

NOVEMBER

ACHIEVING VICTORY IN THE BATTLE FOR DESTINY

God promised Israel, *“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you...” (Joshua 1:3)*--and God fulfilled His Word.

Other than the military defeat at Ai which was caused by sin, the people of Israel were victorious in every battle as they conquered their Promised Land. The enemy nations of Canaan had no power over them. God gave Israel divine strategies for penetrating enemy lines and defeating their foes--and that is exactly what God wants to do for you.

This month, you will study military strategies employed by Israel in their battles in Canaan and apply these principles spiritually.

As a believer--either new or a seasoned one--you may have failed repeatedly in spiritual battles. You may have been knocked down so many times in the past that you find it hard to get up and fight again.

But you can do it! You will do it! And this time, you will be victorious because you will be able to fight from a position of knowing. You will know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

This month you will learn to employ strategies for achieving victory over the enemy--just as Israel did--and you will become a mighty spiritual warrior. You will learn how to successfully confront every conflict of life, which in reality, are battles for your divine destiny.

It all starts with the first devotional reading for this month--eliminating spiritual ignorance.

NOVEMBER

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NOVEMBER 1 ELIMINATING SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE

One of the enemy's chief strategies is to keep believers in spiritual ignorance concerning his evil wiles. This is the tactic Satan used to keep Israel from entering their Promised Land the first time they arrived at the borders. It was the strategy that caused their defeat at Ai, and Satan still employs this method today.

Ignorance of Satan's tactics provides an opportunity for the enemy to take advantage of you (2 Corinthians 2:11). Many believers ignore Satan, hoping if they do so he will leave them alone. Not so. Others are fearful of him, believing that he has tremendous power for which they are no match. If you are to achieve victory in the battle for your destiny, you must know your enemy.

Jesus was able to live His life in one-hundred percent victory over the enemy because He faced Satan from a position of knowing. Jesus never wavered, faltered, or retreated. Jesus knew that He had power and authority to defeat Satan in every circumstance because: *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3:8).

Satan desperately tries to keep his defeat by Jesus a secret. He does not want you to know that through the death of Christ on the cross he has been defeated. Jesus declared, *"Behold, I give unto you power...over all the power of the enemy"* (Luke 10:19). Satan does not want you to know the truth that you have power over all of his diabolical powers!

Jesus has authority over the devil. The Bible declares the enemy is under His feet. We need to realize...

...the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.
(Ephesians 1:19-23)

Since the enemy is under Christ's feet and since Jesus is the Head of the Church, then this means the enemy is under your feet as well because you are part of the Body of Christ.

Israel was promised power over every enemy they would encounter in their Promised Land. God's Word declares that, through Christ, you have been given dominion over this world, the flesh, and the devil--every enemy you may encounter. This power has been delegated to you as part of your spiritual inheritance. Do not let Satan keep you ignorant of these powerful truths. Arm yourself with this knowledge as you enter the battlefield.

NOVEMBER 2 REJECTING LIES

You allow Satan to take advantage when you constantly attribute every bad thing that happens as though he controls every circumstance in your life.

- You give Satan power when you choose to sin and blame Satan for it.
- You give Satan power when you constantly give him undue attention.
- You give Satan power through false perceptions concerning his power in your life.
- You give Satan power when you doubt the truth of God's Word.

You must recognize the devil as the pathological liar that he really is. He has no new tricks! He is still using the same lies and deceptions that he used in the garden of Eden in the first temptation.

This month you will learn spiritual battle strategies, but in order to be effective in warfare you must get it clear in your mind, your heart, and your spirit--once and for all--that the devil does not operate in unlimited power. As you learned during the month of October, the only power he has is rooted in lies and he operates through deception.

- The devil wants you to believe he has unlimited power.
- The devil wants you to believe you are his victim.
- The devil wants you to believe he can do whatever he desires to you.

Many Christians honestly believe they are weak and powerless against the enemy. That was Israel's misconception, and it kept them out of their Promised Land. They saw themselves as grasshoppers in the sight of the enemy giants (Numbers 13:33).

The strategy here is clear: If Satan can keep you believing that he has more power than you do as a Christian, then you will retreat, wander aimlessly spiritually, fearful to face him down in any confrontation. The enemy will become a greatly feared foe, and you will live each day wondering from where the next attack will come and how you can defend yourself against a force that is so much stronger than you.

Get this deep in your spirit: Satan has no power in your life unless you give it to him by either sinning or believing his lies. When you are free from sin and acting upon the truth of the Word of God regarding the enemy, then you can win the spiritual battles of life every time. Reject Satan's lies. You are a victor, not a victim!

NOVEMBER 3 CONQUERING CIRCUMSTANCES

Prior to crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the nation of Israel was warned by Moses regarding what they would face in Canaan. He cautioned that they would fight many battles and the enemy would try to create confusion, wear them down, and defeat them.

The same is true today. Using adverse circumstances of everyday life, Satan will constantly try to wear you down physically, mentally, and spiritually until you are so tired, discouraged, and depressed that you are ready to throw your hands up in defeat.

Satan will try to create havoc in the circumstances in your life--bringing affliction and disease upon your body, attacking your children and loved ones, causing strife in your marriage, binding your finances, and creating problems on your job.

Satan will hold your mind in a vise-like grip through fear, worry and doubt, and try to keep you in a constant state of turmoil. His strategy is to get you caught up in a vicious cycle that hinders you from living and acting in faith.

Satan's objective in attacking you through your circumstances is to steal your health, tear apart your family, destroy your marriage, take your children captive to sin, and keep you in financial bondage:

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians *"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, NAS).*

Paul faced problems that were beyond his strength to endure, even to the point of despairing for his own life. But Paul knew exactly what to do. He expressed his confidence, faith, and hope despite the negative circumstances.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. (2 Corinthians 1:8-10, NIV)

You probably won't face the same situations that Paul faced, but you very well may face difficult problems today. You can conquer every negative circumstance through the power of the Lord. Paul understood this, and because of this knowledge he was able to achieve victory in every battle of life. So can you.

NOVEMBER 4 DECISIVE BATTLES

The Apostle Paul explained an important purpose for the Old Testament record, commenting that: *"... all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).*

When you read the book of Joshua--plus many other passages in the Old Testament--you will find numerous records of battles fought by God's people. You may wonder why these records were included in the Bible. The importance of these battles extends far beyond their immediate results. The strategies of Old Testament warfare in the natural world can be applied in the spiritual world. Just as a soldier in the natural world improves his skills by studying the historical record of previous battles, you can develop your spiritual warfare abilities by studying decisive battles of the Bible.

The book of Joshua records the battles Israel fought as they claimed their inheritance in Canaan. These conflicts were decisive battles, meaning each was an important conflict and they provide examples from which we are to learn spiritually.

First, let's take a look at the heathen nations occupying the Promised Land at the time of the invasion by Israel. They consisted of the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites. Sometimes the general name of "Canaanites" is used for them all.

