



Fighting that is a subject that is natural to me. I am one of those people that just somehow can end up in a fight. I have fought with my parents, my friends, my husband, my kids. I have fought at home, at church, at work. I'm started to feel dizzy just thinking about all the fighting I have done over the years. Do you know what I have gotten out of all that fighting? Hurt feelings, loss of relationships, a bloody lip, and sometimes I have lost the respect of people who I admired. Not a very pretty heritage to leave is it?

Thankfully, that is not my present reality. Did my basic personality change? No, inside I am still prone to fight! I simply let God change one word, instead of fighting *with* now I fight *for*!

I'm kinda laughing as I write "simply let God change" because the truth of it is I got so tired of getting beat up that I was desperate to do something different! But the difference that learning to fight "for" instead of "with" has made in my life has been huge!

I'm so excited that you have decided to join us on this journey! This week we will lay a foundation by looking at different times where God has fought "for". At the same time we will also look at a couple of places where we see people fighting "with" people. Each week we will have one key principle that I hope you will allow to sink deep in your heart so that it will become part of you. Are you ready?

In Exodus 14 we are going to see both types of fighting side by side. As you read Exodus 14:5-12, list the emotions that these different people felt. (You may have to imagine yourself as these people.)

Pharaoh and His Officials

The Israelites

Moses

Circle the emotions that you have felt in the recent past. I hope you put the Israelites were FURIOUS! I believe when they said "Didn't we say to you in Egypt, "leave us alone?" that they were yelling. What do you suppose?

As you read verses 13-14 list the two things he told the Israelites to do:

- 1.
- 2.

Do you think his "stand firm" is the same as when we tell people, "*just calm down and listen to me for a minute*"? I suppose Moses was under a fair amount of stress at this point and he must have been sending up some prayers because, in the next verse (15) what does God say?

I took me a little bit to figure out why God would tell Moses to stop crying out and move on. That is until I slowed down and really read the passage. I going to assume some of you might be like me, familiar with the story so you are picturing it like this:

Pharaoh and his army are breathing down their backs. They see the river and realize that they can't cross, so they get mad. Moses says to stand firm and that means be still. So, as they are standing there he reaches out his staff and the waters part and they cross over! But, you know what? I was wrong. So, just in case you thought that way, let's read the text and make note of the timing.

So to begin with, let's take a verse 9. Where are the Israelites?

When do you make camp if you're on a hike? Yep, early evening because you have to set up the camp, eat some dinner, visit with your friends and then go to bed. So, based on that we can assume, it was early evening. Now, the next thing they did was look up and they could see the army coming. Since they were in the desert, it would make sense that they could see them from a good distance. But since they were an army (unlike Moses and his flock that included women and children) the army would be moving fast! It makes more sense to me now when God said "stop crying out to me and move on." But, it gets better. They pack up and in verse 19 where does it say about where the angel of God goes?

Now, as a woman in that camp I would not have been happy to see the angel and the pillar of cloud head to the back if I knew the path was heading to a big ole river! And darkness was coming. How do you think that would make you feel?

But there was a reason for it. It was so that they would be able to see what God was going to do for them. In verse 21, what did God do and for how long?

All night long, the God that is willing to fight for us, fought for them and they crossed a river on dry ground. Let that "sink" in. He will fight for you and He has the same power available today as He did then! Oh, I just love verse 25;

"The Egyptians said of our God...

Let's get _____ from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting _____ them against Egypt!"

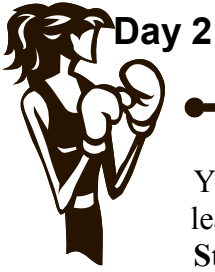
Now, since this study is all about our lives, if we were going to pull out two key principles that Moses shared, what would they be?

1. _____

2. _____



Stand firm and you will see God fight for you!



Yesterday I hope you had as much fun as I did looking at a familiar story and maybe learning some new details. The principle I took out of it was...

Stand Firm and You Will See the deliverance of the LORD.

Personally, every time I study the Old Testament one question I ask myself is, “Is this principle directly in the New Testament or indirectly?” Now, if it is in the New Testament indirectly or not at all, then that just means we have to proceed with a little caution to make sure that we don’t try to apply something to us that doesn’t apply. The children of God in the Old Testament had some principles that don’t apply to us. Just like we in the New Testament age have principles that didn’t apply to them. Does that make sense?

