

Spiritual Keys To Life Management

Exodus 17:8 – 18:27

1. Elevating Arms: Let The Lord Fight Your Battles (17:8-15)

- We Need God's Direction To Fight Our Battles (8-10)
- We Need Mutual Support To Keep The Faith (11-13)
- We Need God's Presence To Be Victorious (14-16)

2. Embracing Arms: Rejoice In Your Salvation With Your Family (18:1-12)

- Recount God's Deliverance With Your Family (1-9)
- Rejoice In God's Deliverance In Our Victory (10-12)

3. Extending Arms: Share The Burden Of Ministries (18:13-27)

- Objective Observations Should Be Shared With Compassion (13-14)
- Being Over-Worked and Burnt-Out Isn't Good Even In God's Work (15-18)
- Criticism Is Just A Gripe Without A Given Solution And God's Enablement (19a)
- The Priority Of Ministry Is About Teaching And Applying God's Word (19b-20)
- Select A Team Of Those Who Fear God And Have Integrity (21)
- Sharing The Load Is Both Good For Everyone (22-27)

Conclusion:

- Let us **mutually bear** the challenges of faith in warfare.
- Let us **rejoicingly share** in God's victories.
- Let us **collectively care** for the ministry needs of others.

Discussion:

- What battle do we need to stop fighting and let God fight for us?
- What recent "deliverance" can we tell our family and friends about? How is God the Hero and not us?
- What life situation or ministry do we need to accept help with?

Spiritual Keys To Life Management

Exodus 17:8 – 18:27

- Filoli Gardens – Fight, Love, Live (<https://filoli.org/about/>)
 - Fight for a just cause.
 - Love your fellow man.
 - Live a good life.
- **Fight, Love, Serve**
 - We are in a fight for our purity, our family's protection and our nation's morality
 - We have one ultimate joy as a family – our mutual salvation
 - We have one ultimate purpose – serve God well
- **Proposition:** God teaches us through Moses and Jethro 3 spiritual keys to manage life's greatest challenges: our battles, our loved ones and our opportunities to serve God.

1. Elevate Your Arms: Let The Lord Fight Your Battles (17:8-15)

a. We Need God's Direction To Fight Our Battles (8-10)

⁸Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. ⁹So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." ¹⁰So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

- The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Jacob's twin)
- Amalek is Esau's grandson (Gen 36:12)
- They dwelt in the northern Sinai Peninsula
- They had a reputation for attacking other groups and stealing their wealth and supplies
- The Amalekites were trained plundering warriors
- They trained camels to ride on giving them speed and power
- Deuteronomy 25:17-19 point out how the Amalekites knew Israel's weakest point – their rear where the elderly and sickly were dragging behind. They were most defenseless there.
- Our enemy – the devil – knows our weak points and knows how to strike
- That's why Peter tells us to be sober and vigilant, the devil is like a roaring lion seeking who he may devour
- **Joshua** is called into action
- This is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible
- Joshua was the General over Israel's army
- **JK:** Where do generals put their armies? In their sleeves!!

b. We Need Mutual Support To Keep The Faith (11-13)

¹¹Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹²But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

- Moses was instructed to hold up his hands – when they were up, Israel was victorious
- When the arms failed, so did Israel
- So Aaron & Hur came to assist Moses to keep his arms up

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray without ceasing – but that's hard

- Ie/ I had a 6am meeting that had prayer in about 30 minutes in – I was embarrassed that I woke up and the group was done praying

- Jesus brought 3 disciples (James, John & Peter) to the Garden of Gethsemane with Him but they couldn't stay awake

- Keep praying
- When it gets tough, find 2 others to pray with!!

c. We Need God's Presence To Be Victorious (14-16)

¹⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, ¹⁶saying, "A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

- We all go through battles
- But the Lord will fight on our behalf
- Israel did not have to be an over-powering force to defeat their enemies because they had God
- Israel had little military defense against the charging Egyptian army –

- Jehovah Nissi – the Lord is my Banner

- Flags were super pre-eminent for soldiers
- Before mobile communication and satellite flags were used, soldiers would rally around the flag
- The Lord is our flag or banner that we rally around
- The flag bearer was one of the most important roles in the army
- If the flag went down, the soldiers lost direction
- The Civil War era song "The Battle Cry of Freedom," made the phrase "we'll rally 'round the flag, boys" popular (<https://www.thoughtco.com/flags-importance-in-the-civil-war-1773716>)
- Soldiers would give their lives to defend their Regiment's flag

- Ie/ One Sunday after church, I was so tired to do anything, I binged watch a 6 part documentary on the Civil War. I was amazed at the story during the Battle of Antietam.

