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by Berni Dymet



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# The Battle Belongs to the Lord

*Every now and then we're confronted with the impossible.  
Fortunately, God specialises in the impossible!*

**christianityworks**

the battle belongs  
to the Lord

A black silhouette of a Roman soldier stands between the words "to the" and "Lord". The soldier is wearing a helmet with a crest, holding a sword in his right hand, and carrying a rectangular shield on his left arm.

*by* berni dymet

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1st edition - Published 2009  
2nd edition - Published 2013

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Cover design: Mariah Reilly Design, Sydney Australia  
*We gratefully acknowledge the creative contribution of Mariah Reilly in the cover design of this book.*

Printed by: Creative Visions Print & Design, Warrawong,  
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## I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT

In this day and age one of the things that they teach us is to be self-reliant. To have confidence in our own abilities.

“You can do anything you set your mind to”, they tell us. “You can make it. It’s up to you.”

That’s OK to a point I guess. It’s a good thing to have some confidence in who we are and who God has made us to be. But you take this idea too far, and it’ll bring you undone. The positive turns into a terrible negative.

What happens when the situation we’re in, or the circumstances that we face are so far beyond our own ability to deal with them, that any idea of self reliance is completely ridiculous?



What happens when the problem confronting us requires skills that we don't have?

What happens when the career we've chosen just doesn't fit who we are?

What happens when the one we love – our wife, our husband, or one of our children – is going through some tough times? Something that, as much as we love them, we can't seem to be able to help them through – an illness, a depression, a crisis – and nothing we can say or do seems to make any difference? Well, then what?

What happens when it feels as if a tsunami has hit our lives? What do we do when the enemy that gathers around us completely outnumbered and outguns us?

Come on. Then what do you do? **This isn't some theoretical exercise. This is life. It's my life and it's your life.** Because this happens. It's real. There are times in our lives when the enemy – whoever, or whatever that may be – is so much bigger than our ability to survive.

It happens in families. It happens in workplaces. And it happens in hearts. When sickness hits for no good reason. When a loved one is taken in their



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.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*





prime and the grief overwhelms us. When a marriage falls apart.

It happens when retrenchment hits. When the economy takes a nose dive. When there isn't enough food to feed the family. When people betray us. This is life. It's real life.

Let me ask you something: **when the enemy is so much bigger and so much stronger than anything you or I could ever handle, what do we do?**

Some people panic and run around in ever decreasing circles, wasting their precious energy on panicking. You've seen it. I've seen it. You know, we've both probably been there too. Other people pull over and stop because they're immobilised by fear.

That's what happens you know. But neither of those things cuts the mustard; neither of them helps. Running around like a headless chook is exhausting. Wallowing in self pity is destructive.

What do we do?

I'm a pretty self-reliant kind of guy. I like to think that I can handle most things. **BUT there are times when things happen that are completely and utterly beyond anything I can handle.**



And in those times, to hang on to this notion of self-reliance, this delusion of “I can do anything” will only make things worse. It’s okay to believe in ourselves but the reality is that sometimes, maybe this time, we just can’t swim against this tsunami.

It’s too big. It’s too scary.

I was talking the other day with a young woman who is extremely competent and confident in her field. Professionally she’s a class act in every way that you can imagine. We got on to the fact that she had two young children, and her demeanour changed.

As someone whose children are now all grown up (I’m well and truly past the stresses and strains of bringing up little ones) I love telling young parents “Don’t worry, the first twenty five years are the hardest – after that it’s a piece of baklava!” It’s my gift of encouragement!

But like any young mum, this motherhood thing was a struggle for this competent, professional woman. It’s so tiring. So much that’s new and challenging. There’s so much in bringing up kids. It’s beyond our control.

That’s the key isn’t it? When we’re dealing with things that are under our control, and we happen to



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have the skills and the ability and the inclination to control them, it's all good.

**But the further things are out of control, the more they look like a tsunami rather than a wave that we can ride.** Then, then it gets scary.

I want to introduce you today to one of the kings in Israel's history. Actually he's the king of a couple of the tribes of Israel – Judah and Benjamin. His name was Jehoshaphat. Okay it's a long name, but he was definitely one of the good guys. And there was a time when he was confronted by an enemy that was way, way, way beyond his ability to fight and defeat. Let's pick up his story...

*After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; already they are at Engedi". Jehoshaphat was afraid; (2 Chronicles 20:1-3)*

See this was an army much bigger than his own. The odds were completely overwhelming and Jehoshaphat and his people were facing absolutely certain defeat. To the king that meant death. For his people it meant death or slavery or loss of all



their possessions and land. Probably rape for the women.

