

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Aug 14

MONDAY

Joab told his brother, who would be leading the other half of the divided army, his plan: if, in the course of the battle, you are in trouble, he said, I will come to your aid; and if I am in trouble, you come to mine. And be strong. Let us be men of great courage. And let us trust the Lord to do as He pleases in the battle.

READ: II Samuel 10:11-12

Joab's fighting words are such great ones! *Let us play the men for our people and for the cities of the Lord our God!* (KJV) For the glory of our nation, and for the well-being of her people, and to protect the land which God has given us, let us be valiant and courageous in the face of great difficulty. In our setting today, it is saying this: "As we seek first the Lord and His kingdom and His righteousness, let us press on in faith, nothing wavering, determined to follow Him." Them is fighting words!

TUESDAY

So Joab and his elite troops attacked. And the enemy forces, apparently after some intense fighting, fled in panic. The Ammonites, fighting before the city gates against Abishai and his troops, saw the desperate flight of the hired troops, and they, too, retreated, going into the city. Joab returned to Jerusalem to report the victory.

READ: II Samuel 10:13-14

Joab had a plan in place in case things did not go well. He recognized the potential dangers and declared that he would fight regardless, committing the results to God. And, in the heat of the battle, he looks up, and sees the enemy retreating! And a few moments later, the second army retreating! Can you imagine his joy? I'll tell you what: it's the same kind of joy that awaits us today as we live for God and see Him accomplish something in our lives which cannot be explained in human terms.

WEDNESDAY

The Syrian mercenaries who had fled from the field of battle were not yet done. They re-gathered their forces, additional troops joined them, and a Syrian general assumed command. When David learned of this, he gathered the troops of Israel and personally led them out to meet the Syrians in battle. They arrived and the battle started.

READ: II Samuel 10:15-17

The Syrians attempt to re-take the ground, and re-capture their honor. Satan works that way with us. A victory at 8AM does not guarantee a day of victories. Satan does not take defeat lightly. He's the one who first said, "I'll be back." And back he comes, again and again. Good reason for you and me to be always on our guard. A soccer coach used to tell me that the first two minutes after we score a goal are the most dangerous. Our guard is down as we celebrate how great we are! He always had his players yell to each other after every goal, "Two minutes, two minutes!" Without the yell, we get the idea. "He'll be back." Let's be ready!

THURSDAY

David once more defeated the Syrians, and, in doing so, killed 7000 men who rode in 700 chariots, 40,000 cavalry soldiers, and their commanding officer. Seeing this slaughter, the other kings in the area who had originally intended to support the Syrians quickly made peace with David. And, after this, the Syrians were afraid to ally themselves again with the Ammonites.

READ: II Samuel 10:18-19

Notice how God worked here: first, as a result of the victory, the various kings sued for immediate peace, and, secondly, the Syrians determined, in future action, to stay away from alliances with the Ammonites. David could never have foreseen the peace coming so rapidly. God brought it in a remarkable fashion! When we live in obedience to the Lord, He works out His purposes in astounding ways.

FRIDAY

About a year later, at the season of the year when fighting usually occurred, Joab marched out at the head of the Israeli forces and defeated the Ammonites. As part of the battle, he lay siege to the city of Rubbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

READ: II Samuel 11:1

God is setting the stage in the narrative for the story of the sins of David which follow. In a sense, David is setting the stage himself: he tarries in the palace while his army is out fighting. No time like a "tarry" for temptation to strike! He should have been with the troops - leading them into battle. Kings did that! Busy about the duties of life, he likely would not have met this temptation. We are likewise more prone to temptation when we neglect things: our devotional times, opportunities to be with the people of God, work and home duties, and so on. Temptation will come, but when we busy about the Father's business, it doesn't hit us in quite the same way.

SATURDAY

One evening, David got up out of bed and went strolling around on the roof of his palace. From that venue, he spotted a woman taking a bath down in her courtyard. She was beautiful, and David called his advisors to ask about her. "She's Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, and wife of Uriah the Hittite," he was told.

READ: II Samuel 11:2-3

David got up in the evening! Not from a bed of illness but from a bed of idleness. The devil's playground! He saw, perhaps inadvertently at first, a woman bathing. But the second look was not inadvertent. Lust was conceived in his heart and he pursued her with all the advantages of a king. Apparently, David had not made a covenant with his eyes, as Job had done, to look away. All of us will at some time or another inadvertently see, hear, or read something which is profane or filthy. But when we have made a covenant (promise) with ourselves to stay pure, we avert our eyes, turn our head, close the magazine, walk away, or whatever we need to do. "My life is holy ground! I will not give ground to such as this."

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