The land of Canaan was situated at the crossroads of the ancient world and became a melting pot for a variety of heathen religions including that of Baal, Ashteroth, and Asherim. Heathen idols, temples, altars, and sacred groves dotted the land. Their religion included idolatry, prostitution, gross immorality, divination, idol worship, and human sacrifice. These people had heard about the true God, yet refused to repent (Joshua 2). Because of their gross evil, God declared that they must be destroyed as they were as vile as those destroyed by the flood in Noah's time. Reasons for executing judgment upon them are given in Leviticus 18 and Deuteronomy chapter 7; 12:31; and 20:16-18.

These passages are not a license for believers to invade other nations and kill sinful people. This was a unique situation in history, as was the flood in Noah's time when all the people except for his family were destroyed because of the depths of their sin. Also, the biblical record confirms that God used wars in Old Testament times to chastise godless nations. He used Israel to punish the sinful nations of Canaan. Years later, when Israel turned from the Lord, they were chastened by other nations (Isaiah 10:5-7).

The meditations drawn from these battles focus on spiritual principles observed in warfare in the natural world. Israel battled the enemy in order to claim their inheritance and defeat the evil forces that would enslave them. Our spiritual battles are for the same reasons. What strategies of the enemy do you need to overcome? What enemies must you conquer in order to reach your destiny? Are you facing a decisive battle that will affect your destiny?

NOVEMBER 5 THE BATTLE AT JERICHO

In previous devotions, we learned about the first two battles Israel fought in the Promised Land--the conflict at Jericho and Ai. For the next few days we will meditate on some spiritual warfare strategies drawn from those conflicts.

The battle of Jericho is recorded in Joshua chapter 6. You will recall that God directed His people to march around Jericho once a day for seven days, then on the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times. When they heard the sound of the trumpets blown by the priests who carried the Ark, they were to shout and then the walls of the city would fall down.

Here are some strategies drawn from this battle that you can apply spiritually:

-Recognize that God's ways are not your ways. No matter how foolish a situation appears, you must trust God. His thoughts and ways are not as yours: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8).*

-Realize that God uses the weak to put the strong to shame. Marching, blowing horns, and shouting seems like a weak military strategy, but it worked *"...because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:25-27).*

-Seek assurance of God's presence before you advance into battle. The Ark of the Lord, mentioned nine times in Joshua 6:6-13, symbolized that God was with Israel. His presence advanced before them as they surrounded the enemy city of Jericho. Before entering any spiritual battle, seek assurance of God's presence.

-Use the strategy of silence. Israel was told to march in silence until they heard the command to shout (Joshua 6:10). Sometimes the best thing you can do in the middle of a spiritual conflict is to remain silent until you receive direction from God regarding when and what to speak. No discussion. No murmuring. No complaining. No words of doubt or fear.

Meditate on these strategies and apply them to your spiritual battles.

NOVEMBER 6
THE BATTLE AT AI
(Part One)

Joshua chapters 7-8 records two battles fought for Ai. In the first battle, Israel was defeated because of the sin of Achan who had taken spoil from the battle of Jericho when God had forbidden it. Here are some strategies drawn from the battle at Ai that we can apply spiritually:

-Do not violate God's instructions. Achan's sin caused God's favor to be withdrawn which resulted in disaster for Israel (Joshua 7:1-5). Be aware that the temptation to sin lurks in the shadows of victory.

-Do not enter battle until you have dealt with your personal sin. If there is sin in your corporate body--the church you pastor or the ministry you direct--you must deal with it also.

-Do not underestimate the enemy. The spies underestimated the population of Ai (Joshua 7:2-4). Never underestimate the strategies of your spiritual enemy that are to kill, steal, and destroy. There is no battle so insignificant that you do not need all of the spiritual arsenal of God at your disposal. Do not let the assessment of the enemy's strength terrorize you. When you are walking in God's anointing, you have power over all the power of the enemy.

-Discover and deal with the cause of defeat. When there is a defeat, there is always a cause. Israel dealt with the guilty parties as instructed. This discipline resulted in restored approval by God (Joshua 7:13,25,26). To maintain the presence of God in the battles of life, you must deal with sin by confession and repentance.

-Abstain from fleshly lusts. Achan's sin was the result of a progression of lust: He saw, he coveted, he took (Joshua 7:21). From the very first attack of the enemy on mankind in the Garden of Eden, fleshly lusts have been instrumental in defeat (Genesis 3). In 1 Peter 2:11 we are told to abstain from fleshly lusts, which "war against the soul". John warns us *that "...all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever"* (1 John 2:16-17).

Meditate on these strategies and apply them to your spiritual battles.

NOVEMBER 7
THE BATTLE AT AI
(Part Two)

In Joshua chapter 7, we read how Israel was soundly defeated at the city of Ai. This was the only battle they lost during the invasion of their Promised Land, and their loss occurred because of sin that resulted in corporate defeat.

Joshua chapter 8 records Israel's return to battle at Ai. This time, they were victorious. They had dealt with the sin in their midst and were once more battling under the anointing of God. Here are some strategies drawn from this conflict that you can apply spiritually.

- Return to the place of defeat. After repenting and eliminating the sin that caused your defeat, return to the battlefield with the fresh anointing of God resting upon you.

- Support one another in battle. Working as a team, Israel defeated the enemy by setting an ambush. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 indicates we have added strength against the enemy when we support one another.

- Be prepared (Joshua 8:4). You must be ready to advance and battle the enemy at all times.

- Use your spiritual sword. Joshua's sword was the signal for the men hidden in ambush that the enemy was coming (Joshua 8:18-19). You battle with the spiritual sword of the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

- Face the enemy. The Israelites who fled into the wilderness turned back upon their pursuers and slew them (Joshua 8:21). You must turn around and face your enemy in the strength of the Lord in order to defeat him. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).*

- Focus on the One who enabled the victory rather than the victory itself. Joshua led the people in worship after the victory at Ai (Joshua 8:29-31). Sometimes we make the mistake of emphasizing our part in attaining victory in the battles of life. We are warned, *"let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).*

Meditate on these strategies and apply them to your spiritual battles.

NOVEMBER 8 THE BATTLE OF GIBEON

As part of the devotional readings for October, we dealt with deception at length, including that of the Gibeonites. Representatives of these people came to Joshua, pretending to be from a far country and desiring to make a peace treaty with him. Without seeking the Lord, Joshua agreed, only to learn later that the Gibeonites were actually Canaanites who lived nearby.

Despite the deception of the Gibeonites, the Israelites honored their commitment to them as allies, following the biblical principle of keeping their promises (Psalm 15:4). Sometime later, a coalition of Amorite kings were planning an attack on Gibeon, the Gibeonites asked for help, and Israel came to their aid. The battle is recorded in Joshua chapter 10.

