

Psalm 144 • A Psalm for the day of battle

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Psalm 144 is considered a Royal Psalm. It's very similar to Psalm chapter 18, but it's a wonderful Psalm to read and to meditate on if you are going through a time of intense spiritual warfare. I think as we go through it, you'll see that some of you have been through spiritual warfare; some of you may be going through spiritual warfare. But this is a great Psalm to think about or to use and to pray about or pray through while you're going through that, because it's all about fighting in the strength of the Lord. Look at verse 1:

“Blessed be the Lord, my rock, (Well, you need a rock when you're in battle.) who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;” (ESV)

And this verse is really important for us to see, so let's not move past it too quickly. David is confessing that the Lord is here, his personal trainer. I've never had a personal trainer, I don't think, for anything, but I hear that people do get them. They have personal trainers for getting into shape or learning how to defend themselves, or whatever the case might be.

David says, God, you are my personal trainer when it comes to the day of battle or the warfare that we enter into on a spiritual level, and You train me for that. But as we move on, we're going to see that David also saw God as his protector in the midst of battle. So how would you like your trainer to come with you into the battle and function now as a shield or a protector? He goes on to say in verse 2:

“he is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.”

Did you notice all the different things he noted here about the Lord? Fortress, stronghold, deliverer, shield, refuge. Wow, all in one verse. We need that going into battle. So God not only trains you and I for spiritual warfare, but He is right there beside us as we go into the battle, and He will be all those things to us if we're careful to trust in Him and not get caught up and lost in the emotional turmoil. Many times, we get into spiritual warfare, and our emotions take over.

And you know what happens? We can ruin it. We can ruin the connection that we have with the Lord. We get into a battle, and it's a spiritual battle, and God wants you to fight it like a spiritual battle because it is. Remember what Paul said? He said, we battle not against flesh and blood, right, but against spiritual principalities, powers, and rulers of this dark world, and so forth.

That's where the battle is (Ephesians 6:12). And so, he says, keep your eyes on the battle, but pretty soon, there's somebody's face that gets in front of us, and we start thinking that's where the battle is.

They start saying things and doing things that upset us and get us into an emotional turmoil. Pretty soon, I'm not thinking about the spiritual battle anymore. I'm thinking about the physical battle. All I can see is this person's ugly face in front of me, and I want to punch it or say something nasty to it. And then I've ruined it. It's like God goes, oh, you're on your own now, buddy. I wanted you to walk in the Spirit, and you totally walked in the flesh.

Now, at that point, I can come back to the Lord and confess my wrongdoing. That's not to say that God's not going to take up again our situation or our cause. But boy, I tell you, at the point that you and I flesh out and start dealing with things on a physical level, we're on our own. God's not going to be in that. God's not going to help me deck somebody in the name of the Lord and in the love of Jesus. It's not going to happen.

He says, no, I want you to think. I want you to understand this is a spiritual battle. I want you to know that you're going to wage this warfare on your knees, not with fists or words to that person. You're going to go through the battle in the heavenlies, and you're going to trust in Me through the course of this, right? And not give in to the flesh. Oh, but God, that's so hard. I just want to punch somebody, please. No, no, no. See, that's physical.

And you guys remember too, well, I remember books came out back when I was a teenager and stuff like that, that said instead of punching someone, you should just go out in the garage, find a cardboard box, and rip it up into little small pieces. Then you'll feel better.

There's only one problem with that from a Christian standpoint, it's still physical. And if you give in to a physical expression to your anger, you're going to become a slave to physical expressions of your anger. And yeah, you might take care of a cardboard box for the first half a dozen times. But soon, you run out of cardboard boxes, and then there's that face again, getting in yours. And because you've given in to these physical expressions, right?

That's why the Bible says the fool gives full vent to his anger in Proverbs (Proverbs 29:11). It's foolish to give full vent to your anger, even to a cardboard box. Because the more you do it, the more it becomes habitual. Pretty soon, you run out of boxes. And now there are just people, and you start ripping them to shreds. And then the Lord's not with you anymore because you've taken a completely physical approach to the whole battle.

He says in verse 3,

“O Lord, what is man that you regard him, or the son of man that you think of him?”

⁴ *Man is like a breath (he says); his days are like a passing shadow. (So why is it, Lord, that You even think about us or care about us? But for now, verse 5, he says.)*

⁵ *Bow your heavens, O Lord, and come down! Touch the mountains so that they smoke!*

⁶ *Flash forth the lightning and scatter them; send out your arrows and rout them!*

⁷ *Stretch out your hand from on high; rescue me and deliver me from the many waters, from the hand of foreigners,*

⁸ *whose mouths speak lies and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”*

Notice what David is doing: he's calling upon the Lord to act. Now, he uses very poetic language here, and you have to understand that when he says, *“...Touch the mountains so that they smoke!”*

He's probably thinking back to the presence of the Lord coming on the mountain when Moses met Him there, and He gave the law to Israel. He's basically saying, let Your presence be magnified and stretch out Your hand. He's wanting God to take care of this situation. He's praying that the Lord would intervene.

And then he says in verse 9:

“I will sing a new song to you, O God; upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you,

¹⁰ *who gives victory to kings, who rescues David his servant from the cruel sword.*”

What is he doing here in these two verses? Notice what David says: *“I will sing a new song to You...”* That's worship, isn't it? People, don't ever underestimate the place that worship holds in spiritual warfare.

Verse 11:

“Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners, whose mouths speak lies and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”

That David ends the prayer with a prayer for blessing. He says,

¹² *May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace;*

¹³ *may our granaries be full, providing all kinds of produce; may our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields;*

¹⁴ *may our cattle be heavy with young, suffering no mishap or failure in bearing; may there be no cry of distress in our streets!”*

And what is he praying for here? What is David praying for? He's praying for fruitfulness, isn't he? He's praying for fruitfulness. We could say the same thing in our churches without talking about plants full-grown or daughters being like cut pillars or granaries being full. We could just say, Lord, let us be fruitful as a church. May we be fruitful in our lives for You.

Verse 15:

“Blessed are the people to whom such blessings fall! Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!”

And boy, I say amen to that.