The higher the stakes, the scarier it gets, doesn't it?!

And for Jehoshaphat the stakes couldn't have been higher. He was in that place, well and truly, that you and I find ourselves in from time to time.

I just want to establish here that old King Jehoshaphat was human like you and me, not some super-human king. There were armies coming in against him. He was completely outnumbered and outgunned. This was a life and death situation and it says *Jehoshaphat was afraid*. Jehoshaphat, it turns out, is just one of us.

I remember as a young boy, going to the dentist – the staircase leading up to the dentist's rooms; the smell of the dental surgery the moment I walked in the door; feeling the knot in my stomach while I sat in the waiting room.

Fear is something that disables us. It's not good for anyone when we're disabled by fear. We're no good to ourselves, we're no good to God and we're no good to those who need our help.

*Jehoshaphat was afraid*. But it was what he did



**in his fear, that made all the difference.** And we're going to take a look at that in just a moment. But before we do, I want to encourage each one of us to think through this fear thing in our own lives.



## LIFE APPLICATION

### A look at fear in my life

*Fear is something that we all must travel through. It can feel as if someone has reached down our throat and torn our insides out. And when we're going through that, we very, very rarely stop to think through exactly what it is that's going on. What are we going through? How are we reacting? And, more importantly, what does God want to do with us, through us and for us when we're gripped by fear?*

So I'd love to pause for just a moment to give you a few questions to ponder on this whole topic of fear and how it applies in your life.

Here they are:

1. *When have you recently been afraid of something?*
2. *Why was it so scary?*



### 3. *How did you react?*

Before you read on, take time to write down your answers and allow the Holy Spirit to speak into your heart.

Fear is something that we all go through. And I believe that God wants to deal with that fear decisively in our lives. Decisively! Over and over again in the Bible, God says to His People: **“DO NOT BE AFRAID.”** That’s easy for Him to say I guess.

But I think that He means for that reality to sink into our hearts. That’s why we’re together here around God’s Word at the moment. That’s why He’s brought us this story of Jehoshaphat. That’s why the Spirit of God, at this very moment is aching to whisper His peace into our hearts. “Do Not Be Afraid.”

I believe that God is going to use His Word to take away our fear once and for all.

And can I tell you something else? This isn’t some pipe dream. This isn’t some kind of spiritual fantasy, or denial of the reality of the things that are going on around us.

So let’s sink our teeth into His Word and let Him do His thing in our hearts. How about it?

.....







## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CAN'T

Well, let's get back into God's Word and take a look at what happened when King Jehoshaphat was faced with these completely overwhelming odds.

*Jehoshaphat was afraid; he set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the towns of Judah they came to seek the LORD. Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, "O LORD, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand*



*are power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you.*

*Did you not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? They have lived in it, and in it have built you a sanctuary for your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before you, for your name is in this house, and cry to you in our distress, and you will hear and save.*

*See now, the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy—they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession that you have given us to inherit.*

*O our God, will you not execute judgment upon them? For we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”*

*Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. (2 Chronicles 20:3-13)*



In the face of  
overwhelming odds he  
turned to God.

.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*



Do you see? Jehoshaphat didn't let his fear immobilise him. He didn't get into a flap and a panic. **In the face of overwhelming odds he turned to God.**

Sometimes that's the only way that God gets our attention. I'd like to be able tell you that I first turned to God because I was wise and loving and understood that Jesus was the Son of God. But if I told you that I'd be lying.

I needed to be hit across the back of the head with a lump of four-by-two before God could get my attention.

Overwhelming odds! That's what did it for me. I turned to God in the middle of fear. And for me it was a last resort. But for Jehoshaphat – God was his first port of call. Such was the wisdom of this King.

Now a King is supposed to have all the answers. A King like Jehoshaphat should have a powerful army and contingency plans based on a comprehensive threat assessment. He should be self-reliant – a man for people to respect and follow and trust for their safety and their future. But listen again to what Jehoshaphat says when he's praying to God.



*O our God, will you not execute judgment upon them? For we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.*  
(2 Chronicles 20:12)

I really relate to this. When I stepped out of the secure, well-paid employment as an Information Technology consultant into full time ministry, that was a step of faith. Leaving security behind to serve God. And I can't begin to tell you how many times since then I have been in that place that Jehoshaphat and his people were in.

I started out with this naive notion that if I was going to be about God's work it would be easy. **And yet so many times people and circumstances have conspired to be against God's work.**

Every couple of years the Board of our ministry, Christianityworks, gets together to do some strategic planning. That's important, and the strategic plan always looks good on paper. It gives us a sense of what direction we think that God wants us to head in.

