

Week 6



HOW TO LOSE A BATTLE AND WIN THE WAR.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7).

Introduction

Over the past few weeks, we have discussed strategies for spiritual warfare. As you apply this knowledge you will advance in your ability to fight in the strength and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. But despite your knowledge of these strategies, you may face failure in certain rare moments. Do not be discouraged...some of the greatest men of God faced similar situations.

Failure can teach important spiritual lessons... and remember... it is possible to lose a battle and still win the war.

Losing a battle: There are examples in Scripture of men of God who lost battles with the enemy:

Joshua was a great military commander who assumed leadership of the nation of Israel after the death of Moses. At a time, he led them to battle but they lost. Why? Joshua 7

David was a great king who lost a battle that he referenced in Ps. 51.

Which battle was this? 2nd Sam. 11 & 12.

At another time, he was greatly distressed and discouraged. Why? (I Samuel 30:1-6).

Other examples: Elijah (1 Kings 19); Peter lost the battle to fear and intimidation when he denied Jesus.

Winning the war: Each of the great leaders mentioned lost battles with the enemy. As you engage in spiritual warfare, you too may experience a loss. This ought to be an exception, not the rule. But although you lose a battle with the enemy, it does not mean you have lost the war. A war is made up of many battles. Just because you lose one battle does not mean you have lost the war. Each of these men lost a battle, but recovered to win the war.

Core message: Losing a battle is not the end of the matter; winning the war should remain the goal.

Losing is not the goal just like sinning is not; but there is life after both. 2 John 2: 1-3

Here are the steps to take to recover from the snare of the enemy (2 Tim. 2:26):

Step 1: Recognize your failure: - Joshua recognized and admitted the failure at Ai. He said: O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies. (Joshua 7:8); David recognized where he went wrong (Ps. 51). Do not let pride prevent you from admitting you have lost a battle. In order to recover from the snare of the enemy, you must first acknowledge you are in his snare (I John 1:8). Also, find out why you lost the battle (like Joshua did). *Why is this important?*

Step 2: Repent: It is not just enough to admit your failure. You must also ask God to forgive you and commit to ways that are a complete departure from what caused you to lose in the first place. *Being remorseful is not the same as "repentance".*

David repented of his sin with Bathsheba. Joshua and the people repented before God (Joshua 7). And so did Peter.

Step 3: Rebuild your spiritual strength: In the natural world when an army has experienced a military loss, time is taken to rebuild combat forces before returning to the battlefield. Commanders analyze the problems, take corrective action, and strengthen and encourage the troops. This is an important principle in the spiritual world also.

When you have experienced failure in spiritual warfare you must rebuild your spiritual strength. Joshua waited before the Lord in prayer to regain spiritual strength before returning to the battlefield. He prayed to discover the reason for failure and receive guidance for corrective actions (Joshua 7:6-15). -David fasted and prayed after his failure with Bathsheba. Following the loss at Ziklag, David "encouraged himself in the Lord" and reorganized his forces before returning to the battlefield (I Samuel 30:6).

Here are some ways to rebuild your spiritual strength:

- Study the greatest handbook on spiritual warfare ever written...The Word of God.
- Spend time in prayer and fasting (asking for help and strength). Ask God to reveal causes for the failure you experienced and what to do to correct the situation.
- Rest physically. Man is body, soul, and spirit. When your physical body is exhausted, Satan can take advantage and affect your soul and spirit.

Step 4: Return to the battlefield: One of the main strategies of the enemy is to tempt you or discourage you to give up when you have lost a spiritual battle. Don't!

What are some of his usual suggestions to discourage you? E.g "Why did you even think you could overcome the problem";

Joshua continued military campaigns in the Promised Land with great success. He returned to Ai and conquered the same military forces which had caused his defeat.

After the loss to at Ziklag, David returned to the battlefield to great military victory. He recovered all the enemy had taken from him: And David recovered all (I Samuel 30:18-19). Peter returned and he was a key player on the day of Pentecost.

Here is a scripture to encourage you to return to the battlefield. (II Corinthians 4:8-9)

Remember Proverbs 24:16.

Stand up; dust yourself and fight again.

That's the hallmark of true champions in Christ.

Questions / Contributions

Acknowledgement / Resource for further studies:

Spiritual Strategies: A Manual for Spiritual Warfare (by Harvestime International Institute).