

# **Welcome to Kev's on-line eGroup**

**The e-Glue that helps with the glitter**

**Part 1: Detailed sermon notes**

**Part 2: eGroup study questions**

### Here Comes Church – “In the know”

- Interested in serving at Elevation Church: See: [www.elevationchurch.cc](http://www.elevationchurch.cc)
- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone – See [www.elevationchurch.cc](http://www.elevationchurch.cc). The “e” stands for empowerment - because getting the instructions from God without having the empowerment to live them out will frustrate you. These groups are our way of putting some very wonderful people in front of you feed you spiritually.
- Stay out of “isolation silos” - you are an easy target for the enemy – and you don't have the benefit of friends to support you. Embrace the power of numbers.
- Interested in leading an eGroup? See: [www.elevationchurch.cc](http://www.elevationchurch.cc)
- Don't over-think it – Invite someone to church – “Who do you know that is close to you that is far from God?”
- What are your Gr8ful eight?
- K-Love and Elevation Workshop at Red Rocks in CO in August 2025
- Elevation Nights is back: Elevation Nights is hitting the road again and we're coming to a city near you from October 21st through the 30th, 2025 - we're going to be in St. Paul, Omaha, St Louis, Louisville, Duluth, Tampa, Miami, and Orlando.

Deuteronomy 20:1-8 - – Moses gives a battle briefing

20 When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. 2 When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. 3 He shall say: “Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. 4 For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”

5 The officers shall say to the army: “Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it. 6 Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. 7 Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her.” 8 Then the officers shall add, “Is anyone afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too.” 9 When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it.

10 When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. 11 If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. 12 If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. 13 When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. 14 As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the Lord your God gives you from your enemies. 15 This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.

Matthew 4:1-11 - – Jesus is tempted in the wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,  
and they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’[d]”

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’[e]”

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

### Romans 8

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[i] have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Gal 5

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Opening Prayer #2 by Pastor Furtick on 9/22/2025: A little history lesson. Back before we had cell phones, we had something called collect calls. A collect call is when you needed to get in touch with somebody but you didn't have any money or currency or resource. And then they would say, do you accept the charges? And if the person who picked up the phone really loved you, they would say, I accept. I hear the Lord saying, I accept. I hold you to the high of my heart. I know your name. You call my name. And when I hear your name, I'll come see about you. I'll help you in the day of trouble. I'll carry you through rough water. I'll still the storm if you'll call my name. We thank you, Lord, that you've already paid the price for us to come into your presence today. Not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the precious blood of Christ. We thank you today that we can come before you and make our heart an altar. We can bring anything to you. It doesn't scare you, intimidate you, or repulse you. We thank you that you have already dealt with our sins and we are free to worship you because of Jesus. We cast all anxiety on Jesus today. He's strong enough. We cast all depression on Jesus today. He's big enough. We cast all of our fear on Jesus today for He is big enough. God, I pray for every one of my brothers and sisters in Christ, in this room, across all of our campuses, and all around the world. I thank You that You're doing a great work. I sense Your presence. Even if I didn't, You would be here. But I thank you that I feel you right now. And I praise you for the word that you gave me. It is a liberating word. A powerful word. It came from heaven and so hell has to leave. Because when you speak, anything is possible. And we ask you now. Kind father. Give a word to us.. In Jesus name. Amen.

# **Part 1: Detailed sermon notes**

# Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon Notes – “Win Before You Begin” – Pastor Rich Wilderson – 10/26/2025

## Sermon Highlights

- The Christian life is not a dance; it's a battle.
- You don't change your life by changing your life. You change your life by changing your mind.
- God wants you to win on the inside before you ever see a win on the outside.
- Don't let what you see shake what you know.
- Faith doesn't deny what you see, it's just confidence in what you already know.
- Don't let your worry be louder than God's Word.
- What you repeat in peace will become your reflex under pressure.
- If you don't train in the Word, you won't triumph in the wilderness.
- Pressure doesn't remove what's inside of you, it reveals what's inside of you.
- Don't let your anxiety overthrow your order. Order is the antidote to anxiety.
- It's not just about enduring life; it's about enjoying it.
- If you'll face it, God will fight with you.

## Scriptures

- Deuteronomy 20:1-8 - – Moses gives a battle briefing
- Matthew 4:1-11 - – Jesus is tempted in the wilderness

## Discussion Questions

- “If you'll face it, God will fight with you.” Share a time that God showed up when you faced something you'd been avoiding — and how it strengthened your faith.
- “If you don't train in the Word, you won't triumph in the wilderness.” What's one practical way you can “train in the Word” this week, not just by reading it, but by applying it?
- “Don't let your anxiety overthrow your order. Order is the antidote to anxiety.” When have you noticed your peace start to slip because your priorities got out of order?
- “You don't change your life by changing your life. You change your life by changing your mind.” What's one mindset God is currently renewing in you?

# Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon Notes – “Win Before You Begin” – Pastor Rich Wilderson – 10/26/2025

AI enabled sermon recap:

Guest preacher Rich Wilkerson Jr. (VU Church, Miami) delivers a sermon titled “Win before you begin,” using Deuteronomy 20 to teach that the Christian life is a battle won first in the mind and heart. He emphasizes fighting from the assurance that “God is for you,” grounding faith in God’s past faithfulness, elevating God’s word above worry, and establishing life-giving order and priorities. Practical habits, vigilance about influences, and persevering through recurring battles are highlighted, culminating in an invitation to “tag God in” and trust Jesus.

Context and acknowledgments

- Setting: Elevation Church; expressions of gratitude for worship (shout-out to Leland) and honor for Pastor Steven and Holly Furtick (Pastor Appreciation Month).
- Illustration: “Proximity brings perspective” (courtside vs. nosebleed seats) applied to close-up view of Pastor Steven’s integrity and leadership.

