleb had an intense passion to attack this mountain territory. He wanted it. He demanded the right to fight this particular enemy. The intensity of his passion begs the question, “Why did he have to have this particular piece of land? What fueled this intense desire?”

I think the answer to this question will surprise you. Caleb’s passion was fueled by an intense hatred of his enemies. To understand this, we must look at the passage again.

*¹²Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard **in that day** how **the Anakim** were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”*

Caleb tells Joshua that he wants to fight these people because they were the Anakites. Also notice the usage of the words “You heard in that day.” In order to know what day and who the Anakites were, we have to go back almost 50 years to the day that Joshua, Caleb, and the other ten spies gave their report to Moses.

The ten rebellious spies said that Israel could not possibly defeat the enemies because of the humongous people of Anak. This enemy caused fear in Israel which resulted in the people rebelling against God. Because of this event, Caleb was forced to wander in the desert for 40 years.

I believe Caleb hated the evil action that resulted because of this event. He used this hatred as motivation to stay prepared for battle. Forty years later, this enemy faced its judgment, and Caleb made sure that no one got to fight them but him.

Like Caleb, we need to hate our enemies and the affects they have on our lives. Some will say it is wrong to feel hatred. I disagree.

Hatred can be a positive emotion if it fuels a passion to destroy our enemies and gain freedom. Hatred is sin when it is accompanied with bitterness and unforgiveness. However, when it is a hatred of evil, it is a positive feeling.

Hatred is sin when it is accompanied with bitterness and unforgiveness. However, when it is hatred of evil, it is a positive feeling.

Hatred of evil is what drove Jesus to passionately drive the moneychangers out of the temple. The Bible even says that God hates evil behavior. It is okay for us to hate our spiritual enemies. It is normal to hate the destructive forces that lead us to sin.

We should despise them for the pain and sorrow they cause in our lives. This hatred needs to fuel a passion inside of us to destroy these enemies. I know it has for me.

I have inherited many generational sins from my father such as abuse, anger, and deceit. I learned these behaviors from being around my dad. Over the years, I have begun to see how devastating and hurtful these enemies are. At first, I hated my dad, but through much prayer and counseling, I have learned how to forgive him. However, I still to this day hate these behavioral patterns and demons.

This hatred fuels a burning desire inside of me to destroy these enemies so they can never influence me again. Hating my dad was sinful, but hating the behavior was right. The hatred keeps me on the attack, even in times of rest. Caleb felt the same way, and, when given the chance, he leapt out of his R&R and began to fight.

“It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.”

¹³And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. ¹⁴ Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁵And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.

Because Caleb never allowed himself to grow complacent, he was able to conquer his land. As a result, we read that he once again got a rest from war. Do you know what Caleb did during this new time of rest? He made plans on how to conquer more land for his daughter and future son-in-law (Joshua 15:13-20).

This is the heart of a godly warrior. He never got complacent. He always stayed prepared to fight, and when the opportunity presented itself, he defeated his enemies.

This is the heart I long to possess. I have decided to follow Caleb's example and use any times of rest to prepare for future battles. R&R is not going to make me complacent. I will use the time to grow stronger in God. I will keep vigorous for the battle, and I will let my hatred for my enemies fuel my passion to fight. I have made my decisions. How about you?

Decision Time

If God were to bless you with a time of R&R, how will you respond? Will you get comfortable and complacent like the first seven tribes, or will you use the time to prepare for the next battle? Will you increase your spiritual strength by reading God's Word, praying, and educating yourself? Will you dread having to get active again, or will you enthusiastically jump back into the fray? Will you hate the thought of fighting again, or will you hate the way your enemies have devastated your life? Will this hatred fuel anger and bitterness, or will it fuel a passionate desire to be free of your enemies once and for all? The rest time will come. The question is, "How will you respond to it?"



War Drills

1. During times of rest, make sure you still spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, educate yourself through books, study guides, and commentaries.

2. Examine your heart. Is there any hatred inside of you? If so, is it a sinful hatred that needs to be dealt with? Begin the process of removing the hate and forgiving the person. Then use the hate as fuel to destroy your enemies.

CHAPTER 16

THE GREEN ZONE

If you watched any of the news coverage during the Iraq war, then you heard a lot about something called the “Green Zone”. The Green Zone was the area of Iraq where the Army’s Central Command was based. It housed military installations, diplomats, and visiting dignitaries. It is where most of the journalist were based. This zone was the most secure area in Iraq, maybe even the entire Middle East. If you wanted to avoid the battles and dangers of this war-torn country, then you would have taken refuge in the Green Zone. This place was so secure that even President Bush was able to visit it. It was virtually impossible for the enemy to get inside the Green Zone. It was a place of protection, safety, and security for all who dwelt in it.

As we once again return to the book of Joshua, we see that the Green Zone is not a new concept. God provided a place of protection for all Israelites who were wrongly being pursued. As we study these cities, we will see that we, too, have a Green Zone in which we can take shelter if our enemies’ attack is more than we can handle. We will learn this as we examine the Israelites as well as some examples from my own life.

The Original Green Zone

Over the past few chapters, the children of Israel have been defeating their enemies and taking possession of their land. Just like in the old West, as towns are

built and development takes place, a sense of law and order needed to be established. God gave Joshua instructions to establish safe havens for any Israelite who is falsely accused of committing a crime.

