



The Ferguson, MO situation continues, and while I don't know that I have much to offer to the conversation, it doesn't seem to me that the jury should have been composed of nine white persons and only three black persons, even if that does represent "the racial makeup of St. Louis County."<sup>1</sup> The court should have "bent over backward" to ensure that everyone would be convinced that justice had been done, and that does not appear to be the case.

As people of the Book, **you and I affirm that all human life matters**, because each person is created in the image of God and has the God-given potential for relationship with God, both in time and in eternity. Let's recommit ourselves to making that potential actual in the lives of specific boys and girls, youth, young adults, and adults right here in Oakland Mills.

**Because nothing becomes actual until it becomes specific**, I ask you to join me in continued prayer that God's purposes for us, individually and together, will become more and more clear . . . and that we will be bold and courageous enough to follow that direction when it comes. It only takes a spark to get a fire going , . . but there does have to be a spark. *Somebody has to be first.*

Joshua Chamberlain was a student of theology and a professor of rhetoric, not a soldier. But when duty called, Chamberlain answered. He climbed the ranks to become colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the Union Army.

On July 2, 1863, Chamberlain and his three-hundred-soldier regiment were all that held the end of the battle line on a hill called "Little Round Top" near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. At 2:30 p.m., the 15<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Alabama infantry regiments of the Confederate Army charged, but Chamberlain and his men held their ground. Then followed a second, third, fourth, and fifth charge. By the last charge, only eighty soldiers remained standing in Chamberlain's regiment, and he himself had been wounded.

When Sergeant Tozier informed Chamberlain that no reinforcements were coming and his men were down to one round of ammunition each, Chamberlain knew that he needed to act decisively. When lookouts told him that the Confederates were organizing for yet another attack, the rational thing to do would have been to surrender, but Chamberlain told his men to fix their bayonets and yelled "Charge!"

Chamberlain and his men ran down the hill toward the Confederate soldiers, who vastly outnumbered them. The Union soldiers caught the Confederate soldiers off guard, and in what ranks as one of the most improbable victories in military history, eighty Union soldiers captured some four thousand Confederate soldiers in five minutes flat.

Most military historians believe that if Chamberlain had not charged, the Confederates would have gained the high ground. If the Confederates had gained the high ground, there is a good chance they would have won the Battle of Gettysburg. And in the hindsight of history, it seems clear that the Army that won at Gettysburg was destined to go on to win the War.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.cbsnews.com/news/ferguson-case-racial-and-gender-makeup-of-grand-jury-revealed/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ferguson-case-racial-and-gender-makeup-of-grand-jury-revealed/)

<sup>2</sup> This account is from Mark Batterson, *All In* (Zondervan, 2013), pp. 35-36. Joshua Chamberlain went on to become a General in the Union Army, and he commanded the Union troops present when Lee surrendered at Appomattox. Chamberlain went on to serve four terms as Governor of Maine.

The story of Little Round Top reminds me of a short poem my Dad used to quote, which appears to go back as far as the fourteenth century:

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.  
For want of a horse the rider was lost.  
For want of a rider the message was lost.  
For want of a message the battle was lost.  
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.  
And all for the want of a nail.<sup>3</sup>

And what's the point? *Nothing becomes actual until it becomes specific, and somebody has to be first.*  
**Maybe that somebody is you.**

Dave



### **Postscripts:**

#### 1. New Members

- Please join me in welcoming **Beth Trollinger** and **Jon and Kimmy Goldsmith** as new members to CBF! Beth is well-known to us, since her father, Dan, is one of our charter members. An active member of an Episcopal congregation, Beth is joining CBF as an Associate Member.
- Jon Goldsmith is a native of Idaho, and Kimmy is from Seoul, Korea. They have one son, and both work or have worked for a well-known agency at Ft. Meade. While they've lived in Columbia before, they're transferring their membership from the Seoul International Baptist Church, where they've been very active for the past five years.

#### 2. Bake Sale

- Many thanks to the Ladies of L.O.V.E. for all the Thanksgiving Goodies and for the hard work that went into last Sunday's bake sale!

#### 3. Missions Giving

- As you consider your gift-giving over the next five weeks, please remember Whose Birthday We Celebrate. **I challenge you to make the largest gift you give this month the one you give to further God's Kingdom on Earth.**
- Next week I'll say more about the many choices CBF provides for such giving.

---

<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/gettysburg/gettysburg-history-articles/defense-of-little-round-top.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua\\_Chamberlain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Chamberlain)

<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/joshua-lawrence-chamberlain.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For\\_Want\\_of\\_a\\_Nail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For_Want_of_a_Nail)

## **The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know**

O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

### **Week forty-five: The Big Ten**

*“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:2-3).*

We all understand the importance of rules and standards in our daily lives. Can you imagine a football game without sideline boundary markers? What kind of order would there be in a game where the running back could leave the playing field, run up the stadium steps, go out through the parking lot, enter the field from another angle, and score a touchdown? Boundaries are a part of our everyday life. A train is most free when it stays on the tracks that have been set out for it, not when it is trying to move through a field. The same is true with us. Like the train on its tracks, we move most freely when we have clearly defined tracks or standards by which to live.

Our memory verse in this chapter includes the first commandment. Why? Why not the third . . . or the seventh . . . or the tenth? Because if we get the first commandment right, all the others have a way of falling into place. This is true for the first four, those that define our relationship with God, that is, the vertical ones. Getting the first commandment right also helps our relationships with others, which are addressed in the horizontal commandments, or the last six.

#### **PRINCIPLE #1: GOD IS PRESENT**

The presentation of the Ten Commandments begins with an amazing declaration: “I AM.” When Moses was called by God from the burning bush to be the great emancipator of God’s people, Moses asked, “When I get back to the Israelites, who shall I say has sent me? What is your name?” God replied, “Tell him I AM has sent you” (Exodus 3:13–14). God is ever present, from eternity past to eternity future. For a brief thirty-three-year span in history, He stepped out of space into our physical realm. But He has always been and always will be the great I AM.

#### **PRINCIPLE #2: GOD IS PERSONAL**

The purpose of the law was never to save us. Paul, in the New Testament, said the law was simply “our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). The law is there to teach us how we all fall short of meeting God’s standards, and how much we need a Savior. We could never save ourselves by keeping the law.

God said, “I am the Lord your God.” But is He? Do you know Him with the intimacy of Father and child? Do you know Him, who is life and life eternal? The only way we can abide by the commandments and make them a matter of the heart is to know Him in a personal relationship.

#### **PRINCIPLE #3: GOD IS POWERFUL**

The Almighty God reminded Moses that He was the one who “brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” He was the One who sent the plagues upon Egypt. He was the One pictured in the deliverance provided by the Passover Lamb. He was the One who parted the Red Sea. He was the One who led the people of Israel with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He was the One who fed them daily with manna. He was the One who brought water from the rock. How prone we all are to forget how powerful our God is and all He has done for us in the past.

#### **PRINCIPLE #4: GOD IS PREEMINENT**

“You shall have no other gods before Me.” A “god” is anyone or anything that enjoys your primary devotion. Once someone approached Jesus of Nazareth and asked Him to identify the greatest of all God’s commandments. In a single statement, the Ten Commandments, not to mention all of the 613 commandments in the Torah, were reduced down to two. Jesus said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40). There you have it; the vertical relationship we have with God (Exodus 20:1–11) and the horizontal relationships we have with each other (Exodus 20:12–17) addressed in the Great Commandment.

As you memorize this verse, meditate on each of the Ten Commandments one by one. And remember that “the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).