Core scripture and theme

- Text: Deuteronomy 20 (esp. v.1–8; v.4). Battle briefing before Israel fights.
- Main idea: Win internally before external battles begin; fight from victory because God is with you.
- Don’t let what you see shake what you know
- Deut. 20:1 frames battles as inevitable. Fear often starts with sight and then becomes a story we script. Faith does not deny realities; it stands on what is known of God’s character and past acts.
- Foundation over wobble: Like Jenga, the top may shake, but a firm foundation stands. Moses anchors courage in memory: “the Lord your God... brought you up out of Egypt... will be with you.”
- “Do not be afraid” appears ~365 times in Scripture—daily resistance to fear with declared truth (e.g., Psalms 27; Psalm 23).
- Don’t let worry be louder than God’s word
- Before the war, the word: In Deut. 20:2–3 the priest, not the general, addresses the army—“every warrior needs a preacher.” Sunday is a battle briefing amid a noisy world of algorithms and inner critics; worry “strangles.”
- Reflex under pressure: “What you repeat in peace will become your reflex under pressure.” In the wilderness (Matthew 3–4), Jesus counters temptation by quoting Deuteronomy (“It is written”); the word is a weapon. Not just read it—learn it; avoid “flip and read” roulette.

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AI enabled sermon recap:

- Pressure reveals what's inside: What gets squeezed out of believers should be the fruit of the Spirit (“believer juice”): love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.
- Shape externals to serve internals: Don't feed fear with inputs that mirror anxiety (doomscrolling, angry media). Create cues and habits that invite faith and peace:
- “Parent your thumb”: Put the phone to bed in another room; go biblical before digital (keep a physical Bible on the nightstand).
- Choose worship over a “depressed playlist”; play faith-filled music (e.g., Elevation Worship; “Gratitude”).
- Don't let anxiety overthrow your order
- Deut. 20:5–7 exempts those with a new house, vineyard, or pledged marriage. God raises families, not only fighters; the Christian life includes enjoyment, not just endurance.
- Domains: House (home life), spouse (relationships), vineyard (work). A principal spiritual act is to get the house in order; order is the antidote to anxiety. God is a God of peace, not disorder.
- Priorities modeled: 1) God; 2) spouse; 3) children; 4) family and friends; 5) church; 6) community. Pastors must not prefer “God's bride” over their own.
- Fear is contagious (Deut. 20:8). Check your circle; fear can be like secondhand smoke. 2 Timothy 1:7: God has not given a spirit of fear but of love, power, and a sound mind.
- Recurring battles and confronting issues
- Strep throat/antibiotics analogy: Stopping treatment early led to relapse; likewise, some fights recur until fully confronted and consistently addressed. If you don't face it, you can't change it; numbing pain also numbs blessing.

# Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon Notes – “Win Before You Begin” – Pastor Rich Wilderson – 10/26/2025

AI enabled sermon recap:

Growth and perspective

- Space Mountain story: The ride didn't change; “you changed.” Battles may not get lighter; believers get wiser and stronger. Look back and see “victory after victory.”
- Assurance of God's presence and call to courage
- Deut. 20:4: God goes with you, fights for you, and gives victory. Ephesians 6 armor has no back—don't turn; face battles.
- “Tag God in” (pro-wrestling tag-team image): Christ reached for us at the cross; momentum shifts when you call on Him.
- Invitation to faith
- Salvation call: Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth; receive grace by faith (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). “Tag God in” by surrendering to Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Next steps and actions

- Daily declare Scripture over fear; anchor in God's past faithfulness (e.g., Psalms; Deuteronomy 20:1-4).
- Create external cues that nurture faith: put a Bible on your nightstand; go biblical before digital; “parent your thumb” and put the phone to bed outside your room.
- Curate inputs: replace doomscrolling/news loops with worship and faith-filled teaching.
- Establish order and priorities: seek first the kingdom; practice tithing and Sabbath; align home, relationships, and work.
- Audit your circle: minimize contagion of fear; spend time with faith-filled influences.
- Face recurring battles; keep applying God's word until full breakthrough.
- “Tag God in”: pray, confess trust in Jesus, and step forward knowing God fights with and for you.

# Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon Notes – “Win Before You Begin” – Pastor Rich Wilderson – 10/26/2025

- Oh, I want to magnify the Lord. Let us exalt His holy name. How do you know that whatever you magnify in your life gets bigger? Something about as we begin to worship God, we start making the name of God bigger and bigger in our situation.
- We might have some problems, but come on, your God is bigger than every problem you have. Come on, give Him praise. Today, I think it's powerful that you're in church. And someone says, let us, let us exalt His holy name. You know, faith is not just individual.
- That we need each other. Today as we've gathered in God's house, I believe he's right here with us. He's going to minister. He's going to speak to us. Can we thank God for just the best worship team ever? Shout out to Leland in the house, my friend Leland. Leland sings like he's in heaven. I don't know some of those notes that he hits, but I'm like, dear Jesus, dear Jesus.
- My name is Rich, if we've never met before. I hail from Miami, Florida. I lead a church called VU Church. And what an honor. Thank you so much. What an honor it is to be with you today.
- If you've got a Bible, quickly turn to the book of Deuteronomy. We're going to read God's word from a standing position this morning. Deuteronomy chapter 20.
- I'm going to give you one verse, and then we're going to look at about eight verses today. And as you turn in there, it is always such a great privilege and such a great honor to stand behind this pulpit. I thank God for this house, and I thank God for the ministry, the life, and the leadership of Pastor Stephen and Holly Furtick.
- It is Pastor Appreciation Month, and your pastor is not just your pastor, but really he pastors so many people all around the world. We thank God for his life, and we thank God for his ministry. Can we clap our hands and make some noise today?
- It's always funny at the fruition of that elevation because there's very few pulpits in the world that when you walk up to it, there's almost like a gasp, like, oh. Someone drove in from Omaha, and they were hoping to hear Pastor Stephen, and he got rich. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. But I do believe that God's going to minister to us.
- I was thinking about your pastor walking in because for me, as I come here year after year, I get excited to share the word. Equally, I get excited to take a moment just to put honor where honor is due. I remember some years ago when the Miami Heat, when they were good, pray for them. They were in the Eastern Conference Finals and my dad, he scored some tickets. And my dad's balling on a budget, so he got us nosebleed tickets. In fact, we weren't just, we weren't sitting up high. In fact, the seats, you had to stand up in the arena, okay? But we were just happy to be in the room. But I remember watching the game from a distance. It was almost like watching the game on delay. You're so far away from the court. There was a couple times I was like, I bet I can hang with these guys. That's from a distance. Since that time, I've had a couple opportunities to sit on the court. And how many of y'all know, sitting on the court, sitting on the wood is a totally different game. You can see guys sweat drop. You can hear what they're saying. One time I was like, foul! And the guy looked at me. I just sat down and never spoke again.

