



## Parkway Fellowship

YHWH: NAMES OF GOD • Jehovah Nissi • Exodus 17:8-15 • 01/05/2020

### MAIN POINT

The LORD is our banner.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you ever display a flag in your yard or garden? If so, what is on that flag? If you don't, what is a flag you would proudly display in your yard if you had one?**

**What are some things the United States flag represents to its citizens, especially those who are traveling or stationed abroad?**

We face times when life throws us such a curve ball that we feel alone and exposed—even when we're surrounded by others. In those moments, we feel vulnerable and under attack. In one moment of Israel's history, they too were vulnerable and under attack. But God Himself showed that He was on their side; He was their Banner, standing over them with His sovereign protection. We are not alone. We stand under another flag, a banner of protection: God Himself. He stands over every issue we face.

### UNDERSTANDING

| Ask a volunteer to read Exodus 17:8-13.

**How confident would you think the Israelites should be in this new scenario, after being rescued out of Egypt and provided for when they were thirsty (Exodus 15)?**

## **What was the significance of Moses' posture during the battle with the Amalekites?**

In Exodus 17:8, the Israelites had just experienced God's miraculous provision of clean water at Massah before the Amalekites launched an attack on them. Moses sent Joshua and some men to fight this battle, while he stood with hands raised. This unusual strategy proved successful: "Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek prevailed" (v. 11). Moses' stance with raised hands was a symbolic gesture; this battle was the Lord's. The power needed to overcome the Amalekites would come from the Lord.

In battle, the Israelites needed protection and strength if they were to survive. God provided both. He continues to do so for His people today.

### **When you are facing a difficult situation, who or what do you look to for confidence? Why?**

### **What is a challenge you have faced that has made you feel like you're in a battle?**

It was not simply Moses' visible presence and dramatic posture on the hilltop with his hand in the air that inspired confidence in his troops; it was that he was holding up God's staff. Though this staff was likely nothing more than a shepherd's staff, God used it again and again as an object lesson to show all Israel His power to accomplish His work.

### **How can we maintain our reliance on God's power when the battle is long?**

### **Who plays the roles of Aaron and Hur in your life?**

Israel prevailed in battle when Moses' hand lifted up the presence of God for all to see. We also prevail in our spiritual battles when God's presence and power are in our lives. We must never underestimate the craft and cunning of our spiritual adversary nor overestimate our own strength. We cannot win spiritual battles in our own strength. We can walk in victory over sin only when we stand under God's banner of protection and put on the spiritual armor He has provided.

| Ask a volunteer to read Exodus 17:14-16.

### **What does God's banner of protection look like in your life?**

### **What are some actions and attitudes that demonstrate we believe that God is our protector?**

### **What are some actions and attitudes that demonstrate we don't really believe**

## **He will protect us?**

The Israelites were to understand that their victory was because God was a banner over them. He was their protection. This truth applies to us today, too. Jesus is our banner. Jesus is the banner of every person who looks to Him in faith. He “covers” us with His protection and victory through the forgiveness of sin and promise of eternal life.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Would you say that it is clear to other people who know you that the LORD is your banner? Why or why not?**

**Do you think outsiders looking in would agree that Jesus is the “banner” of our group, or would they say our banner reflects something else? Explain.**

**In this week’s message we learned a few things about banners. Banners are designed to celebrate and commemorate. Banners are visible to everyone. Banners serve as a rally point. In terms of your relationship with the Lord, which of these three truths stands out the most to you personally right now? Why?**

**In what area of your life will you step out in trust this week of Jehovah-Nissi, God our Banner?**

## **PRAYER**

Thank God that He is your banner. Thank Him for His protection in your life. Ask Him to help you live in such a way this week that it is clear to all you encounter that you trust in Jehovah-Nissi, God our Banner.

## **COMMENTARY**

| Exodus 17:8-15

17:8-15. Without warning, the Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. The Amalekites were descended from Esau (Gen. 36:12), and they lived for the most part in Kadesh Barnea. Here is our first real look at Joshua the warrior. Apparently he was a soldier of superior skill and stood out among the others. He no doubt possessed additional leadership skills that would enable him to lead an otherwise untrained army into battle.

Moses did not hesitate to order Joshua to engage the enemy. The same staff that Moses raised toward the Red Sea and used to strike the rock would next be raised in battle.

Although Joshua must have fought courageously and competently, the battle belonged to the Lord, who demonstrated his power through the symbolic gesture of Moses his servant. When Moses raised his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. Naturally he grew tired, so some aides placed a stone for him to sit down, while Aaron and Hur each held up a hand of Moses. Hur (possibly from Hb. huru, “child”) was probably a special attendant of Aaron. Moses later appointed Hur to assist Aaron in leading the congregation during Moses’ absence (Exod. 24:14). The Jewish historian Josephus claimed Hur was the husband of Miriam, Moses’ sister, something the Old Testament is silent about. Moses, with this assistance, continued to hold his hands up until sunset, allowing Joshua to overcome the Amalekites.

The battle against Amalek carried not only temporary significance but symbolic significance as well. God directed Moses to write down this account of the defeat of Amalek on a scroll. Furthermore, he was to make sure Joshua knew the full significance of this event. In times to come the Israelites would have to remember that God himself allowed them to prevail, and God would continue to help them against future enemies. Joshua would face discouraging times in the days to come and would have to resort to the oral and written memory of God’s former deliverances in times of battle. Moses’ words to him took effect, and one day Joshua would command his fellow Israelites not to let the word of God depart from their mouths (Josh. 1:8).

After this event Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. Moses was quick to ascribe victory to the Lord. Because they attacked Israel with such unprovoked aggression, God pronounced a curse of sorts against Amalek, declaring he would be at war with Israel from generation to generation (forever).

The defeat of the Amalekites displayed the power of God and his willingness to come to the assistance of his people in times of crisis. But God usually uses human instruments in achieving such victories, and he did so here. He chose to use wise and skilled leaders and warriors, such as Moses and Joshua, who never forgot who was fighting for them. Later the apostle Paul would elaborate on this principle of God working through man: “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Phil. 2:12-13).

Many people attempt to serve God in their own strength and in doing so strip God of the glory. Others, in what amount to a cop-out, do very little to serve him and instead invoke such tired slogans as, “If anything needs to be done, God will do it himself.” God’s defeat of Amalek

teaches us that God will indeed fight for us, but we must stand ready to be his instruments in the battle in whatever way he chooses to use us.