

**Where is God When the Battle Rages?
1 Samuel 4-6**

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1. The Israelites are defeated. (4:1-8)

“Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.” (4:3)

- **Defeat should lead to self-examination**
- **God cannot be manipulated**

2. The Israelites are defeated again and the ark is captured. (4:9-11)

So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was great...The ark of God was captured, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died. (4:10-11)

- **The Philistines think they have captured Israel’s God.**

3. Israel is devastated at the loss. (4:12-22)

“The glory has departed from Israel for the ark of God has been captured.” (v.22)

- **Who do you believe in when your God has been defeated?**

4. Although the Israelites have lost the battle, God continues to win the war. (5:1-5)

But the following morning when they arose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the

Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. (v.4)

When you feel like the battle has been lost, God is getting ready to do His best work.

5. The 'captured' God begins his victory tour. (5:6-12)

The Lord's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod...Have the ark of the god of Israel move to Gath...the Lord's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic...so they sent the ark of God to Ekron...Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people. (v. 6,8,9,10,11)

6. Yahweh returns a conquering hero. (6:1-18)

- **God goes into enemy territory, conquers every major city, and returns to Israel with the spoils of war, i.e., gold.**
 - **God wins the war!**
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Things to Think About

When tragedy strikes, where is God?

When disaster comes, how do you relate to God? Do you still talk to Him? Do you blame Him?

Have you ever asked the question of God, "Why aren't you fighting for me?" What did He say?

There's a big difference between using God as a good-luck charm and being in an honest, loving relationship with Him. Where do you fit?

What do you do when it feels like God has been defeated?

What 'victory' stories do you have to share? (times when all seemed lost and, in the end, God came through)

What battles are you still in the middle of? How are you doing? What do you think God is up to?

Even though you might lose a few battles, God still wins the war. Do you believe this?