Prior to the battle, the Lord said to Joshua: *"...Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee" (Joshua 10:8)*. As Joshua, your strength in spiritual battles comes from knowing God is on your side. Have you noticed how often God says "fear not" to Joshua? It was not that Joshua was a weak, fearful man, but rather that God knows fear is our most common response in the face of the enemy.

In verse 10, we read that it was the Lord who defeated the enemy for Israel. The Israeli warriors pursued the enemy and as they fled, God sent great hailstones from heaven that fell on them. More died from the hailstones than were killed by Israel in battle. As the battle raged, Joshua commanded that the sun and moon stand still until the victory could be won. Verse 14 declares that there was no day like this before or since, when God listened to the voice of a man and stopped the elements at his request. The amazing truth evident in this account is that God will do whatever necessary to deliver His people--even something that has never been done before and even though He may never do it again. That is the God who accompanies you into every battle of life!

The other great truth from this account emerges in considering how Israel dealt with the kings of the enemy coalition. As the battle raged, the five kings of the enemy nations took refuge in a cave. Joshua told the Israeli warriors to roll a stone across the mouth of the cave and trap them. Then Israel continued battling until the enemy was totally eliminated.

When the army returned to the cave, Joshua said: "Open the mouth of the cave and bring out those five kings." The soldiers obeyed, and Joshua told them to come near and put their feet upon the necks of the kings. Then Joshua said to them: *"Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: For this is how the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight" (Joshua 10:25)*.

Placing a foot on the neck of an enemy was an ancient sign of complete subjection. This is symbolic of where your enemy should be: Under your feet! God has put all things under the feet of Jesus. As head of the church of which you are a member, that means the enemy is under your feet also (Ephesians 1:19-23).

Meditate on these strategies and apply them to your own spiritual battles.

NOVEMBER 9 BATTLING AN ALLIANCE

Joshua's strategy in the remaining battles in Canaan was a series of lightning-like raids against key cities. The battles recorded in Joshua 10 include those of:

- The battle at Makkedah (28).
- The battle at Libnah (29-30).
- The battle at Lachish (31-33).
- The battle at Eglon (34-35).
- The battle at Hebron (36-37).
- The battle at Debir (38-39).

One important strategy that may be learned from these conflicts is that by conquering key strongholds of the enemy in your life--for example, lusts and addictions of the flesh--you weaken the enemy's ability to attack you.

It is also interesting to note that the battle of Lachish was won on the second day, indicating that the other battles were most likely won on the first day while this conflict took longer. A truth drawn from this is that some spiritual battles are won immediately, while others require perseverance.

In Joshua chapter 11, Israel faced another coalition of Canaanites. Prior to the battle, the Lord told Joshua *"...Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire"* (Joshua 11:6). Once again, God dealt with fear first. Then He told Joshua that "tomorrow about this time" He would deliver them--showing that God has a perfect timing to execute victory. In spiritual battles, be sure not to move ahead of or lag behind God's timing.

An interesting command given by God in this incident was for the Israelites to cut the hamstring of the horses, disabling them for battle. They were also to burn the chariots used by the enemy. Why not keep these advanced military forces of the time and use them in battle? Because God did not want His people trusting in anything other than Him.

There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. (Psalm 33:16-17)

The same is true in your spiritual battles. Do not trust in your education, your ability to manipulate circumstances, your position or title, or in man. In the conflicts you face, trust only in God.

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright. (Psalm 20:7-8)

NOVEMBER 10 PERSEVERANCE AND OBEDIENCE

Two important strategies of spiritual warfare emerge repeatedly in the battles recorded in the book of Joshua: Perseverance and obedience.

Perseverance: As previously noted, some battles took longer than others (Joshua 10:31-33). It is recorded in Joshua 11:18 that Joshua made war for a long time with a coalition of Canaanite kings. Perseverance--remaining consistently faithful over a prolonged period of time--is essential in capturing strongholds, driving out the enemy, and possessing all God has promised you.

Joshua faced a difficult enemy, for their hearts were hardened against Israel. You, too, face a difficult enemy who is set to destroy you. Only by persevering in battle will you remain victorious. The Apostle Paul warns, "...*be not weary in well-doing*", indicating that this is something against which you must guard. The Prophet Daniel noted that one of the end-time strategies of the enemy is to "*wear out the saints of the Most High*" (Daniel 7:25).

Do not allow the enemy to wear you out through difficult circumstances. Persevere until you win the conflict.

Obedience: Repeatedly in the book of Joshua, we read that Joshua did everything exactly as God had commanded: "*As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses*" (Joshua 11:15).

All of the strategies of Satan are focused on one ultimate purpose: To gain control over man's will through rebellious disobedience. From the time of man's first encounter with the enemy in the garden right down through the centuries until now, Satan has been lying, deceiving, tempting, and using every possible tactic to cause people to disobey God. Because of disobedience, the first generation of Israelites failed to take possession of their inheritance. When the new generation obeyed God's instructions, they conquered Canaan.

God fully intends for you to walk in obedience to His Word, as this is vital to waging victorious spiritual warfare. The only time Israel failed in battle was when they were disobedient to God. The Lord has already placed within you the ability to be obedient, promising..."*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

You cannot be obedient to God in only certain areas of your life. That is not enough! You must be completely obedient in every area of your life. The meditations that begin tomorrow will illustrate why.

NOVEMBER 11

GIANTS BREED GIANTS

Spiritually speaking, "giants" stand for the difficulties you face in life. You will meet "giant" problems in your family, church, social life, ministry, job, and in your own heart. Your giant may be an addiction, negative emotions like anger or unforgiveness, or an enemy that is coming against you.

It is in the way of duty that you find giants. When Israel was going forward they met giants. When they turned back into the wilderness, they found none. If you are meeting "giant" problems in your life and ministry, the good news is that you are progressing in God. You are advancing to claim territory that affects your destiny.

God told Israel to totally destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, including the giants. But Israel did not heed God's warning: *"...but ye have not obeyed my voice...wherefore...they shall be as thorns in your sides and their gods shall be an snare unto you"* (Judges 2:1-3). Israel conquered much of Canaan, but they left just a few giants in three cities: Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Joshua 11:22). The giants allowed to remain became "snares and thorns" for Israel in these cities. Giants breed giants both in the natural and spiritual worlds. If the giants of your life are not eliminated, they will become "snares and thorns" in your spiritual journey to destiny.

It is from these three locations where giants remained--Gaza, Ashdod, and Gath--that trouble erupted in later years.

Gaza. Read Judges 16. It is in Gaza that we find God's man, Samson, in trouble. In a city where the giants were spared, Samson finds Delilah, is deceived, stripped of his spiritual strength, and taken into captivity. No matter how strong you are in the Lord, if giants are allowed to remain unconquered they have the capacity to destroy your life and ministry.

