

Russell Kelfer

Part 1

**Mentoring by
Intercession:
Leading on Your
Knees.**

#1372-A

**Series: Possessing the Land:
The Process of Mentoring**

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Part 1

Mentoring by Intercession: Leading on Your Knees

The background should still be fresh in our minds. A water shortage. An angry, rebellious atmosphere. Sarcasm. A leader in the midst of turmoil cries out to God in prayer. God intervenes. The crowd is silenced. God's name has been vindicated once again.

It is the first of two such instances during the children of Israel's wilderness wanderings, illustrations of what happens when a drought brings out the ingratitude of a whole nation and surfaces the kinds of short memories that break the heart of God. You remember the story:

And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink.

Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?
(Exodus 17:1-7)

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On this occasion, Moses did exactly what God told him to. On the second occasion, the one we recently looked at, Moses lost his temper, lost his perspective, and lost his chance to enter the promised land. This first time of water worry, however, was not Mo's downfall. It was a time of great turmoil, and a potential uprising revealed the great leader's need to be totally dependent on God. Had he maintained that dependence when it happened again, it might have been a different story.

Our reason for looking at this incident, however, is not to compare the two events in Moses' life. We've already done that. The reason is to look and see what happened next, and how what happened next impacted the life of Moses' disciple, his minister, if you will, a man named Joshua.

It is the mentoring relationship of these two men and the corresponding principles of transferring one life to another that we are looking at in this mini-side trip as God calls Joshua to take the mantle of authority and lead the people home. In our last study, we looked at the concept of mentoring by example, of how watching those we are learning from teaches us more than just hearing from them.

Moses has said nothing to Joshua about this incident, nothing at least that is recorded in Scripture, but Joshua was, once again, watching it all from the sidelines, as we shall see momentarily. What he was witnessing revealed to him, and I trust to us as well, that:

1- The rain falls (or fails to) on the just and the unjust alike (vs. 1). God doesn't owe His children freedom from life's water shortages, or life's sicknesses, or life's sudden calamities. The children of Israel began to rail at Moses and rebel against God because He had the audacity to let the well run dry. Water was not God's problem. These ungrateful children of His were His problem. He holds the key to the clouds. He can make it rain any time and anywhere He chooses. Take a concordance and look at the ninety times the word "rain" is used in Scripture. Catalog how many times it is referred to in the light of God being the One whose hand is upon the faucets of heaven. And see how many times rain is used either to bless or to punish or to get the attention of His people. It will amaze you. The absence of rain is not a signal that God has forgotten to press the dialog box on the screen of eternity that says "water". It is rather a confirmation

that He, indeed, is using either the presence or the absence of it to get man's attention to draw their hearts to Himself.

2- The problem of tempting God through presumption is as old as life itself. They didn't humble themselves before Moses and confess their unworthiness, they demanded of Moses that he tell God to turn on the spigots in heaven or they were going to turn on Him. Moses responded, "*Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?*" Their attitude was that God owed them water. We're not much different. We still think God is sitting in heaven waiting for our wish lists, so He can give us what we think will make us happy, and we think that's what prayer is: a chance for us to update God on what He may have overlooked that will "bless" us and thus give Him glory.

We've forgotten what a "blessing" is. We need to reread Matthew 5 again. Mourning is a blessing. Meekness is a blessing. Persecution is a blessing. Poverty of spirit is a blessing. Being reviled and ridiculed is a blessing. Why? Each of those things creates or denotes dependence, and *the more dependent we are, the more glorified He is*. God owes us nothing. He has promised us Himself. That is ten-trillion times more valuable than all the gold in the earth and all the applause of men.

3- Man has always viewed authority as something or someone to protect him, but when things get hard, that is who he turns on (vs. 3). The people murmured against Moses. They couldn't get their hands on God, but Mo was within their reach, so they began to blame him. They said, "*Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*" The sheer absurdity of their accusations is obvious to us. It isn't, however, as obvious when we are the murmurers. And so often we are.

4- Moses didn't bother to answer their accusations, He transferred the responsibility to God. Instead of engaging in debate, he prayed (vs. 4). I believe Joshua learned a lot from this encounter. I believe it stood him in good stead in later years when the tides turned against him as the people once again began to forget, and their forgetfulness led to rebellion. Joshua learned how to lead on his knees by watching Moses. "*Moses cried to the Lord*". The next words are key. "*And the Lord said unto Moses*". Moses cried. God answered. What a great pattern for leadership. The people rebelled. Their leader prayed. Their God answered. He

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gave them what they asked for, but He did it in such a way that no one could ever doubt it was not something they had earned, but something God had given them as a gift.

