

How to Overcome Problems

2 Chronicles 20

Intro

Have you ever faced an impossible situation? Have you ever experienced a serious problem that you needed deliverance but you were convinced that you could not help yourself? It was as if you faced a brick wall. No friends could help you; no relatives could deliver you. You were totally unable to deliver yourself. This reality actually happened to a person in the Bible named Jehoshaphat.

King Jehoshaphat's Challenge

King Jehoshaphat faced perhaps the biggest challenge in his life. We find the story in 2 Chronicles 20. Jehoshaphat received word that three enemy nations were coming to fight him and conquer his nation. These combined armies were the Moabites Ammonites, and the Meunites. Jehoshaphat was greatly outnumbered and the odds were definitely not in his favor.

This historical incident is very much applicable to us because we all face at one time or another challenges or battles like: financial, marital, relational, emotional and spiritual. From Scripture we can learn from these stories certain vital spiritual principles on how to overcome the challenges we face. I would like to share with you 5 principles we can learn from King Jehoshaphat's huge problem.

1. Know the Enemy

2 Chronicles 20:1, *"After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat."* In reading this beginning verse we learn the first principle in overcoming our challenges. It's called "know who your enemy is".

Sometimes people simply do not know their enemy. They often think that it is a person who wants to harm us or take away something from us. But can I say this? I believe that often our enemy is our attitude. It is not necessarily the problem that gets us down but our response to the problem.

Before we can overcome our personal problems or challenges we need to honestly identify the enemy. In 2 Chronicles 20:3 we can see how Jehoshaphat reacted when he received the bad news – he was "fearful." Often this is the typical reaction, we panic and become fearful. Now, fear is not bad in one sense. We can use fear to motivate ourselves to overcome the battle or problem. But if fear cripples you like discouragement and to give up and get depressed then fear has defeated you.

Fear is a tool that Satan uses against us to make us miserable and destroy our lives. It begins as a thought and then creates emotions that can rule us. It often becomes a strong, intense feeling that tries to move us to make a foolish action or tries to prevent us from doing something that would be good for us.

So, identify your enemy, the fear attitude. We are to live by faith not by fear.

I like what Dr. E. Stanley Jones, (the great missionary to India), wrote some time ago: *"I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by*

fear, doubt and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath — these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely — these are my native air.”

2. Confess Your Need

The next thing Jehoshaphat did was call on the Lord, 2 Chron. 20:12, *“Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”*

Jehoshaphat confesses and admits his need. This is the second principle, “Confess your need.” There are times when we need to admit our inadequacy and ask the Lord for help. Don’t just rely on your own resources and capabilities. You need to call on God and admit that you need His intervention and help.

After Jehoshaphat confessed that he and his men didn’t know what to do, he prayed, *“But our eyes are on you.”* We need to get our eyes focused on God. The natural tendency is to focus on our problems and we tend to leave God on the sidelines. We worry and are taken over by our fears and we neglect to focus on the Lord. If you live the Christian life on your own ability you will soon have a power shortage. You need the power and strength that come from the Lord. We live this life *“not by might nor by power but by the Spirit”* (Zech. 4:6). Confess your need of God’s Spirit to live through you. Get energized by His Spirit!

3. Hand It Over to the Lord

In the midst of Jehoshaphat’s great problem he did something very wise. Let’s read 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, *“Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.4 The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.”*

Notice that people came from every town in Judah to seek God for help as they prayed and fasted. The third principle is overcoming your challenges is to *hand your problems to the Lord*. How do we do this? By praying and at times fasting in prayer. Sometimes prayer is often the last thing we do because we think that we are able to work things with our own abilities and resources.

4. Stand Firm in Faith

As the people of God were praying and fasting notice how God responded. 2 Chronicles 20:15, *“Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.’”*

The fourth principle in overcoming life’s battles and problems is to stand firm in faith. God promises to be with us through the ups and the downs in life. He wants us to walk by faith not by sight. He wants us to trust Him completely in any circumstance we find ourselves.

When we rely only on our strength we can fail. As Christians sometimes we get enthusiastic in living our lives for the Lord. We are eager to win the world for Christ. Then when things get very difficult and hard we feel disappointed and feel we have let the Lord down. BUT God says, “You didn’t let me down because you weren’t holding me up.”

The truth is this, we don't hold up the Lord; He holds us up. We are to stand firm in the faith because the battle belongs to the Lord.

In 2 Chronicles 20:15, 17 God tells Jehoshaphat twice not to be afraid. Jehoshaphat had every reason to fear – it was three-to-one odds against him. But God tells him “*Do not be afraid.*” Why not? Because He promised to fight the battle for him. I want to ask you. Has God ever lost a battle? Obviously not. If He says it's His battle then who is going to win in the end?

Notice another thing that God said to Jehoshaphat. It's found in 2 Chronicles 20:17, “*You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; **stand firm** and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.*”

What does it mean to stand firm? It is to have an attitude of confidence that says, “No matter what problem I'm facing, I'm going to trust God.” He is absolutely sufficient for any problem or challenge we face. In the midst of the challenge we stand firm on the character of God. He is faithful and we can depend on Him because He will never let us down. We also stand firm on the word of God and rely in confidence upon His promises.

5. Give Praise to God

The final principle in overcoming life's problems is to praise God and give Him thanks in advance for the victory. 2 Chronicles 20:21, “*After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.'*”

This is an amazing story of how Jehoshaphat believed and trusted God to deliver him from a great crisis. The king appointed men to sing and praise the Lord in the front lines facing the enemies. Imagine that you are facing a big battle, on one side you see three enemy nations outnumbering you 3 to 1 and you send the choir out front to face the enemy. So they go out marching to battle with the choir out in front, singing praise to the Lord. Did it work?

Lets read 2 Chronicles 20:22-23, “*As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.*” In the end the three enemy armies got confused and ended killing each other.”

Why did the Lord do it this way? It is an object lesson to teach us to praise God in faith even before the victory takes place. In Acts 16 we find the apostle Paul and Silas in prison praying and singing praises to God. As they were singing and praising God a violent earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and all the doors flew open and everyone's chains fell off. NOW that is powerful praise!

In the midst of your challenges and problems you can start right now by praising and thanking God for your deliverance in faith!