

Five Things to do When You're Facing a Battle

As Presented by Lisa Bishop

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Day One

What do you do when you are in the midst of a battle? We all face battles in our lives, situations that are seemingly impossible or challenges that seem insurmountable. Times when our limited minds see no way around the conflict in front of us, or in us.

We face battles in our marriage, in our thought life, at work, in our friendships, with our kids, financial battles, health battles, battles with addiction, emotional and mental battles.

What is your battle plan when you face difficulties in life? How do you have courage in the battle?

Let's look at 2 Chronicles 20 and a battle that the southern kingdom of Israel, led by King Jehosaphat the fourth king of Judah, was facing for some cues. For a bit of a backstory, spiritually King Jehosaphat began his reign in a positive way, seeking the Lord, and leading his people to fear and follow God. But like many of the human kings we read about in the Old Testament, Jehosaphat had his shortcomings. Despite his misgivings we see how he led God's people to victory when a vast number of their enemies were in hot pursuit to destroy them.

There are five parts of his battle plan that are important as you prepare your plan for the battles you will face in your life. When faced with what appeared to be an insurmountable battle the first thing Jehosaphat did when he was afraid was that he resolved to seek the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:3). He was determined and resolute to fix his eyes on and seek God.

When you are afraid, what is your knee-jerk reaction? What or who do you give your first attention to?

It can be easy to give in to fear and forget to seek God. It can be tempting to phone a friend and rely purely on human wisdom (which by the way - phoning a wise friend is a good idea). We just sometimes forget to seek the Lord and his wisdom. After all, the battle does not surprise him so you need to fix your eyes on Jesus.

Jehosaphat also "*proclaimed a fast for all Judah, who gathered to seek the Lord.*" (2 Chronicles 20:3). Fasting is a spiritual discipline that helps you take your eyes off the things of this world and focus completely on God. It helps gain a new perspective and a renewed reliance upon God as you seek him for answers and direction.

The next time you are facing a battle, resolve to seek the Lord first. Consider fasting as you enquire of the Lord and his wisdom for the road ahead.

Day Two

We all face battles in our lives, situations that are seemingly impossible, challenges that seem insurmountable. Times when our limited minds see no way around the conflict in front of us, or in us.

What is your battle plan when you face difficulties in life?

As we seek to formulate our own battle plan for challenges in life, we are looking to 2 Chronicles 20 for cues on how King Jehosaphat led in a battle that Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, faced.

The first thing Jehosaphat did when he was afraid in the battle was to seek the Lord and he also led his people to do the same. So when you are facing a battle the first part of your plan is, seek the Lord! The second step in Jehosaphat's battle plan was to acknowledge God and pray.

2 Chronicles 20:5-7 tells us,

"Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard and said:

"Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?"

Don't you just feel stronger already, hearing those powerful declarations about God?

In the midst of the battle, Jehosaphat acknowledges who the Lord is and with confidence and boldness declares what is true about him, his character and his promises.

I have to admit that sometimes when I am in a battle, I spend more energy staring at my circumstances and welling up with fear and anxiety rather than focusing on God.

When you are in a battle do you recall and declare what is true about God? Can you easily call to mind the character of God and proclaim your courage in God?

Courage is the state of mind and belief that enables you to face difficulty, fear, and pain because you know who fights your battles and who fights for you—the Lord!

As a follower of Jesus, who you set your mind on and who you get your courage from determines your ability to experience victory in the battles you face.

What truths about God do you need to remember? What character of God do you need to recall and declare, shout at the top of your lungs with confidence and courage, knowing the battle is not yours to fight. That the Lord is with you wherever you go. Power and might are in his hand and no one can stand against him which means he fights for you and no one or nothing can stand against you. Declare his faithfulness in the battle.

Day Three

Sometimes other people's lives look so perfect as if they never face challenges and everything is always going right. But that is simply not true. We all face hardships in life. If you are currently in a battle, you are not alone.

So the question is not **if** you will be in a battle the question is "**when** you are in a battle, what will you do?"