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- Okay? Hold on.
- **Here's what I want you to do. Same game - different perspective. Proximity brings perspective.**
- And let me just say, as a friend of this house, I've been up close and personal with your pastor. He is a man of faith. He's a man of integrity. He is a man of courage. And I'm so grateful for what God has done in his life. For me, he's one of my heroes. He's someone that I look up to. And I just always want to say to Elevation Church, You better take care of that man. Pray for him. Stand with him. We love you, Pastor Steve and Pastor Ali.
- Come on, can we make some noise?
- We're grateful for the life and the leadership of Pastor Steve and all of you. We love you guys.
- Let me give you one verse today, and then we'll preach it like I feel it, and I feel it today. Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 1, it says this. When you go to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them. Because the Lord your God, ooh, I like this. Because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. Yeah, you should just clap your hands. It's that good, it's that good. Amen. I want to speak for a few moments today from this subject. When before you begin. When before you begin.
- Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank you for your word. God, we believe it's sharpened in any double-edged sword. Speak to us now. Lord, as we read it, we invite it to read us. May we leave here different from how we came. Speak to us. We love you. We praise you. And all of God's people said? All of God's people said? If you love Jesus, make a little bit of noise today. All right, high five a couple people and say, you're going to win. Say, you're going to win. In the chat, say, you're going to win. You're going to win. You're going to win. You're going to win.
- **Win before you begin. Win before you begin. I love the fact that all throughout the scripture, God invites us and tells us that we're going to win. But notice, he never says that we won't have to fight. In fact, the longer I walk with Jesus, the more and more I recognize that the Christian life is not a dance, it's a battle.**
- And the first battle that we must always fight is not an external one, it's always an internal one. It's always the battle in your mind, that you have to fight the war on the inside. I think many times we go, I want to change my life. Listen, you don't change your life by changing your life. You change your life by changing your mind. How about that you could just use some more peace? Anyone just could use a little more peace in 2020? Not me, gosh, I'm good. I think most people I talk to could use more peace in 2025. It seems like everyone I talk to is dealing with this mild grade of anxiety, this little level of just a restless soul. In fact, you can just see it as you talk to people. Have you ever asked someone, how you doing? How you doing? Busy. Moms are busy, dads are busy, everyone's busy. How you doing? Busy. I talked to a student in our youth ministry today, 16 years of age, he said, how you doing, brother? Busy. I was like, bro, you're 16, you ain't got no job. You ain't got no wife, you ain't got no kids, you aren't busy, you know?
- But I think he speaks to a culture that's moving so fast that what comes up and spills out of his life is a restlessness of going, I could use some more peace. Anybody thankful for a God that says, you can be warring on the outside, but you can still have peace that passes all understanding on the inside?

# Kev's guys on-line eGroup study notes

Elevation Sermon Notes – “Win Before You Begin” – Pastor Rich Wilderson – 10/26/2025

- **My Bible says that his peace transcends understanding. Let me make that modern day. You might be in a battle today that doesn't make any sense. You might be up against a challenge that is illogical. We can be right there in the midst of something that is illogical, but right smack in the middle, he can give you a peace that doesn't make any sense.**
- I need you to clap your hands, stir your faith a little bit today. God wants you to win on the inside before you ever see a win on the outside. Deuteronomy chapter 20 is powerful, because if you don't know about the book of Deuteronomy, it is the book of instruction that God is giving his law, he's giving his commands. And here in Deuteronomy 20, what we're discovering is that Moses is giving a battle briefing before they go into war. Which I like that. It's like before they actually step into a fight, he's giving them instruction. He's teaching them how to win before they begin.
- And what's really interesting as he begins to teach, long before he actually puts weapons in their hands, he's wanting them to win the war in their head. Before he puts weapons in their hands, he wants to deal with the worry in their heart. I think as we teach in this day and age, I think we all need a framework from wherever we're operating from that we're not fighting for victory. We're fighting from victory. And the only way you're going to fight from victory is when you actually believe that God is for you.
- I know that kind of sounds maybe cliché to some people, but many people don't live with that revelation. God is for you. Recently, I had a little battle briefing of my own in my house. Not with soldiers, but with my children. I've got four kids. Wyatt, Wild, Waylon, and Wolfgang. And our last name is Wilkerson. Those are preacher's kids right there. Everything's got a rhyme or be an alliteration. I had to grab the three bigs. I had to do a briefing with them. I had gotten information from the babysitter that particularly my daughter, Waylon, had been pretty difficult all day long. And so in my house, I am the gentle, if you know what I'm talking about. And so I lined them up and I said, Waylon Wesley Wilkerson. I said, were you being bad today? Is this really true that you were throwing tantrums like this? And all of a sudden she just turned instantly into these beautiful princess just, Daddy, I don't remember.
- Any of the parents out there, your kid got short-term amnesia, you don't remember? So I looked at her older brother, his name is Wild, and trust me, he lives up in the lane, Wild. I said, yo Wild, was your sister bad today? He looked at me and said, oh Dad, it's been such a long day. Mommy, it's 2.15 in the afternoon. I love my son, Wild, because what's interesting is that Wild can fight all day long with his sister. But the moment he senses that there is judgment or someone potentially coming after his sister, he says, not on my watch.
- **Let me tell you something. Brothers protect, but fathers fight. And I need some people in this room to understand that when the enemy comes after your life, whatever battle is coming your way, you need to settle once and for all. There is a God who says, I will be with you. I will get into that fight and I will fight on your behalf. So before the enemy attacks, before the temptation comes, why not settle it in your heart? God is for me. And if God is for me, come on. Who can be against me?**