Ashdod. Read 1 Samuel 4-5 about the departure of the Ark from Israel. Ashdod was one of the cities where the evil Philistines took the Ark they had captured and degraded this most holy symbol of God's glory. This is the same Ashdod where Israel left "a few giants." Unconquered giants will rob you of the glory of God's presence.

Gath. One bad thing about leaving giants in the land is that giants give birth to giants. In 1 Samuel 17, God's people are being held hostage by a giant named Goliath. This man was from the city of Gath, where Israel left a few giants. There would have been no Goliath if the giants had been eliminated as God had commanded.

Unconquered giants in your life breed more giants. These giants will return to taunt you and eventually you will be held hostage by them. You can have your spiritual armor on and be trained in spiritual warfare, but you will be rendered immobile unless you get down on the battlefield and face the giant. Are there "giants" in your life that you need to eliminate?

NOVEMBER 12 CONQUERING THE GIANTS

Gaza, Ashdod, and Gath--these were the cities where Israel allowed a few giants to remain, despite God's command to totally destroy the enemy. Interestingly, the name "Gaza" means "strong"; "Ashdod" means "stronghold"; and "Gath" means "winepress". Giants left unconquered in your life will increase in strength, establish a stronghold, and eventually squeeze all that is good out of your life.

In 1 Samuel 17, God's people are being held hostage by a giant named Goliath. This man was from the city of Gath, where Israel left a few giants. If Israel had destroyed all of the giants as they were commanded, they would not have been faced with this problem. But here we find the armies of Israel cowering in fear as, day after day, Goliath came out to taunt them. Israel had the proper armor and adequate warfare training, but they were rendered immobile by the giant, held captive by fear. Somebody had to face the giant! God used a young man named David, upon whom His Spirit and anointing rested. The strategies of giant-killing used by David in this natural battle can be applied spiritually to conquer the giants in your own life.

First: Prepare. In order to conquer the giants of life, you must prepare in the lesser battles you face. David recalled how he conquered a lion and bear who attacked the sheep for which he cared (1 Samuel 17:34-36). He knew he could conquer the giant because he had prepared himself in the lesser battles of life.

Second: Profess. David had the proper profession. He professed his confidence in God saying, "I know I can conquer this giant in the name of the Lord" (1 Samuel 17:26,32,37,45-46).

Third: Prove. Saul tried to equip David with his own armor, but David had not proven Saul's armor. You cannot conquer giants on the basis of someone else's power or experience. You must put on the whole armor of God described in Ephesians 6 and prove it as you use it in the everyday challenges of life.

Fourth: Penetrate. Your preparation may be good, you can have a proper profession of faith in God, and you may have proven your armor--but if you do not confront the giant you will never conquer him. David ran towards the giant. He penetrated his territory. No victory is possible while you remain immobilized rationalizing, compromising, or excusing your continued defeat.

Fifth: Proper Motive. When you face the giants of life, you must do so with the proper motive. David's motive was not to gain glory for himself or demonstrate how brave he was. His motive was to bring glory to God *"...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."*

Sixth: Perfect Pattern. God had a perfect pattern for David's victory. In this case it was a sling shot and five smooth stones, the first of which hit its mark and toppled the giant. Your giant is God's enemy and you must fight with His weapons according to the biblical pattern of spiritual warfare. You cannot fight spiritual giants with natural, carnal weapons. You must follow God's perfect pattern and, like David, persevere to conquer the giant!

NOVEMBER 13 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF WARFARE

Old Testament battles in the book of Joshua and elsewhere reveal some common principles that are applicable to spiritual warfare. Meditate on these and apply them to your spiritual battles.

Principle one. In a properly conducted war authorized by God, He promised protection to the warriors (Deuteronomy 20:1-4). As you go to the world with the Gospel, your battle is authorized by God and He will protect you.

Principle two. Israel's enemies were God's enemies. The people were to trust Him for victory rather than trusting in their own strength (Judges 5:31, Exodus 17:16). When they did this, God fought with them. Your enemies are God's enemies and He will fight with you and for you.

Principle three. God's presence is required for successful warfare. The Ark went before the armies of Israel to symbolize God's active presence with His people (Exodus 30:6; 25:21-22). The Ark had no power in itself, but was an important symbol of God's presence (1 Samuel 4:1-11). In the New Testament, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit--God's active presence--to dwell within believers (John 14:16-17). Do not go to battle without His presence.

Principle four. If God was to fight for His people, they had to be holy (Deuteronomy 23:9-14). They were to separate themselves from anything sinful. Likewise, you are also called to holy living.

Principle five. The fearful were exempted from war because cowards turn and run in the middle of battle (Deuteronomy 20:8; Judges 7:1-6). Do not go to spiritual battle with people who are filled with fear.

Principle six. People engaged in the affairs of life were exempted from war (Deuteronomy 20:5-8). Paul warns Timothy *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life"* (2 Timothy 2:4). In order to be a good Christian soldier, you must simplify your life so that your focus is on the battlefield.

Principle seven. God's people were to persevere until the enemy was completely destroyed, as are we (Numbers 31:10-11). Don't stop with just dealing with surface manifestations. Go to the root cause. Cut the root and you will kill the fruit.

Principle eight. The walls surrounding Israeli cities were important to their defense. These walls were approximately 10 feet in width and as high as 30 feet. Watchmen on the walls kept a set guard against the enemy. The New Testament compares believers to a "city set on a hill". You, too, have spiritual walls of defense which must be secured and maintained.

Principle nine. A trumpet signal by the commander-in-chief opened each battle (Judges 7:18). When the conflict was over, the trumpet called the soldiers away from the fight (2 Samuel 2:28; 18:16). Jesus sounded the trumpet in the call to battle when He commissioned us to go into all the world with the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). Someday in the future, a trumpet will call us away from the fight (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

NOVEMBER 14

NATURAL PARALLELS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The early Church viewed their spiritual experience in terms of warfare. The Apostle Paul told Timothy: *"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18)*. Protection is described as the "armor of God." The Word of God is compared to a "sword." Satan's attacks are fiery darts and faith is the "good fight." Believers are told to "war a good warfare."

Why did God choose the example of natural warfare to describe what is happening in the spirit world between the forces of good and evil? The answer is found in a basic Biblical principle: Natural principles of spiritual truth, meaning that God uses natural principles to explain what is happening in the spirit world. You are able to understand what you see in the natural world. Then when parallels are drawn between something in the natural world and the spiritual world, you can understand the spiritual because of your understanding of the natural.

Jesus often used this principle of natural and spiritual parallels to illustrate important truths. For example, He used a natural harvest field to illustrate the great spiritual harvest to which He was calling laborers. There are many parallels between natural and spiritual harvesting.

The same is true in relation to warfare. There are many principles of natural warfare which have been studied and applied by military experts. These principles are also applicable in the spiritual world. For the next few days we will look at some principles of natural warfare and apply them in the spiritual realm.

