

Remnant Life Church  
October 27, 2024  
**Principles for Winning a Spiritual Battle**  
**Part 1**  
Judges 7:1-8

We live in a time when there is great confusion

- People are very confused about who and what they are
- They may outrageous claims that have nothing to do with sense of logic
  - And many will tell you that you must agree with them and support them
  - Otherwise you are bigoted, close minded, phobic, and hateful
  - Not true

But what is true is that everyone of us are comprised of three parts

- There is the physical
- The intellectual – the mind and emotions
- The spiritual
  - And within each of those 3 we have battles and struggles that come about from time to time
  - And they come with various degrees of severity and intensity
    - Within the physical part of our lives that is certainly true
    - Aches, disease, pains that get more pronounced the older we get
      - JR and I playing in Williamsport
      - 9 games in one day
      - Then, back to work on Monday
      - Today, in the ICU of Holy Spirit Hospital until Christmas
    - Emotionally we struggle with doubt, fear, even depression
    - Intellectually with confusion or a lack of knowledge or understanding at an important time
  - And we also each go through spiritual battles
    - Whether you think you do or not
    - Whether you realize it or not
    - It is a part of you and you will struggle

But what is a spiritual battle?

- Very simply it is a struggle within the spirit aspect of your life
  - And make no mistake, the enemy, the one battling you is satan
  - satan is very real and very active coming against the people of God and the church
  - And we are seeing more and more evidence of that every day
- But are we able to tell the difference between a spiritual battle and a natural one?
- Let's quickly define those first
  - A natural challenge or battle are those things that come about through the natural aspects of our existence
    - They will impact your body through the 5 senses
    - They are often emotional or intellectual challenges as a result of the natural world

- Dealing with a sickness or physical limitation would be called a natural battle
- A spiritual battle is no less real, but it is often much more difficult to deal with and even identify
  - They are those things that challenge our spiritual life
    - They are born out of the universal struggle of good versus evil
    - For the individual the battleground is most often between the mind and the heart
      - The mind is the seat of the individual
      - The heart is the seat of God's presence in your life
  - They may cause us to question our faith, our understanding of the Bible, and even who God is or the certainty of our salvation.
  - And spiritual battles may also manifest or be seen in the natural
    - A person who is living with the spiritual battle of unforgiveness will likely be impacted physically
    - The great problem presents itself in that a person may be dealing with tremendous spiritual battles and you would never know it by looking at them
      - It is why people often feel so alone during those times
- What must be understood is that spiritual battles are real!
  - You must expect them; you must know how to respond and deal with them
  - And you can be assured that God is with you through those dark times of struggle
- But there are also important principles for us to know and understand when we encounter these battles that will help us come to the place of, not just surviving, but being victorious

Over the next several weeks, I would like to share with you three principles that are vital to winning your spiritual battles

- Now, this first one might give the impression that you will always have a warning before a spiritual battle begins
  - Unfortunately, that is not usually the case
  - We most often find ourselves well into them before we realize where we are and what is happening
  - But God knows before we get there!
  - And because of that, He is already active on your behalf

The first principle for winning a spiritual battle is the time of PREPARATION

**READ** – **Judges 7:1-8**

Gideon is a perfect example of how we all begin handling the battles that come into our lives

- We spend our energy, our thinking, our emotions wrapped around finding a way to work it out
  - IOW – we want to solve the problem

- Gideon was doing the same thing
- He was looking at numbers, strength of the armies, establishing priorities, strategies, and why not?!
  - He was being a good leader
  - A good general
- But while he was doing all of that, God was preparing Gideon to move an important element of the battle to the top of his priority list
  - His faith!
  - Trusting in God's might
  - Knowing and believing that God was going to do what needed to be done
- God has information and knows things intimately related to your situation that you do not have
  - In Gideon's case, God knew the hearts of the people
  - He knew that with their full army they would readily attribute any victory to their own strength, their own might, and their own skill
  - And so God began to prepare them for the battle
    - But not in the way Gideon was expecting
    - And that is certainly often true for our own circumstances as well
    - God's ways are very different than ours and that is why our faith is so important