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- Clap your hands. Give God some praise in this house today. Win before you begin. I want to make a couple of observations. I want you to take some notes. The scripture begins here in verse 1. And Moses comes out. And the instruction is when you go to war. Not if. But when. Because you need to understand that battles in life. are not optional, they are inevitable.
- Like, you don't get to choose the fight, all you get to choose is how you show up to the fight. How are you going to show up to this fight? And notice what it is that he says. He says, when you go to war against your enemies, and you see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, please write this down for me. Don't let what you see shape what you know. Don't let what you see shake what you know. When you see the chariot, when you see an army of great heroes, how many of y'all know that fear begins with your sight? What you see, it starts in your eyes and then it moves to your mind.
- Is there anybody out there like me that all of a sudden you can see something and as you see it, you can make it far worse? Your imagination can run in the wrong direction? You can take one little thing that you see and turn it into an entire Netflix series. Just me? You see a text left on the red and you're like, that's it? Relationship's over! I'm going to be living with my parents forever! You see one unexpected buildup. That's it! I'm done! I'm never going to make it! Dave Ramsey was right about me! You see one uncomfortable conversation at work, that's it, they're gonna fire me. They're probably clearing out my desk right now. Why is it? It's because it's not just what we see.
- We don't just see things, we script things. We have a tendency that something begins with our sight, but then all of a sudden it's not the sight that's the problem, it's the story we attach to the sight. And here it is, God's saying, if you wanna win before you begin, Do not let what you see shake what you know. You're going to have to understand that faith doesn't deny what you see.
- It's just confidence in what you already know. Yes, I see chariots, but I know my God. Yes, I see problems in front of me, but I know his promises. Yes, I see the odds are stacked up against me, but I know the one who has already overcome. Is there anybody in this house who says, I want to have an unshakable kind of faith? listen to the command. He says, do not be afraid. Do you know that this is the most common command in all of Scripture? Some 365 times the Bible says, do not be afraid. Why? Because the Bible wants to remind you every day of the year not to be afraid. Because if fear doesn't take a day off, faith shouldn't take one either. And it's not just what you seek, it's what you say. And you ought to start getting good at saying God's word over every situation of your life. I will not fear.

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- The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Oh, come on, I'm going to preach myself happy. I will not fear. Anybody out there today in a valley, you could be in a valley, and right there from the valley declare, I will not be afraid, I know who my God is. Not just what you see, it's what you say. But fear shakes us, faith stands. You ever play that game Jenga? I can't play it anymore. It increases my anxiety. When that thing starts wobbling, I'm like, oh, it's a bridge. It's not a real tower, man. Chill out.
- But what I've learned about the game is as you pull out bricks, the top can be wobbly. But watch this. If the foundation is sturdy, it doesn't fall. I want to encourage you today that faith does not deny what you see. Faith doesn't even stop the shaking. What faith does is it gives you sturdy and stable ground to stand on. I want you to see the sturdy ground that Moses gave. Moses said it this way. He says, do not be afraid of them because the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt will be with you. See, this is the thing with faith. Faith is... firmly looks at a situation, and it can be shaking, but it makes a decision that I'm building my life on the word of God, on the rock of God. And so I don't always know what it is that God is doing.
- I can't even always see what God is doing, but I do know what he's done. And here comes Moses, he's like, I know you can't see the battle in front of us about how God's gonna do it, but you do know what he has done. So you might not be able to see God's plan, but you do know his power.
- And you might not be able to see your future right now, but come on, you can remember your freedom. And you might not be exactly where you want to be, but can anybody testify? You know you are not where you used to be. What a miracle! He came and found me! I want to encourage you to operate in faith today. Because you don't have to see what he's doing, but you know what he's done. You know enough about God to understand he's going to get you through this thing. If he brought you up out of Egypt, he'll bring you through whatever circumstance you're in now. If he parted the Red Sea, he can part your situation. If he was faithful back then, he'll be faithful right now. If he did it then, anybody believe, he can do it again. Don't let what you see shake what you know.
- But watch what Moses does here as he continues to speak. Let's look at verse 2. I haven't read this to you yet. Verse 2 says this. When you're about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say, here Israel, today you are going into battle against the enemies. Do not be faint hearted or afraid. Do not panic or be terrified by them.
- **Write this down. This is important. Don't let your worry be louder than God's word. This is unique. They're about to go to battle. They don't send out a general. They don't send out a colonel. There's no sergeant who comes out. Moses sends out the priest. Can you imagine if you're in that army? What's up here? What's going on here? You're sending out priests? Yeah. It's because every warrior needs a preacher.**

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- Oh, boy. before the war the word that's what I love about Sunday's and I'm so proud of you for being a church today I'm so proud of that habit of your life because as we gather here today we're not just merely putting on a church service this is the briefing before the battle this is the strategy in God's strategy is spirit I don't think I'm speaking to spectators I'm speaking to soldiers anybody fighting for something today anybody fighting for peace, fighting for joy?
- Anyone fighting for their marriage? Fighting for their family? Are there some dads out there that are fighting for their kids? Come on, if you're a fighter in this house, clap your hands. We're fighting. Sometimes on Instagram, people will comment on me, why are you always yelling? Calm down, bro. And I'm like, I'm yelling? Because every week when people come into church, I want to make sure that my voice is louder than whatever they've been up against all week long.
- I want you to know there is a God who is for you. There's a God who's fighting for you. You don't have to be afraid. He's going to get you through this thing. Because we live in a noisy world. And all week long, you're going to leave here. And you're going to tune off from the link today. And all week long, you're going to be dealing with algorithms and people at work. And all the voices you're going to hear is going to be the voice of worry.
- Even some of you right now listening today, it's your own inner critic that speaks to you. And it's the voice of worry all day long. That word worry comes from an Anglo-Saxon word which means to strangle. How many of us are just being strangled by worry? We're being strangled by the pressures of this life. I wonder, what's louder in your life, God's word or your word? Write this down, this is important. **What you repeat in peace will become your reflex under pressure. Let me say it one more time, put it in the chat. What you repeat in peace will become your reflex under pressure. This is really important because when life hits you, what's going to come out of you? We could look at the life of Jesus, right? Jesus in the wilderness, remember that? After Matthew 3, he's baptized and the Father speaks over him. And immediately he goes into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Notice, whenever Satan comes to attack you, he always attacks your identity. So the last thing that Jesus heard the Father say is, This is my Son, whom I love and I'm well pleased. The first thing out of the enemy's mouth is, If you are the Son of God... Gets you to question, what's this, the word of God? And what you'll see there in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted for 40 days. And what Jesus is actually doing is he's illustrating for us how to win. Because the Israelites, they went into a wilderness for 40 years. And they had been given the book of Deuteronomy, the book of instruction. But they never obeyed it.**
- They never used it. They never applied it. And they found themselves delayed forever. Never getting out an entire generation. But here comes Jesus, and he doesn't take 40 years. All he needs is 40 days. And every time the enemy comes and tempts him, all Jesus does is he says, it is written. Why? Because it is written before it is won. The word of God must come first. And what's really fascinating is that as you study that entire dialogue back and forth between Jesus and the devil in Matthew 4, what you find out is that every scripture that Jesus quotes is from the book of Deuteronomy.

