

Is God Asking You to Take This Unusual Stance in Your Battle?

The pastor was at her wits' end. Leaders in her church had been discussing their political views loudly in the lobby after church, making others around them uncomfortable. The pastor tried to explain that the discussions were making for an unwelcoming atmosphere but the leaders, intent on their own agenda, accused the pastor of trying to silence them altogether (not her intention). Can you imagine trying to grow a church in that kind of climate?

I'm sure you've heard of similar instances, especially during this season when our country is so divided and no one wants to even consider any viewpoint other than their own. How many churches have been divided? How many families? We find ourselves avoiding Facebook or at least blocking certain "friends," feeling we can't take any more of their rants. (Of course, it's only a "rant" when we don't agree with it!)

Sadly, when we pray, we find ourselves praying that our agenda will win out. After all, isn't God on our side?

Joshua of the Bible had every right to believe God was on his side. God had chosen Israel as His own people, and He had chosen Joshua to lead them. The Israelites had finally finished their season of wandering in the wilderness and were ready to take the Promised Land. They had crossed over the Jordan and were heading toward Jericho. It was then that Joshua "looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. In His hand was His drawn sword. Joshua went to Him and said, 'Are You for us or for our enemies?'

He said, 'Neither, for I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.' Then Joshua fell with his face to

the ground and worshipped. Then he said, 'What does my Lord wish to say to His servant?'" (Josh. 5:13b-14).

Have you ever asked someone an either/or question only to have them answer yes or no? It kind of takes you aback, like the other evening when I asked my husband, "Would you like tomato soup or lentil soup for dinner?"

It turned out he didn't want soup at all and consequently answered with an emphatic "no!" (He would have preferred a big, juicy hamburger with fries. I know, gross.)

In Joshua's story, the captain of the Lord's host is clearly telling Joshua he was not choosing sides between Joshua and his adversaries. The captain was fighting for the Lord. No matter how just Joshua thought his cause was, the captain of the Lord's host was not going to get in line behind Joshua. The captain expected Joshua to get in line behind him. Joshua and the rest of the Israelites were but a part of the Lord's host (which includes angels and the forces of nature). The victory they would win at Jericho would be supernatural (Josh. 6:1-21).

It is not the Lord's job to "help us win battles" against other people or even other countries as if He were a hired strongman. He is not someone we summon to accomplish our own agenda. He is looking for those who are on His side, battling with Him. He is the one giving orders.

So should we care about politics? Certainly, but we need to realize that our "our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). It's not against other people, no matter how much we disagree with them. When we spend all our energy fighting other people, we are distracted from fighting the real battle.

We fight the real battle by going to prayer. Like Joshua, we

need to ask “What does my Lord wish to say to his servant? (Josh. 6:14b). He may ask us to do something that is seemingly preposterous (like biting our tongues once in a while or listening to someone else’s viewpoint). He may ask us to do something about an issue rather than complaining about the way others deal with it. What would happen if we refrained from airing our every thought on social media and spent some of that time seeking the Lord? Maybe we would win some amazing battles, battles that really matter. {eo}

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