

The Red Thread in Noah's Ark (Part 3) – The Choice



Kaitlyn Barkley's Photography

The Red Thread in Noah's Ark.

I once met a man named Popeye.

He wasn't a cartoon character, he was a real man serving time in a minimum security prison. I'd gone with my church to minister to whoever would come to meet with us.

Popeye told me he wanted to trust Christ to save him from his sins, but he needed to clean up his life first.

I couldn't convince him that cleaning up his life was not a prerequisite for salvation. The only prerequisite was faith in the message that there's salvation in Christ alone. "No,"

he said. "I must get my life straightened out first. Then . . . then I'll become a Christian." He refused to accept salvation as a free gift.

Every year that goes by I think about Popeye and wonder what happened to him. Only God knows what was really going on in his heart that night.

Maybe he couldn't fathom such a radical gift of undeserved grace as he sat in prison serving time for his crime.

Maybe he was just saying what he thought I wanted to hear and didn't really care about Jesus or changing.

I learned during our time of prison ministry that a surprising number of people prefer prison over living in the world, because, despite the fact that it's prison, it's their home.

We're not always much different.

Sometimes we find ourselves imprisoned in sin, and despite it making us miserable, because it's familiar – because it's home – we stay.

Staying is a choice we make.

When Noah built the ark while the world watched, I believe he preached the message of salvation from judgment. (*2 Peter 2:5 calls Noah a "preacher of righteousness."*) This leads me to believe others could have followed Noah and his family onto the ark, leaving the condemned world behind, but they refused. Why would God give Noah the message of righteousness but not offer the path? He wouldn't. He didn't.

Noah knew the path, and he preached the message. They chose to ignore it.

Choosing to accept God's invitation and enter the Ark seems a no-brainer to us.

Enter the ark and be safe, or refuse and get washed away in the worldwide flood of judgment with everyone else.

How hard of a choice could that really have been, and yet only eight made the choice to accept God's invitation.

Popeye never said he was refusing God's invitation of salvation, but neither was he willing to accept it. Unfortunately, Popeye's choosing to do nothing about the invitation was choosing to reject it.

In the days of Noah, the world faced the same decision.

Ignoring Noah's message of righteousness and impending judgment and not entering the ark was choosing to see how long they could tread water, not in a serene pool for an hour or two, but rather in a raging storm guaranteed to overwhelm them and the earth. (You can't cover the entire earth with water in only forty days with a gentle Spring shower. It takes a deluge.)

In my last post, [The Red Thread in Noah's Ark, Part 2](#) I noted that Noah's family was saved based on [Noah's righteousness](#), not their own. But they still had to make the choice to enter the ark.

We, too, have a choice to make.

We must either choose to accept God's invitation to enter into our salvation provided through His Son, or choose to reject it.

Choosing to do nothing about it is choosing to reject it – to reject Christ.



Noah and his family accepted God's invitation, entered the ark and were saved from the flood. All who refused to enter, perished.

Likewise, all who accept Christ's invitation to enter into salvation through Christ will be saved from sin. All who refuse, will perish.

I think Noah and his family chose well. What about you?

If you're new to the *Noah's Ark Series*, Click here to read previous posts: [The Red Thread in Noah's Ark](#)

Don't miss a post as we follow [The Red Thread of Jesus in Noah's Ark](#) by subscribing to my blog. And please remember to share this post using the share buttons (found in my website, if you're reading this via email) and/or the Click to Tweet below:

Tweetable:

[What choice would you have made? The Red Thread in Noah's Ark – Part 3 \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

By the way, here's an interesting and ironic thought:

In today's world, a person entering prison steps into a "box" of sorts, cut off from the world.

In the time of Noah, however, it was the world that was the prison and stepping into the Ark – the "box" – was stepping into freedom.

I just thought that was interesting. It's a freebie for you.



*Kaitlyn
Barkley*

Thank you, Kaitlyn Barkley, for the poignant photograph above. To visit her blog and see more photos by Kaitlyn click here: [Kaitlyn Barkley Photography](#).

Christians Should Have Their Own Curse Words

The first time I saw this sketch by comedian **Brad Stine**, in the midst of my laughter, I had to agree. Christians should have their own curse words.

Why don't Christians have their own curse words? Do we not get hurt, too?

This morning I was in the throws of fighting the *War of the Weeds and the Roses*.

Roses are the stinging sea anemone of the garden. Weeds know that if they hide in a rose bush they have a better chance that the gardner may leave them alone. (Seriously, weeds think through this stuff.)

I had a world-class army of weeds hidden in my roses, but I didn't leave them alone. This was a war I was determined to win.

