



Leadership Tip #6
Don't Be Surprised by Conflict
By Carrie Dameron

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 (ESV))

Joshua led the Israelites in many battles to possess their Promised Land. Joshua's battle were a physical battle where they did hand-to-hand combat against Israel's enemies, whereas Christians are engaged in a spiritual battle: skirmishes where we are easily deceived, devoured, and destroyed (1 Peter 5:8). There were three distinct areas of conflict which Joshua faced: the battle of Jericho, the sin of the Israelites while fighting at Ai, and disastrous treaty they entered with the Gibeonites. Bible scholars compare these three conflicts or formidable enemies to the three enemies Christians face: "the world," "the flesh," and "the devil." (1,3)

- The battle at Jericho represents "the world" which pressures us and hammers us and tries to conform us to its mold.
- The sin of Ai represents "the flesh" or the sinfulness within us which betrays us and undermines us and sabotages us, even though we want to serve God with our minds and our bodies.
- The deceit of the Gibeonites represents the devil as a master strategist of assault against Christians. He sometimes attacks us openly, sometimes craftily, but always with an unerring sense of where our weaknesses lie. (2,3)

This coalition of evil forces that have banded together against Christians attempts to destroy us. At times, it seems like an unbeatable combination. But, we have the assurance of victory.

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)

As Christian nurse leaders, we are vulnerable to attacks in both our professional and personal lives, thus we need to remember three important truths.

- 1) We do not war with people, institutions, or systems. We engage in spiritual battles, not human battles. (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4).
- 2) The battles are personal and God uses them for faith development (James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:7).
- 3) Our weapons are spiritual and found in prayer, worship, and scripture (Ephesians 6:10-18).

“The Christian’s possession of spiritual blessings and experience depends upon conflict and conquest (Ephesians 6:10-20; Galatians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 1 Corinthians 9:25-27; Hebrews 4:11). These are never attained through the energy of the flesh, but through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the yielded life of the believer (Romans 7, 8).” (1)

In the next three devotions, we will discuss each of our enemies. We will learn how Christian nurses can take Joshua’s strategies to arm themselves to battle against each enemy.

- (1) McGee, J Vernon. *Briefing the Bible* © Thru the Bible, www.ttb.org
<https://ttb.org/resources/briefing-the-bible>
- (2) McGee, J Vernon. *AI and I* © Thru the Bible Radio Network. www.ttb.org
- (3) Keathley III, J. Hampton. 9. Destruction of the Amorite Coalition (Joshua 10:1-43)
<https://bible.org/series/studies-life-joshua>