And invariably then all hell breaks loose (literal-



...it's what we do when  
fear strikes, that makes all  
the difference.

.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*



ly) because the enemy wants to overwhelm us. He doesn't want to see God's will done here on earth as it is in heaven.

And that's what's going on here with Jehoshaphat and Judah. Remember, these are God's chosen people. The king honoured God and by all accounts was wise and competent. But in the face of overwhelming odds he admitted to God, **"We do not know what to do..."**

So what was his solution? How did he cope with this? In the same sentence, in the same breath he says... **"but our eyes are on You"**.

I wonder sometimes when I see people who profess to believe in Jesus running around in panic, wasting so much of their energies complaining and worrying and being afraid. It takes a lot of energy to be afraid, you realise. I wonder if they spent even half of that amount of their energy having their eyes on God, how much better off they'd be.

You and I – we can't help but be afraid. Jehoshaphat was afraid. It's a natural human reaction. I'm not here to tell you to somehow pretend that you're not afraid when fear is rocking you to the very core. That's ridiculous!

**But it's what we do when fear strikes, that makes**





**all the difference.** When we panic we burn energy. When we're frozen and immobilised that's probably the end of us. That's what fear does – stops us dead in our tracks. We go nowhere. Had Jehoshaphat done that, he and all his people would have been dead. Literally!

Or, we can just turn and look at God and say, “You know something Lord – this is so huge. I just don't know what to do, but my eyes – my eyes are on you. I'm just going to wait on you. I don't know what you're going to do. I don't even know if you're going to show up but – no matter what – my eyes are on you.”

And here's the bit that blows me away about this story. It's this. That **God wasn't Jehoshaphat's last resort, God was His first port of call.** He trusted in the sovereign grace of his God.

*Jehoshaphat was afraid; he set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)*

I wonder how different things would be amidst our fear if, instead of running around spending all that energy on panic, or instead of running to the phone to talk to some friend, if we first ran to God.



If the very first thing we did was take stock, and in our hearts, deep inside somewhere and we decided to set ourselves to seek the Lord?

God – the first point of call, rather than the place of last resort!



## LIFE APPLICATION

### My response to fear

*Did God say anything? Did God do anything? Or was Jehoshaphat's faith, just a fantasy?*

See that's the question that we each have to face when we dare to look to God, from the midst of our fear.

Let's pause for a moment and just consider how what we've learned applies to our lives, because that's what this is all about. God isn't some theory lesson. He is a powerful, mighty loving God who wants to be involved in every part of our lives. And when we go through fear, that's an opportunity to learn.

What?! How?



Fear is our opportunity to turn to God, to experience His peace – a peace that surpasses all understanding. When God speaks, things happen.

After all God said “Let there be Light, and there was and it was good.”

And when He says “Do not be afraid” – He expects that to happen in our lives. By His Word. By His Spirit. By His power.

So let me ask you these questions. Take time to write down your answers and let God speak His truth into your heart.

1. *Do you really expect God to give you peace when you're afraid? If not, why not?*
2. *Do you really expect God to deal decisively not only with your fear, but the overwhelming odds, the overwhelming enemy that's massing around you?*
3. *Are you prepared to make God your first port of call when the storm of fear hits, instead of a God of last resorts?*
4. *If you did deal with fear that way, what would that look like? I mean – right in the middle of a battle that you're facing right now?*



These are ‘crunch’ questions. And, like Jehoshaphat, it’s the way that we answer these questions, not in theory but in real life, that is going to determine whether we ever realise the incredible opportunity that God is handing us in the middle of our fear.



## A POWERFUL OUTCOME

So – how did it end? **Was Jehoshaphat's trust misplaced or well placed?** Let's take a look...

*Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the middle of the assembly. He said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not fear or be dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go down against them; they will come up by the ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. This*



*battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.”*

*Then Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.*

*They rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God and you will be established; believe his prophets.”*

*When he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy splendor, as they went before the army, saying, “Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever.” As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the Ammonites, Moab, and*



Was Jehoshaphat's  
trust misplaced or  
well placed?

.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*





*Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.*

*For the Ammonites and Moab attacked the inhabitants of Mount Seir, destroying them utterly; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another. When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; they were corpses lying on the ground; no one had escaped.*

*When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take the booty from them, they found livestock in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They spent three days taking the booty, because of its abundance.*

*(2 Chronicles 20:14-25)*

**“Unbelievable,” I hear you say. How can this possibly happen?!**

I’ll tell you how. Because Jehoshaphat decided that he would stand and wait on God – no matter what the outcome! That’s the key – that’s the faith that God was looking for. No matter what the outcome!

