

Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You
ARE YOU FIGHTING THE RIGHT BATTLE?
Joshua 5:1-15

Introduction: Over the last few weeks we've had a little laugh at reading a word in the Book of Joshua that has a different cultural effect in the English-speaking world than it does in other languages. However, this week I don't get to express my inner middle schooler as I read about what was taking place in an area called "Shittim," but, after months of the subject of circumcision coming up over and over again in our study of Galatians, we do get to once again return to that opportunity for the seventh grader inside all of us to get a few laughs.

To those that are new to our study. Here's the super short version of what's led up to the events we are going to read about today. After 430 years of living in Egypt (Exodus 12:40), most of which as slaves, God raised up Moses to lead the people of Israel back to the Promised Land. However, because the people lacked the faith to follow God to conquer and claim the land He had given them, He forced them to wander around for 40 years until all those who had refused to follow Him died.

In addition, God did not allow Moses to lead the people to conquer and claim the land, instead, before Moses died, God told Moses to officially knight Joshua as the next leader of Israel. The Book of Joshua begins after Moses died and Joshua is now holding the reigns to lead Israel to follow God. God promised Joshua He was going to use him to lead the people of Israel to conquer and claim the land and the people of Israel now know God has indeed called Joshua to do just that. After two spies had returned with news that God had struck fear into the tribes and cities on the west side of the Jordan, Joshua gave the command for the Israelites to move forward. But to do so they needed to do the impossible; an entire nation of up to two million people needed to cross the now flooded Jordan River. But these were the impossible circumstances of God's making so that He could show His glory! God miraculously dried up both the river and the mud. The people of Israel safely crossed into the Promised Land and as such, entered it for the first time since Jacob journeyed from it hundreds of years prior.

They were now encamped on the west side of the Jordan, not far from a city named Jericho, the city they were preparing to conquer as they followed God forward into the land He had given them to prosper as His nation; the chosen nation that God would bring forth The Savior of the world—Jesus! They erected a monument made of twelve stones both on the west side of the river and in the middle of the river where the priests had stood on dry ground with The Ark of the Covenant. The purpose of both memorials was to serve as a reminder to the fact God had brought them across the river, and as such, they were to fear God and thus obey God (Joshua 4:24).

Now you would expect the next scene in the narrative to be a prayer effort or strategy meeting to figure out how to conquer Jericho. However, God had dried up the river for two main reasons; one to strike fear into the western tribes occupying the land God had given to the Israelites (4:24) and second, to lift up Joshua before the people as the man God had

chosen to lead them (3:7). Of the two purposes, the latter was the most important. God wanted Israel to do something they didn't have a very good history of doing—truly living by FAITH in Him which necessarily requires living in allegiance to Him! Therefore, before they could faithfully follow God to conquer Jericho, they needed to apply the lesson the miracle of the Jordan River was supposed to teach them and start obeying God! God had already set the stage for this with Joshua when He commissioned Joshua in chapter one. God told him,

7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:7-8)

Therefore, the fear God struck in them with the miracle of the Jordan needed to first cause the Israelites to obey Him or they stood no chance of successfully following God into the land to conquer and claim it. Shockingly however, two of the more obvious commandments in the Law God gave Moses for the people of Israel to follow had not been followed for generations even though Moses himself is the one who received those Laws from God! It is to no surprise then that the first thing we see in the Book of Joshua after God presented His glory to them in parting and drying up the Jordan River, was not an immediate march on Jericho, but a renewal of not only the people's faithfulness to the Lord, but Joshua's as well. In showing us how the Lord did that, Joshua 5 demonstrates two inseparable responses to God when we truly understand Him to be the one and only living God; two responses to God that characterize what it means to truly have faith in God.

Proposition: Joshua chapter 5 demonstrates two inseparable responses to the Lord when we truly understand Him to be the one and only living GOD!

The first inseparable response is demonstrated in the first twelve verses of chapter five.

(1) Obedience is an inseparable part of a proper response to God. (5:1-12)

Note: You cannot separate a commitment to obey God from your faith. Committing to follow Him, which is to obey Him, is literally what it means to have faith in God. Remember, Biblical Faith = Right Belief + Repentance (turning our allegiance to God) and this is exactly what we are going to see the people of God demonstrate. We know they have faith in God because we see them obey Him.

There are two renewed acts of obedience in Joshua 5:1-12.

The first renewed act of obedience was to return to God's commandment concerning circumcision.