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- As if to say, you always had the answers. The same word I gave you back there in the wilderness is the same word that I'll use to defeat Satan. See, Jesus understood that the word is a weapon. You do get that, right? This is a weapon. And if you don't train in the word, you won't triumph in the wilderness. Good stuff. Let me just go a little bit further. Satan, when he comes to attack Jesus, uses the word. Meaning you can't just read the word. You've got to learn the word. We've got a lot of immature believers in 2025. God bless everybody. But sometimes it's like, you ever need a word from God? God, please. Oh, God. God, God, God. Where are you? You, you, you. I need a word. You ever do flip and read? Elevation is way too mature today. Never. Flip and read. Flip and read goes like this. It's like, oh God, I need a word, I need a word. You just flip and hopefully you get a good word from God. But that's like Russian roulette, man. God, I need a word, I need a word. Flip and read. And Judas hanged himself. No! No! I need another word. Okay. Go and do likewise. Whoa! No, friends, it's not enough to read it. You've got to learn it. It's a weapon. And as you train in it, come on, you become lethal.
- That when the enemy attacks you, you have a word to fight back. Come on. When pressure hit Jesus, it's like the word came out of him. Pressure doesn't remove what's inside of you. It reveals what's inside of you. What happens if you squeeze in at it? You get what? Apple juice, look at this, this is an amazing audience today.
- **What happens when you squeeze an orange? You get what? Orange, give him a big round of applause today, wow. What happens when you squeeze a Christian? Complaining, fear, trouble, No, friend, when you squeeze a believer, you ought to get believer juice. Believer juice, believer juice, believer juice. You ought to get believer juice because believers ought to have fruit. That's right. That's right. No believer juice. Amen. That's right. Amen. That's right.**
- Yeah, if you're a believer, you ought to have proof of spirit. Which means when attacks hit my life, when people lie about my name, when they accuse me, when life squeezes me, I want love to be the result. When all of a sudden I'm dealing with the sorrows of life and the pressures of life, I pray that joy would be squeezed out of me. Believer juice. I pray that when anxiety wants to hit my life, I pray that all of a sudden when I'm feeling strangled by worry, I pray that peace would begin to erupt. It's believer juice.
- But how much more for kindness and goodness and gentleness and faithfulness, self-control. Come on. All the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Because last time I checked, the fruit of the Spirit still grows under pressure. Come on and clap your hands. And so God has the priests go forward. Can you imagine being that? I'm going to put someone on their hands. You're sending out the preachers? Yeah, we're going to battle. Okay. We need a strategy. Now I'm going to give you a sermon.
- A sermon? But what is God trying to do? God is trying to get his external world into their internal world. God is trying to get his external world inside to shape their internal world. I gotta get the word in you, because as the word takes root in you, something's going to grow. Faith is going to grow.
- I have a friend who's a performance coach, and I love him so much, and he said to me something the other day that really struck me. He said, Rich, have you ever noticed that people tend to shape and design their external environment to mirror their internal world? Now, all of the gospel, as we understand, is about inside-out change. That I have to have my heart changed, and Jesus does that. But that shouldn't stop us. Once we've had that moment of salvation take place, maturity would say, let me set up an external world that impacts and influences my internal world.

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- But so many people, if you just look at it, it's like their whole life is in chaos. Watch their environment around them would be in chaos. So many people, they start going through worry, and so what do they do? They feed into that worry. Many people, they feel lonely, so what do they do? They isolate, so their external environment begins to mirror what's happening on the inside. You know this to be true. That's why we have a bad example. Alexa, play my depressed playlist. Come on, don't. Some of you are going to pray, Alexa, play I want to cry in the shower playlist. You ever heard that term, misery loves company? It's true! That's what we're feeling, we want our outside world to look like that so often. And so all of a sudden,
- I'm feeling fear, so I put on the news to feed my fear. I'm upset, so now I go to TikTok and I scroll and I death scroll just so I get angrier and angrier and angrier. But maturity, somebody who wants to win before they begin, they say, I don't feel this, but I've got to play faith. I don't want to worship, but I'm going to play worship. I want to set up an external world that changes my internal world. I think sometimes we can overthink this, because sometimes we can start thinking to ourselves, all right, that's it, I've got to change my environment, I've got to move cities, I've got to move churches. And sometimes those things are required, but more often than not, it's smaller things. It's just creating small little habits to say, let me just do things that all of a sudden I can create an external world that begins to change. Let his word on the outside get in and shape my heart on the inside.
- One of the most practical things I think we can do, my friend here, Adrian's got his phone, is we can start with this thing right here. This little devil in our pocket. I just feel like it's 15 minutes about how bad the iPhone is, you know? No, it's not the point. But this right here is one of the leading causes of our anxiety, of our restlessness. This old man, we carry this all the time. This little people, you know, just all day long. Let me just tell you, when it comes to this thing, here's just a basic thing.
- I had a friend tell me, you've got to parent your thumb, Rich. I said, what does that mean? He said, well, your kids go to bed before you don't, don't they? I said, yes. He said, you wake up before your kids, don't you? I said, yeah, I do. He said, why don't you do that with your phone? For some of us, it's like, just quit sleeping with your phone. Some people have got their phone on their pillow at night. I don't know why I'm anxious. You don't? Why? Can you imagine if you're an alcoholic? It's like, man,
- I'm really struggling, but I sleep with Jack Daniels every night. You can't defeat the enemy if you're sleeping with the enemy. No, you've got to put it to bed at night. And maybe it shouldn't even sleep in your room. Maybe you should tuck it in in another room. Unplug it and say, good night, little phone. I'll see you in the morning. In fact, just little things. Just change your environment. Instead of putting your phone on your nightstand at night, why not swap that out and put this on your nightstand at night? Why not just make a decision even right here today, I wanna win before I begin. I'm gonna go biblical before I go digital. Meaning, why don't you just put your Bible on your nightstand?
- Even if you don't read it, even if you don't get to it, let it be a trigger on the external side of you that before I go to bed at night, it's the last thing I see. And when I wake up in the morning, it's the first thing that I see. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. I might not feel it on the inside, but I want to put it on the outside to trigger my environment to say, I want God's word to be on the inside. Come on, clap your hands. Thank you. Sometimes it's just a little cue. Sometimes it's just a little thing that the priest would come out before them. They might not have wanted a sermon, but they needed a sermon. In fact, the more and more I grow in my life, when I'm feeling lonely, when I'm feeling depressed, I don't wanna say, Alexa, play my depressed playlist. I wanna say, Alexa, play my faith-filled, elevation worship playlist. Jesus be the name. Okay, thank you.