As I reached my hands through the maze of rose thorns, some so big you could hang a hat on them and others so numerous they make a shark look toothless, I thought how handy it would be if I had acceptable curse words, because "FIDDLE STICKS!" just wasn't getting the job done.

One of my best friends invented the curse word: *crudamatic*. That's still one of my favorites, but it's still no match for a clash with a rose bush.

What about you? Do you have any favorite Christian curse words? Leave me a comment below. I'd love to hear from you.

(Share the laughter via Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter using the share buttons.)

Tweetable:

[Christians Should Have Their Own Curse Words – Hilarious comedy by Brad Stine \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

Today's Bible Study Tip #1 – Read the Bible Like a Novel



~ Isaiah 40:8 ~

As you know, if you follow my blog regularly, Bible Study is kind of my thing.

In fact, it's the whole point of my blog. I want everyone to *Join the Journey* with me into God's Word.

In today's journey, I'm sharing a Bible Study Tip – one simple way to get more out of the Bible.

It's a tip I stumbled upon years ago when I decided to read the Bible in a year.

All through the month of December, the local radio station WMHK had been announcing their free Bible Reading Guide for reading through the Bible in a year. I'd done it before, but it had been a struggle for me to stay on track. The reading guide made it easy – I just wasn't faithful to the reading guide.

As I thought back on my previous experience, I wasn't sure I

wanted to rejoin the I-Read-the-Whole-Bible-in-a-Year-Club. That's when I stumbled upon this great tip.

Since [*The Message*](#) paraphrase of the Bible is written in somewhat of a novel form, I thought that might help make it easier to accomplish my goal. I picked up a copy and started reading on January 1.

Before I realized it, I discovered I was reading the Bible like a novel.

I finished it in September.

And that's my Bible Study Tip for today – one simple way to get more out of the Bible:

Read the Bible like a novel.

I was shocked by how fast I read through the Bible when I read it like a novel, but more importantly was that I now had a better feel for the entire text. It stopped being a collection of individual books and chapters, and became one exciting adventure.

Other than that one difficult year, I'd only ever read through the Bible over an extended time. In fact, the first time it took me three years to finish it.

Reading through the Bible thoughtfully and slowly is life-changing, but so is reading the Bible quickly, like a novel.

Getting large chunks of the Bible at one time helps give a fuller, more cohesive picture of the whole Bible than did my reading a chapter or two each day. It makes sense. Imagine how hard it would be to keep up with the themes and plot of a novel if it took you a year or two (or three) to read it.

I will always advocate careful study of the Bible using a good translation like the *New American Standard*, *New International*

Version, or English Standard Version, but I also advocate rapid reading.

This novel approach won't give you all you need. It can't take you deep enough, but reading the Bible like a novel will bring it to life in a way you can't experience reading it slowly. Plus, if you've ever felt that reading the entire Bible is too much, you'll discover it's not.

You don't have to read *The Message* translation. This works with any translation. And you don't have to wait until the New Year. Get started today.

What could be better for your Summer Reading than the #1 best seller in history?

Check out my post which includes [printable book marks](#) to help you keep your place. Mark off each book as you finish it.



Great Bible Study Tip: Read the Bible Like a Novel

By the way, unlike these three novels in the picture above (which I highly recommend), the Bible is not fiction nor is it *based* on a true story. It's the truest story ever told.

Have you ever read the Bible like a novel? Share your experience in the comments, and if you enjoyed this post, I hope you'll share it with others.

Tweetables:

[Today's Bible Study Tip – A Simple Way to Get More Out of the Bible \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

[A Novel Way to Study the Bible \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

Monday Music – “Soldier’s Light” by Rylee Preston & “Fighting Fear” by Edie Melson

Happy Memorial Day!

Today we honor all the men and women who have dedicated their lives to keeping our country free. We also honor all the families left at home who've supported their loved ones as they've laid down their lives.

We can never repay you – all of you.

In today's Monday Music, fifteen-year old Rylee Preston sings an original song, “Soldier’s Light” inspired by a poignant

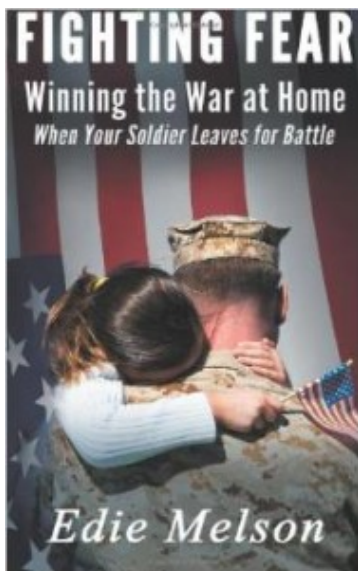
moment in her life. The moment when her father's good friend received "the news."

Army SPC. Justin Rollins was killed in Iraq in 2007.

