

8 Ways to Defeat the Goliaths in Your Life

Before you conquer Jericho, you must seek God for His war strategy.

Joshua never had to face the kind of fearsome threats that challenge believers today. When he led Israel into the Promised Land, he didn't have to worry about the likes of Saddam Hussein, chemical weapons or suicide bombers. On the home front, he didn't have to concern himself with job layoffs, rising gas prices, a shaky stock market or the loss of his retirement portfolio.

But Joshua did have to face his own set of giants. Just across the Jordan River were real threats that had many of his fellow Israelites shaking in their boots.

How did he approach these giants and ultimately defeat them? By pressing into the Lord to gain a fresh strategy for each new battle.

In the perilous times in which we live, many people are filled with fear. There are giants in the land. As Christians, we need to follow Joshua's example. By seeking God each day for fresh words of divine strategy for ourselves, our families and our nation, we can defeat the giants.

Don't Believe the Bad Report

Before the Israelites crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, Moses sent a team of 12 men to spy out the territory. When the spies returned, 10 of them gave a fear-filled report.

They had seen giants in the land. Next to these giants, they had seemed like mere grasshoppers. Israel could never go up against them and win.

But two spies—Joshua and Caleb—came to a different conclusion. Yes, the giants were big and strong, they said; but they could take the land because the God of Israel was more powerful than any giant.

Unfortunately, the people of Israel chose to believe the report of fear. Never mind that they'd witnessed God's powerful signs and wonders during the course of their escape from Egypt.

Their "grasshopper mentality" resulted in their refusal to battle the giants and take the land God wanted to give them. Instead they wandered aimlessly in the wilderness for 40 years. Joshua ended up leading an entirely new generation into the promised land.

When we look at the dangers facing us in the world today, do they appear to be giants, while we seem like grasshoppers? Or do we, like Joshua, have faith that our omnipotent God is greater than any enemy we might encounter?

Joshua's Secret

Joshua spent 40 years in the wilderness with the rest of the nation of Israel. His time was not wasted, however. He spent his days in the "secret place" of God's presence, getting to know the Lord in an intimate way.

Whenever Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to meet with the Lord, Joshua would linger nearby (Ex. 33:11). Joshua loved being near the presence and the glory of God.

God used this wilderness period in Joshua's life to prepare him for the monumental battles that lay ahead. By the time he was chosen to be Israel's new leader, he was known as "a man in whom is the spirit" (Num. 27:18).

To overthrow the giants, Joshua would need to draw on the intimate relationship with God that he'd developed in the

desert. He would need to seek fresh revelation on a daily basis.

God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

On their way into the Promised Land, the Israelites faced many challenges. Yet with each new challenge, God gave Joshua a unique strategy for success.

Many of the strategies didn't make sense from a military perspective. But as Joshua and the people followed God's ways and not their own, they experienced victory.

The first challenge came before Israel even crossed the Jordan. Under God's divine guidance, Joshua sent two men to spy out Jericho, the first city that Israel would have to conquer.

Once inside the city walls, the two spies were directed by the Lord to a very unlikely hiding place: the home of Rahab the prostitute. It was probably the last place the men expected God to send them. But the Lord knew that Rahab was the one person in Jericho who would take them in.

Because the spies followed God's unusual strategy, they were kept safe. In the process, Rahab came to faith in God and was saved from Jericho's destruction.

When the spies returned to Joshua, they were flush with victory. They immediately filed this faith-filled report: "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are faint-hearted because of us" (Josh. 2:24).

With that first challenge successfully behind him, Joshua moved on to the next one: how to get the entire population of Israel across the Jordan. The timing could not have been worse. It was flood season, and the river was overflowing its banks.

Joshua could have said, "Lord, can't we just wait a little longer, until the waters recede?" Instead he listened for God's divine strategy.

The Lord's instructions were specific. First, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant would step into the river. As their feet touched the water, the current would be held back supernaturally, and the rest of Israel would cross on dry land.

The priests would remain in the riverbed until Joshua appointed one man from each tribe to pick up a stone from the spot where the priests were standing. Then the stones would be used to build an altar to God so that, as Joshua declared, "all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty" (Josh. 4:24).

Israel's supernatural crossing of the Jordan made a powerful impression on their enemies. According to Joshua 5:1, "their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel."