5- God uses every opportunity to use physical needs to teach spiritual truth. The whole of Scripture reveals Biblical parables in which the creator God of heaven and earth takes physical illustrations and weaves them into the fabric of the heart of man and his relationship with God. This “rock” was Christ. We don’t need to guess about that. I Corinthians 10 tells us:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (I Corinthians 10:1-4)

God, then, allowed them to get thirsty so they would have to cry out to Moses who would go to God who would provide water from the least likely place on earth, a rock, *in order to teach them that the Living Rock, even Jesus, would one day become Living Water who would feed their spirits so they need never ever thirst again.* Remember the passage we looked at a few lessons ago when God explained why He gave them manna? Same principle. Remember? It said this:

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

(Deuteronomy 8:3)

See the pattern? God creates a need. Man complains. God lets him. Sooner or later, man cries out to God. When he does, God moves to meet the need, *maybe not the want but the need*, and does so in a way that paints some kind of picture of a rich spiritual truth. Then He whispers, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” The Rock was Christ and the water was the water of Life; and God was painting a backdrop on the canvas of the word so that generations later when His Son appeared on planet earth

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and claimed to be “Living Water”, they understood who He was. Oh, Beloved, look beyond the incidents in your life that so stretch you and test you; look at the timing and look at the portraits and look at the dependence that God is creating in order to be your God. What lengths He goes to. Oh, what pictures God is forming in Joshua’s heart, and oh, what pictures He wants to form in ours. Why not take a notebook, fill it with blank pages, and begin to write out the things God has been doing and allowing in your life, and ask Him specifically *to help you make the spiritual switch*. It will not only change your perspective of the event, it will change your perspective of God.

The story goes on:

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

(Exodus 17:8,9)

Then came Amalek. What a seemingly revolting development. God creates a need, meets that need, and the people are in a state of spiritual euphoria. They were, no doubt, holding praise gatherings all over the desert because God had delivered them once again. Hopefully, they surmised, God had gotten His act together, and now they would live happily ever after. That is how man so often views life when God intervenes on his behalf in answer to prayer. It is always curtain time. We tend to let our guard down and assume that God’s intervention in our lives is a good time for us to lay down the armor and head for the barracks for some “R and R”. Not so.

It is, rather, a good time to take up that armor and prepare for battle. Satan is always around the corner just after a God-induced miracle, and often God allows him some latitude, lest we begin to focus on the miracle, rather than on Him. So then came Amalek. And then came Joshua. Moses, the mentor, turned to his minister and said, “Joshua, it’s war time. Go pick out some men and let’s take on Amalek.”

You must understand what that statement means and what it must have meant to Joshua. It would be much like saying to a group of kids playing basketball in their back yard, “*Let’s go take on the San Antonio Spurs*” or “*Let’s challenge the Chicago Bulls*”. It would be much like the least armed country in the world

declaring war on the United States.

There was a saying in the ancient world that *“The best of butchers is a friend of Amalek”*. Butchers had the reputation of cheating their customers continually and ruthlessly, and to be called a friend of Amalek was to be considered contemptible. The Amalekites, a band of vicious nomads, lived in the Dead Sea region, but they wandered as far west as Arabia and Egypt. They were shepherds, but they added to their income by raiding any desert settlement they could surprise and overcome, carrying off anything of value, and kidnapping unmarried women and children. The men and the married women would be killed, the others sold off as slaves.

As the Israelites traveled through Sinai, they came to an oasis at Rephidim, which meant “Place of Refreshments”. It looked like a place for them to find rest and peace. God, however, had prepared them for an enemy attack by calling attention to Himself and His supernatural provisions through His heavenly water supply which He provided from the Rock of Ages. It was at this point, that our man Joshua entered the scene and actually took on the role of a warrior and a leader. The key, however, even then, was not Joshua’s greatness as a military man, for behind the scenes, his mentor agreed to take up the mantle of responsibility for the outcome even while he stayed behind and let Joshua get his feet wet on the sandy surface of the Sinai.

And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.
(Exodus 17:9,10)

Here is one of the most beautiful pictures of divine intercession ever written for man’s eyes to behold. Here is God’s man, chosen to lead an entire nation, sending his disciple out onto the battlefield to face an enemy so evil and so strong, that mighty men trembled in fear when they heard the word “Amalek”.