After witnessing her father grieve over the loss of his friend's son, Rylee wrote this song. It's a beautiful, haunting song of the price of freedom.

Rylee stars in this music video which portrays the moment too many families have had to endure – the loss of their husband father, son, or brother – another of our US soldiers.

Rylee wrote "Soldier's Light" to honor Army SPC. Justin Rollins. The proceeds from the sale of her song (available on iTunes) will go to the [Rollins Ride](#) charity event, which raises money to support local schools and honors this brave soldier and all others who have given the ultimate cost for our freedom.



Fighting Fear:
Winning the War at
Home When Your
Soldier Goes to
Battle by Edie
Melson

If you or a loved one is one of the countless families of a soldier deployed abroad, I encourage you to check out this book by acclaimed author/editor Edie Melson:

[Fighting Fear: Winning the War at Home When Your Soldier Leaves for Battle.](#)

“Saying goodbye to a loved one leaving for war is a gut-wrenching proposition. But for those of us left behind, their deployment marks the beginning of our battle. And yet, it is possible to find God’s peace in the midst of fear and conquer the terror that lurks in the darkness of doubt. In Fighting Fear: Winning the War at Home, parents, spouses and siblings recount their personal journey as God goes before His people during times of spiritual, physical and military warfare. Learn the secret to living a peace-filled life when a loved one leaves for battle. Fight fear; win the war at home.” ~ Amazon.com

Read what award winning novelist Ann Tatlock has to say about it:

Few life events can be more unsettling than sending a loved one off to war. This book captures so vividly the fear, doubts and anxiety that go along with deployment, but more than that, each devotion leaves no doubt as to God’s presence with us in the midst of it all.

– Ann Tatlock.

Everyone in America has been touched by a soldier. If you’re breathing air in the *land of the free*, you’ve been touched by a soldier.

What does Memorial Day mean to you?

Share a message to our soldiers below in the comments, and help spread our gratitude around the world to our soldiers here and abroad, and to all of their loved ones waiting their

return, by sharing this post with your friends and family using the share buttons or the click to tweet below.



Edie Melson @
thewriteconver
sation.com

Edie Melson is the author of numerous books, including the devotional for military families, [*Fighting Fear: Winning the War at Home When Your Soldier Leaves for Battle*](#), and for [*Connections: Social Media & Networking Techniques for Writers*](#). She's also a well known freelance writer and editor. Her blog, [The Write Conversation](#), reaches thousands each month. She's the co-director of the [Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writers Conference](#) and the Social Media Mentor at [My Book Therapy](#). She's also the Military Family Blogger at [Guideposts.com](#), Social Media Director for [Southern Writers Magazine](#) and the Senior Editor for [NovelRocket.com](#). Connect with her on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Tweetables:

[Monday Music – Rylee Preston sings “Soldier’s Light” this Memorial Day \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

[Get Edie Melson’s book *Fighting Fear: Winning the War at Home When Your Soldier Goes to Battle* \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

Monday Music – The Heart: Needtobreathe, David Letterman, & David Jeremiah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY0mgqK154U>

Needtobreathe is one of my top two favorite groups, and they're fellow South Carolinians – whoo hoo!

(If anyone knows them and wants to introduce me, I'd be fine with that!)

If you missed Needtobreathe's performance on The David Letterman Show, I found it for us on youtube.

This song will make your having faced another Monday worth it. Feel free to play it every morning. My free gift to you.

As David Letterman said, "It doesn't get any better than that!"

The thought I want to leave you with as you listen (and dance) to this song is:

What has your heart?

What gets you dancing?

What are you passionate about that you simply must have?

If God has called you to it, it's a done deal – it's His deal.

If He hasn't, you don't want it. Let it go.

As you're busy doing the thing that you simply must do, don't

lose sight of the fact that it's God's responsibility to accomplish all He's called you to do.

Don't turn your passion into a burden or let fear overtake you.

Keep it your passion.

Don't lose The Heart.

Dr. David Jeremiah gave an outstanding teaching on defeating the fear of failure. This teaching will excite you as you discover how to keep the heart in all that God calls you to do.

I've included it at the bottom of this post.

The teaching actually starts at the 16 minute mark if you want to fast forward straight to Dr. David Jeremiah.

If you enjoyed this, I hope you'll use the share buttons to email this to a friend or post this to Pinterest, Facebook, or Twitter. (Of course, for Twitter, you can also use the handy pre-made tweets below.)

Tweetables:

[Needtobreathe sing "The Heart" on the David Letterman Show \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

[Dr. David Jeremiah teaches on Defeat: the Fear of Failure \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

[Do not fear: If God has called you to something, He will do it. \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

[God's commandments are God's enablements. \(Click to Tweet\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDUVbXE3lb8>