Look at how God prepared Gideon for his battle with the Midianites

- Gideon began with 33,000 fighting men
  - That sounds like a lot until you consider that the Midianite army was numbered at 135,000
  - But God was not concerned with numbers; He was concerned with the hearts of the people
    - He was concerned with their arrogance
      - **V 2** - *The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me; you will say, 'My own strength has saved me.'*
      - God will not share His glory with anyone (**Isa 42:8**)
    - He was concerned with their spirit of fear
      - **V 3** - *Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'"* So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.
      - A spirit of fear will paralyze you emotionally, physically, and even spiritually
    - And He was concerned with their love of self
      - **V 5-6** - *Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred of them drank from cupped hand, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.*
      - Even how the men drank water spoke of the condition of their hearts

- To drink water directly from the stream meant that the soldier would have to get down on his hands and knees, lower his head down and put his mouth into the water
    - That means his eyes were facing the ground, preventing him from seeing what was around him
    - The enemy was positioned just across the valley from, but his desire to quench his thirst and satisfy his own needs was more important than remaining alert
  - However, the soldier who drank the water from his hand meant he remained upright and vigil
    - Notice that in verse 6 it tells us that he drank from his hand
    - Meaning his weapon would have still been held in the other
    - He did not lose sight of his responsibilities for the sake of his own comfort and desire
- Even as the number got smaller and smaller, God was preparing the people to fight in a way that would demonstrate the true power of God with them
- But how do you think Gideon was doing, what was he thinking at this point?
    - If he had needed a double-fleece sign from God with an army of 32,000, how was he feeling now with 300, meaning he was outnumbered not just 4 to 1 like before, but now 400 to 1?
    - But God is not restricted by the physical state of things that we must live in
      - God was dealing with a spiritual battle
      - And it was not going to make much sense to those involved
  - The Midianites, as mighty an army as they possessed, were nothing more than a tool God had been using to discipline the people of Israel for their sin of pride and idolatry
    - He did the same with the Babylonians, the Canaanites, and the Philistines
    - God could have dealt with the Midianites at any time and in an instant
    - Just as He can deal with your battle at any time in an instant
      - But He rarely does – why?!?
      - Because He is more concerned about what is happening inside of you than what is happening outside
      - The trials, the battles, the storms are all permitted by God and designed to strengthen your faith, increase your reliance on Him, and bring glory to His name
    - Because it is His strength and power alone that brings victory into our lives
      - Our resources, like the size of Gideon’s army, are of no value
      - Our strength, when we rely on it, actually becomes a detriment just as it would have been to the Israelites

- The Apostle Paul writes of this in **2 Cor 12:9** when talking about an affliction that he had taken to God many times asking that it be removed
  - He tells the reader that God's response was one that changed his thinking and his focus
  - *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*
  - God will extend His grace to us even in the time of preparation when fear and anxiousness tend to try and seat themselves in our hearts and minds

The spiritual battles will come

- It may only be something such as a strong temptation that zeroes in on a weakness in your life
- Or it may be an overwhelming crisis of faith that has you looking at, like Gideon, an impossible army of 135,000
  - The first principle in order to win your spiritual battles is to embrace and accept God's time of preparation in your life
  - That begins with recognizing your dependence on Him, that He knows and understands your needs, and He sympathizes with your weaknesses
- This is not simply about the underdog, the little guy always winning or besting the big, bad bully
  - Yes, David did defeat Goliath, but David had been undergoing a time of preparation
  - Both in body and in spirit
- To position yourself to receive His preparation means that we must take very seriously the words spoken by Jesus to His disciples when He said to them...*apart from me, you can do nothing.* (**John 15:5**)

How many of you can say there have been times when you have felt like Gideon?

- Unsure of yourself
- Unsure of what God could do through you
- Faced with what appeared to be an insurmountable task or challenge
  - If you can truly identify with Gideon, it should drive you to your knees seeking God for His direction, His strength, and His wisdom in order to build your faith to know that He will go before you into that battle

God will prepare you even if you are not aware of it

- He is likely doing that right now in each of your lives
- Trust Him and seek Him in every way
- God whittled the army of Israel down to 300 men
  - In the natural, I'm sure there were many who saw this and said, that is ridiculous!
  - No, it was God's way of perfectly preparing them for battle in a way that clearly demonstrates how we should live today