Let's start with the definition of war. A simple definition of war in the natural world is "an act of force intended to compel an opponent to fulfill your will." This definition is applicable also in the spiritual world. Satan is constantly using the forces of evil to compel you to fulfill his will.

The objective of warfare in the natural world is victory over the enemy. This is also the main objective in the spiritual world. To achieve victory in natural warfare, there are many short-range objectives that must be accomplished. Individual battles must be won and separate territories claimed. Each of these individual battles contribute to the final goal of victory.

The same is true in the spirit world. Your long-range goal is victory over the enemy, but you must break down this long-range goal into more specific objectives. You must know the objectives God has for you in spiritual warfare in your family, your church fellowship, your community, and your nation. You must identify the specific territory assigned to you for conquest and continuously battle for your destiny.

Reflect on these truths today: The analogy, definition, and objectives of spiritual warfare.

NOVEMBER 15

LIVING A WARTIME LIFESTYLE

When a nation is at war, the life-style of that nation is greatly affected. Men give up their jobs to fight for their nation. They spend hours in preparation and training. Funds are drawn from the economy to aid in the battle. Residents are alert to invasion and extra guards are posted at national borders. During the two major World Wars, people around the globe made great sacrifices. They lived frugally and certain luxuries were eliminated so that more funds and supplies could be sent to the front-lines of battle.

In the spiritual world, many believers are totally unaware of the warfare raging around them so they have not adopted a wartime lifestyle. Church fellowships plan programs and parties, but they do not have a battle plan for reaching their city, nation, or the world. Believers live in luxury and ease while the enemy is claiming the souls of multitudes without Jesus Christ.

We invest millions of dollars into beautiful buildings with stained glass windows and gorgeous statues and art. But what about investing millions in the slums and villages where there are people who have not yet heard of Jesus? That is where the battle is raging for the souls of men and women. Funds are needed for Bible translation, support of Christian workers, Bible schools, church planting, etc.

Many believers are so caught up in the circumstances of their everyday lives that they don't even think about spiritual battles. Their time is consumed by the cares of the world, pleasures, and recreation. Yet they wonder why they are depressed and discouraged. They question why they have no joy or purpose in life. It is because they are victims of a war they do not even know exists.

You must understand that you are at war and you must adopt a wartime life-style. Spiritual warfare should become a priority in your life. You should spend time in preparation and training. You should learn how to use your spiritual weapons.

You should designate material wealth to extend the Gospel to the unreached. You should be alert to invasions from the enemy and post extra guards at the borders of your heart, mind, tongue, soul, spirit, home, community, and church fellowship.

You should be raising your children as ambassadors for God rather than to become corporate presidents, bankers, and stock-brokers. You are at war, and your life-style in the spirit world should reflect it.

Take time to review your own life. Are you living a war-time lifestyle?

NOVEMBER 16 BASIC TRAINING

In the natural world, a soldier receives basic training before he heads out to battle. His training includes learning about the enemy, his tactics, how to use the weapons of warfare, and the battle plan.

In the spiritual world, believers often enter the battlefield without basic training. Some do not even know there is a war going on until they are attacked. They do not understand the tactics of the enemy. They are not aware of their spiritual weapons and how to use them and they have not studied the battle plan of God's Word.

In the natural world, to send a soldier to the battlefield without basic training results in defeat. The same is true in the spirit world. You must be trained in the basics of the faith. You must know your weapons and how to use them. You must have your life built on the foundation of the Word, or else you will fall in spiritual battle.

When a soldier enters basic training in the natural world, he leaves civilian life behind. He is no longer entangled with civilian affairs but is only concerned with the army in which he has enlisted.

In the spiritual realm, in order to war a good warfare, you, too, must not be entangled in the affairs of life. You are not a citizen of this present world. You are a citizen of and a warrior for the Kingdom of God:

The Apostle Paul declared:

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

If you want to be a good spiritual soldier, you must not be entangled with the affairs of life. Of course there are certain things that we all must do in the natural world--things like provide an income for our families, complete daily tasks that are required like shopping for food, cleaning house, etc. But many believers are entangled in a multitude of unnecessary and self-imposed activities from which they need to be freed in order to be an effective warrior for the Lord. They serve on this committee and that board. They attend numerous meetings and social events. Their time is consumed by many activities, but how many of them are related to their divine destiny?

If you are too busy to study the Word of God, pray, attend church, and focus on your destiny, then you are too busy. Take a good look at your life and determine what you can delegate to others and what you can eliminate from your schedule. We usually make time for the things we really want to do. Are the things of God a priority in your life? They must become so if you are to successfully complete basic training for spiritual warfare.

NOVEMBER 17 YOUR PLACE IN BATTLE

Each soldier in a natural army has a different position and responsibility in the battle. The same is true in the spiritual world. You are part of the church, which the Apostle Paul described in terms of the human body.

*For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.
(1 Corinthians 12:14-18)*

Just as each part of the human body has a specific function, so does each member of the Body of Christ. Your objective is to find your place and fill it.

War is a team effort and soldiers must cooperate with one another in the battle in order to defeat the enemy. They come under the direction of one commander. They move forward as a united front. They do not fight in their own name, but on behalf of their country.

The same is true in spiritual warfare. Believers must learn to cooperate in battle, come under the direction of the Commander in Chief, and move as a united front. We do not fight in our own names, but in the name of the Lord and for the Kingdom of God. Instead of fighting each other, we need to concentrate our attacks against the enemy.

In the natural world when a soldier is wounded, his friends make every effort to rescue him. "No man left behind" is the motto of some military forces. When the troops move forward, they move as a unit. They do not leave the weak behind, but place them in the center of the battalion with strong warriors ahead and behind them. The Christian army tends to shoot its own wounded. When a believer falls in battle, we often abandon him. Instead, we should rescue the spiritually wounded and surround them with our strength. The spiritual army of God should move ahead as one united front, not as a straggling group trailed by wounded warriors who fall and die by the wayside.

A soldier on the battlefield in the natural world does not do as he pleases. He follows orders from the commander. Total obedience is required. The same is true in the spiritual realm. If you are to be effective in spiritual warfare, you must follow the instructions of your Commander. You must be in total obedience to Him. You are not in charge. You do not make the decisions. You follow orders.

We are not fighting in our own name. We are fighting in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not fighting in our own behalf. We are fighting in behalf of our spiritual nation, the Kingdom of God.

As a good soldier, you must find your specific place in battle. You must cooperate with others in God's Army. Follow orders from the Commander as revealed in His Word, and stop along the way to help those wounded in battle.

NOVEMBER 18 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Communication is vitally important in warfare. Here are some natural parallels of spiritual truth that illustrate the importance of dissemination of information in battle.

Propaganda. Enemy nations always spread false information about each other. Satan also injects false propaganda into your mind if you allow it. This is a major tactic he uses and the reason why we previously spent an entire month of devotional readings on the subject of winning the battle for your mind.