A. Renewed obedience to the covenant of circumcision. (5:1-9)

1. **1 As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel. 2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. 4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. 5 Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. 6 For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD; the LORD swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8 When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. 9 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.**

2. Let me go back and explain a couple things really quick about what we just read. First, let me draw your attention back to verses two and five.

3. **2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." ... 5 Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised.**

a. Some commentators like to suggest the knives were not actually made of flint and that they didn't make the knives by their own hands. Instead, they suggest God was actually telling them to use a black volcanic glass that is of itself sharp and thus not a knife made by human hands, but rather God's. It's an obvious spiritualization of the passage that ironically requires us to no longer translate the passage as its actually written. God told Joshua to make knives out of flint, a stone that was commonly used to make sharp knives. To make the knife meant to find the flint and fashion it into knives.

- b. More importantly let me explain what is meant by circumcising **“the sons of Israel a second time.”**
- c. In chapter one God told Joshua to obey ALL that He had commanded Moses to write down as the Law for the Jewish people. In that Law Leviticus 12:3 made it very clear and straight forward that God demanded that all the newborn males had to be circumcised on the eighth day of their birth. Now this part of the Law was not new at Mount Sinai when God gave Moses the Law for Israel. It had actually been going on since Abraham was 99 years old. In Genesis 17, at least 13 years after Abraham finally came to faith in God and got saved (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4), God clarified His covenant with Abraham and told him Ishmael was not the son of the promise, but rather he and his wife Sarah were going to conceive a child together. In addition, God gave Abraham the following instruction to clarify the immense significance of the covenant that God made with Abraham to set apart he and his descendants as His special chosen people, to accomplish His special purpose, to rescue people from the curse of sin:
 - d. **8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." 9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." (Genesis 17:8-14)**
- e. However, ever since leaving Egypt, the people of Israel had not obeyed the instructions God had first made with Abraham and all his descendants to follow, nor had they even obeyed it since God put it in writing through Moses.
- f. Throughout church history people have tried to find a way to excuse this disobedience, perhaps because it reflects a failure of leadership by Moses. However, Calvin noted, **“what excuse could there be for not**

testifying on their part that they are the people of God? The apology which commentators offer is altogether frivolous.”¹

- g.** Some have even suggested that they actually had been circumcised in Egypt, just not all the way, and thus they needed to be circumcised a second time. Verse five however makes it clear that’s not the case - **“5 Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised.”**
 - h.** In other words, the first time the people of Israel had been circumcised was from the time God had initiated it with Abraham through their time in Egypt. However, since coming out of Egypt it had not happened, and therefore, there needed to be a second initiation, or a second start to the covenant that God had first begun with Abraham that had now been broken for over forty years. For more than forty years they had conveniently ignored the instructions of the Lord, and Moses let them get away with it.
- 4.** The second thing I want to draw your attention to is in verse nine. **“9 And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.”**
- a.** Again, there are all kinds of opinions on what that means. Those who believe the “second” circumcision is a reference to fixing an incorrectly or incomplete circumcision in Egypt, suggest then by being fully circumcised they are now free from the reproach of Israel.
 - b.** However, I believe the leading opinion is that after aimlessly wandering around for forty years the Egyptians had been mocking Israel for thinking they were God’s chosen people. But now that they were miraculous standing on the land God had given them, and doing so clearly as God’s people, the reproach and mockery of being nothing more than Egyptian slaves was over. Roger Ellsworth notes, **“The comedians of Egypt would need new jokes. Israel didn’t look so foolish now! God was at work!”²**
 - c.** “The Egyptians felt vindicated during those years of Israel’s wandering. The Israelites had supposedly been delivered from Egypt to conquer the land of Canaan, yet all they could do was wander and die in the wilderness! A fine bunch of conquerors they turned out to be! They

¹ Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). [*Commentary on the Book of Joshua*](#) (pp. 77–82). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

² Ellsworth, R. (2008). [*Opening up Joshua*](#) (pp. 56–58). Leominster: Day One Publications.

would have been much smarter to have stayed in Egypt! The circumcision of the new generation signaled the end of that reproach!”³

- d. “In Egypt the Israelites had been a nation of slaves. Now they were heirs to the promises God had made with their fathers (cf. Genesis 17:1–14), and had begun to take possession of the land. This served as a sufficient rebuke to those Egyptians who, during Israel’s wandering in the desert, had told them that their God was incapable of bringing them into the land.”⁴
- e. “The disgrace of Egypt is expounded by some as meaning that the want of circumcision rendered them similar to the Egyptians, in other words, profane and marked with a stigma; as if it had been said that they were again made the peculiar property of God when they were anew stamped with this mark, to distinguish them from the nations that were unclean. Others understand it actively, as meaning that they would no longer be scorned by the Egyptians, as if God had deceived them.”⁵

The second renewed act of obedience was to return to the law concerning the Passover.

