



Sermon Title: Pick Your Battles

Text: Genesis 14

*"Worldly friendship drags you into fights never meant for you.
So, seek godly wisdom."*

In the Premier League, managers must decide which trophies to chase and which to let go. With limited depth and energy, trying to win everything often leads to winning nothing. Our lives are no different; we have limited time and strength, and we must learn to pick our battles.

Abram demonstrates this discernment in our text. He overlooked regional dealings until his relative, Lot, was taken captive. He then assembled 318 men for a strategic rescue mission but distinctly declined the spoils of war from the King of Sodom, saying, "I would not take a thread... lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

Whether in leadership, marriage, or the workplace, we often experience burnout by fighting trivial battles. Picking your battles means focusing your energy on issues that align with your values and God's mission, rather than exhausting yourself over minor disputes. As we examine Abram's life—before, during, and after the battle—we find a blueprint for spiritual discernment.

BE WISE (BEFORE THE BATTLE)

The opening of Genesis 14 describes a chaotic regional war. On one side, the Eastern Kings sought dominance; on the other, the Canaanite Kings (including Sodom) rebelled for economic freedom. They fought

over trade routes, resources, and the very land God had already promised to Abram.

In the face of this geopolitical mess, we see two very different responses:

- **Abram:** Despite being rich and influential, Abram refused to be enticed by the conflict. He did not use the war as an opportunity to seize land by force or align with the winning side. Instead, he stayed at the **Oaks of Mamre**—a place of altar-building, worship, and intimacy with God. Because he was secured in God's promises, he did not feel the need to fight for worldly territory.
- **Lot:** Lot, who originally pitched his tent near Sodom, was now dwelling in Sodom. He had embraced their culture and norms. Consequently, when Sodom went to war, Lot was dragged into a battle that was not his, eventually losing his freedom and possessions.

As the Apostle Paul warns, "*No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits*" (2 Timothy 2:4). When we chase "Material Girl" values—excessive debt, greed, or worldly status—we get caught in "snares" and "senseless desires" (1 Timothy 6:9) that lead to ruin.

Worldly friendship drags you into fights never meant for you. To be wise is to remain satisfied in God's presence so that the world's conflicts do not seduce you. Abram was a man of peace, but he was not passive. He was waiting for the *right* reason to fight. When the situation became personal, his focus shifted.

BE READY (DURING BATTLE)

Abram was a man of peace, but he was not passive. When the crisis became personal, he immediately mobilized the capture of his kinsman,

Lot. To pick your battles effectively, you must be ready when the right one arrives.

- **Ready to meet desperate needs:** Abram was motivated by love, not loot. He did not say, "That's Lot's fault"; he acted on the principle of rescuing those in danger. This mirrors Jesus Christ, who voluntarily entered our world to rescue us from the captivity of sin.
- **Ready through Preparation:** Abram led 318 trained men. He did not panic because he had prepared during "peacetime." Whether it is spiritual discipline or career skills, we must prepare now so we are ready when the opportunity or trial arrives.
- **Ready with Strategy & Boldness:** Abram was tactical, employing a night attack and persistence, pursuing the enemy until north of Damascus. He faced an undefeated superpower with remarkable courage because he was empowered by God.

The battles that truly matter are for people, not things. In 2026, God is calling you to be a warrior who is prepared, strategic, and bold.

BE HUMBLE (AFTER THE BATTLE)

Success and victory have a way of changing people—turning a humble heart into a proud one. After his victory, Abram is met by two very different kings, representing two very different paths.

- **The King of Sodom (Pride & Enticement):** He approached Abram with an air of superiority and a materialistic offer (v. 21). He never thanked God; he only focused on what he could get.
- **Melchizedek (Peace & Blessing):** The King of Salem and Priest of God Most High brought bread and wine. He reminded Abram that it was God who delivered his enemies into his hand. Abram recognized Melchizedek's spiritual authority and responded by giving a tenth of everything.


EMBRACING A NEW BEGINNING


Issue 3


Abram's humility is proven by what he refused. He did not need the world's rewards because he was satisfied with God's presence. He showed that true humility after a victory means:

1. Refusing unholy alliances: He did not want to be indebted to Sodom.
2. Practicing Gratitude: He gave tithes before the Law was ever written.
3. Exalting God: He attributed his success entirely to the "Possessor of heaven and earth."

We are called to acknowledge God as the source of all things, attributing every victory and success to His providence.

 **Ponder:** Your identity is defined by the battles you choose. Befriending the world entangles you in its chaos, but staying close to God gives you the discernment to ignore the trivial and fight only for what is eternal.

 **Practical Application:** Identify one minor conflict or "material world" pursuit draining your energy this week and let it go. Redirect that strength to help someone in need, choosing a battle for a person rather than a thing.

 **Prayer:** Lord, I pray that You will shape me into a warrior who perseveres. Strengthen my body and my faith; grant me courage, clothe me with wisdom, train my hands, steady my heart, guide my steps, and hold my hand as I face each battle. Remind me to rely on Your grace and that I am never alone, for You are with me. Make me battle-ready, and may each victory bring You glory. I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen

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