Diplomatic proposals. One of the strategies of a nation at war is to weaken the enemy by diplomatic proposals. These are usually suggestions to compromise. Through such proposals each nation tries to gain an advantage over the other. In spiritual warfare, Satan attempts to make believers compromise with sin. He knows such "diplomacy" will result in spiritual weakness.

Intelligence. When nations are at war, there is always an intricate organization of intelligence. Each side has intelligence forces dedicated to gathering information about the other. These forces collect and analyze information about the enemy and then they communicate what they have learned to the soldiers engaged in combat.

In spiritual warfare your knowledge of the enemy and his tactics are vital to victory. The Bible is your "intelligence manual" which reveals all you need to know about the enemy. As you learn of Satan's strategies and scriptural counter-strategies to defeat him, you should communicate these facts to other Christian soldiers. Be aware: Satan gathers information on you too. He learns your points of weakness and targets them with offensive attacks.

Communication. Communication is vitally important in natural warfare. The troops must be able to receive instructions and encouragement from their commander. The enemy will try to sever communication between the front line troops and their leader, knowing this will result in failure on the battlefield.

In spiritual warfare, Satan wants to destroy your lines of communication with the Lord. He will try to prevent you from praying and reading God's Word, as these provide instructions and encouragement for spiritual warfare. If you are so busy in battle that you neglect communication with the Commander, you will be easily defeated.

Your victory on the front lines of spiritual warfare comes through sustained communication with the battle Commander. You must constantly receive His instructions and encouragement through prayer and study of His Word.

NOVEMBER 19

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS

Armies in the natural world use both offensive and defensive strategies. Offensive warfare is an aggressive advance against an enemy.

-Defensive warfare is when the enemy attacks and you must defend your territory. You employ defensive spiritual strategies.

-Offensive warfare is when you take the initiative to claim new territory for God, such as sharing the Gospel with unreached people and invading enemy territory spiritually. You take the offensive in battle.

A great military general once told his troops, "We are not going to dig foxholes and wait for the enemy to come shooting at us. We are going to move ahead, and move fast." (A foxhole is a hole in the ground in which a soldier can retreat and hide from the enemy).

The general said, "When you dig a foxhole, you dig a grave. When you are in that foxhole and fire at the enemy, he knows your exact location...If we will keep moving, the enemy will always hit where we have been and not where we are."

This general did not believe in defensive warfare only. His theory was that if the enemy was constantly under attack, there would not be any need for defense tactics. He realized that the forces moving in offensive warfare have an advantage over the defending forces. He said, "We will fight on our terms and we will win."

In spiritual warfare, those who understand the objective of warfare will not easily be reduced to a defensive position. They understand that in order to gain total victory, offensive fronts are required.

For example, let's consider your children. Do not wait for Satan to attack your children. Set godly standards for your family. Pray each day with your kids and for them. Take them to church. Monitor what they listen to and watch. Do not let them play violent video games. Know who they are associating with. From the beginning, discipline your children lovingly. Let them know at an early age that the plea that "everyone is doing it" is not the standard for your household. The very fact that everyone is doing it is most often a good reason why not to do it. Let them know early on that the standards for your family are different from those of others.

Now think about other areas of your life. What offensive warfare strategies can you employ in terms of your finances, your marriage, your relationships with others, and your ministry?

NOVEMBER 20 ATTACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS

In natural warfare when one side attacks, the other side counterattacks. A counterattack is an attempt to stop enemy forces from advancing and to regain lost territory. Satan counterattacks every offensive move made by believers. When you decide to pray more, study the Word of God more intensely, or enter into a new ministry, he will immediately stage a counterattack to prevent you from advancing in these areas.

In military terms, there are basically three forms of attack. Similar attacks are launched by the enemy in the spiritual world.

A frontal attack. These are direct attacks. The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan is an example of a frontal attack. These direct spiritual assaults should be met by resisting them with the Word of God which causes Satan to flee.

And when the tempter came to him...he (Jesus) answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God...It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve...Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. (Portions of Matthew 4:3-11)

A siege or blockade. A siege or blockade in the natural world is when the enemy takes control of territory that does not belong to him. Spiritual bondage is similar to a siege or blockade in the natural world. The enemy breaks through your defenses and part of your life is brought under his control. He does not actually possess you--as in demonic possession--but he prevents you from functioning properly and righteously in certain areas. For example, he may seize control of your fleshly appetites, your finances, or your emotions.

The way to deal with a spiritual siege or blockade is by using the powers of binding and loosing. The enemy must be bound in the area where he has seized control and the Holy Spirit loosed to fill that void. Jesus said, *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19).

Invasion and occupation. When an enemy invades in the natural world, he occupies and controls a territory. This is similar to demonic possession in the spirit world. A Christian can be oppressed by the enemy, but Satan cannot take possession because the Holy Spirit lives within a true believer and the two cannot coexist. An unsaved or backslidden person is usually the target of demonic possession. The way to deal with this type of attack is to bind the enemy and cast him out: *"No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house"* (Mark 3:27).

NOVEMBER 21 SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

In every war there are weapons involved. They may be simple weapons such as a spear or bow and arrow, or they may be complex weapons such as a missile system. A good soldier knows what weapons are available and how to use them.

This is also true in the spiritual world. As a Christian soldier, you must be aware of your spiritual weapons and know how to use them. Never be reduced to trying to use ineffective natural weapons to fight spiritual battles.

Here is a composite list of your spiritual weapons. Take time to look up the scriptures and study each of them carefully.

- Submitting to God: James 4:7
- Resisting Satan: James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8-9
- Refusing to give place to the Devil: Ephesians 4:27
- Recovering yourself from Satan's snare: 2 Timothy 2:26
- Keeping yourself from evil: 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:22
- Standing your ground: Ephesians 6:13-14a
- Using spiritual discernment: 1 John 4:1
- Rejecting false teachers: 2 John 10-11
- Prayer: Ephesians 6:18
- The sword of the Spirit: Ephesians 6:17
- Casting down vain imaginations and all that is against God: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- Binding and loosing: Matthew 16:19
- The blood of Jesus: Revelation 12:11
- Your testimony: Revelation 12:11
- The name of Jesus: Mark 16:17
- The armor of God: Ephesians 6:11-15

The command to Christian soldiers is to...

... take unto you the whole Armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)

NOVEMBER 22 STRATEGIC SPIRITUAL TARGETS

When you accept Jesus Christ as Savior, it certainly does not mean your spiritual battles are over! You have won a major confrontation with the enemy when you are saved, but in reality, your intense struggle has only begun.

There are many different strategies Satan uses, but they are all focused on four major targets in the life of a believer.

The Word of God. Satan will cause you to question the Word of God and will add to, take from, or distort the Scriptures. This happened in the first temptation of Eve in the garden (Genesis 3). This is why it is important for you to study and understand God's Word so you will not be deceived by these attacks. Satan tried to twist the Word when he was tempting Jesus, but Christ set him straight because He knew the Word of God.