2 Chronicles 20 reminds us that the first thing to do is seek the Lord. The second thing to do is to acknowledge God and pray and the next thing to do is cry out to God.

Verse 9 says, *“If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.”*

Do you know that you serve a God that listens?

In Psalm 116:1-4, we hear the words of the Psalmist as he cries out to God in the midst of his own personal battle. *“I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord: “Lord, save me!”*

You can hear the absolute distress in the Psalmist’s voice. He is in utter despair. There is a lot of despair in the world these days. We can find ourselves in our own times of utter darkness and hopelessness. When disaster comes and it feels like life is caving in. In those moments when you are tired and weary and you feel like you are at your wits end. When you are not sure where to turn and you feel as though there is no way through your circumstances or no way out from under the weight of life, remember to cry out to God.

Not too long ago I was experiencing a really big battle in my life. I felt confused, anxious, worried, and weary. I was desperately seeking to hear the Lord’s voice. Psalm 25:4-5 became a Psalm that I recited on a daily basis, *“Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”*

Sometimes in the battle it will feel like a fight just to cry out to God. You can be tempted to turn to other things to distract you or to numb the pain. But remember to cry out to him. As a follower of Jesus, you have the privilege of a personal relationship with God and 24/7 access to him.

Day Four

What do you do when you are facing a battle? When it feels like the odds are against you? When it seems like the enemy is winning?

When you are in a battle it can be easy to feel alone, surrounded on all sides, not knowing what to do. This week I have been talking about steps to creating a battle plan when you are experiencing hardships in life. I want to encourage you to remember that God is with you in the battle.

In 2 Chronicles 20 when in the thick of the ensuing battle against Judah King Jehoshaphat calls out to God, *“We are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but we look to you.”* (2 Chronicles 20:12)

Have you ever been in a situation where you had no clue what to do? Where did you turn? Who or what did you turn to? God wants you to know that when you ask him for help, when you look to him for guidance, he is with you, the Spirit of God will counsel you.

When Jehosaphat looked to God, the Lord said, *“Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast number, for the battle is not yours but God’s..... You do not have to fight this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord..... Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out tomorrow and face them, for Yaweh is with you”* (2 Chronicles 20:15b-17).

When you feel defenseless. When your back is against a wall, and you don’t know what to do. When fear, worry, and anxiety grip you, look to the Lord and position yourself towards God. Being aware of God’s presence is always the way to dispel fear in your life. How often do we take the battle into our

own hands and try to fight back in our own strength when God says, "You do not have to fight this battle. Position yourself. Stand firm."

Ephesians 6:11-18a is another reminder of how we can take our stand against the enemy's schemes and stand firm in the battle. The apostle Paul says, "*Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*"

When you are in a battle, look to God, listen, position yourself before him, and stand firm.

Day Five

As we continue looking to 2 Chronicles 20 as our guide we see the final weapon in King Jehosaphat's battle plan: Praise and Worship.

Jehosaphat has just cried out to God asking him what to do, God answers, and immediately we see that Jehosaphat and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed down before the Lord and worshiped him and the Levites stood up to praise the Lord God shouting with a loud voice. When in the midst of a battle the people put themselves in a posture of worship and praise.

Sometimes the last thing we feel like doing when we are faced with a battle is to worship God. Yet this is the very thing that brought victory and the very thing that God invites you to when you are feeling the heat of pending defeat. As my friend Becky says, turn your panic into praise!

2 Chronicles 20:20-22 continues:

"Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever."

As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."

Praise is what defeated the enemy.

This reminds me of one of my favorite worship songs.

"I raise a hallelujah, in the presence of my enemies.
I raise a hallelujah, louder than the unbelief.
I raise a hallelujah, my weapon is a melody.
I raise a hallelujah, Heaven comes to fight for me.

I raise a hallelujah, with everything inside of me.
I raise a hallelujah, I will watch the darkness flee.
I raise a hallelujah, in the middle of the mystery.

I raise a hallelujah, fear you lost your hold on me!"

When you are facing life's battles, your weapon is a melody.

Praise God in the middle of the battle. Praise Jesus in the middle of the storm.