Here is a very quick example in Leviticus 13:47. It talks about if anything has mildew on it you are to take it to your priest to have him inspect it. Then depending on the state of mildew he might burn it, wash it or something else along those lines. Now, we would not find that in the New Testament, so that is not something we are going to apply to our lives. Your priest (Pastor Jim) will be happy not to have to inspect your mildew items! Have any of you guessed I recently had some mildew issues??

But, when you can find a principle in the Old Testament and in the New Testament then you start realizing that this is for us! So, can we find our principle in the New Testament? Glory to God, we can! In several places! This is going to be fun! On each of these, look for the words “stand firm” and record two things, (1.) anything that stands out in that verse to you and (2.) who wrote the book where it is found. I’m going to do the first one with you.

1 Corinthians 16:13:

Be on my guard means I need to be looking around at what is going on. Paul wrote it. (For a quick tip of how to figure out who wrote the book under God’s inspiration, it is normally in the first verse or so.)

Ephesians 6:11

Ephesians 6:13

Ephesians 6:14

Philippians 4:1

1 Thessalonians 3:8

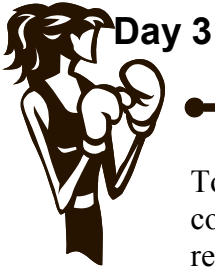
2 Thessalonians 2:15

1 Peter 5:12

You are doing great! Can you agree with me that we can 100% say that the principle to “stand firm” is in both the Old Testament and the New Testament?



It is about to get even better tomorrow, but for today, just let these words start to take root in your heart...Stand Firm!



Today we are going to start to figure out two things. First, how to recognize the enemy coming after you and then why is it so important to stand firm. Let's start with how to recognize the enemy.

Anytime there is a person that you are considering an enemy you have a wrong view. Now, that just steps on my toes! Because when I am mad at Chad, he is the enemy! So to have to change my thinking on that is hard! In Ephesians 6:11-12, Paul tells us who the enemy is. Who is it?

Another way to put that would be Satan and his host. Now, is that to say that Satan or one of his hosts is behind everything going wrong in our lives? Nope, because look at this in Ephesians 4:22-24. It gives us another big enemy...
Who would that be?

Are you feeling this with me? Not only is Chad NOT the enemy, but there is a good chance the enemy could be my own flesh! Can you think of any other enemies we have?

Well the good news is we only have two, Satan and our own sin nature. Personally, my own sin nature has been my biggest problem to date. How about you?

So how can we distinguish between the two enemies? Now, since some of you haven't been in Bible study with me before I have to tell you I don't claim to have a great deal of theology in my mind. Mine is more like advice you get from your best friend, based on her experiences. So when I tell you how I distinguish between the two, don't think I am saying this is the only way. If you know another way, please tell me!

Alright, here is how I decide if the enemy is self or Satan. First, I ask is this something for which I am the cause of? Here's an example:

In Jonah 1, God tells Jonah to go to the city and preach. But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. Before you know it, in verse 17, a great fish swallowed Jonah. That, to me, is a very clear example of "self" being the enemy. It couldn't be that Satan sent the fish; it was all because of disobedience. Obedience is training ourselves to do what God tells us to do!

This morning my friend Carrie called and I was running late so as I was talking to her, I was putting on my grey pants. They felt a little snug and as I looked in the mirror, they were skin tight! Now whose fault is it? My "self" has been over-indulging and now I have a choice, learn to control it or not. In my mind I was replaying a conversation I had just had with her the night before about how I had no interest in walking. I might need to change that!

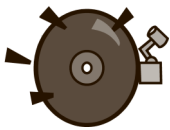
Can you see how in both of these examples, there is a “self” causing it? So being simply put, if we aren't causing it, what would the logical assumption be?

Satan! Once we start getting some control of our selves he gets nervous. See, as long as we are like Jonah in the whale, he isn't worried. But when we step out of that whale with some gumption about us, he notices.

Can you think of a Biblical example of Satan attacking someone? If so, re-read it slowly and see if you can glean some nuggets to apply. If you can't think of any, I'm going to list a couple for you to choose from.

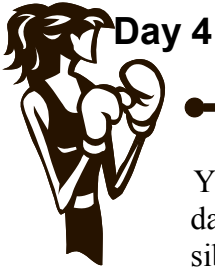
Acts 7:54-8:1 or Matthew 27:27-31

Can you remember what our principle for this week is?