B. Renewed obedience to the memorial of Passover. (5:10-12)

1. **10 While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. 11 And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.**
2. The memorial feast known as Passover, as well as the memorial feast known as the weeklong feast of Unleavened Bread, are both spelled out in Exodus 12. The Passover meal occurs on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread which begins on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish Calendar (Nisan), which is equivalent to the fourth month of our calendar (April). The first night Passover was celebrated was the night the wrath of God came on Egypt. As the Jews laid in bed asleep God killed the first born in all of Egypt, including the first born of all the livestock. The only exception was those who were staying in homes where the blood of the

³ Ellsworth, R. (2008). *Opening up Joshua* (pp. 56–58). Leominster: Day One Publications.

⁴ Barber, C. J. (2006). *Joshua: A Devotional Exposition* (pp. 54–57). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

⁵ Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). *Commentary on the Book of Joshua* (pp. 77–82). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Passover lamb they had previously sacrificed, cooked, and ate that night, was smeared on their door posts.

3. A year later, Numbers chapter nine tells us the Israelites celebrated this feast as scheduled, however, there is no evidence of them doing it again until they arrived in the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. Interestingly, it wasn't long after they had celebrated the Passover in Numbers chapter nine that Moses sent out the twelve spies and ten of them came back and discouraged the people from trusting God and following Him into the land to conquer and claim it! But now, forty years later, they have finally trusted God and entered the Promised Land, and as such, there is no way Joshua can ignore the command in the Law that said,
4. **25 And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. (Exodus 12:25)**
5. Joshua, therefore, having been commanded by God to learn and obey the Law He had given Moses for Israel, did that very thing. Because the Law required that a man had to be circumcised for he and his household to participate in the Passover meal, it was important that they first renew their obedience to the covenant of circumcision, otherwise, obeying the Law God gave Moses to annually celebrate the memorial of Passover would have actually been disobedience. But once that was done, they were not only long overdue to celebrate the Passover, they were also literally standing on the ground God told them to be sure to celebrate it on!
6. Interestingly another thing happened—the manna stopped! God had been supplying the people manna since two and a half months after they left Egypt (Exodus 16). But the manna has now stopped because the land God had promised was going to fully supply their needs; the land flowing with milk and honey; the land that they had set out to go live on more than forty years prior, was the land they were now standing on! They were “Located on the fertile plain just northwest of the Dead Sea. The site is well-positioned for agriculture, and has been settled since pre-historic times.”⁶
7. C.J. Barber noted, **“The miracle of God’s providential supply was discontinued when it was no longer necessary. The manna had been given them in the desert where a sufficient quantity of food could not be found. But now that they were in their own land with fields and orchards and vineyards, the manna was withdrawn. This illustrates for us an important principle in God’s economy. He has promised to supply our needs (Philippians 4:19), but this does not exclude personal effort. If we have the ability to earn enough money to buy food then we should**

⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jos 5:13). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

not expect that it be supplied in supernatural ways. In other words, we cannot look for God's blessing without diligent use of His appointed means."⁷

8. God had promised Joshua if He and Israel obeyed the Law God gave Moses, then God would prosper them (Joshua 1:8). God turning off the manna must have been a huge sign that God was indeed doing exactly what He said He was going to do. They were about to conquer and claim the territory on the west side of the Jordan and in so doing, take control of the cities, supplies, livestock, wells, fields, and crops that had been grown by the Canaanites. Minus what God would tell them to destroy as they conquered the land, He had given it all to them, but now they needed to trust Him and go take it and prosper in it by obeying Him! The days of relying on manna were over and the days of obeying God and moving forward into what He had promised, doing it the way He had told them to move forward and dwell in the land, was now their only option!

The second inseparable response is demonstrated in the final three verses of Joshua chapter five.