- In the Civil War, at the Battle of Antietam, in the Dunker Church woods, Sgt. George **Simpson** of the 125th Pennsylvania infantry was shot and killed while bearing his regiment's flag. His oozed from his temple onto the flag he covered and protected. Private **Boblitz** retrieved the flag and then he was shot. Sgt. **Greenland** was the 3rd person to retrieve the flag to rally the troop. This statue commemorates George Simpson holding that flag.

<https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/historyculture/flags2.htm>

- That's why the flag during the Stars Spangled Banner is so important to many Americans
- The Lord is our rallying point
- The Lord is also our Fighter
- We are more than Conquerors

2. Embrace With Arms: Rejoice In Your Salvation With Your Family (18:1-12)

a. Recount God's Deliverance With Your Family (1-9)

¹Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. ²Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, ³along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"), ⁴and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). ⁵Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. ⁶And when he sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," ⁷Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. ⁸Then Moses told his father-in-law **all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh** and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, **all the hardship** that had come upon them in the way, and how the Lord had **delivered them**. ⁹And Jethro **rejoiced** for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had **delivered** them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

- Moses' wife, Zipporah, and sons (Gershom and Eliezer) were with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and were reunited after the danger with Egypt had cleared.
- Moses recounted the wonderful deliverance with Jethro and family
- When is the last time we praised God for our salvation or a recent deliverance?

b. Rejoice In God's Deliverance In Our Victory (10-12)

¹⁰Jethro said, "**Blessed** be the Lord, who has **delivered** you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹Now **I know that the Lord is greater than all gods**, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." ¹²And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

- Jethro was not Jewish. He was a Gentile from Midian.
- But he knew God and that God is greater than all
- V. 12 Jethro gives a burnt offering to God

- Regularly rejoice with your family and friends about God's salvation!

3. Extend Your Arms: Share The Burden Of Ministries (18:13-27)

a. Objective Observations Should Be Shared With Compassion (13-14)

¹³The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. ¹⁴When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?"

- We read previously that there were Elders with Israel, but they weren't functioning as Shepherds to the nation as of yet
- That burdened came on the shoulder of Moses
- Israel came to Moses personally for 2 main reasons: 1) **instruction on God's law** and how to apply it, 2) how to **settle judicial conflicts**

b. Being Over-Worked and Burnt-Out Isn't Good Even In God's Work (15-18)

¹⁵And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; ¹⁶when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." ¹⁷Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸You and the people with you will certainly **wear yourselves out**, for the thing is **too heavy** for you. You are **not able to do it alone**.

- There can be a time that doing good is not good
- When you wear yourself out (v. 18)
- When the burden is too heavy (v. 18)
- When we can't do it alone (v. 18)

c. Criticism Is Just A Gripe Without A Given Solution And God's Enablement (19a)

^{19a}Now obey my voice; I will give you **advice**, and **God be with you!**

- Last week, we talked about complaining and the sharp line between complaining and stating a fact
- **Jethro** was different than **Korah** (Num 16)

Numbers 16:1-5 Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. ²And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. ³They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" ⁴When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, ⁵and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning the Lord will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him.

- Jethro brought up a **problem** to Moses
- Korah brought **accusation** against Moses
- Jethro was **concerned** about his son-in-law burning out
- Korah wanted similar **power** to Moses
- Jethro dealt with Moses **personally**
- Korah **ganged up** on Moses and Aaron **conspiring** with Dathan, Abiram and On
- Jethro suggested 100's of trustworthy leaders to **work with** Moses
- Korah gathered 250 prominent leaders to **oppose** Moses and Aaron
- Jethro had a **solution** in hand
- Korah gave a **complaint but no solution**
- Jethro **overcame** a real problem
- Korah **convinced** himself there was a problem
- Jethro **accomplished** God's will
- Korah **opposed** God's will

