

Battling Your Enemies

They are bigger and stronger than you.

Deuteronomy 9:1-3

Introduction: There can be no doubt that the Christian life is to be one of victory. But, if the challenge is less than you are able to bear, then the victory really is nothing more than what *you* can accomplish. Yet, this is the way that most of us hope to live our lives; not without challenge, but with a challenge whose stature is not as great as our own. However, God's ways, as we well know, are not our ways. God's plan for victory was detailed for Israel as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. Moses reminded the people of God's plan for them in Deuteronomy 9:1-3. God painted no rosy picture for Israel regarding the strength of the people they were to face. We even see the use of the exclamation mark at the end of verse two. These were a fearsome foe. God reminded Israel repeatedly that their enemies were bigger and stronger than they were in Deuteronomy 4:38; 7:1; 9:1; 11:23b.

There could be no doubt that God was painting a clear picture of the foe. There was no intention on God's part to deceive His people regarding the reality of a mighty enemy. It is because of these enemies that we, too, begin to shrink from the enemies we battle. Sadly, the people had come to the conclusion that, since the giants were bigger than their own strength, victory was not possible (Numbers 13:32-33). Today, we often call our enemies fear, or loneliness, or anger, or temptation, or discouragement, or doubt. They come in the form of unpaid bills and uncertainty about our future. They stand tall and they taunt us and, at times, we become paralyzed with fear. What is necessary for us to move forward as we begin this series on battling our enemies? One word—*courage*. Courage defined: courage begins with a surrender to God's sovereignty and trust in God's strength.

God, providentially, places enemies along the pathway of every believer. We all face them. Not until our courage is the result of our trust that God knows what He's doing and has the strength to do it, can we have any real sense of composure to battle our enemies. Joshua was reminded that God knew what He was doing and that he was to take confidence in Him.

I. How Did Joshua Have Courage?

- A. He was reminded of the command to be courageous. Joshua 1:6a
- B. He was reminded that God's presence would be with him. Joshua 1:9
- C. He was reminded that God's promise was still intact. Joshua 1:6b

II. When Courage Is Denied People Become Paralyzed. 1 Samuel 17:11, 23-24

Just as when the spies brought back the evil report to Israel and the people cried and feared, so also because of Saul's fear, his army was paralyzed with fear. Goliath presented a legitimate threat to Israel, but not to God.

