

# Losing Your Grip

- Wayne Dailey -

Founding Pastor, Bethel Revival Center

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II Samuel 21:15

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.

You may wonder how a man like David could have waxed faint in the battle, could have felt as faint as David felt on this particular day.

II Samuel 21:16A

And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

David was facing a big one! facing a tough one! And the adversary of our soul is also a big one! a tough one!

Now, David faced another big one earlier in his life when he faced Goliath. We all know that story. A lot of time has gone by since that day, and here in II Samuel 21, he is facing another big one, another giant, another one who towered over most anybody.

*And David waxed faint!* Things don't look good here. Where's the boy who faced Goliath with a slingshot?

II Samuel 21:17

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

Do you understand what this means? This was informing David that it was all over — that the days of his warring were coming to an end because he waxed faint in the battle. He would have been slain if it had not been for a young man who rose up to slay the giant that was coming against David.

## Have You Lost Your Grip?

Is there a giant you haven't been able to slay? You can't lose your grip, or you'll lose the battle. You've got to bear down on that handle and hold on for dear life.

Just imagine what it was like to be holding a sword all day long in the heat of battle. This day we find that David lost his grip on his sword.

What about you? Have you lost your grip on the sword? Are you waxing faint in the battle? Are you finding yourself in the place where you can't seem to handle things any more? Are you in the place where you don't even care if you handle it any more? Are you so faint that you don't even care if you go on — so faint that you're ready to just give up and quit?

We are told that David waxed faint, and, oftentimes, God's people wax faint in the battle: "I'm tired! It's church time but I don't think I'll go. I'm too tired, too weary. It's too cold outside. I'm tired of this constant warfare."

God warns His people not to be weary in well doing because He knows that they can become weary in the battles.

It would have been sad to find the account in God's Word where a Philistine smote David and took off his head! But God had someone that day who would give David a helping hand.

I wouldn't want to read where a giant came along and took vengeance for the slaughter of Goliath. It looked that way for a season, but there was this brave young man who waxed valiant in the battle and put that Philistine in his place (in a prone position, stretched out on the ground!).

Are you waxing valiant, or are you waxing faint?

If you give serious consideration to the battles you have faced, you'll see where there are many times you waxed faint in the battle. You'll see those times when you lost your grip, where you didn't hold your sword tightly as you should have held it.

May we realize that anytime we're in a conflict that it's not time to have a down time — where we're dragging our feet and our mind is off some place else.

In this life we find the need to stop sometimes and evaluate where we are — such as checking the gauges in our car. When we do, we can determine where we stand by what we note. We can see if we need to get some gas or need more oil. When the gas gauge is on E, shouldn't we do something about it?

And don't you sense that something's wrong with your walk when you're waxing faint and not pressing in, when you're not fighting a good fight?

II Timothy 4:7

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith

Paul fought a good fight from the day he had gotten saved right to the end.

How are you doing in the fight? Are you going to finish your course, able to say you had fought a good fight right to the end?

## **Signs of Losing Your Grip**

### **No Desire for Church**

There are some symptoms that will let us know when we're losing our grip: "I'm losing interest in attending church." Face the real issue: You're not losing interest in church — you're losing interest in Jesus! The Lily of the Valley in your life is fading. The Rose of Sharon is wilting. Something's wrong!

Now, there's nothing wrong with Jesus, but there is something wrong with your view of Him and your admiration of Him if you're losing interest in the things of God.

It's like when a husband and wife aren't on speaking terms: something's wrong. To keep a marriage together in love, a couple has to keep talking, showing love and respect for one another. They've got to stay sweet, stay in love, stay close to one another.

What about your relationship with Jesus? Are you waxing faint in the battle? Are you in a situation where Jesus isn't so important to you anymore?

You can't afford to wax faint in the battle; you can't afford to give in for some reason or another — you can't afford to lose interest in Jesus.

Now, there are other signs of faintness in the battle. Know that the enemy is ever out there to pull you down one way or another.

### **No Desire to Pray**

*Watch and Pray* (see Matthew 26:41): "I don't feel like praying. I don't have any mind to pray. It's not in me to go pray. I don't see any necessity in praying. Why go to prayer meeting if I don't feel like praying? What does God want of me, anyhow?"