Who do you feel like is your biggest enemy presently?

(Remember you only have 2 choices.)



You all are working hard! I promise we are going to start tying these threads together today! Our first principle is to stand firm. Now, we said earlier this week that we could possibly just stop and think for a minute. When you are thinking, what should you be thinking about?

That's right. I can ask myself if this is a fight of my flesh or a fight with Satan. We **HAVE** to have a clear picture of who the fight is coming from. Now the trick is, changing it from a fight with _____ (self or Satan) to a fight for _____.

Now, who is going to do the fighting? God is! See, when we fight **WITH**, it is us doing the fighting, but when we fight **FOR**, that invites God in to do it.

So what is going on in your life now? Who are you fighting with?

If you asked me what was going on in my life here is what I would share with you. I am trying to not fight with Meghan. Or Katie. Or Chad. And we are having the same struggles, Meghan is almost 16 and at that stage where she is faced with all kinds of new choices. Katie is almost 13 and experiencing the same thing. With Chad it is a bit different in that we are just at a new stage of being married,- no babies, no toddlers, no preschoolers and we have different ideas on what the girls should or shouldn't be allowed to do. In each of these areas there is some of self involved, but Satan also is trying to get his hands into it, too! When I looked at everything going on, the word that came to me was LUST. That is an ugly word isn't it?

See lust can take many forms. Lust of the eyes isn't just sexual. Lust also can be for material things. When I hear Meghan talking, I want her to realize the stakes are high! Same with Katie, she is going into middle school and being exposed to new things. Then, Chad and I have just got to make 100% sure that we are not letting anything into our lives that will damage our relationship. So, that is what I am fighting with...but, when we fight "with," I said we ended up doing it on our own.

How effective do you think I am? Yea, not so much. But, when I change that to fighting for, I'm inviting God in to assess the situation. If I were going to write it out, here is what you would see:

God, please fight for us! We need purity on every level. Show me the steps to take in order to bring purity into my life and in those I love! I want to see it with my own eyes.

~Amen.

Spend a few minutes today and think through your present circumstances. Write down your situation or circumstances in your life that you'd like to have God "fight for you".

We are going to just peek at a couple of verses and pull out some nuggets that we will think about.

Nehemiah 4:20

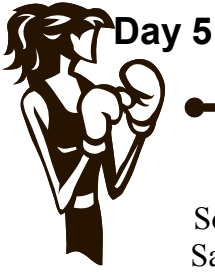
Deuteronomy 1:30

Joshua 23:10

Do you not love that? Which one is your favorite? I think Nehemiah is mine. I love the idea of giving a shout and all my sisters in Christ running over, not only to help, but to see God fight for us!



Why is it important to give a shout?



So far this week we have seen that when we have an enemy it is going to either be, self or Satan. We have to stand firm, and take a minute to get our heads straight. Do you think the words “stand firm” can mean more?

Yes, they can also mean to preserve, to persist and to keep one’s standing. You know what that tells me? It may not be an instant process! In Exodus 14, we saw the people were camped. That means they had to pack up move on to the edge of the river. Moses had to go forward hold out his rod. God began to drive the sea back with a strong wind. It took time! Let me say that again, it took time. I just wonder how long it was from the time they started packing up until the very last person crossed over the river? How long do you suppose?

My gut tells me, a good long while! They had to stand firm, they had to know who the enemy was, and they had to know and believe that God would fight for them. But before they saw it, they had to “move on” (v. 15). As we go through these next few weeks, we are going to have to start applying these principles, and move on, believing that we will SEE with our eyes, God fighting for us!

Are you willing? That is the question, are you willing to move on. Yes, you are, Darling! Do you know why? Because deep down you want to see God fighting for you! You want to hear your sisters shout and run over and see God fight for them! Maybe you are weary right now. That’s ok because in Deuteronomy 1:30 it says God will carry you like a child. God wants you to learn to let Him fight for you!

Lastly, we are going to read Joshua 23:1-16. Today don’t get bogged down in the details, just hit the high points. Keep in mind Joshua was a young man when they crossed the river and now he is old. You know one thing I know about old people is that they speak what they believe! Let his words fall on you like a grandfather encouraging you, because “in Christ” he is your grandfather!

If something speaks to you in this passage write it down.



Do you know without a shadow of doubt what our principle for the week is?