

How to Survive 'Swimming With Sharks'

It's that time of year again... no, not back to school or football season. I'm talking about "Shark Week" on the Discovery Channel!

If you're brave enough, or crazy enough, to watch this week-long series dedicated to sharks, you'll learn about many different species of sharks with the help of some amazing (albeit frightening) underwater footage. You'll also hear tale after tale of people getting attacked by sharks—all while being assured that sharks don't mean to harm humans.

Ha! It never fails that some segment will show a man or a woman in an underwater cage getting up close and personal with great whites, bull sharks, tiger sharks or hammerheads. Did you know you could do the same thing in Hawaii or Australia or most other tropical vacation spots? It's called "swimming with sharks."

On the off chance I suddenly had a lapse in sanity and decided to go and swim with sharks, I would want to go with the experts—the people who have done it many times and know what they're doing. Wouldn't you?

Being a Christian in today's culture is a lot like swimming with the sharks. We live in a world in which many people are looking out for themselves, pursuing worldly gain, and rejecting the faith (2 Tim. 3:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:3-4). When you seek to live a righteous life according to the Word of God, it's like swimming in an ocean full of sharks with a tiny cut on your toe—people of the world are sure to smell blood and zero in on you! That's because your integrity and godliness invite attacks and ridicule from people of the world because they don't possess the mind or Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14;

2 Tim. 3:12).

How can we as Christians survive and confidently navigate these murky waters? How can we obtain victory in the trials that come our way simply because we are trying to follow God in the midst of a fallen world? In my new book, *Walls Fall Down*, I reveal seven steps from the battle of Jericho to overcome any challenge. And one of the best ways to be victorious no matter the spiritual or physical obstacle you are facing is to travel with mature believers.

In your battle, seek out like-minded and experienced people in the faith who have been where you are today and can give you the spiritual tools necessary to get you through. They know how to navigate shark-infested waters and come out stronger, and they can teach you how to do the same in your current struggle.

Think about it. Whether you're swimming with sharks or doing any activity that carries an element of danger or uncertainty, you are potentially putting your life at risk simply by embarking on the adventure in the first place. You need to be accompanied by someone who knows what he or she is doing. And if we're talking about a spiritual or physical battle—like the one Joshua and the Israelites faced at Jericho—the stakes are even higher.

If I were placed in the middle of a battlefield, I'd want to be next to a veteran—the person who has combat experience and knows what kind of peril to look for, how to use his or her weapons, and how to survive harsh environments on limited food and water. I have so much admiration and appreciation for those who serve or have served in the military. These men and women have put their lives at risk and sacrificed greatly in order to protect our freedom. I'd want to be flanked by one of these seasoned soldiers who could show me the ropes and look out for me. That's where I'd be the safest. That's where I'd have the best chance of having victory on the battlefield and

seeing my walls fall down.

Likewise, whatever you are facing today as a believer in Christ, link up with veterans in the faith. They will teach you, pray for you, encourage you, and give you invaluable wisdom. So as you make your way through the rough and sometimes dangerous waters of life, journey with those who have a lifetime of experience. Doing so will help you to not only survive, but also thrive.

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