(2) Worship is an inseparable part of a proper response to God. (5:13-15)

- A. **13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" 14 And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" 15 And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.**
- B. A drawn sword is a clear statement the man was there to fight. But, before I get to the big idea of this passage, let me deal with the question of who Joshua is interacting with. The ground is Holy, not in a permanent sense, but in a present sense because God is present either representatively through a messenger (Angel), or through a theophany, that is a manifestation of His presence. Both of these views are possible, but both have difficulties as well. Let me explain.
 1. One belief is that the man is a literal Angel from the Lord who is in charge of the Lord's army. The problem with this view is that Joshua then bows down and worships an Angel who doesn't rebuke Joshua for doing so (only God is to be worshiped). Proponents of this view however explain this seeming contradiction by pointing to historical context. An emissary or official

⁷ Barber, C. J. (2006). [*Joshua: A Devotional Exposition*](#) (pp. 58–59). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

messenger of a King was to be treated as the King himself. For instance, to kill a messenger of a King was an act of war because you were metaphorically killing the King. Therefore, for Joshua to bow down and worship wouldn't be idolatry, but appropriate, because he's not worshipping the angel, but the Lord the Angel represents.

Note: "The mysterious man Joshua met was not the Lord himself, but his heavenly captain (niv mg. best serves the Hebrew). As secular messengers were fully equated with their senders (*e.g.* 2 Sa. 3:12–13; 1 Ki. 20:2–4), God's angel (*cf.* Gn. 31:11; Ex. 3:2; 14:19) and his angelic captain (*cf.* Dn. 10:5, 20) were also treated with equal respect. He tells Joshua that he is neither for Israel nor her enemies. He is *commander of the army of the Lord*, including his angels (2 Ki. 6:15–17; Ps. 103:20–21), not an ally (3:10). Should Israel break covenant, the holy God will turn his sword against them (Lv. 26:25; Dt. 28:15–26), as Israel and Achan learned at the battle of Ai (ch. 7). Joshua appropriately bowed in homage before this angelic being. The answer to his second question (14b) was as unexpected as the first. Instead of an awaited battle bulletin, he was ordered to worship better. Though prostrate, his unclean sandals were still on. With Joshua unshod, holy war can begin."⁸

2. The other plausible belief is that this is a theophany. This is a complex concept to fully explain, but at its most basic element a theophany is essentially a term used to describe how the Trinitarian God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) sometimes reveals Himself to mankind, particularly in the Old Testament but not exclusively. The Gospel Coalition has a great article on this subject - www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/theophany. When this concept is applied to Joshua 5, the belief then is the man Joshua sees is the pre-incarnate Jesus, who appears as a man even though He has not yet become a man. As Calvin notes, those who take this view have to be very careful how they explain it,⁹ because the Bible is very clear the incarnation of Christ (that is becoming the GodMan) happens in the womb of Mary and not a moment sooner. Therefore, those who believe the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is always Jesus must then say He is not truly a man, but only appears as a man.

Note: "Joshua's planning was suddenly interrupted. A man with his sword drawn was standing before him (v. 13)! Immediately, Joshua asked the man to declare himself as foe or friend. The man's response must have surprised and astonished Joshua: 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come' (v. 14). Joshua was the human commander of the army of

⁸ Waltke, B. K. (1994). [Joshua](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., pp. 242–243). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁹ Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. (2010). [Commentary on the Book of Joshua](#) (pp. 85–89). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Israel, but he was in the presence of the true Commander—the Lord God himself! We have here a ‘theophany’, that is, a temporary appearance of God in human flesh. It was a ‘pre-incarnate’ appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. His incarnation, which would come centuries later, would be different, as Peter Jeffery indicates: “The coming of Christ to this world was not technically a theophany but an incarnation, not just a temporary form but God becoming man; God not just appearing to man but identifying himself with us by adding human nature to his divine nature; God not coming to us with a temporary encouragement but with an eternal salvation.”¹⁰