Your worship of God. Satan's original rebellion involved his desire to be worshiped, so he especially targets the worship of believers. He will try to prevent you from worshiping or lead you into false worship or idolatry which is defined as putting anything or anyone ahead of God.

Your walk with God. Satan attacks your personal walk with God. He accuses and slanders you, tempts you to engage in the works of the flesh, to be occupied with the world, and to rely upon your own human wisdom and strength. If Satan can win territory in your personal walk with God, it will be easier for him to defeat you in the next area which is...

Your work for God. Satan tries to deter you from accomplishing God's will by persecution, disaster, discouragement, prayerlessness, and involvement with the cares of the world. Satan also tries to affect your work for God by infiltrating your ministry with false teachers and disciples (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1-19; Matthew 13:38-39). While God sows good seed through your ministry, the enemy sows tares which are the "sons of the wicked one." Satan also promotes division and confusion to try to hinder the work of God in you and through you.

Take time today to examine each of these areas: The Word of God, your worship, your walk, and your work for God. What specific areas is Satan targeting? Where do you need to war more defensively?

NOVEMBER 23 LOSING A BATTLE, WINNING THE WAR

There are several examples in Scripture of men of God who lost battles with the enemy:

- Joshua lost a battle at Ai (Joshua 7).
- King David lost a battle of the flesh with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11).
- The Prophet Elijah felt so defeated that he wanted to die (1 Kings 19:4).
- The Apostle Paul said that he was "pressed out of measure" and "despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8).

Each of these men lost a battle, but recovered to win the war. The spiritual strategies they used will help you when you have lost a battle.

Step one: Recognize your failure. Joshua realized there was sin in the camp. King David admitted his sin with Bathsheba. Elijah admitted he was no better than his fathers. Paul admitted he was troubled, perplexed, and cast down.

Step two: Repent. Joshua eliminated the sin in the camp (Joshua 8). David's prayer of repentance is recorded in Psalms 52. Elijah repented of his negative attitude and returned to ministry (1 Kings 19). Paul indicated that although he had an intense battle with the flesh (described in Romans 7), he was able to gain victory through "repentance from dead works" (Romans 8).

Step three: Rebuild your spiritual strength. Joshua rebuilt his spiritual forces--he took all the warriors to fight against Ai when he returned to the battlefield. David fasted and prayed. Elijah rested, was ministered to by an angel, and waited on a mountain until receiving a special manifestation from God (1 Kings 19). Paul reminded himself that nothing could separate him from God (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

Step four: Return to the battlefield. Joshua conquered Ai. David was restored into fellowship with God after he repented. Elijah recovered from his despondency, returned to spiritual battle, and performed some of the greatest miracles in the history of his ministry. And as for Paul--he out-wrote, out-traveled, and out-preached any other New Testament minister.

Always remember: A just man may fall repeatedly, but he can rise up again (Proverbs 24:16). A war is made up of many battles. Just because you lose one battle does not mean you have lost the war. Get up one more time than you fall, and you will always win the war!

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore... (Ephesians 6:13-14),

NOVEMBER 24

STRATEGIC MOBILITY

In order to be effective in natural warfare, an army must be mobile. Military forces must be able to move to the place where offensive action is needed. If they are trapped and held immobile by the enemy, they are rendered ineffective.

Mobility is a requirement in the spiritual world also if you are to carry out Christ's orders to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel." Are you a Christian soldier who has been immobilized by the enemy, or are you actively pursuing the command to advance with the Gospel message?

A soldier does not put on armor and take up his weapons just to sit comfortably at home in front of a fire. He not only prepares for battle, he actually goes to the battlefield. Some Christian soldiers prepare for battle, but never leave the security of their home or church fellowship to go out to the battlefield.

The war is going on in the streets of our cities. It is occurring in villages that are yet unreached with the Gospel message. It is going on in jails and prisons and in houses of prostitution and drug dens. No matter how prepared we are spiritually, we will never win the battle unless we are mobile for the Lord Jesus Christ.

A soldier does not gain skills as a warrior by just studying books on warfare. He advances in skill through experience gained on the battlefield. Studying your spiritual warfare manual--the Bible--is important, but the battle will never be won unless you put what you have studied into practice. Skill in spiritual warfare comes through experience and application, just as it does in the natural world.

For some believers, being mobile may mean leaving their present geographical location. They may be called to another country as an evangelist or missionary. They may need to relocate in order to attend Bible school to prepare for their destiny.

For other believers, being mobile may mean remaining where they are geographically but stepping out of their comfort zones to reach the unsaved. How can you expect to win the world for Christ when you associate only with believers? You may need to move outside the four walls of your church building and go into the ghettos to minister. You may be called to minister in rest homes, hospitals, or prisons.

Every man or woman in the Bible who was greatly used by God was mobile. They left geographical locations at the command of the Lord. They marched into battle at His command. They took cities and nations, and New Testament believers literally turned the world upside down. The world was not impacted by believers just sitting on a church pew for an hour on Sunday morning.

Are you mobile for God? Would you relocate geographically today if He directed you to do so? Are you reaching beyond the four walls of your church to extend the Gospel? Are you moving out of your comfort zone for the purpose of extending the Gospel?

NOVEMBER 25 COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

Two vital qualities are required of a good soldier: Courage and commitment.

Courage. Repeatedly, God tells Joshua to have courage as he prepares for battle in Canaan:

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:6-7,9)

A great general once said, "If you are afraid of being shot at, you are whipped before you start...Fear kills more people than death." Do not fear failure in spiritual warfare. If you are afraid of being shot at by the enemy, you are already defeated before the battle begins.

The brave general also said, "There can never be defeat if a man refuses to accept defeat. Wars are lost in the mind before they are lost on the ground. No nation was ever defeated until the people accepted defeat."

As in the natural world, there can never be defeat if you refuse to accept it. Spiritual battles are lost in the mind first. Refuse to accept defeat in your mind. God's command is to take courage--indicating it is an act on your part:

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:6-9)

Commitment. In speaking about commitment, a famous general said: "We are lucky people. We are at war! We have a chance to fight and die for something. Many people never get that chance. Think of all those poor people you know that have lived and died for nothing...Total lives spent doing nothing but eating, sleeping, and going to work."

As a believer, you are at war in the spirit world. You have an opportunity to fight and die for something. You do not have to spend your life in the routine monotony of eating, sleeping, and working. You fight for a Kingdom to which there will be no end. You fight for a Commander who has already conquered the enemy forces. Your victory is assured. You have something worth living for, fighting for, and if called upon to do so, worth dying for.

NOVEMBER 26

CLAIMING THE SPOILS OF WAR

God has planned that the soldiers in His end-time army be bold and fearless as they march through the nations of the world, pursuing the enemy and tearing down his strongholds. God expects us to boldly and fearlessly wage war against Satan and his principalities so that entire nations can be opened to the Gospel.