^{20:1}The Lord also spoke to Joshua, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

According to Israelite law, anyone guilty of murder was to be killed. If one man killed another man, then the dead man’s relatives had the right to pursue the murderer and kill him. It was very much an eye-for-an-eye justice system.

However, sometimes the deaths were accidental. In these cases, the family was not allowed to take revenge. This didn’t always please the family. Sometimes they still wanted to take revenge. They would try and kill the man before his innocence could be proven. Joshua was commanded to set up cities of refuge, or green zones, so that the innocent man could seek safe asylum.

⁴And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. ⁵Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. ⁶And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until

the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.’ ”

The accidental killer could find refuge inside of the city until guilt or innocence could be determined. The man was safe from any relatives who were pursuing him. Once proven innocent, the killer was given sanctuary until the high priest died. This long expanse of time allowed the relatives to learn the truth and cool off. Thus, Israel kept an innocent man from being killed.

You may be thinking, “This is very interesting, but what does it have to with our war on our enemies?” While the connection isn’t obvious, I assure you it is there.

We discussed earlier in the book that our enemies gain ground in our lives when we willfully sin. Like the avenging relatives, our enemies pursue us to destroy us as soon as we commit a sin. In these instances, we have to fight back, repent, and work to destroy our enemies. However, there are times when we have not knowingly sinned. We may not even have sinned at all. Still, our enemies will launch an attack which we are unable to stand up against. Like the innocent, accidental killer, we need to run to our city of refuge. What is this city of refuge? It is Jesus.

Jesus came to earth to die so we might live in freedom. He is our High Priest whose death allowed us freedom to once again live. Because of His death, we can approach our Heavenly Father in prayer. When the enemies’ attack comes, we can cry out to God in Jesus’ name.

The Bible says when our enemy comes in like a flood, God will raise up a standard against them. While it is true that we will usually have to help defeat the

enemies, there will be times when we aren't strong enough to defeat them on our own. It is at these times we call out to God for safety and deliverance.

You may be wondering "How do I know when I need to fight and when I need to go to my green zone?" This is an excellent question. The only way I know to answer is to give two examples from my own life.

To Fight Or Not to Fight?

After I graduated Bible College, God brought me home to deal with my past. Up to this point I had never faced any of the abuse and pain in my childhood. I hadn't dealt with the anger and hate in my heart. I had a lot of work to do cleaning up my heart and defeating my enemies.

During this time, God had me doing construction work remodeling my parent's home. My father had not kept up with things, so we had a lot of work to do. We redid the whole thing. We even added on a laundry room. I learned a lot about home repair during this time. Once the work was completed, I naturally assumed that God was going to free me to go and minister. However, my plans were not God's plans.

I have always had back problems because of scoliosis. One day I was helping my dad put an air conditioner into a window. All of a sudden, it slipped from his hands and fell toward the ground.

Instinctively, I reached out and grabbed it. As I did, I felt a searing pain in my back. I had damaged vertebrae and torn some cartilage. As a result, instead of going out to minister, I was sidelined with another back injury. My plans were not God's plans.

However, instead of submitting my will to His, I got angry and sank into a deep depression.

For the next year, I sat down and didn't do anything. I didn't quit on God. I still believed He was going to heal me and allow me to minister. However, I decided to just sit down and wait for Him to do it. I didn't work at rehabbing my back. Instead, I allowed my body to get weak.

During this time, I rarely left the house. Car rides were excruciating (you wouldn't believe how much you use your back muscles while sitting in a car). I didn't exercise. I didn't comb my hair or shave (I have never been blessed with great amounts of facial hair). I sat around all day in my pajamas. I read hundreds of books. I became an expert at Madden Football and online golf. I grew mentally and spiritually, but I didn't defeat my enemies. Instead, my body got weaker and my weight shot up to almost 300lbs.

Eventually, God used my mother to confront me and get me to rouse myself from my depression. I had to get back on track spiritually and defeat my enemies. I had to work hard and endure the pain physically to get my back well again. The enemies I fought were of my own making. I sinned against God by quitting and giving into depression, and anger. Fleeing to a city of refuge was not an option for me. God helped me fight my enemies, but I had to take action and fight.

Now that we have seen an example of when to fight our enemies, let's look at a time when I had no choice but to cry out to God to be my city of refuge. This event happened when I was a sophomore in college.

It was the beginning of April. My twentieth birthday was a little over a week away, and final exams were fast approaching. My life for the next few weeks was thoroughly planned. Little did I know my plans were about to take a surprising turn.

It was a bright, sunny Sunday morning the day that it all began. I had made plans to go to church with a few friends. However, when I awoke that morning, I discovered that I was unable to lift my head because of a splitting headache.

I was shocked. I was fine the day before, but that morning I couldn't even get out of bed. I managed to call my friends to let them know I wouldn't be going to church with them. I spent the rest of the day in bed. I was even forced to skip the joy of my life, the small men's group that I led on campus. I just couldn't get up. At least not until the diarrhea and vomiting started.

As evening approached, I called my mom and told her how sick I was. The next day she drove two hours to take me to the doctor. The plan was to go to the doctor and return to campus the next day. Little did I know that I wouldn't step foot back on the campus for the rest of the semester.

