

Pray Like Moses (3)

Hands Lifted for Victory: Intercession in the Battle (Exodus 17:8–16)

Introduction: This gripping story provides us with a powerful lesson on prayer. It shows that prayer is *our most powerful weapon in life's battles* – more powerful than any sword or strategy.

I. **The battle with Amalek — Battles are inevitable (Ex. 17:8)**

A. **The battle came to them** – “Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” *Battles often arrive without warning.*

1. First battle after the water-from-the-rock miracle (Exodus 17:1–7).
2. Attack from the rear on the weary and stragglers (Deuteronomy 25:17–18).

B. **Spiritual reality:** Expect warfare; it's part of the journey (Ephesians 6:12; Acts 14:22; John 16:33; James 1:2–4).

C. **Two-pronged strategy:**

1. **Joshua fights** in the valley (Exodus 17:9–10).
2. **Moses intercedes** on the hill with the “rod of God” (Exodus 17:9–11).

Prayer **and** action—both are necessary (cf. Nehemiah 4:9; 1 Timothy 6:12).

Merrit: “If you pray but don't go to war, you're a fool. But if you go to war without praying, you'll be a failure.”

II. **Moses' hands lifted — Prayer invites God's power (Ex. 17:9–11)**

A. **An astonishing observation:** “When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed” (v. 11).

B. **Meaning:** Raised hands/staff = visible appeal to God's throne; dependence on **God's** power, not human strength (Psalm 20:5; 33:16–22).

Stanley: “While the battle raged on the ground, victory was secured on the hilltop.”

C. **Takeaways:**

1. The decisive work is done in **prayer** (Philippians 4:6–7; Psalm 50:15).
2. God wanted Israel to remember **who** wins battles (Exodus 17:14–15).
3. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much” (James 5:16).

D. **Personal application:** Make prayer your **first resort** in battle (Psalm 25:4–5; 62:8; 1 Peter 5:7).

III. **Aaron and Hur's support — We need others in prayer (Ex. 17:12–13)**

1. **Problem:** “Moses' hands became heavy” (v. 12).
2. **Provision:** Aaron and Hur sat him on a stone and **held up his hands**—steady “until the going down of the sun”; **Joshua defeats Amalek** (vv. 12–13).

3. **Principles:**

- a. Don't fight alone—**share the load** (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16).
- b. Community makes us stronger: “A threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).
- c. Be humble enough to **ask** for help; be loving enough to **offer** it (Hebrews 10:24–25; Romans 12:12).

Morse: “Blessed is [the one] who has an Aaron and Hur with them; abundantly blessed is [the one] who has a whole church holding up [their] arms.”

4. **Christward hope:** Jesus, our unfailing intercessor, **always lives to make intercession** (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34).

IV. **“The LORD is my banner” — God wins the victory (Ex. 17:13–16)**

A. **Memorialize the lesson:** “Write this as a memorial... recount it to Joshua” (v. 14). “*God wanted to ensure they never forgot who really won the battle.*”

B. **Worship response:** Moses builds an altar, **Yahweh-Nissi**—“The LORD is my Banner” (v. 15).

1. We rally under His name and credit **His** power (Psalm 60:4; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5).
2. Ongoing conflict: “The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (v. 16).

C. **Summary axis of victory:** **God's power overhead + our obedient action + intercessory prayer** (cf. Exodus 17:11–13; Psalm 44:3).

Fighting our battles with prayer — practical steps

1. **Pray first:** When “then came _____,” seek the Lord immediately (Psalm 34:4; 55:22; Philippians 4:6–7).
2. **Persevere in prayer:** Don't quit—Jesus taught us to pray and **not lose heart** (Luke 18:1; Colossians 4:2).
3. **Enlist partners:** Identify your “Aaron and Hur”; agree together in prayer (Matthew 18:19–20; Acts 4:24–31).
4. **Give God the glory:** Raise **His** banner in every victory (Exodus 17:15; Psalm 115:1; Revelation 12:11).
5. **Look to Jesus:** Your faithful High Priest intercedes for you (Hebrews 7:25; 4:14–16).

Key verse to remember: “*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much.*” — **James 5:16**