

Big Idea: Victorious people lose everything when we fight among ourselves.

1. Peace is precious. Enjoy it! (v. 21:43-45)

Take time to recount recent victories you've won or ground that you have taken. What were the enemies? Describe the peace gained through battles won.

Are you in a season of rest or war?

How do you properly enjoy the rest that God gives? Do you ever stop long enough to celebrate the "wins" or look at how far you've come?

What promises has God made to his people? Do you ever doubt God will keep his promises?

Do you want God to keep all of his promises or just most? Do you want all that God has promised or just some?

2. The heart is vulnerable. Protect it! (v. 22:1-9)

The eastern tribes willingly risked their lives fighting for land that their western neighbors would possess. What battles are you fighting on behalf of others? Do you do it willingly? Do you ever feel like the risk is too great or the cost too high? Have you quit before the war has been won?

Are you fighting any of these battles?

- Parents fighting on behalf of children.
- Children caring for aging parents.
- Church members sacrificing financially so others would have a place to worship.
- Church members who serve guests or disciple students who are not their own.
- Prayer warriors who pray for those they may never know.

Discuss this statement: *The further you live from the center of worship the greater the chance of theological drift.*

Discuss this statement: *Our hearts are often most vulnerable when the intensity of the battle is over.* Does your passion for holiness increase or decrease during seasons of rest?

When was the last time you moved away from a "band of brothers"? Have you ever received a warning like Joshua gave to the eastern tribes to not forsake the Lord?

On a scale of 1-5, how are you doing in these six evidences of carefully following the Lord?

- Observing His commandments.
- Loving the Lord your God.
- Walking in His ways.
- Keeping His commandments.
- Clinging to Him.
- Serving Him with all your heart and soul.

Does God deserve all of your heart or just most?

3. Accusations are divisive. Avoid them! (v. 10-20)

Phinehas was a peacemaker. Are these steps characteristic of the way you handle conflict?

- Keep the main thing the main thing.
- Don't share or listen to gossip.
- Don't judge the motive.
- Seek to understand and restore.
- Become a peacemaker.

Theological triage prevents theological civil war by ordering the importance of doctrinal differences to their proper place. List a few doctrinal differences that people have. Can you order them in three levels of importance (without starting a theological war)?

How many of these are worth going to war over? (Some doctrinal differences are!)

What is happening in the world while Christians fight with each other?

Have you ever received an accurate but insufficient report that almost caused you to start a war?

Have you ever realized that you had been given the facts without the truth? Describe a time you jumped to conclusions that were not true. What damage was done?

Do you most often believe the best or expect the worst in people? Why? Which of those two attitudes do you want people to express toward you?

Do you find yourself judging the motives of others before clarifying with them?

Gossip is sharing information with someone who is not part of the problem or the solution. How often are you guilty of gossip?

Is there anyone you have in mind that you need to go to?

4. Answers are available. Seek them! (v. 21-29)

When you are misunderstood, misrepresented, or slandered do you appeal to the Lord as your defender or do you try to defend yourself? What is the result of these two positions?

What are you doing to ensure the next generation will not forget to worship the Lord?

5. Alternatives are worthless. Abandon them! (v. 30-34)

The western tribes were willing to go to war over the belief that there are no alternative paths to God. We all are tempted to worship alternative saviors. We want to believe we can satisfy our cravings for God without Christ. What alternatives do you run to instead of Christ to satisfy your longings? What must you do to abandon them?

How does your heart respond to the fact that Jesus provides exclusive access to God?

Additional Scripture

- Proverbs 10:12
- Proverbs 28:25
- Matthew 5:9
- Romans 14:1-7
- 2Timothy 2:23-26
- James 3:18
- James 4:1-2