When I saw the doctor, he diagnosed me with mono and sent me home with some medicine. He told my mom not to worry because I would be fine. However, that night, I developed a very high fever and started bleeding with the diarrhea. My mom, being quite concerned, called the doctor again only to be reassured that I would be fine. As it turned out, I kept getting worse.

My older sister had an idea to call a college friend who had mono the year before to see if my symptoms were like his. He told her that he felt the doctor was wrong and I

should be taken to the hospital immediately. Within 15 minutes, I got my first ambulance ride, an hour long trek to the nearest hospital.

Once at the hospital, I was immediately admitted. The doctors examined me closely, but were unable to diagnose what was wrong with me. By this time, my temperature had risen and I was somewhat delirious. They finally decided I could have a severe case of pneumonia, but they just weren't sure.

I spent the next day in the hospital. As I lay in the hospital room, my mom played praise music for me and read me the Bible. She tried to keep me calm so I could get some rest. However, rest was not happening due to the extreme coughing I endured.

My family began to contact people to pray for me. My doctor, who happened to be a Christian, had his church pray. The entire Bible College was praying for me, and the students had their home churches praying. I had believers up and down the East Coast united in prayer for me to be healed.

For the next two days, I continued to get worse. I experienced dry heaves, coughing, and a dangerously high fever. The doctors still couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. They tested me for everything from meningitis to legionaries' disease. They were even questioning my sexual life to see if I could have a venereal disease. Since I have never even held a girl's hand or kissed a girl, I knew this was impossible. Stumped, they just kept taking more tests.

A pivotal day was the day before my twentieth birthday. My mom, unable to stand the thought of having to go and watch her son die, cried out to God for help. She said at that moment God told her to make my bed because I was coming home. God's

assuring words gave her the strength to face the upcoming day. It turned out she would need it.

That same morning my condition got worse. My white blood cell count fell dangerously low, causing my body not to be able to fight any germs. I was moved to intensive care. They packed me in a bed of ice in an effort to lower my temperature. Later, I learned that the doctors feared that the prolonged high fever would leave me brain dead or paralyzed. Completely at a loss and extremely frustrated, the doctors told my parents that they didn't know if I was going to make it.

The next day was my birthday, and it turned out to be the most dramatic day of my life. My parents arrived at the hospital to news that more tests needed to be taken. However, the tests were extremely dangerous. They needed to drain the fluid from my lungs so that I wouldn't drown and die. The doctors were not sure if I would survive this procedure.

My mom, unsure of what to do, turned to God for help. His answer came in the form of a Christian woman who came and held my mother's hand as she simply sat with her during my test. Later, my mom said that this was a greater help to her than any words of comfort that people spoke to her. Sometimes the best help is given by just being there for people in need.

I survived the test and spent the rest of my birthday sleeping off the nerve pills they gave me to get me through the tests. The doctors were treating me with the newest, most high powered drugs they could give me, but nothing was working. Later that night, I awoke to a nurse taking my temperature. It was 106 degrees.

The room turned to panic. The nurse immediately packed me in more ice. My white blood cell count was dangerously low and falling, leaving me unable to fight off the infection. I was basically dying.

It was at this point that I mustered the strength to pray the only prayer that I was capable of praying. I said, "Daddy, please help me. I can't do this myself".

At that moment, I heard the voice of God in a way that I had never heard it before. He said to me, "Don't worry. You will be okay. I will take care of you".

I felt such a sense of peace come over my entire body. I had no idea it was the power of God. I fell asleep and had the most peaceful night I had experienced since this nightmare began.

The next day I awoke to find that my temperature had dropped to 98.6, never to rise again. I was given food to eat. It was the first time I had eaten in the past nine days. I laughed and talked to my family. At one point, I laughed so hard that I threw up. My mom later told me that once she saw me laughing, she knew I was all better. Even the doctors said it was a miracle.

The next day I was moved from intensive care into a private room until my white blood cells were established at a safe number. I began physical therapy. I was so weak and had lost 35 pounds in nine days. I had to regain my strength to be able to walk. By the end of the week, I was back at home in my bed. God's words to my mom were fulfilled. It was a miracle.

The healing was a complete miracle from God. No brain damage occurred from the prolonged high fever (some friends would disagree ☺). As a matter of fact, my professors allowed me to take my final exams just a few weeks later from my home. I remembered everything I had learned and passed all the exams with flying colors, including my language class in ancient Biblical Hebrew. My body was completely healed by God. On top of all this, God even went the extra mile and healed a lifelong foot defect passed down from my father and grandfather. I now have a perfectly normal foot.

Years later, I went through a deliverance session. I was set free from a demon named Devour. This demon had tried to kill me through the pneumonia. I had no idea it was a demonic attack, and if I had, I was too weak to fight. My family was too exhausted and emotionally connected to do spiritual warfare. All we could do was take refuge in God. I did this when I cried out for help. It is what you can do in your time of extreme need.

Our enemy will always try and attack us during times of extreme vulnerability. At these times, we need to flee to our Green Zone. God is our city of refuge in the midst of our extreme need. We can always turn to Him when our enemy wrongfully accuses us or takes advantage of our vulnerabilities. God promises us the He will raise up a standard against our enemies. He will be our refuge. He was for an innocent Israelite, He was for me in the hospital, and He will be for you.