When We're Weak, He's Strong

The Israelites must have been thrilled with their success and eager to hear God's next miracle strategy. But the divine instruction that followed was probably not a welcome one.

That generation had been born in the wilderness, and the men had never been circumcised. Now God said each man would need to be identified as a child of Abraham, qualified for covenant blessing, through the act of circumcision.

Here they were, about to go into battle to take the city of Jericho, and the Lord was commanding them to do something painful, something that would make them vulnerable and weak! How could they defeat Jericho if they could barely walk?

But God's strategy was perfect. He would show Himself strong

in their weakness.

Circumcision was only the first step. Through a special visitation from heaven, Joshua was given more divine instructions that must have stumped Israel's military minds.

Can you imagine this scene? Joshua, Israel's fearless leader, steps up to the platform. A cheer goes up.

He clears his throat. "The good news is, the Commander of the Lord's army has just appeared to me," he says.

The people whoop and yell, waving their shields and jabbing the air with their swords.

Then he continues: "The bad news is, He gave me the battle plan." Kicking the sand with his toe, he mumbles, "Uh, priests march, trumpets blow, everyone shouts, walls fall down."

The confused soldiers scratch their heads. No commander on Earth would plan for a battle like that!

True. The strategies that God gave Joshua for overcoming obstacles and defeating giants were, to say the least, unusual and creative.

Yet the Lord knew the timing and strategy necessary for each victory. When Joshua and the people trusted the Lord's wisdom above their own and obeyed His direction, God moved with supernatural power to bring them to victory.

Slaying Our Own Giants

Like Joshua, you and I are challenged by many giants. New and potent dangers are all around us, both in the world and in our personal lives.

But we don't have to shrink in fear. Just as God guided Israel supernaturally, He will also guide us if we learn to be like Joshua and seek Him on a daily basis.

We can have fresh revelation and know God's divine strategy for each new battle—no matter how big or how powerful the enemy might be. How do we do this? Here are eight keys:

1. Return to your first love. Spend intimate time alone with God—not attending church, not serving in ministry, not reading the current Christian best-seller. Be together, just the two of you.

Cut fluff from your schedule. Lop off any areas of your life that don't correspond with God-given assignments. Spend long hours waiting in His presence.

2. Intercede. Through prayer, fasting and worship, go into the heavenly war room and get fresh strategies and weapons for each day's new battles. Take comfort knowing that Jesus "always lives to make intercession" for you (Heb. 7:25).

3. Lay aside differences. Do a personal inventory of your relationships with family and friends. Where necessary, relinquish your rights, forgive and love one another as an act of worship to God.

4. Trust Jesus. Identify your fears. Do you see yourself as more than a conqueror, or are you a grasshopper hiding in the giant's shadow?

The issue is your trust in Christ's eternal character. Ask the Lord to show you the strongholds of fear in your life and how, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can bring them down.

5. Have an ear to hear. Hearing the voice of God is a survival mechanism for us all. The Lord promises that His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him (John 10:3-4). Press in to hear the voice of God, confident that He wants to speak words of deliverance to you.

6. Rest in Him. Did you know that rest is a form of spiritual warfare? Isaiah 30:15 says, "In returning and rest you shall

be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” God wants to give you rest and peace in the midst of turbulent times. “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” Jesus promised ().

7. Ask for the lost. Ask God how to knock down the fortified walls in your heart and in your world. And while you’re at it, ask Him to show you the Rahabs in your workplace, school or community that He wants to pluck from the rubble. Don’t be surprised if He uses them to communicate divine strategies that will save your life as well as theirs.

8. Feed your spirit on the goodness of God. Meditate on Psalm 91 and keep a journal of God’s faithfulness in your life. Remember His faithfulness as you approach each new battle.

Declare that by grace and faith in the finished work of Jesus, you are an overcomer. God will crush the enemy under your feet! He has done it before; He will do it again.

Before Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land, the Lord told him: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you. ...Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:3, 9).

You and I have that same promise today. Don’t be afraid! Our giants are nothing more than grasshoppers in the eyes of our omnipotent God.

*The late **Jill Austin**, founder of Master Potter Ministries, traveled internationally as a conference speaker for more than 25 years.*