But here also is a man of such faith that He, like Abraham, was *“fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform”*. So confident in His God and His word was Moses that he literally declared war on this evil monster and sent Joshua out with a chosen band of men to take on these wandering warriors.

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Moses was not going to, however, like David, stay at home and wait for the troops to come home or tune in CNN and wait for reports of the fighting.

Moses had a job to do, and that job was at least as important as the one assigned to his disciple. He was to intercede for Joshua and the men under Joshua's command. He was to go up to the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. What was that going to accomplish? Everything. Read on:

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.
(Exodus 17:11)

God decided to paint across the pages of Scripture a word picture of the silent believer who stands in the shadows and simply raises up to God the needs of those who are engaged in spiritual conflict. The one in the battle was Joshua. The one interceding was Moses. The one winning the battle was God.

Interceding is hard work. Let no one tell you, "I'm not strong enough spiritually to be in the midst of the battle, I'll just pray." Prayer *is the battle*. God is the one doing the fighting, and prayer is the fuel He has given us to energize His Spirit. When Moses interceded, God made mincemeat out of Amalek and his grubby warriors. When Moses tired and decided he couldn't go on, God let the enemy move in and make gains. Why? He was painting a picture, and He was, remember, *wanting us to make the spiritual switch*. Moses, as we shall see, knew what to do. He wasn't to be a "one-man show" even in the shadows of the intercessor's closet. Here is what happened:

But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.
(Exodus 17:12,13)

Moses was worn out. He was no "spring chicken". This was hard work. Harder than herding sheep. Harder than preaching to his over-sized congregation. This was perhaps the hardest thing Mo had to do. And the reason many of us don't realize that is that we have not stood in the gap and interceded the way Moses did, nor have we even come to understand the intensity of the

spiritual warfare that cries out for such intercession. We have not prayed as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, nor have we prayed as Moses prayed here. We often do not sense either the scope or the intensity of the spiritual conflicts going on in the world and in the lives of those we love. We are willing to “add them to our prayer list” and “call their names” when we think of them, to God.

This wasn't that kind of prayer. This was a man's heart reaching out to God's heart on behalf of someone who was virtually a son to him, crying out to His God to vindicate His name and lead His people to victory. Granted, not all prayer is of this magnitude. Not all prayer requires this kind of vulnerability. Not all prayer includes this kind of accountability. I believe, however, that those who are willing to engage in the battle at this level will experience a different kind of power in the “lesser” conflicts of life because they have learned the secrets of intercession and having counted the cost, find it to be not only worth it, *but God's very calling for their lives.*

Let's ask ourselves as we proceed:

- “What kind of battles do we face, if any, where this kind of intercession is required?”
- “Can we intercede and know we are seeing God win the battle?”
- “How can we enlist others to be like Aaron and Hur when we get weary and cannot stay the course alone?”
- “Would this kind of intercession be in harmony with the surrendered life which acknowledges that it is Christ who wins the battles and not us?”
- “Should we enter the conflict of the Spirit at this level, what are some of the dangers and what are some of the warning signs?”

Let's begin with the first question. Not all spiritual battles are of this magnitude. Scripture is clear about that. Many, many passages in the word concerning prayer and intercession involve a much more relaxed, even passive stance on the part of the believer. Prayer, remember, is man coming to God to get His perspective. In many cases, that is done daily, hourly, as we go about life, the human heart searching for divine direction and longing for complete dependence. Prayer is not taking God our problems so He can become a heavenly genie, dispensing

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miracles proportionate to our faith. Prayer is man coming to God with a broken, open heart, seeking to find His will, crying out for that will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In heaven, God's will is always done. The angels live to do His will. In heaven, so will we. On earth, however, there is a horrendous war taking place between the forces of Satan, who have temporary custody of this round ball of real estate, and the power of God, which is being imparted by His Spirit through the lives of His born-again ones. Satan has the advantage, externally. He has been deeded control of much of the world's resources and most of the world's leaders. God, on the other hand, has the advantage internally. He is using even the apparent victories of the enemy to change the hearts of His children, so that *every blow of Satan's sword that seems to be aimed at the heart of man, actually has the capacity to open that heart to God's truth, which ultimately leads to Satan's defeat.*

Many of our prayer times, then, become quiet times of resting in God, or vibrant times of worshipping God, and we anticipate them with a spirit of expectation and joy. Such was the prayer life of Jesus. Such was the prayer life of Paul. Such was the prayer life of Moses. But Moses and Jesus and Paul and most of us also face some battles in life that call for a different kind of prayer. The sky overhead darkens. The thunder in the heavens seems like cannon fire to the ears of the spirit. You sense that the external problems that are crushing the life out of you are more than coincidence and even more than a Romans 8:28 revelation.