Decision Time

No matter who you are, you have faced horrible times in your life. Maybe it is a death of a family member, a sick spouse or child, financial ruin or loss of your name or reputation. No matter what the circumstances, you may feel too weak to stand up and fight. It is at this time you must decide what to do.

Will you fall victim to your enemies and allow them to defeat you, or will you take refuge in your Green Zone? Will you cry out to God and allow Him to raise up a standard against your enemies? Will you trust in Him for full deliverance? The choice seems obvious, yet it must be made. Decide now.



War Drills

1. Download Third Day's "Cry out to Jesus". Let the words encourage you to reach out to God.
2. Take time and think back on your life. Have there been times when God has been a City of Refuge for you? Add these times to your War Memorials so they can be a future source of encouragement.

CHAPTER 17

FINAL THOUGHTS OF A WARRIOR

We are nearing the end of our journey together. So far, we have learned what it means to be in a war with our enemies. We have discovered who our enemies are and how we can defeat them. We have learned what changes we need to make in our lives in order to prepare ourselves for the battle. We learned techniques and strategies to defeat our enemies and enter God's promised freedom. Hopefully, you have begun to apply these principles to your life and are beginning to experience a newfound freedom in God.

In the final two chapters, we will learn exactly why it is so important that we defeat our enemies. In this chapter, we will see that it not only affects our lives, but it affects the lives of those around us. In the final chapter, we will face the most challenging decision time so far, but before we do this, we need to take a look at the message Joshua had for the younger leaders of Israel. As we do, we will see exactly why our fight has been so necessary.

When we first began this study, we met a young, fearful man being thrust into a battle which he felt incapable to fight. Since then, Joshua has led the people of Israel on one of the greatest military campaigns this world has ever seen. With the help of God, he and his people have defeated any and all enemies that they encountered. Now, many years later, a much older Joshua gives a final speech to the leaders he has trained over the years.

^{23:1}Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. ²And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age.

Joshua knew his time on earth was limited. Before he dies, he wants to leave a legacy for the next generation of men who would take his place. He doesn't want to leave them as afraid and anxious as he had been so many years ago, so he lays out words of wisdom for them to follow. As we examine these words, we can learn not only why we have to fight, but how our battles can be used to help those around us prepare to fight their own battles.

³You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you.

Joshua knew that it was vital for them to understand that it had been God Who helped him fight his enemies. God gave him the victory. As we continue on, we see why he felt the need to tell this to them.

⁴See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. ⁵And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the Lord your God promised you.

Joshua knew that his death would not cause the war to end. The people of Israel would still encounter enemies. Joshua knew that he had defeated many foes, and he

wanted to use these victories as a source of encouragement to the future warriors. This is the heart of a godly warrior. We must develop this same heart.

The battle we have been fighting has not been only for our benefit. We should use the knowledge of our victories to help others break free, especially younger men. So many men today have not had godly male examples in their lives. These men are well aware of the mess their fathers made of their lives, and they do not want to repeat the same mistakes. We need to come along side these men and teach them how to break free of the generational sins which they fear repeating. We need to help them obtain God's promised freedom.

This is one of the main reasons God has led us to victory. He wants us to help other men out of their bondage. He wants us to follow Joshua's example and point them to freedom. Look at how Joshua did this.

1. He taught them everything he had learned about obtaining freedom.

⁶ Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷ and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them,

Joshua taught them the very things God had taught to him. He showed them the need to courageously enter the battle. He taught them the need to read and study the Bible. He instructed them on how to use God's words as a way to break free of the sins of the surrounding nations. He warns them to be careful to obey all of God's promises. Basically, he is telling them all the strategies and lessons which helped him defeat his enemies and enter into God's promise land. He didn't want these lessons to die with him. He wanted them to benefit a whole new generation of people. We need to do the same.

Joshua didn't want the lessons he had learned to die with him. He wanted them to benefit a whole new generation of people.

We need to take any and all knowledge we obtain from our spiritual battles and share it with younger men. We must help them find the inner courage and strength to face their enemies and take the battle to them. We do this by letting them know that we felt the same way when we began our spiritual battles. Then we share with them how we gathered the courage to begin. We share insights we learned along the way. We then encourage them by relating how we gained the victory.

We need to teach them the power of God's Word as a spiritual weapon. We must instill in them the importance of knowing and obeying the Bible. We must show them how obeying God's Word opens doors of freedom while disobeying it gives our enemies room to control us. We must teach them how to cripple their enemies by speaking God's Word against them. We need to encourage them to daily spend time in the Word. All these things are lessons we learned through our own spiritual journey.

They are the lessons Joshua portrayed to the younger leaders. However, his message didn't end there.

2. He taught them that God will give them the victory when they live in obedience to Him.

⁸but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day. . ⁹for the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. ¹⁰ One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. ¹¹ Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the Lord your God.

Joshua had learned one thing during his years of battling his enemies. If he was careful to obey God and follow His commands, then God would help him to defeat his enemies. He knew that no one could defeat God's people when they were living in obedience to God.

