

The Hold-Up

by Joseph Hovsepian

reading Exodus 17:1-13

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behind." While no God-sent opportunity should ever escape our grasp, we must also learn to position our life to enable us to catch it! A man growing wise in life no longer feels the need to run after success or fulfillment because in giving up the frantic pursuit, he finds those very blessings catch up with him from behind. Abraham had the hope of the Lord providing a lamb, and out of his obedience, "...behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket." David had the promise of a throne made behind him, but after a time of preparation, the promise caught up with him. Vance Halder said, "He who waits on God loses no time." Although we fear having lost many God-given opportunities, may we ever remember that the God of the opportunity always ensures "objects in mirror are closer than they appear."

Essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." For all of the good and bad we have ever faced in our life, everything has worked together to shape and mold who and what we are today. However, beware of taking drawn out stares into your rear-view mirror. You may turn around just in time to discover the future has run out, and all you have done is stolen from yourself. 📧

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God had helped the Israelites all along their journey. He had given them manna, quail and whatever else they needed to survive.

But they continued to complain and murmur – just as we often do. Again, God supplied water to quench their thirst and the children of Israel were refreshed and rejoicing. But, as often happens, trouble followed this blessing: "*The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites*" (Exodus 17:8).

In this world, we will have trouble and tribulation. Jesus said: "*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33)

Once again, the Israelites were in trouble and Moses led his nation to victory, with God's help. Moses asked Joshua to lead a select force into battle, and Moses, Aaron and Hur oversaw the battle from a hill.

What does this battle have to do with the Church? We, in the Church, are also in battle. Our battle is not against governments or other religions or even ourselves, as some may think. Our battle is against the forces of evil that are at war against us (Ephesians 6:10-12).

There are some mistaken ideas about the work and role of the Church, but the truth is:

- We are not here just to preach and teach.
- We are not here just to raise money – no matter what the purpose may be.
- We are not here just to run programs and activities.

According to the Word of God, we are here to do spiritual battle with the enemy – the spiritual forces of evil. We must remember that eternal issues are at stake – not doctrinal and religious traditions and customs. Souls hang in the balance. Basic standards of purity and holiness are being compromised. Foundations of decency are crumbling. Today, right is wrong and wrong is right.

But God has given us the equipment to win the battle: the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16), the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:4), the armour of God (Ephesians 6:13) and, finally, the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).

We may become tired in this battle of life, just as Moses did. What was the secret weapon in the war with Amalek? It was prayer and total dependence on God. When Moses held up his hands – a symbol of appeal to God for help – the Israelites were winning, but when he let his hands down, the Amalekites were winning.

Moses had been told by God in the past to "stretch his hands to the Lord for help" (Exodus 9:22). And he had obeyed and experienced God's power. What stands out in this story is that, even though God was there to help the God-fearing Israelites to win and He expects them to completely depend and trust Him, He also expected them to do their part – to pray and to fight.

Sometimes the battles are not won right away and so we get tired and weary and we let our guard down, we stop praying. Moses, too, became very tired. He could not go on alone. He needed help.

Pastors sometimes get tired or weary because of fatigue, whether it relates to the ministry or personal and family matters. Each one of us sometimes fights fatigue. What can we do to help one another to win our battles? We can hold up the hands of those who are weary. In Moses' case, a stone was provided so that he could rest and then Aaron and Hur held up his arms.

How can we "hold up" tired hands? First of all, we can be there when we are needed-ready to help. We must also pray for one another, as Moses prayed for the people in battle; we must refuse to judge and condemn one another; we must faithfully worship with one another; and we must join those who, like Aaron and Hur, are active in the ministry of our Lord.

The battle was won because Aaron and Hur were ready to hold up Moses' hands in prayer all day long. Are we ready and willing to hold up weary and tired hands until we have victory? 📧