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- Say gratitude is the right attitude? When I hear that song, I want to run through a brick wall! Why? Because faith has a sound. Peace has a sound. And once you pray, it starts to shape your environment. It starts turning things around. You've got to keep God's word. Let him be worried. Let me hear the sound of faith. Let me hear the sound of peace. Let me hear the sound of joy in this house. I play it when I don't feel it. Who am I? But you keep me on your mind. God, I'm just hyped. What a miracle. What a miracle. How did you do this to me? Yeah, I got some battles in front of me.
- But Lord, what I've seen you do time and time again is I know what you brought me out of. I don't know what you're doing, but I know what you have done. And if you were faithful back then, you'll be faithful again. I need you to praise God in faith today. When before you did. Grab a seat, grab a seat. Let me give you this last one. Look at verse five with me. We're just walking through the text today. Just a Bible study on a Sunday. Pastor, we'll be back soon. Please come back to church. Look at verse 5, this is very interesting The officers, chef's safety, the army Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it Has anyone pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home or he may die in battle and someone else marry her.
- This is a very fascinating part because this is before the battle has begun and here is the strategy of winning. I'll give this last thought. I want you to get this deep in your heart. It's simply this. Don't let your anxiety overthrow your order. When you say the word of God and you see when it says, do not be anxious. it can be translated, do not be torn apart. Because that's what anxiety does. It makes us feel thin, and it separates us. But if you really want to win in life, you really don't win until you become whole. Everything about our gospel is about an integrated life. Mind, body spirit, and soul coming together on all cylinders. And what's taking place here is that they give these instructions to the people, and they say, hey, Has anyone like built a new house and you haven't gotten to live in yet? Leave.
- Has anyone about to get married and you haven't gotten to be with your family? Leave. If anyone's planted a new vineyard and you haven't enjoyed it, leave. What's happening? What I want you to see in the text is that God is not just interested merely in raising up fighters. He also is raising up families. And when we talk about things like contending and fighting back, It's not merely always in life about enduring. It's also about enjoying. That's what I love about Elevation Church. You don't just have to come to church. You get to come to church. We're not just suffering through it No, we enjoy the presence of God. God is into your enjoyment. In fact, all the pleasures of life, every good gift came from above.
- What's meant to happen in the life of Christians, every good thing that he's given you, relationships, family, jobs, blessings, It is supposed to roll back up into praise and adoration of him. That I would give glory unto God. I'm blessed to be a blessing. But just see this category here. You've got a house. You've got a spouse. And you've got a vineyard. By the way, if you've got a house and a spouse, all you're missing is a vineyard. But your house speaks about your home life. Your spouse speaks of your relationships. And your vineyard speaks about your work. And what God is saying, he said,

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- I care about all this. Listen to me. One of the most spiritual things you will ever do in your entire life is go back home and get your house in order. If your home life is in chaos, your peace will always be in confusion. Many of us, sometimes we think it's the really big, massive thing, but often it's the small thing. God is a God of order. I don't have enough time today, but I want you to hear this. Order is the antidote to anxiety. Order. We don't serve a God of disorder, but a God of peace.
- Meaning that when I get my life in order, peace will be the result. And I see so many people today and they're wondering why I feel so afraid. Why I feel like I'm up against so many challenges. And it's because they're missing that piece on the inside. But if you want to win before you begin, you better get your priorities set. Everything about God in this book is about priorities. Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.
- We have a whole generation that's chasing after the added things. But God says, if you'll put me first, I'll handle all of the additions. What is tithing? It's about putting God first. What is Sabbath? It's about going, God, I'm gonna cease one day of the week and I'm gonna trust you like Chick-fil-A that as I work for six days and I take one day off, you're the God who can show up, you're the God who can do exceedingly, immeasurably more than we can ever ask of him. It's about order. And even for me, it's just good luck. The order of my life, number one, God. Told this to my church today. Number two, my spouse. Number three, my children. I got four of them. Why? Well, we're a little thing. Number four, my family and friends. Watch this. Number five, my church. Number six, the community.
- There's a lot of preachers today that if they're not careful, they will prefer God's bride over their own bride. It's not noble, it's dangerous. I can't take care of God's children if I don't first take care of my children. Amen. Listen, this is one of the things I love about your pastor, is that he's got his priorities set. He doesn't bend into culture. He doesn't bend into naysayers and critics. He understands the assignment of God, and with it, he's a leader worth following. Because you don't want an anxious priest. You don't want a disintegrated preacher. You want someone who's integrated and whole, because you teach what you know, but you reproduce who you are. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
- So God says, I want you to go home because I want to make sure that you are whole before you fight. Let me show you this verse. Verse, I think it's verse number, is it verse number eight? Can you bring that one up? Yeah, verse eight. Is anyone afraid or faint hearted? Let him go home. so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too. I just want to remind some people at Elevation Church and those watching online, fear is contagious. And so he says, yo, if there's anybody in the camp who's afraid, leave now! Because I can't let the rest of the company, that's who you are, a group of soldiers, not a crowd, a company. I can't let you catch that.
- About two weeks ago, I woke up with a sore throat. Couldn't believe it. Went to the doctors. They said, Rich, you have strep throat. I said, I'm 41 years of age. I didn't know you could get strep throat at 41 years of age. So like we might have to take your tonsils. I said, you, the devil is a liar. You should have come for me when I was eight. There is no way you're having my tonsils, bro. Well, it just so happened that about seven days prior, my son Wyatt, my oldest He had strength throughout. It wasn't random. I caught it from wife. I wonder today, some of these that you're carrying, you didn't start with that. You caught that along the way. You caught fear. You've been examining something outside of God's word that's feeding your fear. A co-worker gave you that. A fearful friend gave you that fear. An absentee father gave you that. The betrayal of a man or a woman. Something else gave you that.