Even if "one of them stood against a thousand", God would give them the victory. God had proven this over and over to Joshua as he and his men defeated stronger and better equipped armies. Joshua knew God had given them the victory because of their obedience to Him.

We must teach the younger men God brings into our lives the need to live in obedience to Him. We must share stories of times God helped us gain the victory because we had been obedient to the commands He gave to us. We must show how obedience to God leaves no room for our enemies to attack us. Even if they do attack,

God will fight for us and help us obtain the victory. Joshua taught this lesson, and we must do the same.

3. He taught them how to live a holy life by destroying sin.

¹² Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, ¹³ know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

Joshua knew that if the Israelites disobeyed God and lived an unholy, disobedient life, then they faced certain destruction.

He remembered the sin of Achan and the devastating effects it had on the entire nation. He knew how heartbreaking this defeat was.

He remembered the way he had rashly made a treaty with the Gibeonites, allowing them to stay in their midst. He knew tolerating these people had caused them to have to fight increased battles. He didn't want the younger generation to fall into the same trap. He wanted them to live a holy, separate life from the nations surrounding them, so he gave them these clear words of instructions.

We, too, need to teach other men how to live holier lives. We must instruct them in ways to avoid falling to the many temptations around them. We must share examples from our lives of how living holier lifestyles and removing sins from our lives helped us

defeat our enemies. We must also be vulnerable and share examples of time we gave ground to sin and the devastating affects it had on us. These two types of examples along with our encouragement will help these men see the need to break free of sin and live holy lives before God, allowing freedom to result.

4. He teaches them how to use God's Promises to achieve victory.

¹⁴ "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one Word of them has failed.

What a statement made by Joshua! Not one of God's Promises to him had failed! God did everything He said He would do. This message would help strengthen anyone to fight.

We need to make sure we tell the younger men that God will keep His promises. Share stories of times God did what He promised. These stories will give them the strength to begin fighting their own battles. Once in the fray, they will earn their own memories which will give them strength, but until then, we need to hold them up and strengthen their faith. Our stories are crutches on which to lean as they slowly begin to fight.

We need to make sure we tell the younger men that God will keep His promises.

5. He taught them the consequences of not defeating their enemies.

So far Joshua has focused his message on the ways we go about defeating our enemies. Now he shifts the focus on what will happen to them if they don't go to battle.

¹⁵ Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. ¹⁶ When you have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

How's that for motivation! Joshua basically tells them all of the blessings they were currently enjoying would be taken away if they refused to engage the enemy. He wouldn't be around to fight for them. They would have to do it themselves. Failure to do so would result in them losing the freedom they currently possessed. They would instead end up bound in slavery in another country, just like their ancestors were bound in Egypt.

Sometimes this type of motivation will work better than all the words of encouragement. Many men see the mistakes and sins which kept their parents bound. This is one reason why they turn to God. They want to be saved and set free to live differently than their parents. They want their lives to have better results than the ones

they grew up with at home. We need to let them know that defeating their generational enemies will help them achieve this goal. We need to show them how to go about doing this. However, we must make it clear that failure to defeat these enemies will guarantee the same outcome as their parents.

This was a big motivator in my life. Once I realized the truth about my dad and the sin in his life, I became scared to death that I would end up just like him. I learned that the best way to avoid this outcome was to destroy the generational iniquities. Now I can break free of being my dad's boy. I can instead defeat my enemies and become God's man! After this, I can follow Joshua's example and teach other men how to defeat their enemies.

The crux of this chapter is not the exact steps Joshua used to teach the younger men. It is more about the need to get in there and encourage them to engage their enemies. We do this by sharing the steps we have learned.

However, it goes deeper than that. It is about us sharing ourselves. Joshua shared the way he came to freedom and realized God's Promises. He didn't share how Caleb did it. He didn't describe the high priests journey. He told his story. He used his story to teach them how to break free. This is the crux of discipleship; using all you have learned and all you go through to help strengthen and encourage a younger Christian to do the same. This is what Joshua did. It is what I am trying to do in this book. Will you be vulnerable enough to do the same?

Decision Time

Will you open up your life to another man in need of some spiritual support? Will you use the examples from your spiritual battles to give them the encouragement they need to fight for their own freedom? Will you share insights from God's Word to help them defeat their enemies? Will you show them how to use God's Word as a weapon? Will you teach them how to destroy sins so they can live holier lives? Will you give them tough love by pointing out generational sins which are keeping them from realizing God's Promises?

The Promised Land of Freedom in Christ is not just for our enjoyment. It is so we can help others break free and experience the same level of freedom in their lives. The question is, "Will we do it?"



War Drills

1. Volunteer to work in your church youth group. I have never met a youth pastor who would refuse free help.
2. Begin a small group for young men. Pour yourself into the men that God leads to your group.
3. Volunteer to be a big brother or a mentor to another young man. Invest yourself in his life.

CHAPTER 18

A QUESTION FOR THE AGES

The year was 1775. The American colonies, tired of oppression, tyranny, and suppression from the British government, held a meeting in Saint John's church in Richmond, Virginia. The delegates were unsure of whether to choose to fight or live at peace as loyal subjects of the British king. After many speeches, it appeared that the men were going to vote against fighting against their oppressors. All this changed when Patrick Henry rose to speak.

