

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

The Hard Questions Series

Topic Two: Does God want Christians to be Successful Soldiers?

Week One:

Introduction

Many Christians believe that their faith and their work are not linked, that they are somehow separated into different compartments of their life. In this two-part topic we look at well known and successful military figures from the Bible and ask ourselves: does God want us to be successful as soldiers in His service?

Abraham – Elder Statesman

First point of call is God's first great warrior, Abraham. Read Genesis Chapter 14.

- † Why does he go to war? What does this say of Abraham?
- † How big and Army does Abraham take to war? How would this have compared to the defeated four king's Armies?
- † After he defeats the invaders, what is the response of those around him?
- † How would this have brought glory to God?

Moses – Reluctant General

Now turn to Exodus 14 and we examine Moses' flight from the Egyptians.

- † Who was really calling the shots here? What was God's plan (see vs 4)
- † How brave were the Israelites? What does this say of their trust in Moses?
- † How brave were the Egyptians?
- † Some apologists say this event could have been caused by a tsunami or other geological event. Read the description of the parting of the sea, how much like a geological event does that seem to be?
- † What was the end result for the reputation of Moses and the people's belief in God?

Week Two:

Joshua – Veteran General Readies his Troops

There can be no doubt of Joshua's faith and bravery. One of only two men with enough faith to want to go into the promised land, despite the apparent odds, let us check out this archetypal military leader. Read Joshua Chap 5.

- † In order to get ready for war what was Joshua's first act for the Israelites (see vs 2)?
- † Would this have been welcomed initially as an act that would increase their ability to fight?
- † What was this saying to both the Israelites and to God?
- † What was the outcome (see vs 9) and why was this necessary?

Deborah -Warrior Prophetess

Always thought God fought his battles through men only. Think again, read Judges 4.

- † What would Barak have thought about the instructions he received in vs 6 and how did he react? Would we react any differently?
- † What was the price for Barak's uncertainty?
- † With nine hundred chariots to fight against who was the favourite to win?
- † What was the purpose of the battle in God's eyes?

Week Three:

Gideon – Father of Special Operations

Do you imagine ancient warfare to be hordes of infantry shoulder to shoulder? Let have a look at someone with a more unconventional approach to war. Read Judges 7.

- † How confident was Gideon with 32,000 men? How would he have felt about God's plan to get rid of 75% of his force? How would we?
- † What was God's reason to reduce the number of men to a mere 300?
- † What vision did God send to fortify Gideon's resolve?
- † What was Gideon's plan, how did it work, and what was the result?

Sampson – Flawed Champion

NASA was never going to employ Sampson! Not the sharpest instrument of God's will, he nevertheless shows us that God can use us for powerful ends despite our flaws.

- † Read Judges 14: 1-4. Sampson wanted a Philistine woman as his wife, contrary to Israelite law and custom. How was God going to use this to His ends?
- † Read Judges 15:1-15. Sampson might have been lacking many qualities but certainly not courage. In what state was the nation of Israel? Why did they need a man like Sampson to lead them, despite his faults?
- † Read Chapter 16:23+. What was God's purpose in Sampson? How did this lead to eventually lead to Israel's deliverance from the Philistines?
- † Sampson was headstrong, jealous, quick to anger, foolish, vain, and greedy. Why did God choose to use him? What does that teach us about our faults?

Week Four:

Saul – Anointed Hero or Faithless King?

In 1 Samuel we read of Saul's anointing by Samuel and appointment as King. He has many victories whilst he struggles with following the Lord's directions. The end is good for Israel but things start to go wrong for Saul...

- † Read 1 Sam 13: 1-15. Saul was to wait for Samuel but he acted in fear and trusted to his own timetable not God's. What did he do wrong? How often do we have the patience to wait for God's plan? What were the consequences of his faithlessness?
- † Read 1 Sam 14:15-23. Saul starts to seek God's will as to when to attack but in the end makes the decision to attack himself. Whilst they were victorious who is given the credit for the victory? How often do we start with good intentions to follow God's will but end up living off our own judgment and insight?
- † Read 1 Sam 15: 1-11. Now Saul really starts to follow his own plan, not God's. Why did God order genocide against the Amalekites (see Ex 17:8-14)? How does Saul disobey God? What was God's response? Bearing in mind Saul's history how patient is God with us?

David – God's Greatest General

Famine to feast, rags to riches, small to huge, shepherd to King, God has never had a more faithful General than David.

- † Read 1 Sam 17:25-37. Why is David so sure he can fight Goliath and win? Is it just his faith alone or also experiences that God has given him? Does God expect us to show great leaps of faith or does he prepare our hearts too?
- † Read 1 Sam 17:38-40. How does David prepare himself for battle? Does he go unprepared? If David so trusts the Lord why doesn't he go unarmed?
- † Read 1 Sam 17:45-47. David gives God credit for the victory even before it won. Not just confident in his own victory over Goliath what other improbable event does David

promise? What would the Philistines have thought of these comments from a shepherd-boy? Jesus tells us that our lack of faith stops us from moving mountains (Matt17:20), but how faithful are we?

Conclusion

As God's people of the New Testament He does not expect us to fight other nations to claim our inheritance; but He does expect us to have the same courage, determination and faith as the Israelites. And he expects us to show that in every aspect of our lives, not just when we step out of uniform.