

Study Objective: An exploration of Scripture and insight that outlines God's design for the role of Man's Headship/Leadership – the Mantle of Spiritual Care and Accountability for those in his immediate sphere of influence.

A. THE BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS

Our mind is our greatest asset. It is the gateway to our heart and our spirit. Our adversary wages a relentless war against our mind, and he is intense, vicious and does not fight fair. Also, as the first line of defense in our home, the enemy is highly motivated to target us: if he successfully neutralizes us, our families are fair game to him.

No one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. Mark 3: 27

Though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh [in other words, we don't fight with armor, we don't fight with politics, we don't fight with money, we don't fight with all the humanistic ways]. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

STRONGHOLD:

What is a Stronghold? A Mental Block or Blockade: anything that we construct or allow to be constructed that impedes the voice of God or will of God in our life.

- It can be our own voice, keeping our volume above His.
- It can be a vice, some area that the enemy has gained a foothold on from our past experiences, and it will not only take driving him out, but also taking special care to guard that area closely.
- How about these common strongholds: Worry, Fear, Guilt, Insecurity, Resentment, Need for Other's Approval.

We have been given the power and guidance to tear down ALL these strongholds!

ATTITUDE: Optimism vs Pessimism

"Attitude is everything; Life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you react to it."

Charles Swindoll

Mankind in general operates from a space of mood and mentality more on HOW WE VIEW our circumstances, than the actual circumstances themselves.

St. PollyAnnas vs. St. Eeyores

Unfounded positivity is not a natural inclination for the masses. However, we as Christians have a unique opportunity to pause and recognize that:

Joshua 24:15 "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Not only do we have the power of attitude choice everyone else has, but we also have a much brighter lens through which to view it all: our relationship with Jesus Christ and the promises He has already made over our lives!

A Bad Attitude is like a flat tire; if you do NOT change it, you will never go anywhere.

“Reject your sense of injury and the injury itself disappears.” Marcus Aurelius

“When you take control of your attitude, you take control of your life.” — Roy T. Bennett

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan Press On! has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.” — Calvin Coolidge

Inspirational Quotes aside, here is the sincerest truth:

Perhaps one of the greatest ways we can debunk our own faith to others – is our own pessimism.

- If we are the only Christian at work, and we find ourselves falling into the St Eeyore category more often than not – can we really convince a non-believer that we have found a better way?
- If A) we know (and can quote) Romans 8:28 that all things work together for our eventual good, but B) our first response is always to bemoan our circumstances or latch onto the negative view of a situation by default, which reality do we really think our coworkers believe WE believe?
- I’ve asked someone this before: *“If you encountered a glass that was half-full, would you even know how to respond?”*

On the flip side:

If our coworkers watch us battle life’s challenges, but more often than not, they see peace they cannot understand, a joy they can’t figure out, strength that seems beyond our capacity– we have just grasped perhaps the brightest light we can shine and the greatest power we can wield for Jesus!

For those who generally feel uncomfortable sharing their faith, perhaps they feel they’re not ready to get that personal yet, or it’s not in their personality, here is the answer:

- LIVE the hope you have in Jesus
- BELIEVE the God you’re serving WILL work out everything for your good
- EMBODY the gratitude you have for a God who said He’d rather die than live without you – and then proved it.
- EMBRACE the “future you” He is working to shape THROUGH these challenging circumstances.

Joshua 24:15 “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

But before we deliver an unnecessary death blow to Eeyore, let's pierce down to the truth of the matter:

- We are humans who cannot see the future
- Life's challenges are hard, often even brutal
- Life happens and it gets painful, sometimes devastatingly so
- Sometimes, in one fell swoop, everything we've known and loved can be taken or altered
- Again, we are humans who cannot see the future

This is why we need each other – brothers reminding brothers – of how much hope we have IN the circumstances we face. We must encourage each other, we must remind each other. We also need to allow ourselves to be encouraged by our brothers.

- Col 1:27 “Christ in you, the hope of glory”
- Jer 29:11 “I know the plans I have for you, to prosper you and not to harm you”
- Rom 8:28 “All things work together for good, to them that love the Lord”

We often miss the fact that He has allowed *or even ordered* those challenges into our life.

Genesis 50: 20

Joseph finally has the opportunity to confront his brothers for all the evil they've acted on towards him. He has all power and in total control of their fate. He committed no wrongdoing to justify any of their actions, and if anyone had a right to reflect from a space of self-justification and exact righteous revenge, it would have been him. Rather than focusing on the circumstances they put him in, or the momentous opportunity he had to “right his wrongs”, he focused on a more spiritual perspective:

NIV “You intended to harm me, **but God intended it for good** to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

KJV “...you thought evil against me, but **God meant it unto good**....”

HCSB “You planned evil against me; **God planned it for good** to bring about the present result....”

We've most often studied this passage with the perspective, that God has taken account of our circumstances and will make something good out of them, in the vein of Romans 8:28 (all things work together for our good...), which is a positive reflection.

However, the truth is, this scripture clearly supports that God himself planned those challenges, even using Joseph's loved ones in the causing of such great pain. There is no way that Joseph the young man, the 11th of 12 sons could possibly have imagined...years down the line being away from his family and father's flocks, in a foreign land, rising to 2nd in command in one of the most powerful nations of the time, empowered to save that nation as well as God's chosen people.

Joshua 24:15 “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Q. Can we pause and reflect over the trajectory of our challenges, to accept God has a greater mission and purpose than we've allowed ourselves to imagine?

Q. In accepting He has a greater mission and purpose for us, will we also be willing to look at those who have caused us such turmoil and in lieu of revenge, instead show grace, forgiveness, composure, and the hope that Joseph did in this account?

THIS is the hope and vision God IS WORKING TO DO in each one of us RIGHT NOW.

VISUAL – Bible Heroes Q & A