Listen, God wants you to wax strong in battle. That's what He wants!

I'm going to ask you point blank: Are you made strong by prayerlessness? Are you made strong by missing church, or are you made strong by getting into the house of God and having your soul fed? made strong by seeking the Lord daily in prayer?

You're kidding yourself if you think you're made strong by staying away from God's house, made strong by not praying.

It's no time to lose your grip. You can't afford to lose your grip in this day and hour. You've got to get a hold! You've got to lay hold of spiritual things and not let them slip.

It's so easy to get into one of those ruts, so easy to slide into an "I don't care" attitude. But, remember Who it is you're not caring about!

You need a change of heart if that's the way you feel. Something's wrong inside when you no longer have a deep desire for the Lord. What is the matter with Him? What has He done to vex you to where you no longer want to be close Him any more?

Listen, it's *you* who has done something. It's you who has drawn back from Him and put a lot of things between you and Him.

Are you going to be like David, waxing faint in the battle?

I'll say this for David: He was getting up in years yet was out on the battlefield. He may have been waxing faint at this time in his life, but he wasn't playing church! He was in the battle, even though he waxed faint. He wasn't out on a pleasure binge. No, he was out on the battlefield.

Many of God's people are losing their grip these days. They're not hanging tight to the sword. And once we start letting down, we will begin to lose ground fast. It's just a little at first . . . then a little more . . . a little more . . . a lot . . . and a lot more.

We can see a picture here of how God's people lose their grip. They can't hang on any longer. They no longer have a firm hold on that sword in the battle.

And, when you let down — slacking off because you're tired and faint — realize the devil doesn't let down: He doesn't get tired and faint and leave you alone; he doesn't back off. It's his aim to keep at it until he can put you down!

In this account about David we find the giant thought he had the victory. He thought he could slay King David. That would have put a big feather in his cap: "This is the man who brought that great warrior David down!" What honors would have been bestowed upon him that day.

And what honors the devil would have if he succeeded in putting you down. It's an honor to him to come along and sift you like wheat. That's what he did to Peter. It was his aim to sift Peter until he had him — and could keep him.

Why did he want Peter? Peter was chosen of God, and Satan desired to destroy him. He sought for an opportunity to put him down. Where did he find his chance? When Peter wasn't watching and praying, when he was fast asleep.

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

## **Sleepy Hollow**

Sleepy Hollow is where you're going to get caught in a snare. The devil will get in and hang one on you there. He'll run his fingers through the wheat and take you out. That's his purpose.

Christians aren't supposed to go over to Sleepy Hollow and lay down for a nap. Sleepy Hollow is a trap! You get down in that hollow and find a big giant standing before the entrance to prevent you from getting out again: "I've got you now. Keep sleeping!"

It's not easy to stand in the battle time after time. You think you just about had the enemy defeated when he breaks out on the other side, coming against you in another way. You think you have the victory over that problem in your life when you find a new problem arises — and often that problem is that you no longer want to go to church!

When that new problem arises, you feel it's important for you to stay home during church. You feel there are better things to do at home, and you no longer have a mind to go to church because you enjoy staying home.

When one loses their grip on the spiritual sword, spiritual things take a back seat. Watch out!

Did you ever faint? I fainted once. I got hurt and blacked right out. Strange things happen when you faint: You black out; your eyesight is gone. You can hear what's going on around you, but you've blacked out.

And this happens when one faints spiritually — when one loses their grip.

Some get their feelings hurt and right away they faint! Oh, I don't mean they fall down physically, but they decide they're not going back to church just because their feelings got hurt. Some little thing comes against them, and they faint. They're ready to give it all up over one little offense.

Listen! When we feel faint in the battle, that's a danger signal. It's time to get a hold of things, not time to let go. When we find we're not wanting to pray, not wanting to attend church, not wanting to get into God's Word, that's not time to let go! It's time to tighten our grip on the sword.

## **Losing Your "Mind To"**

Many of God's people lose their "mind to." When you're on fire for God, you have a mind to go to church. You wouldn't miss church for anything. Even during a storm you'll try to find a way to get there.

When we first got saved, my wife and I lived in the hills of Pennsylvania. And there were times when we'd drive 30 or 40 miles in a raging snow storm because it was time to go to church.