He spoke about what life had become like as subjects of the tyrannical British government. He laid out the consequences of not fighting. Then he vigorously spoke of why he felt they needed to fight. He felt they had become a slave to England, and fighting was their only chance out of bondage and into life as free men. He concluded his speech with these infamous words, laying a clear choice before the delegates.

The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable-- and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life

*so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?
Forbid it, Almighty God! **I know not what course others may take; but as for me,
give me liberty or give me death!***

Patrick Henry knew that the only way to live in freedom was to fight, and he wanted to be free more than anything. He would rather die than stay bound in slavery. He made his choice. His stirring words ignited the passion needed for war.

Years later, Patrick Henry and the rest of the colonies won their freedom on the battlefield. They went to war, they fought, and they won. The freedom we enjoy today is partly due to Patrick Henry laying down a challenge for his time.

Patrick Henry was not the first man to make such a speech. Centuries earlier, Joshua rose up and made his final speech to the nation of Israel. As we take one final look at the book of Joshua, we will see Joshua's final challenge to the Israelites. As we do, we will see that his words didn't just apply to his generation. It was a challenge for the ages. It leaves a decision to be made. We will examine this decision and see how it applies to our becoming Mighty Warriors. Let's look one final time at Joshua and make our decision together.

A Final Farewell from a Godly Warrior

In the last chapter, we saw Joshua give a final speech to the leaders of Israel, encouraging them to continue the fight. As we rejoin Joshua, the aged leader is preparing to give his final address to the nation of Israel.

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua had a particular message for the nation of Israel. For years, he had valiantly led the nation on one of the greatest military conquest ever known to man. He courageously guided the people to victory against every enemy they encountered. Now the nation of Israel was free to dwell in the beauty of their Promised Land.

It seems that Joshua's work was done. He led them to victory. He defeated their enemies. All that was left to do was leave a legacy for the nation.

For the sake of time, allow me to recap the message. You may want to take a moment and read Joshua 24:1-13. Joshua begins his message with a recap of all that God had done over the years for the people of Israel. Beginning with Abraham, he retells how God had chosen Israel as His own people. He relates how the people went into slavery in Egypt and how God had given them freedom. He continues to remind them of the many ways God had protected them and kept them safe from their enemies on the way to the Promised Land. He makes it clear to them that God was the one responsible for the freedom and blessings they currently enjoyed. They had done nothing to deserve it. He did it all. It was a beautiful reminder of the grace and love of God to the nation of Israel.

Now that Joshua has laid the groundwork of his speech with this walk down memory lane, he goes immediately into the heart of his message.

¹⁴ *“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!*

Joshua had presented a case to the people of Israel describing why he felt they should serve the Lord. He told them all the blessings they enjoyed were due to God. He had led them to victory. He kept them safe as they travelled. He protected them. He fought for them. He defeated their enemies. He gave them the Promised Land. He fed and clothed them. Nothing they enjoyed was because of them. God deserved their glory and praised. He alone deserved their devotion and loyalty. The question was, would they give it to Him?

¹⁵ *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...*

Joshua felt that the nation owed their allegiance to God. However, he couldn't make the decision for them. They had to decide who they would serve. In order to help their decision, Joshua gives them two alternative choices.

Alternative #1

¹⁵ *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River.*

The first alternative Joshua presented to the Israelites was the gods of their fathers. Many years earlier, the nation of Israel had begun worshipping other gods.

They adopted the gods of the Egyptians while living in slavery. Once free, they began to serve the gods of the desert nations in which they wandered. While these gods had done nothing to help the children of Israel gain victory over their enemies, Joshua wanted to give them the option of choosing their father's way of life. We have the same option.

We have learned about generational sins and iniquities in this book. We have seen how we can identify these areas and deal with them. However, knowledge alone is not enough. We must take action to defeat these enemies if we want to serve the Lord.

There is also the option of ignoring these patterns and continue practicing them. Granted, they won't bring us to our Promised Land, but they are an option none the less. Joshua makes it clear that if serving God isn't desirable, than we can choose our father's ways. However, this isn't the only alternative he offers.

Alternative #2

¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve....or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.

The second alternative to serving the Lord is to serve the god's of the culture in which they now lived. The surrounding nations had lots of gods they could choose to follow. They could serve Baal. They could build their Ashtoreth poles. They could go to the temples of the prostitutes. No one was forcing them to serve God because of all

that He had done for them. They were free to choose. We, too, have this same freedom.

There are lots of god's in our culture we can choose to serve. We can serve the god of power. We can dedicate our lives to the god of success. The god of play is a choice many people enjoy serving. Sensual pleasure can be our god of choice. Our world is surrounded by millions of gods which can take the place of serving God. We have the choice to choose these gods; however, they can come with a price. Joshua knew the price and made his choice.

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua had no doubt in his mind which God he would serve. He chose to serve the Lord. In true Patrick Henry style, Joshua threw down a gauntlet for the people to choose. There was no doubt in his mind what his choice would be, but he wanted the people to choose for themselves. As we read on, we see that their response was immediate...a little too immediate for Joshua's taste.

¹⁶ So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the Lord our God is He Who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. ¹⁸ And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God."

¹⁹ but Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. ²⁰ If you

forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.”