This is war! Satan has pulled out all the stops, and you see no light at the end of the tunnel, although the demonic train is rushing towards you at the speed of light. You know that God is still on His throne and that He is waiting and wanting to turn this battle into a victory celebration. Something inside of you cries out for God in a way you have scarcely, if ever, experienced before. Without Him, you perish. Without Him, you see no hope. It may not be you that is being affected. It may be your children, your parents, your disciples, your disciplers. Whoever is being affected, you know that either God comes on the scene with a great display of eternal power, or Satan appears to have won a major victory.

Remember: what God wants is for His will to be done. What we want, most of the time, is for His will to be done, if it can be

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done with minimum pain and as quickly as possible. The two are not always compatible. We must, then, learn to come to God as Moses did, and stand in the gap for those we love and for His will in our own lives, with a level of dependence and a level of humility we have never experienced before. God doesn't need us to win the battle. He needs us to surrender so He can win the battle, *and part of that surrender involves a willingness to come to Him, hearts exposed, hopelessness revealed, crying out in anguish, with total awareness of two things:*

- 1- This is a spiritual battle and it must be won spiritually.
- 2- The battle is not ours; it is God's.

Oftentimes the conflicts we are aware of are not overtly spiritual. They involve our children or our jobs or our finances or our health. If we are not careful, we tend to focus on the *battlefield*, rather than on the *battle*. The battlefield is wherever Satan thought he could wrestle your allegiance away from God, but the real battle is in the heavenlies where Satan and God are engaged in hand-to-heart combat over your surrender to the one thing God wants: *His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven*. Satan wants you to major on what you are experiencing. God wants you to major on what *He is accomplishing*. What you are experiencing is probably pain, suffering, rejection, or loss. What God is accomplishing, if we'll let Him, is spiritual growth, a testimony to unbelievers and a new source of comfort to share with others who later pass through the same battlefield.

Either we recognize that the battle is really spiritual or we will try to band-aid the external wounds and overlook the internal disease and its ramifications. Prayer, Beloved, is a spiritual exercise and it is designed to accomplish spiritual transformation. Most of our prayers center around things and circumstances and we miss the depth of their meaning.

Having come to a spiritual perspective of the conflict, we then must do the only thing that allows God to work on our behalf: We must humble ourselves and acknowledge that *apart from his amazing grace, we can do nothing*. Any prayers that call on God to "help" us are, I believe, an affront to His holiness. God does not need to "help" us win the battle. We aren't in the victory business, *He is*; and we can't defeat the enemy, *He can*. It isn't the words we say, Beloved; it is the heart attitude behind those words. Unless we are truly broken and unless we truly know that

there is no hope apart from God, we are only playing at prayer. His is the Kingdom. His is the Power. His is the Glory. Period. Not His and ours. His. Prayer is not a pity party wherein we tell God how rotten we are. He knows how rotten we are apart from Him. And coming boldly to the throne of grace does not mean coming proudly to the throne. He resists the proud. He has nothing to do with them.

Coming boldly means coming in absolute humility, yet clothed in God's word, coming in absolute faith. Moses was interceding and he understood why. The reputation of God was at stake and God had promised victory. So *Moses had a guarantee of victory from God, but even with that guarantee he had to stand before God and intercede in order for the victory to become reality.*

Two thoughts clamor for our attention as we close this study.

1- Our boldness before God is the result of our confidence that we are praying *according to His will*. (I John 5:14,15) Real intercession is founded on the promises of Scripture, not our feelings or our perceived needs.

2- Even having that confidence, we sometimes are called on by God to enter into the prayer closet at a level we never anticipated, taking those promises and holding them up before a holy God seeking His will (which we know from His word) to be done on earth and in this situation.

When Moses held up his hands, signifying his awareness that it was God's battle, Joshua proceeded to overcome the enemy. When Moses indicated presumption through weariness, and let his arms drop, God freed the enemy to make advances, *even though He had promised ultimate victory*. The key was: *the process was as important as the promise*. God planned to win the battle, but He wanted Moses to understand that victory was a minute by minute thing and total dependence meant continual dependence. We hate that. We want the victory flag to go up ten minutes after we call on the King. We are willing to pray, so long as it doesn't interfere with our "schedule".