Why did we do that? We didn't love to drive in a storm, but we did love to go to church. We had a mind to go to church. Before we ever became pastors, we had a mind to go to church.

You've got to have a "mind to" in the things of God. When you lose that, you'll slip away and get a mind to do something else. You'll lose your mind to draw close to the Lord, and you'll get a mind to do something new.

Some slip away from church because they now have a mind to go to bed early and sleep. Others now have a mind to go shopping when it's time for church. Others have a mind to do this or do that — anything but go to church.

No matter what it is that lures them away, the issue is that they lose their mind to go to church. Church no longer seems important to them.

Oftentimes people deceive themselves by making up excuses when they've lost their "mind to."

One excuse that often pops up when one is faint is this: "God doesn't expect me to! He's not asking that much of me!" Those are words from someone who has lost their "mind to." What they're really saying is that they enjoy some other pursuit much more than they do Jesus.

Now, it's not just a matter of attending church: Many are still in church but have lost their mind to to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

If all you're doing is going to church to show your face while doing your own thing when you leave, you're not doing anything worthwhile. If you go to church just for the sake of going to church, you've not accomplished anything. But if you go to church to meet with Jesus — to worship Him and give yourself to Him — then church becomes meaningful. If you go to get prepared for the battle, preparing yourself to stand in this last day, that's worth while!

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

## **STOP!**

Are you weary? Are you faint? Is your hand slipping? Are you losing your grip on the sword? Stop and consider where you are in the battle.

Realize that you can do something about it by renewing your mind to where you have a mind that's fixed on the Lord. You can have a mind that's set on going to church, set on serving the Lord with all your heart. And you should have such a mind.

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I find, oftentimes, in talking to those who need to get back to church, that they've lost their "mind to." They no longer want to go to church because they don't feel like going.

## **Keep Your First Love**

There's no first love in such a mind. You need to be careful. If you hang around the wrong crowd, you'll fall in love with the wrong things. Your love for the Lord will cool off to where you will leave it behind.

Remember the joy you had when you first got saved! You couldn't wait to get into the house of God. The Lord was on your mind and heart night and day.

That's a first love. The Ephesian believers had that first love . . . at one time. They got started off on the right foot, but down the road (where you might be today) they left their first love for other things. They lost their grip. They waxed faint.

Oh, they were doing so well. God was pleased with them. In fact, He commended their good works even after they had left their first love. He spoke about the good things they had done for His Name's sake:

Revelation 2:1-5

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

*"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love . . ."*

The Lord is looking for more than the good things we might be doing for Him. He's looking for more than service. He's looking for our love and our fellowship.

We can't afford to lose sight of the Lord. We can't afford to leave our first love for Him — but this is what has happened to many. Their first love has been put away. It's not there any longer. It's almost like in a marriage where the distance between a couple has become great — where their relationship has become arguments and bickering, or silence. The sweetness is no longer there between them.

When you leave your first love, you don't mind staying home even when you know the Lord is blessing at church. You put distance between you and Him.

My, I want to be in the house of God even if there were only two or three gathered together to meet with Jesus. I don't want to be in the crowd where I'll still be alone, though people are all around. I want to be with Jesus because I'm in love with Him.

Realize, now, the danger of waxing faint in the battle where, the next thing you know, you've left your first love. And when you've done that, church no longer is a pleasure. It suddenly becomes a drag, because you're no longer interested in the things of God; you no longer have that first love for the Lord burning in your heart.

When the rapture takes place, are you going to decide then to get interested in Jesus? Listen, it will be too late then. You don't want to be caught in that day having no love for Jesus.

The Lord knows how to deal with us when we need to be dealt with. In the book of Revelation we find Him dealing with those who have left their first love. It doesn't say that the Ephesians had *lost* their first love. No, it says that they had *left* their first love. And if they left it, that means they left it for something else. They had fallen in love with something else.

When a love is new, it is a first love. And the Ephesians left the first love they had for Jesus to fall in love with something else.

When Jesus comes, you want to be found having that first love for Him. You want to be found having the fullness of the Spirit. You want to be found with your white garment on, prepared to meet Him. You want to be found in that righteousness which Christ gives.

