



EXODUS

FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

BIBLE TEXT | EXODUS 17:8-16

8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. **9** So 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." **10** So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. **11** Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. **12** But 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. **13** And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. **14** Then 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." **15** And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, **16** saying, "A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

DEVOTIONAL FOR EXODUS 17:8-16

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Are you a prayer warrior? Have you ever prayed so hard and long for something or someone that you became physically weak? Many of us, including myself, cannot raise our hand in agreement to these questions. I do pray, yes, but this is a convicting text for me because I cannot say that I am a prayer warrior or that I have been physically weak from praying for a long period of time. May we all be given a charge and encouragement from this text. Please read Exodus 17:8-16 before you continue reading this devotional.

We see in this passage where the Amalek, who is a descendant of Esau, came and battled against the Israelites. Moses summons Joshua to choose men and go to battle while he went up on the mountain to pray. And so it was, when Moses held up his hands with the staff of God, Israel was winning. Moses supported the battle behind the scenes, busy in prayer. The fate of Israel in battle depended on Moses' intercession, because when he prayed Israel prevailed and when he stopped praying the Amalekite army prevailed. The posture of Moses' hands in the air was a posture of prayer and praise to God for the Israelites. He knew he could not put his hands down or his people would



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die. "This amazing passage shows us that life or death for Israel depended on the prayers of one man. Moses prayed as we should pray – with passion, believing that life and death – perhaps eternally – depended on prayer." (Guzik)

We see that Moses became weak and Aaron and Hur were there to support Moses' arms. They also supported his body by placing a stone where Moses can rest upon so he can stay steady. Physically fighting is hard work, but true prayer and interceding for others can be just as difficult. This battle went all day into the twilight hours. Though this was Moses' work to do, it was more than he could do by himself. Moses alone could not win this battle of prayer. He needed others to come by his side and strengthen him in prayer. If you haven't asked yourself this question yet, let's do it now. Who is holding you up when you are weak in a spiritual battle? Even better yet, who is going to carry a stone for you to rest upon? Maybe it's not a physical stone for you, but who is encouraging you with the solid rock of Jesus Christ, our firm foundation? (Luke 6:46-49)

Prayer is sometimes sweet and easy; other times it is hard work. We see in the New Testament, Paul describes the ministry of a man named Epaphras who was described as always laboring fervently in prayers for his church (Colossians 4:12). Paul wrote that we must continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2). In Exodus we see that Joshua still had to fight. Moses' praying did not eliminate what Joshua had to do. The battle was won with prayer, but also through normal instruments – the work of the army, led by Joshua. "Prayer is a downright mockery if it does not lead us into the practical use of means likely to promote the ends for which we pray." (Spurgeon) We must have action behind our faith. Faith without works is dead faith (James 2:26).

God told Moses to build an altar of remembrance so they would not forget what God did on this day. And so Moses built an altar and called its name, "The Lord Is My Banner". Though Moses knew his prayer was important, he wasn't foolish enough to think that they won this battle on their own. As an act of worship he built an altar and praised the name of Yahweh-Nissi. Nissi describes a flag or a banner. The idea is that God is victorious in battle and the flag of his victory is lifted high. In Exodus 17, we see examples of God's power and man's effort working together. Moses struck the rock; but only God could bring the water (17:6). Joshua fought and Moses prayed, but only God gave the victory over Amalek. In it all, God received the glory. "It wasn't Israel is my banner or Moses is my banner or Joshua is my banner; rather it was Yahweh-Nissi: The-Lord-is-My-Banner." (David Guzik)

Questions:

1. Do you struggle to remain faithful in prayer? Are you fighting your battles through prayer, or trying to fight them on your own?
2. Who are you interceding for in prayer?
3. Do you have others in your life to hold your arms up when you are weak? Are they members of the body of Christ?