

Week 10 Day 1 | *The Lord Is: My Banner*

It's hard to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and not envision the epic battle that took place at Fort McHenry in 1814. We can almost see the weapons being fired. We can nearly feel the earth shake as the bombs explode. We can just about smell the stench of smoke and gunpowder. By song's end, our pride swells, as a tattered American flag still stands tall, waving in the wind.

A country's banner (or flag) should elicit pride in the heart of its citizens. For the United States, Old Glory represents sacrifices made by our brave military to preserve the liberties we hold dear. Our flag represents the 50 states formed from the 13 colonies that first declared independence from Great Britain. She represents strength, legacy, dignity, and home. It's meant to be flown high, on display as a sign of respect for the fallen—a symbol of gratitude for our freedom.

Yet as much as our flag means to us, neither she, nor anything or anyone else, should be our personal banner. Our banner is the Lord. This is something Moses understood quite well.

In Exodus 17, we read about an interesting fight between Joshua and the Amalekites. Joshua had engaged the Amalekites, as Moses had instructed. Joshua was winning, but only when Moses' hands were held up in the air. As soon as Moses dropped them, the Amalekites would have the advantage. Moses kept his hands up, but as you can imagine, his arms would get tired. Moses received help from Aaron and Hur, one on each side, to keep his hands high until sunset. Finally, Joshua overcame the enemy. Then we read:

*"Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner."
—verse 15 (NIV)*

Moses understood where the victory came from and who should receive credit. Moses didn't give Joshua the victory. There certainly wasn't anything magical about Moses' hands. Nor would Joshua or any of his fallen soldiers get the credit. In fact, neither did national or ethnic pride. After all, Moses didn't name the altar "Israel is my Banner." The Lord and the Lord only gave the victory.

Well, the Lord is my banner too . . . and He's yours. He's the banner of all who have professed Jesus as the Son of the Living God and as their personal Savior. Not unlike an American banner, the Lord as our banner represents many things for us. With only a few weeks left in this 13-week journey, remembering who gives the victories is of utmost importance.

First, our banner represents what has already been done. The war over sin and death has already been won. The Lord already sent his Son. The ultimate victor has declared the ultimate victory.

Now you still may have struggles with food, lethargy, or addictive behaviors. Pride, balance, or physical ailments might be tripping you up. It's important to keep in mind that while these are very real battles, the outcome has already been decided. Yes, you're still in the battlefield. Yes, Satan is still firing mortars at you. And yet he's still on the losing side, no matter how frightening the battle

becomes.

Second, if the Lord is our Banner, and our Banner is in charge of our lives, should we not feel emboldened? If the Lord is Lord over all and truly the Lord of our lives, is there anything we have to fear? Is there any battle too big? Any fight too fierce? If He has claimed the biggest victory there is to claim, can He not also win the smallest? Of course He can!

Those struggles you might still be facing? He can still win! It's not over. They are winnable skirmishes in an already won war.

Third, a banner is meant to be on display. It's meant for people to see. It's meant to be recognized and understood as a symbol for something greater. The Lord is that "something greater." In fact, He is the greatest and no one else even comes close.

As our banner, we give the Lord credit for whatever success we have with our fitness. We need to fly His name high as the motive, power, and giver of our progress—whether you've lost a lot of weight or a little, or whether you exercised regularly or on occasion. Whether sleep has improved or stayed the same, He has sustained you over these weeks. He has kept your arms lifted and will continue to do so. As such, we should take a cue from Psalm 20:5, which says, "May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God."

Moses had it right: the Lord is our banner. God is the symbol and giver of victory. He's worthy of all the praise and glory and honor, doing for us what we can't do on our own.

With the Lord as our banner, we remember not only what He has done, but we also have confidence in what He can continue to do. This includes what He can do with our fitness. Then, as He works our good for His glory, we need to remember to give Him the praise He deserves.

Prayer

Father, thank You for being both the symbol and giver of victory. Will You forgive me when I lose perspective or lose hope in what You have already done? Please help me to unabashedly give You the praise and glory for what You are doing in my life. Amen.

Meditation

The Lord is my banner.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Spend 10 to 15 minutes writing your own "The Lord is _____" devotional. Remember, you don't need to be eloquent to honor God by this exercise. The goal is to acknowledge who He has been, is, and will continue to be in your life. Don't get caught up in making it perfect. It's the pouring out of your heart that brings Him glory.