## **Preparation for the Battle**

Now, let's take another look at David:

II Samuel 21:15-17

Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

We all get older, but that doesn't mean our experience with the Lord should grow stale. We may get older, but the Lord isn't any older than He was when we first fell in love with Him.

When one gets older, it's tempting to become weary in the battle. It may seem quite natural to come to the place where David came and begin to wax faint.

"I've waxed faint! I've lost my grip! I can't hold on to the sword any longer! The days are too long for me! I'll have to cut those battle times down and make some type of an agreement with the adversary to shorten the fight. I can fight from nine to eleven and then take a break until the



next day! But I've got to cut down the fighting time because I am waxing faint. If you shorten the services, pastor, I'll come to church. If you cut down the fight time, I'll come. I'm getting old and I'm waxing faint. I can't hang on to the sword for too long these days. Cut down the songs and time of praise; cut that fighting time down. Pastor, if you could only learn to cut your sermons down into four parts, one for each week of the month, that would be enough for me."

I wonder what David had for breakfast that day. I wonder if he knew the day would be rough, so he took some time to seek the Lord that he might have enough strength to hold onto the sword all day long.

"I'm going to take time before anything else today and pray my strength in the Lord. I'm going to pray that I'll have a lot of grip in my hand today. I'm going to pray that I might be enabled to stand out there in the battle all day, and, if the battle rages all day into the night and there's no time to stop and grab a sandwich, I'm going to be able to stand in the battle because I took the time to receive my strength in the Lord."

What do you have for breakfast when you're out there on the battlefield? The military has such things as K-rations, because a soldier needs something to eat out there; he can't stay in battle all day without something to eat. That would be a sure way to faint.

Look, if we can't get into church to get something to eat, we'll find ourselves getting faint in the battle.

These days the battle is raging: gross darkness is creeping in on the face of the whole earth; the time of the end is at hand; the great falling away has set in. There's such a lack of love for God's Word in the church world of our day. So many are backing down, backing way, not wanting to stand for the truth. Truth has been thrown into the streets.

We don't want that!

"Pastor, if you didn't preach about that, I'd come to church."

Look, we're in a war. Do you understand that? We're in a war! The church is being invaded from within and losing its love for truth. The church, as a whole, has left their first love and heaped unto themselves teachers having itching ears, turning their hearts away from the truth (see II Timothy 4:3,4). Yes, the church is waxing faint in the battle.

Listen, you can't go out to face those giants with a small glass of juice and a bowl of cereal. You need more than that! You can't go that route without being overcome. Would it help to cut the sermons? Would that help get you stronger? You may find more time for other things, but what does God say in His wisdom? He knows what it will take to stand in the battle.

Why preach the Word? Why not just preach little sermons, and have little services, and sing little songs . . . and have little power, and little victory, and little strength?

When we slack our hands, we just wax weaker and weaker. Get it into your heart that we are in a battle! We're in the battle of the last days. Yes, we're at the end of the age! Satan has a short time — and he knows it!

Revelation 12:12

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Knowing he has but a short time, Satan is doing all he can to hinder and stop God's people from walking in truth with a first love for the Lord.

We each need to check our experience to be *sure* we're ready. The teacher notes on the report card how many days the student was absent. Does that mean anything? If they were absent three days this week and two days next week, that would mean they missed a week of school — a fourth of the month's teaching.

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

But *even the more so*, as you see the day approaching! A church that keeps its doors open to preach the Word of God more than just on Sunday morning is not out of touch with the Holy Spirit.

Pastors who take the time to preach from God's Word to their people are concerned to help them stand in the battle and maintain victory. But it's up to the people to eat what's fed them from the Word. Just because pastors are faithfully feeding their flock God's Word doesn't mean the flock is eating what they feed them.

We live in a diet-conscience society today: "I want to be thin. I ate my three cornflakes for breakfast with four grains of sugar and a spoon of diluted milk." Well, that's your business, but are you also on a spiritual diet? Do you want to just nibble at God's Word? Do you want to avoid the meat?

I can't imagine David going out to battle with just a small salad in his stomach. We don't need a spiritual diet like that; we need a healthy diet of God's Word. We don't need old wives fables; we don't need a diet void of truth, a diet of oppositions of science. We cannot pick and choose what we want to hear from the Word.