It is easy to make a promise in the heat of the moment, but in the end you must keep your promise. Joshua knew that the people hadn't counted the cost. They hadn't thought it through. They didn't consider the hard work necessary to serve God wholeheartedly. Their natural disposition was not to submit to God. It would take hard work to retrain themselves to keep their word. He knew they hadn't thought about the consequences of breaking their vow. He tells his concerns to the people. Then, he waits for their answer.

²¹And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord!” ²²So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him.” And they said, “We are witnesses!”

The choice is made. They decided they will serve the Lord. Joshua accepts their answer. He then teaches them how to keep their word.

²³“Now therefore,” he said, “put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.”

The only way they could serve the Lord was to remove all the sin in their lives. They must serve only God. Anything else needed to go. The same is true for us.

Throughout this book, we have learned how to break free from our enemies so we can enter into God's Promised freedom. We have learned about the two main enemies: our generational sins and the sins from the world around us. We have

learned techniques and strategies to recognize these enemies. We discovered how to remove these enemies from our lives. We learned that none of this was possible without God fighting on our behalf to defeat our enemies. Now like the children of Israel, we must decide how we will choose to live in this freedom.

At the end of each chapter, we made a decision to follow through with what we learned. However, it was not a onetime decision. It needs to become a life choice. If we are to live in the Promised Land of God's freedom, these choices need to become a way of life. We need to choose to serve God wholeheartedly.

We must choose to stop following generational sins. We can no longer take part in the ways of the culture around us. Joshua has presented us with a challenge for the ages. We need to decide if we will accept his challenge and choose to serve God wholeheartedly because of all He has done to help us break free. I know I have had to face this challenge. One time stands out strongly in my mind.

A while back, I was sound asleep in my bed only to be awakened by my mother's scream. A blood-curling scream in the middle of the night is always startling, but what happened next was worse.

Apparently, my mom had a nightmare that scared her so badly that she jumped out of bed to run away. As she jumped up, she tripped and fell, dislocating her shoulder. Now, scared, half-asleep, and in pain, she screamed again for help. My sister and I jumped out of bed to help her. We ran to her side and helped her up.

It was at this point that my dad put his two cents in. He was angry at my mom for waking him. He showed no concern for her or her health. Instead, he was verbally and emotionally abusive to a woman in pain.

This behavior infuriated me. I was so angry. I could have hit him! Instead, I turned and punched the hallway door, putting my fist through it. I was left with a broken door, a hurt hand, and a shattered heart.

I was devastated by my actions. I was angry at my father for being abusive, yet here I was acting just like him. I instantly felt like God could never use me since I was capable of this behavior. I cried for hours. I felt like all my years of trying to become a godly man were wasted. I felt hopeless and ashamed.

It took me a long time to get over this event. I eventually realized I wasn't too far gone. Any freedom I experienced was because of God. I had to choose whether to keep going with God or continue following my generational sins.

I had to choose to defeat the sins of my father in my life. I had to decide to avoid the sins of the culture. I loved God and wanted to serve Him. I made my decision and I never looked back.

Since that time, I have kept Joshua 24:14-15 hanging on the back of my bedroom door. Every day it reminds me of my choice. Daily, I choose to reject the world in which I live. I choose not to continue the generational patterns of my ancestors. I have decided to accept Joshua's challenge to serve the Lord.

Before we look at our final decision time, I want to look once more at the book of Joshua to see what the Israelites decided.

²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" ²⁸So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

²⁹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

³¹ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

The people of Israel kept their word. They served, obeyed, and followed God wholeheartedly and taught their children to do the same. Joshua died knowing he had fulfilled all that God told him to do. He defeated all his enemies. He lived in His Promised Land. He influenced the next generation to follow his example.

Then he died and went to Heaven, leaving his bones on his promised inheritance. He stood before God and heard Him say "Well done, good and faithful servant. You thought the Promised Land was good...you ain't seen nothing yet!" No man could ask for more than living free of his enemies on earth and spending eternity in Heaven. Joshua chose to serve the Lord. He made his decision for the ages. We need to do the same.

Decision Time

We have made a lot of decisions together throughout this book, but none more important than this one. Will we choose to remember all the good things God has done in our lives? Will we give Him the praise for defeating our enemies and giving us freedom? Will we choose to take all we have learned and put it to use in our lives? Will we scorn the generational sins which are so familiar and come so naturally? Will we stop living a sinful, worldly life like those around us? Will we yield our hearts to God and serve Him wholeheartedly? These are decisions we all face. The case has been presented. The information is set before you. What will you decide?

Like Joshua, I have decided that me and my house will serve the Lord. I pray that you, my fellow warrior, will make the same decision.

One day we will enter our glory in Heaven. We will receive our accommodations from our Commander in Chief. What He will say to you is determined by your decision. What will you choose?



War Drills

1. Make your Decision. If you decide to serve the Lord, than hang a copy of Joshua 24:14-15 in a prominent place so you will remember your decision.
2. Re-Read this book. I have found that a lot is missed the first time through a book. Allow God to show you even more now that you have made your decision.

