

Biblical Principle ... Choose your Battles well!

Count the Cost (of Discipleship)

Luk 14:31-32 What king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and **consider whether he is able** with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

Luk 14:32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

Jesus is pointing out that “in life” there will be lots of challenges – opportunities for “battles” – where we need to “consider” or “count the cost” of whether each battle is worthwhile.

Actions have consequences & scripture is full of examples for us to “be balanced” in our choices ... in our marriages, family, friends, coworkers, and even enemies.

Today, we will learn from some of these scriptural examples

This is important because ...

- Sometimes we need to take a strong stand
- Sometimes, we need to show we are sensitive to “both sides” of an issue
- Christians *sometimes* need to handle things differently – even counter-intuitively in our walk

Shimei Curses David

2Sa 16:5-14 Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came.

2Sa 16:6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

2Sa 16:7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed:

"Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!

2Sa 16:8 The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"

2Sa 16:9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this **dead dog** curse my lord the king? **Please, let me go over and take off his head!**"

2Sa 16:10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?' "



2Sa 16:11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him.

2Sa 16:12 It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."

2Sa 16:13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.

2Sa 16:14 Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

David, Nabal & Abigail

... Nabal was a rich owner of sheep & goats ...

... David & his mighty man helped protect his flocks

... David sent men to ask for a gift or reward for their service

1Sa 25:10-35 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master.

1Sa 25:11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"

1Sa 25:12 So David's young men **turned on their heels** and went back; and they came and told him all these words.

1Sa 25:13 Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

... a Servant explains to Nabal's wife (Abigail) of David's service & that Nabal reviled them.



1Sa 25:18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

1Sa 25:19 And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

1Sa 25:20 So it was, as she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them.

1Sa 25:21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good.

1Sa 25:22 May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light."

1Sa 25:23 Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground.

1Sa 25:24 So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant.

1Sa 25:25 Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

1Sa 25:26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal.

1Sa 25:27 And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord.

1Sa 25:28 Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days.

1Sa 25:29 Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling.

1Sa 25:30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel,

1Sa 25:31 that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

1Sa 25:32 Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!

1Sa 25:33 And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.

1Sa 25:34 For indeed, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!"

1Sa 25:35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person."

... Nabal dies when he hears of Abigail's actions

... Abigail became a wife of David

Dialogue from Movie ... "A Few Good Men"

Demi Moore speculating about the commanding officer:

"He's lying"

Tom Cruise (knowing false accusations against officers can get the accuser court martialed & disqualified from being a lawyer):

"Great! We can say, "Liar, liar, pants on fire"!"

It's not what I believe, but what I can prove.

So, don't tell me what I know or don't know. I know the law!



Reason this is significant ...

1. In court, we have a "standard of evidence" before something is accepted as "proof"
2. As representatives of Jesus, do we demand the same high standard of evidence, before accusing someone of something? (or inferring something is true?)
3. **Confirmation bias** ... is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values

Do we want Obama to be born elsewhere so he should not have been president?
Do we delight over each misstep of Justin Trudeau or Joe Biden? Or Donald Trump?
Do we "more readily" discard or accept evidence that fits our goal / or belief?

4. What can Jim really PROVE ... sitting in his basement office, in Kingston, in a world of deceiving media? ... If he wants to be **credible**, he better have solid proof for his contentions ... and simply "put on the shelf" ideas he cannot prove because people will not attack your strongest proofs ... they ignore those and go after your peripheral proofs that are vulnerable or suspect.



People will reason ... if he was wrong about (a tiny point) then he is likely wrong about (his Major points) ... It is all about credibility ...

"Choose your battles wisely" ... Choose your battles means to be selective of the problems, arguments, and confrontations that you get involved in. Instead of fighting every problem, you save your time only for the things that matter. This means fighting the most important battles and letting go of the rest.

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Romans 12:17-21 ESV

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, **never avenge yourselves**, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Matthew 5:9 ESV

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Colossians 3:13 ESV

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Luke 17:3 ESV

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,

Proverbs 16:7 ESV

When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Ephesians 4:26 ESV Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger



*“Choose your battles wisely. After all, life isn’t measured by **how many times** you stood up to fight. It’s **not winning battles** that makes you **happy**, but it’s how many times you turned away and chose to look into a **better direction**. Life is too short to spend it on warring. **Fight only the most, most, most important ones, let the rest go.**”*

1) **Evaluate the problem**

- Is this problem really important?
- Do I need to deal with it?
- Can my time be better spent elsewhere?

2) **Do a cost-benefit analysis**

- Do the costs outweigh the benefits? If “yes,” it’s generally better to let go and move on.
- What are the odds of success? If the odds of success are very low, move on as well.

Yet...Sometimes you want (need) to pick a battle to “make a statement”.

3) **Go for win-win, not win-lose**

Often, the battle isn’t against your opponent, but the conflict.

4) **Have an open discussion**

Respect that the other person has their views and goals that may be different from ours.

- Seek to understand why the person thinks that way.
- Share your views

- Be supportive as the other person is sharing their views.
- Brainstorm the best solution.

5) **Don’t get angry**

Remember, your goal is to achieve a win-win, not to bring your “opponent” down. The enemy here is the conflict at hand, not the other person.

6) **Have an exit point**

We don’t have unlimited resources. We can’t spend forever working on a problem if it’s not progressing despite our best effort. Have a cut-loss point that tells you, “Okay, that’s it. Time to cut my losses and move on.”

7) **Let go of unresolved problems**

Success comes not from not winning every battle, but learning to let go when it’s time to do so.

- Acknowledge your feelings
 - Understand why you feel this way
 - Work on a new path forward
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Philippians 2:4

do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Ephesians 4:31 ESV

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Matthew 18:15-17

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Proverbs 19:11 ESV

Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Luke 17:4 ESV

And if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Proverbs 18:19 ESV

A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.

Romans 12:18 ESV

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Proverbs 15:18 ESV

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Matthew 5:44 ESV

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

James 1:19-20 ESV

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Matthew 5:25-26 ESV

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

James 4:1 ESV

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