Joshua, on the other hand, couldn't engage in the combat without some wounds and some casualties. It wasn't a cakewalk; it was a war. And lest we forget, *even on the road to victory*, God allows some enemy fire to penetrate our bodies, but only to wound, never to slay. Those wounds are life's beatitudes. They are His blessings. They bring about meekness, mourning,

persecution and pain. But even those wounds bring joy as the Great Physician comes quickly to our aid and binds them up with the oil of His Spirit.

Moses couldn't handle it alone. Neither can we. We need to be willing to call upon others when the conflict gets this severe. Even Jesus longed for the three members of His inner circle to share His Gethsemane experience. They chose sleep instead. Usually, so do we. He cried out for others to stand with Him. We need to do the same. That is a part of the humility needed to come to the end of ourselves and part of the glue that holds the body of Christ together in love.

So Moses needed help. Aaron and Hur became his prayer partners. They helped lift him up so he could lift Joshua up. That steadied Moses and pleased God. Joshua, meanwhile, out where the gunfire was real, began to sense a new kind of power; continuous power. The enemy began to retreat. It took all day. It took to the "going down of the sun". That's okay. Aaron and Hur were there to intercede for Moses, and Moses was there to intercede for Joshua, and Joshua was there to stand before the enemy and watch God work. God, incidentally, does good work. Amalek and all his troops went down in defeat, *just as God promised.*

Joshua had just been in the fight of his life. So had Moses. One was out there where the enemy was taking liberties with his life. The other was up the hill and slightly separated from the actual battle. He was, however, just as much a participant, and just as much the victor. Moses became the symbol of the intercessor, and a portrait of the One who was to come. Who was to come was the Lord Jesus, our Moses, who would intercede for us and the Holy Spirit, who like Aaron and Hur, would intercede with us.

What more beautiful picture could we ask for? Look, as Jesus intercedes for us in Romans 8:

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who *is* he that condemneth? It *is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

(Romans 8:33-35a)

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And it is the Holy Spirit who intercedes with us, *literally teaching us how to intercede as He does. Verses 26-28:*

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his purpose*.
(Romans 8:26-28)

We can learn a lot from that one passage. God's Spirit is teaching us how to intercede. In our next lesson, we will try to learn some of those lessons. Several things surface that we need to look at:

1- We don't know how to pray as we ought. God knows that.

2- God intervenes and intercedes *when we let Him, and He intercedes aright, because He prays always according to His will.*
So must we.

3- Therefore, we can rest in His sovereignty, because we know that all things work together for good.

Some of us even now have Joshuas on the battlefield in the midst of heavy gunfire. Like Jesus in that garden, like Moses on that hilltop, *everything is at stake*. It is a spiritual battle; therefore, it must be fought in the Spirit and the results will be spiritual. That may mean great sweat drops falling. That may mean arms that no longer can lift themselves to the heavens. But it may also mean the opportunity to see God at work in ways we never dreamed possible.

I believe there is a secret chamber inside your prayer closet and mine. It is called "The Intercessor's Room". And I believe that Moses wanted to show us just how wonderful it is. He has handed us the key that unlocks the door. Few enter therein. By His grace, may we be added to the few.

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For Further Study and Application

1- Reread Exodus 17:1-7. Why did the people blame Moses for the lack of water? Why did Moses say they were “tempting the Lord”?

2- Why did God allow the “Rock” to be smitten once? What was He depicting to the children of Israel?

3- What made the children of Israel think that God owed them a good, continuous water supply? To what can you liken that kind of presumption today?

4- What great spiritual truth was God trying to teach the Israelites?

5- How can we “make the spiritual switch” when God allows things into our lives we don’t think we “deserve”?

6- Immediately after the miracle came the test. Was that unusual? Is it to be expected? Why?

7- Why was facing the Amalekites such a difficult thing?

8- What would your response have been if you had been Joshua?

9- What was Moses’ role in the battle plan? How does that translate into our roles in spiritual warfare?

10- Why did Moses take Aaron and Hur along? What role did they play? To what can you liken that?

11- Do you find yourself occasionally faced with praying for someone who is undergoing serious spiritual warfare? Do you long to know how to pray and when to pray? Reread this story again. See if God gives you new insights into the joy of intercession.

12- Memorize Exodus 17:11.

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