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- Because my Bible says that you are not given a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and sound mind. Come on and clap your hands if you believe our God. That's the end of it. He says, get your life in order. I just want to tell some people, there's some folks in your life right now, you've got to let them go.
- **Check your circle. Fear is like secondhand smoke. It might not have started with you, but it doesn't mean that it won't affect you. And some of us are inhaling something from afar. And all of a sudden it's getting down into our heart. It's leaving us in a restless place. I think many times we find ourselves going, God, just take away the battles.**
- But that's not the point of this message. It is one battle after the next. You're in the fight. It's a battle. But what you have to learn is that God wants to mature you in the battle. He wants to strengthen you in the battle. He wants to give you peace and joy and love right there in the middle. All the water in the ocean can't sink a ship unless it gets inside the ship. I love how Pastor Steve has been preaching about the same lives, new loops. Because here's what's funny. I went to the doctor for my strep throat. At this point, I'm just like, I want immediate results. I'm like, give me the shot, bro. We're so sorry. I went backward with the shots. We had to do antibiotics. Two pills a day for 10 days. Well, five days in, I felt good. We went to Elevation Nights, had the Spirit of God. I forgot that I had ever been sick. And then last week, the virus came back. Today, as I stand on this stage, I'm back on antibiotics. See, Rich, why are you telling us?
- I'm telling you that sometimes we have to face the same fight again and again and again. And we have to keep coming back to it because if you don't confront it, you can't change it. And if you keep denying it, you'll never ever be delivered from it.
- I want to say to some people right now that are running from some stuff, listen to me. When you numb the pain, you also numb the blessing. Wow. When you try to escape the trial, you're also going to escape the teaching and the lesson in it. They go hand in hand. In some fights, you just got to keep fighting. Some things you got to keep coming back to.
- Some things you got to keep going, God, I got to apply your word again. I was laying in bed with my son about two weeks ago, my oldest son, Wyatt. And we were recounting his really first trip to Disney World. It took him when he was four years of age. And I really traumatized him. I apologize for that. At four years of age, I took him on space maps. I said, you're going to love it. He came off. You ever cry so hard you convince yourself you have asthma? I hate you. He's in therapy, so that's going good. I said, Dan, I hate that ride. I'm so sorry. Every year we would talk about it. I thought, you love it, you love it. Well, we just went back literally maybe six weeks ago, and at seven years of age, I had to bribe him a little bit. I said, I'll give you two toys, one from Star Wars, one from Marvel. Don't come at me in the comments.
- I'm just trying my best to out here in these streets. But he went on Space Mountain, of course, as he came off the ride. got his hands up laughing, and he goes, dad, again, again, again. And I was like, son, I wanna go again, but the way my budget's set up, I only got one. I only got one making the fastest. That's it, bro, next year. I tell you that because then I was laying it down from just two weeks ago. We were talking about Disney World. I said, Wyatt, what's your favorite ride at Disney World? He said, Space Mountain. I said, Wyatt, that makes me laugh because you told me that you were so offended that you hated it. He said, I know, Dad, but I think they changed the ride. I said, no, son.

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- **The ride didn't change. You changed. You changed. It didn't get easier. You got stronger. And the battles won't get lighter, you'll just get wiser. And circumstances won't change, but you will. You will grow from the inside out. You will win from your mind, and even before you get in the battle, even before it begins, you're walking in with a winning mindset. I know who my God is, and if my God is for me, well, he's brought me through in the past, he'll bring me through again. I know there's a mountain in front of me, but all I gotta do is and freedom to the Lord God. And even this valley has done to do. Anybody who has proven to the devil today, clap your hands, give up your praise.**
- **As you stand on your feet all in this place, one verse I did not read, and let me speak it over you. As we come to a close, Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 4. The Lord your God goes with you. fight for you to give you victory. May you step into this week knowing that you have a God who will fight for you and with you, and he will give you victory. I know it feels like it's been battle after battle, but I think a faith-filled person looks back on their story and says, actually, it's been victory after victory after victory after victory. I'm getting stronger. I'm getting stonger. And if you'll face it, listen to me, if you'll face it, God will fight with you.**
- He didn't give you armor on the back, stop. You go back and read Ephesians 6, there is no back play. Because he never meant for you to turn from this sin. He meant you to face it. God says if you'll face it, I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to fight for you. When I was a kid, I was obsessed with professional wrestling. Don't you tell me it's fake.
- I used to love the tag team. Legion of Doom and Road Warriors. I'll keep going, I'll stop. There'd always be this moment in tag team match where the guy's down, he's down, he's down, he's down, he's tired, he's weird. But his partner is outside reaching, reaching. Kind of boks like a cross. But while I was stuck in my sin, Christ died for me. What a miracle. I couldn't get to him. He came to me. And he reached out. And all you got to do is tag God in. Because when that partner gets in the ring, momentum is about to shift. A miracle is on the way. I came all the way to Charlotte, North Carolina to tell some people, tag God in.
- Oh Thank God for Jesus. If you haven't got it, you're always close. At all of our locations and online. Thank God for Jesus. For peace is not a concept, it's a person. He is the Prince of Peace. The cross was God's hand. You can tag Jesus in. If you'll face it, he'll fight with you. Victory is in front of you. I don't know what battles you're stepping into this week, but you can win before you win. It's a battle briefing. You're getting battle ready. It's a battle plan. God, we thank you for your presence. God, anything's possible when your people show up and your presence shows up. It's an atmosphere of possibilities. Lord, I pray for people today that are fighting. People that are dealing with anxiety. People dealing with fear. But I pray that your word would begin into their heart and begin to shape and reshape their internal world even now. Peace that transcends, peace that passes. What a miracle. Who am I that would love me? Holy Spirit, I just sent you at work today. People facing so many things. What do you mean of me? Right here, right now.