Jethro (Exodus 18)	Korah (Numbers 16)
Brought problem to Moses	Brought accusation against Moses
Concerned for Moses	Power-play against Moses
Dealt with Moses personally	Ganged up against Moses conspiring
Suggested 100's of trustworthy leaders to work with Moses	Gathered 250 prominent leaders to oppose Moses and Aaron
Proposed a solution	Complained without a solution
Overcame a real problem	Convinced selves there was a problem
Accomplished God's will	Opposed God's will

- Sometimes we have issues at church that need to be addressed.
- We could point fingers and blame
- Or we could suggest or work towards a solution
- "I don't know the answer, but I'll work with you until we find one"
- It can be difficult in leadership when there are more critics than problem solvers.
- We need more Spielbergs and Lucases than Rotten Tomatoes or Siskel and Eberts
- Directors vs. film critics

- Of course, pragmatic solutions aren't the only solutions

- **God must be with us!!**
 - **We need to rely on Him**
 - Ministry is about faith – it's not about mere business principles
 - **We are accomplishing God's work, God's way**

d. The Priority Of Ministry Is About Teaching And Applying God's Word (19b-20)

^{19b} You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, ²⁰and you shall **warn** them about the statutes and the laws, and **make them know the way in which they must walk** and what they **must do**.

- Moses' role as a judge and leader was to teach God's Word and to evaluate disputes and problems according to God's law

- They need to be taught, warned and shown how they must walk
- As crazy and busy as ministry can get, Moses' still had to prioritize teaching and applying God's Word

e. **Select A Team Of Those Who Fear God And Have Integrity (21)**

²¹Moreover, look for **able** men from all the people, men who **fear God**, who are **trustworthy** and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.

- **Able** – the key to forming ministry teams is putting people in the right place
 - Some people are frustrated in ministry because they are not gifted or suited for that ministry
 - An elder must be able to shepherd sheep
 - A deacon must be willing and able to serve others
 - A teacher must be able to handle God's Word
 - A nursery worker must be able to be patient and gentle with babies
 - A coach must be able to motivate and inspire
 - If you're not able, this is where **training** comes
 - Our job as pastors is not to do the work of the ministry but to train you to do the work of the ministry
- **Fear God** – they fear God because they know they're ultimately accountable to Him
 - It has been sad to read recently of bullies in the pastorate – from Washington to Illinois to a reputable school placed on probation for having a culture of bullying
 - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/standing-up-to-bully-pastors/>
 - <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/november/harvest-elders-say-james-macdonald-biblically-disqualified.html>
 - <https://religionnews.com/2014/08/22/mark-driscoll-charged-allegations-21-former-mars-hill-pastors/>
 - Elders are not to be quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3)
 - Elders are to be gentle (1 Tim 3:3)
 - Not domineering (1 Pet 5:3)
 - A servant (Mt 20:25)
 - Insecure leaders want to be feared by the people when this really demonstrates these leaders don't really fear God but fear the loss of power and authority
- **Trustworthy** – will keep God's trust, even to the point of resisting a bribe
 - They're not in it for the money
 - They're not in it for power
 - They're in it for the stewardship before God of their gifts, talent, time and ability

f. **Sharing The Load Is Both Good For Everyone (22-27)**

²²And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. ²³If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace." ²⁴So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵Moses chose **able men** out of all Israel and made them

heads over the people, **chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens.** ²⁶And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves. ²⁷Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.

- Moses got good advice and heeded good advice.
- Appoint “chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens”
- The people profited from having more attentive ears and didn’t have to wait 3 weeks for an appointment with Moses

- D. L. Moody: “I would rather put ten men to work than do the work of ten men.”
Cited by: Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Delivered (Exodus): Finding Freedom by Following God (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 113). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

- This is a good case for **small groups**
- Having a leader that can help deal with around 10 people is wise

Conclusion:

- Let us **mutually bear** the challenges of faith in warfare.
- Let us **rejoicingly share** in God’s victories.
- Let us **collectively care** for the ministry needs of others.

Discussion:

- What battle do we need to stop fighting and let God fight for us?
- What recent “deliverance” can we tell our family and friends about? How is God the Hero and not us?
- What life situation or ministry do we need to accept help with?