Let’s take another look:



*If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before you, for your name is in this house, and cry to you in our distress, and you will hear and save.*

*See now, the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy – they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession that you have given us to inherit.*

*O our God, will you not execute judgment upon them? For we are powerless against this great multitude that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”*

*(2 Chronicles 20:9-12)*

**This is the do or die faith that God is looking for.** And when we place our faith in God in this way – for things that are completely out of control, right when that tsunami hits – His Spirit and His Word come along and witness this truth to us:

*This battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the LORD on your behalf. Do not fear or be dis-*



....we get to stand still,  
and discover in our own  
experience that the battle is  
not ours at all.

.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*



*mayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you.” (2 Chronicles 20:17)*

Listen to me. Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ? Have you?

Then those times of fear are the times when we discover what a beautiful thing it is to trust in the Lord, no matter what is coming against us, no matter what the world throws at us, no matter how overwhelming the odds might be.

Those times are the times that **we get to stand still, and discover in our very own experience that the battle is not ours at all** – but the Battle Belongs to the Lord. Can I encourage you that if you feel right now that you’re on death row, as though there is no tomorrow, to listen to the words of the Apostle Paul, from His dungeon:

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure,*



*whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9)*

Do you see? That's the Word of the Lord for us today. Jehoshaphat knew it and learned it again in his experience. The people of Judah learned it again under the leadership of Jehoshaphat. This overwhelming army came against them. They couldn't win. It was a no-win situation.

And then they discovered afresh and anew that **the battle was not theirs but that the battle belonged to the Lord.** And they listened to God through His prophets when He said, "Stand still to see and to watch what the Lord would do for you".

Can I encourage you today to remember the battle is not yours. The Battle Belongs to the Lord. Stand still and watch to see what the Lord will do for you.



...they discovered afresh  
and anew that the battle  
was not theirs but that the  
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.....

*the battle belongs to the Lord*



## TIME TO PRAY

**Well, isn't God's Word amazing and powerful?**

Doesn't it give us a completely different perspective when we lift our eyes from the murky lowlands in which we've been wandering for so long, up to the glory of God. I think that's our problem so often.

We lose sight of the glory and the wonder of God. We take our eyes off Him, and focus on the big, hairy eight hundred pound gorilla in the room, as though somehow that gorilla is bigger than our God.

We lose the sense of wonder and awe of our God, amidst the mundane and fearful realities of life. That's human. So as we allow God's Word to wash over us and through us right now, I just



wonder whether it wouldn't be a great time to pray together:

*Lord God, forgive us for losing sight of you. Forgive us for getting lost amidst the realities of life and forgetting that You are our God – on the bright, sunny days and on the dark, stormy, fearful days. Forgive us dear Lord for this mistake. Yes, it's human but no, we have no excuse.*

*Lord what we've discovered here in your word is that those times of fear are our opportunity to experience your peace and your deliverance. And what we've discovered Lord is that what you want us to do is not waste a whole bunch of energy flapping around and being afraid, but simply to stand still right there in the middle of the storm and believe in our hearts, right in the middle of that place of fear, that the battle indeed belongs to the Lord.*

*Speak your words "Do Not Be Afraid" into us in a way that we will never, ever forget them.*

*In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

.....







## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Berni Dymet is a contemporary Christian communicator with a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus right into the middle of life. He comes from the perspective that this Christianity thing - it isn't just a faith that lives in our heads or even our hearts, but that it actually works right here in the middle of our lives.**

Christianity actually works when we dare to accept Jesus Christ into our lives!! Not just as Saviour, but also as Lord.

Millions of people around the globe tune into Berni's radio programs each week. The Lord has given him a special gift for sharing the Gospel in a truly practical way. In a way that really connects into the hearts and lives of real people in real places, transforming their lives. That's what the ministry of Christianityworks is all about. Leading people into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

But Berni's passion, his enthusiasm and his insights into the day to day realities of life are simply tools in God's hands. The real change agent is God Himself.

*And to Him - and Him alone - be all the glory.*

.....

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Berni Dymet

## The Battle Belongs to the Lord

We all feel some stress sometimes. That's normal. But way too many of us are living our lives constantly under way too much stress. And that's not good. It impacts us emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, relationally and physically. So if God is God, surely He has something to say about stress, some bit of wisdom to relieve the pressure. Surely He cares doesn't He?

Join Berni Dymet in this practical and powerful booklet as he opens God's Word to discover that the 'Battle Belongs to the Lord'.

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