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- Okay, we're going to head down. Your eyes closed before we dismiss and before we get out of here. I just want to give you one opportunity. The Bible says, Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth and you shall be saved. You can't achieve salvation. You can receive it. It's by grace through faith so that no man can boast. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in it will not perish but have everlasting life. That's the message and the anthem of Elevation Church. And that's what we bring week in and week out. If you're online or right here in the room and that's your day, you say, I want to surrender my life over to Jesus. On the count of three, I want to give you an opportunity just to lift your hand up high enough and long enough just to say, I want to put my trust, my faith in Jesus. It happens in a moment. It's called tagging God in. You're getting stronger today by faith. On the count of three, if that's your day, say, Rich, would you pray with me? I want to. I want to receive grace. I want to receive Jesus. I'm counting to you. Ready? One, the Bible says today is that day. Two, don't look at your neighbor. It's not about your neighbor. It's between you and Jesus. Ready? One, two, three. If that's you, look up. That's me. That's me. Thank you, God. Thank you, God. Thank you, Jesus. All the time right there. Come on out. Thank you. Lift your hands. What's happening? All friends, friends, this is the Lord. Say, dear Jesus, today I give you my life. I turn from you.

## **Part 2: eGroup study questions**

How are you going to tap God in this week?

What is your reaction to this?

“Check your circle. Fear is like secondhand smoke. It might not have started with you, but it doesn't mean that it won't affect you. And some of us are inhaling something from afar. And all of a sudden it's getting down into our heart. It's leaving us in a restless place.”

What happens when you squeeze an orange?

What happens when you squeeze a Christian?

## Gal 5

“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

“What you repeat in peace will become your reflex under pressure.”

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- “Do not be afraid” appears ~365 times in Scripture—daily resistance to fear with declared truth (e.g., Psalms 27; Psalm 23).
- Don't let worry be louder than God's word

So what does it mean that we operate from a position of victory?

## Romans 8

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[i] have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Closing prayer:

The ride didn't change. You changed. You changed. It didn't get easier. You got stronger. And the battles won't get lighter, you'll just get wiser. And circumstances won't change, but you will. You will grow from the inside out. You will win from your mind, and even before you get in the battle, even before it begins, you're walking in with a winning mindset. Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 4. The Lord your God goes with you. fight for you to give you victory. May you step into this week knowing that you have a God who will fight for you and with you, and he will give you victory. I know it feels like it's been battle after battle, but I think a faith-filled person looks back on their story and says, actually, it's been victory after victory after victory after victory. I'm getting stronger. And if you'll face it, listen to me, if you'll face it, God will fight with you.

Back up slides

Sermon Discussion – “Not As Long As My Song” - Pastor Furtick – August 10, 2025

In August 2017, Pastor Furtick led a study of David called “Bars and Battles.” I think Pastor Furtick’s sermon this weekend “Not as Long as My Song” builds of this prior series. On August 13, 2017, Pastor Furtick said this while unpacking Psalm 142 and 1 Sam 22 – where Saul is trying to kill David: “We have to learn to trust God and keep our hand on the harp. This means that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (fleshy or bodily), they are mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds – so it might not look like much – but our worship is our weapon. If you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and trust him – no matter what is coming at your head, no matter what is coming at your life – if you trust him and duck – and trust him and pray – the hand of God is on your life. Therefore, if you can win the battle here (your heart) – if you can get down low enough to say God I need you – and realize that the real battle is not with Saul – it is with self. Before David become a king and before God calls us to do what we are supposed to do, we need to learn to do the hardest thing to do – to depend. The easiest thing for David to do was to fight – this came naturally to him – the hardest thing for David to do was to be humble and depend – where David has to depend on the hand of God for the spear to miss him.” Kev note: Dang that is good!



## July 18 – Daily Devotional:

“There is nothing miraculous about the things that we can explain. We command what we are able to explain, consequently it is natural to seek to explain. It is not natural to obey; nor is necessarily sinful to disobey. If one man says to another – You must and you shall, he brakes the human spirit and unfits it for God. Many a soul begins to come to God when he flings off being religious, because, there is only one master of the human heart, and that is not religion but Jesus Christ. But woe be to me if when I see Him I say – I will not. He will never insist that I do, but I have begun to sign the death warrant of the Son of God in my soul. When I stand face to face with Jesus Chris and say – I will not, **He will never insist, but I am backing away form the re-creating power of His redemption.**



Dr. Timothy Keller

total freedom = lack of meaning and significance

What if we found the reason for life? Why we were created? Why we were designed? And conformed to that and then honored that?

If there is a design, there is a designer. And if there is a designer, the logos has come. Not some abstract philosophical principle. **It is a person.**

The designer has punched a hole into the world and he has descended. And you were built not to just honor some philosophical principle. But you were built to know and love this divine person. When you know him and when you serve him and you find out what he built you for, when you comply with it and submit yourself to him, you find out who you are. And you are now able to reach your potential.

Have a good navigational beacon in 2022:

“Life and Leadership at the Highest” A quote from an unknown author and requoted by Pastor Tim Keller in his sermon “This is Jesus” part 4 “Two Grieving Sisters Encounter Jesus” at Oxford University in 2016: “The accounts of Him in the New Testament speak for themselves – He combines qualities that no one has ever seen – despite his incredible claims, we never see him pompous, offended, or standing on his own dignity. Despite being absolutely approachable to the weakest and most broken people, he is completely fearless before the powerful and the corrupt. Despite being weary and lonely, we find him remarkably human - filled with joy, fear, love, and anger. Yet, we never see him Moody. We never see him being inconsistent. We never see Him strong when He should be tender and we never see Him tender when He should be strong. Most interesting of all – Of all his encounters with people - we are continuously surprised – shocking us - but never disappointing us – it is difficult for us to imagine words that Jesus ought to have said or deeds that he ought to have done. Nothing he has done ever falls short - in fact He is always surprising us - because He is incomparably better than what we could imagine for ourselves. Why? These are the surprises of perfection – He has tenderness without weakness – He has strength without harshness – humility without the slightest lack of confidence – unhesitating authority without the slightest sense of self-absorption – Holy and unbending convictions without the slightest lack of approachability – power without insensitivity – passion without prejudice – there is never a false step – there’s never a jarring no – this is life at the highest.”