Regardless of what strategies Satan may use to oppose, hinder or try to stop you—regardless of the dangers, the persecution, afflictions, or suffering you may face in fulfilling the will of God—you must not be weak or cowardly. You must march forward, knowing God will deliver your enemies into your hands and give you the victory.

God has given you *dunamis* power to boldly proclaim His Word in a demonstration of power to the world. He has given you powerful weapons that enable you to demolish Satan's strongholds. He has given you His spiritual armor that makes you invulnerable and invincible.

What is preventing the army of God from advancing in God's power to take their villages, cities and nations for God? Jesus has already won the victory. He has destroyed the works of the devil. He has conquered Satan and his principalities, stripped him of his power over you, and given you power over all the power of the enemy. It is time that you boldly claim the victory, and take the spoils of war!

Throughout the book of Joshua--other than at the first battle of Jericho--whenever Israel defeated an enemy, the spoils of the battle were theirs for the taking. The soldiers in God's army today need to have the revelation that Christ has conquered Satan and his evil forces and that the spoils of victory are ours for the taking. Enforce the victory! Seize the spoils of battle!

What is holding us back from taking the spoils in our cities and nations? Fear and lethargy! Satan is releasing a spirit of fear to attack the minds of God's people and bring them into such bondage they are unable to release their faith and take the spoils of victory that belong to them. They become lethargic and unconcerned about the battle for the souls of men and women, boys and girls.

It is time to move in and snatch the spoils of battle from the enemy who has tried to take your ministry, your city, and your nation. It is time for finances to be released into your hands to support your spiritual vision. It is time for your healing, your deliverance, and the salvation of your loved ones.

It's time for God's army to boldly and fearlessly march into battle and take the spoils of war that rightfully belong to us!

NOVEMBER 27 DIFFICULT TIMES

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:10-12)

From this passage we learn three important facts regarding spiritual warfare:

- The devil accuses you before God.
- He works against you day and night.
- You can overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony.

We all experience times of temptation, trouble, and persecution. What separates believers from unbelievers is that we can emerge from every difficult circumstance in victory.

Jesus warned us there would be a time of intense persecution in the end-times:

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (Matthew 24:9-10)

And in another place He declared:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:21-22)

Even during times of great difficulty, God is still in control.

James declared:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4)

We are not to wonder why we experience difficulty. We are not to question whether or not God has abandoned us. In difficult times, we are to count it as joy. The phrase "count it all joy" means to look forward to the future, knowing that difficult times are used by God for your spiritual benefit. The trying of your faith results in patience, perfection, and provision.

Through the blood of Jesus Christ, you can be completely victorious in every situation--right now and in the future. If difficulties arise today, God will show you exactly what to do and say. You will know no defeats!

NOVEMBER 28 LIVING IN VICTORY

Today and tomorrow, we will meditate on seven keys that will enable you to break out of the cycle of defeat in your life--whether it be in your finances, your relationships, your physical body, your ministry, or other areas of your life. These steps will enable you to continuously live in a cycle of spiritual victory.

1. Replace stress with peace. When Satan attacks in your circumstances, instead of becoming stressed, set your mind on God and His faithfulness, and allow Christ's peace to guard your heart and mind: *"You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind (both its inclination and its character) stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You and hopes confidently in You" (Isaiah 26:3, AMP).*

2. Rejoice in difficulties. James said to count it all joy when you encounter trials (James 1:2). Peter said: *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13).* Regardless of whether or not you feel like praising God, offer up sacrifices of praise—not for the circumstances themselves, but because you know God is using these circumstances for your good.

3. Refocus your attention. Take your eyes off of your circumstances. Fix them on Jesus and the Word.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

4. Resist Satan. God has provided an effective strategy for every battle you face, but your victory is not automatic. God would not have provided you with spiritual armor and given you powerful weapons to take authority over Satan if He had not planned for you to be involved in battle. God does not want you to sit back and allow Satan to control your circumstances. You must pick up your weapons and go to battle.

Meditate on these four points, then turn to tomorrow's reading for three additional keys.

NOVEMBER 29 THE VICTORY CYCLE

Yesterday, we studied four keys that will enable you to break the cycle of defeat and begin to live your life in a cycle of victory. Today, we will examine three additional keys.

5. Release your faith. In prayer, cast all your cares on Jesus, claim God's covenant promises to you, and release your faith to God. As you do, act on what you believe as if it were already done. Believe that you have received the answer even before you see any evidence.

But let him ask in faith without doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8, NAS)

6. Rest in the Lord. You are only defeated when you become weary and faint in your mind. The moment you feel that you are becoming weary—tired of resisting, struggling, casting out fear and doubt, tired of releasing your faith, exhausted by the circumstances—take time to wait on the Lord in prayer to strengthen and sustain you.

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:29-31)

7. Remain persistent. Regardless of how long you may have waited for deliverance in your circumstances, regardless of the pain or heartache you have experienced, continue to battle it through in the spirit world. Keep on persevering through prayer. Keep on believing. Keep on releasing your faith and expecting God to deliver you.

In summary, the keys that will help you break the cycle of defeat in your life and live in a continuous cycle of victory are:

1. Replace stress with peace.
2. Rejoice in difficulties.
3. Refocus your attention.
4. Resist Satan.
5. Release your faith.
6. Rest in the Lord.
7. Remain persistent.

NOVEMBER 30 THE DEVIL'S DESTINY

As we conclude this month's meditations on achieving victory in the battle for destiny, let's look at what the Word of God says concerning the ultimate destiny of the devil:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John 12:31-32)

Now is the judgment—that means the devil is already defeated. Satan no longer has power over the earth. Jesus Christ was lifted up on the cross and the prince of the world has been cast out. As believers, our battle is to enforce Christ's victory and share the message of the cross.

In the book of Revelation, we find details regarding Satan's ultimate destiny:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

If you are to receive God's promises, claim your inheritance, and fulfill your spiritual destiny, then you must settle these truths in your heart and mind once and for all:

- The enemy has been judged.
- His power has been destroyed.
- His ultimate destiny is assured.
- Jesus destroyed his works (1 John 3:8).

Surely, if the Son of God has destroyed the works of the devil--and He has--then you must grasp that breakthrough revelation and begin to function as Christ did. You must act upon the truths that:

- The devil has no power over you except what you allow him to have.
- The devil cannot make you do anything that you do not want to do.
- The devil has no power over your will.

-Each morning, instead of starting your day by focusing on your circumstances, focus instead upon the ability of God to overcome every obstacle that lies before you.

-Each day, give God glory as the creator of the universe and acknowledge Him as the source of all your needs.

-Start each day with the knowledge that there is no circumstance that you cannot overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit.

During this past month, you have studied the battles Joshua fought and learned vital principles of spiritual warfare from them. Now you must apply what you have learned. This is how you will learn to consistently achieve victories in the conflicts of life and win the battle for your destiny.