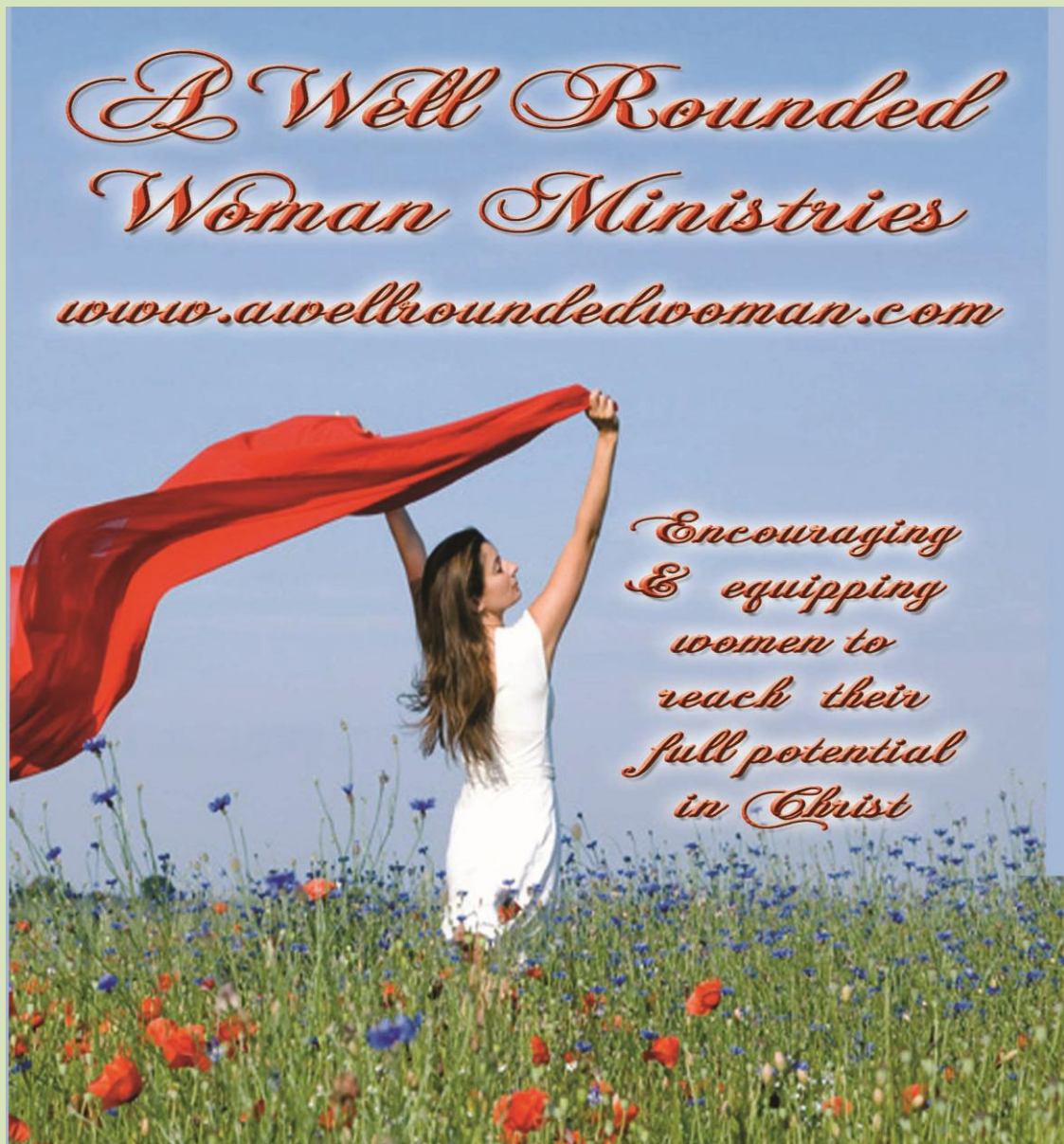
Jamie Holden can be contacted at Jamie@mantourministries.com .

Feel free to send any questions, comments, or requests for speaking engagements.





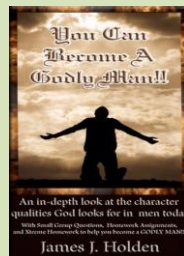
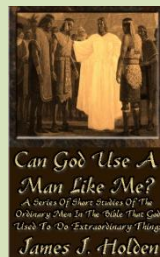
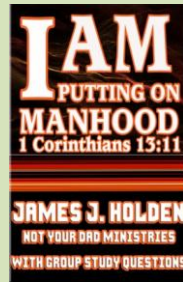
Guys, Here Is A Website For The Women In Your Life!!



*A Well Rounded
Woman Ministries
www.owellroundedwoman.com*

*Encouraging
& equipping
women to
reach their
full potential
in Christ*

Check Out Our Other Free Downloadable Ebooks



Look For More Coming Soon To

www.mantourministries.com

**If You Enjoyed This
Ebook, Then Look For More
Free Ebooks
From Mantour Ministries
In Coming Months!!**

**Feel free to make copies and distribute this ebook for use as curriculum in your
men's ministry. All we ask is you don't charge for copies. We gave
it to you for free, please pass on the blessing**

If you would like to donate to Mantour Ministries To Help Us Continue Providing Free Resources To Help Men Grow In Their Walk With God, You Can Send a Check To

James J. Holden Ministries
PO Box 24
Tower City, PA 17980

Or Click the Donate Button at www.mantourministries.com