## **Help in the Battle**

David waxed faint! Was it just his age? Did he just have a bad day? What brought all this on? The Word doesn't tell us, but it does say what would have happened if someone hadn't risen up to help him.

II Samuel 21:17

But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

I'm trying in this message to do what that young man did. I'm trying to rise up and help you if you're faint and ready to pass out. You're going to lose the victory if you're pulling away from Jesus: and who's going to rescue you?

Someone best rise up to help, or the devil will get you off alone someplace and do you in. I don't know of any better place to be when we're having a struggle than in the house of God . . . and so much the more as we see the day approaching!

Have you lost your grip? Picture that sword in your hand: squeeze your hand tightly; don't loosen up, but hold it firmly for the entire day. You're in the battle, and as soon as you throw that enemy down, there'll be another in its place. Be on the lookout because two may come at the same time and take you off guard. And someone may not be standing nearby to jump in and help you.

You can't afford to allow yourself to wax faint in the battle.

Now, if *you're* not waxing faint, who are you standing in the gap for? Are you trying to help anyone who seems to be waxing faint?

We can't be losing our grip and chasing the enemy. But one can chase a thousand and two 10,000 — if they're living for God.

Babes can grow on a steady milk diet. But how long is it before they require something stronger? Would you want a steady milk diet day after day? If you're not going to wax faint in the battle, you need some meat in your diet. Your soul needs to be nourished and fed. If we don't have a mind to feed it, we're only deceiving ourselves, beginning to walk by feelings rather than by faith.

Listen, in this battle you'd best walk by faith. You can't go by feelings, or you'll be defeated. What would you do if you were a soldier in a war and you woke up with a sore throat or a sore arm? What would you do? You'd rise up and fight, anyhow, or be overcome by the enemy!

## **Lame Excuses**

Sick! Lame! and lazy! When I was in the Navy, we were used to having this call every morning. It's for those who wake up and don't feel like doing anything. They go over to sick bay and report in because they found an excuse to get off duty.

Excuses: "About 5:00 or 6:00 I'll feel sick tonight — until it's too late to go to church! Then I'll feel fine again. And then I'm going to wonder why I've lost my grip."

Did you ever go to work and hate being there? You think of looking for another job, something you would like, and then you'd feel like going to work each day. Some people are always looking for a new job because they hate the one they have. They need a change — until they work a while at that new job, and then it's time for a change again!

"I need a change! I'm sick of going to church!" If you're faint, you certainly do need a change — a change in your soul. You can't afford to get taken over by feelings. Remember now, this is a faith battle.

II Corinthians 5:7

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We've got to conquer and defeat the enemy if we're going to make it in the battle.

I Samuel 17:45

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

Did David really conquer Goliath with his slingshot and one little stone? Why did he only use one of those little stones he had picked up? Because he came out against the giant in the name of the Lord, the living God. What was he using in the battle? He may have put that little stone in his sling, but that didn't bring the giant down. Did he lose his grip that day? No, he was strong that day in the power of the Lord. He brought the giant down in the name of the Lord!

David wasn't a mighty warrior at that time in his life. He was merely a youth — but a youth with a lot of faith.

## **It's Time to Shake Yourself**

Are you waxing faint? Are you losing your grip? Is the giant there to do you in? It's either yes or no. Listen, it's time to shake yourself and realize you need to get with it while it is day. Make a fresh commitment to the Lord.

Ephesians 6:17

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

Get a grip on the Sword. Get your soul fed with the Word of God, that you might wax strong in the battle. Recognize that it's no time to get weary in the battle. You're in a war: stand and fight. This battle is for your soul. Are you in the battle with a firm grip on your sword, or have you pulled away?

There's no in between — it's either yes or no. Have you left your first love? Is Jesus slipping out of your life? Have you put distance between you and Him?

There's only one way to get that first love back again: repent, and do your first works over. God wants to forgive you, but first you must repent and ask His forgiveness.

David didn't fall that day. God kept him. He may have lost his grip on his natural sword, but he still had a grip on the Lord.

II Samuel 22:32,33

For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God? God is my strength and power: and He maketh my way perfect.

What about you? Have you lost your grip in your spiritual walk? Are you growing faint in this spiritual warfare? Grasp hold of the Sword of the Spirit, and keep a firm grip in these closing days of apostasy.