- C. However, no matter where you fall on who it was that was speaking to Joshua, what is not debatable is that at minimum this was an official representative of Yahweh, with official orders from Yahweh, to lead the army of Yahweh to accomplish the will of Yahweh; and this is where we get to the big picture.
- D. Joshua asks, **"Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"** Did you notice the answer of the Angel of the Lord? **"And he said, 'No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.'"**
- E. Certainly the “no” could be applicable to the later part of the question, but the context seems to be the entirety of the question. He’s saying no to the question of whose side are you on because the entire question is wrong. As long as the Israelites were obeying the Law God gave them, and as such following God, then they could join God in what He was doing. However, the moment they decided to disobey God then God’s army would turn against them! They were being invited to the land GOD was giving them, and thus land GOD was going to fight to provide them, NOT the OTHER WAY AROUND! This means being postured to follow GOD into Canaan, not just running off doing whatever they wanted and hoping God would follow them and win the battles they chose to fight! Therefore, the right question Joshua should have been asking was, “How do we join you in the fight you’re in; how do we battle and not fight against you?”
- F. The answer made it real clear to Joshua, who had likely been looking at Jericho wondering how he was going to lead the people to conquer this great walled city. The answer was, this is God’s war to fight, not yours, so join Him where He goes to war! Its why the Bible says, **"Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, 'What does my lord say to his servant?'"** Joshua instantly realized he needed to be postured to follow God and His instructions, as opposed to wondering if God’s army was going to join him to help him!
- G. Its why the Angel of the Lord, the Commander of the Lord’s army then says, **"Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.** God is telling Joshua it’s not just about obeying me

¹⁰ Ellsworth, R. (2008). [*Opening up Joshua*](#) (pp. 62–63). Leominster: Day One Publications.

so you can win a battle and prosper in the land, it's about worshiping me so you can dwell with me and know me; so you can experience me!

- H. Interestingly, you can obey God without worshiping God. For instance, Abraham started obeying God in Genesis chapter 12, but it wasn't until Genesis 15 that Abraham finally believed God, that is had faith in God, and truly started living His life in total glad submission to Him, not just as God, but HIS God!
- I. We are not called to simply obey God; we are called to something much bigger – worship! A proper response to God certainly can't separate obedience from worship. You can't claim to worship Him while refusing to obey Him. However, you also can't separate worship from obedience, in that you can't claim to be truly obeying Him all while not living your life truly dedicated to Him (worship).
- J. Ironically when we live our lives trying to obey God without worshiping God, we will find ourselves fighting battles God has nothing to do with. We will try to deploy the rules God gave us as our method of success without realizing we are following rules to try and glorify ourselves instead of Him. It is the very essence of religion. Therefore, God was making sure that in all the huge excitement of what just happened at the Jordan River, Joshua wasn't about to go trotting off on his campaign, but rather that Joshua would continue being consumed with loving the Lord with all His heart, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5)!

Challenge: Are you asking God to join you in a fight for an outcome He's not fighting for, or are you joining Him in His battle for you to experience the outcome He's already won?

The following are some examples of battles we can find ourselves trying to get God to join us in.

- (1) Launching a business that He didn't call you to be involved with. We've all seen this. The vision to start a business wasn't from the Lord, but rather from greed, selfishness, the refusal to be under authority, or some other motive that God had nothing to do with, and as such, your fight to make the business work is a business God had nothing to do with either.
- (2) Fixing somebody He hasn't called you to fix. Its not that God may not be trying to do something in their life, but if He's not calling you to do it with Him then you are actually fighting against Him by insisting you need to do something He hasn't told you to do! You're trying to fix them instead of trusting God!
- (3) Trying to make a relationship work that's not meant for you. There are 8 billion people in the world and not everybody is meant to be to you, what you may want them to be to you.
- (4) Trying to serve or minister in a way you're not called to do.

Ultimately, the battle the Lord is fighting for you, is the battle to lose your life so that you can receive His; that is to trust Him with your life so much that you totally surrender it to HIM and as such get His. Its why Matthew wrote this,

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 16:24-25)

Its why Paul wrote,

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

The point being the battle God is fighting in our lives is for us to live our lives worshiping HIM! Its why John Piper began the very first chapter in his now famous book on Biblical missions with these words,

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man."¹¹

The point he was making is the goal of the church is not missions, but rather worship. Missions is therefore a necessity because most of the world doesn't worship God!

God fights our battles to accomplish His will not ours. God fights our battles to bring us into the full experience of His life and that is only realized as we live our lives in true obedience and worship of Him. Therefore, what God is doing is fighting for us to truly worship Him; to truly live our lives bowed down before Him, finding our total identity and self in Him!

So, the battles we launch into this life need to be the ones He's calling us into for His purpose, otherwise we are launching into battles for us to win life from others who have no more of it than we do, instead of fighting with Him in His battle for us to have His life!

Are you asking God to be on your side or joining Him on His? Are you asking God to fight your battles or surrendering your battles to join Him in His? Are you responding to God with obedience and worship, or just obeying God to try and get Him to bless your effort to glorify yourself?

¹¹ Piper, J. (1993). *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (p. 11). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.