

Life Is Hard, God Helps Part 3

When It Feels Like Your Losing During Life's Hardest Days

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*So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them. Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet tall! He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds. He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds. His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield. Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken. **1 Samuel 17:3-11***

When facing a battle in life, it's not so much the fight to win,
as it is a fight to do what's right.

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Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of Ai ... When they returned, they told Joshua, "There's no need for all of us to go up there; it won't take more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are so few of them, don't make all our people struggle to go up there." So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. The men of Ai chased the Israelites from the town gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away. Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord until evening. Then Joshua cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?" But the Lord said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded

must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

“Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the Lord. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.

“In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the Lord will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the Lord will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then come forward, and the Lord will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord and has done a horrible thing in Israel.”

Early the next morning Joshua brought the tribes of Israel before the Lord, and the tribe of Judah was singled out. Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of Zerah was singled out. Then the families of Zerah came forward, and the family of Zimri was singled out. Every member of Zimri’s family was brought forward person by person, and Achan was singled out.

Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.”

*Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest.” **Joshua 7:2-21***

I want God’s help in the fight
but I don’t want His leadership in life!

If I want God’s help, I must live God’s way.

*When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.” And you forgave me. All my guilt is gone. **Psalms 32:3-5***

We’re only as sick as our secrets.

*If I had not confessed the sin in my heart the Lord would not have listened. **Psalms 66:18***

*People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. **Proverbs 28:13***

*I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. **2 Corinthians 11:23-27***

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. 8 And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. **2 Timothy 4:7-8***

*And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? **Matthew 16:26***

*We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. **2 Corinthians 4:8-10***

*Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart because I have overcome the world. **John 16:33***