

THE BATTLE *IS* NOT OVER

When it comes to the “battle,” Christians typically fall into one of two categories: 1) either they believe that the “battle” is ALREADY over (that Jesus has won the victory), or they believe that the “battle” is NEVER over!

The problem with believing the battle is already over is that it causes you to be overconfident and unprepared when conflict finally does come, and the problem with believing the battle is never over is that it causes you to be preoccupied with the fight.

What’s the solution? To answer this, we first have to look back on what happened when Israel finally entered the Promised Land.

Joshua 11:23

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Therefore, after Joshua delivered the land to Israel as a possession (or an inheritance), the people “rested” from war. However, it’s important to understand though they rested from war, they did not cease from war! The battle would continue—at least it was supposed to!

Judges 1:28

28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

Notice, after Israel possessed the land, they were supposed to “cast out” or dispossess it of its inhabitants. Unfortunately, Israel failed to do this! Moreover, when we give up the battle too soon, promises can quickly turn into problems!

Numbers 33:55

55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

Like the Israelites, many Christians are willing to give up the fighting once they have received the promise. However, before you reach for a sword, understand what kind of battle you’re being asked to fight. You’re not so much being asked to fight FOR SOMETHING; you’re being asked to fight AGAINST SOMETHING.

Hebrews 12:3–4

³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. ⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

The author of Hebrews is writing to people who had become weary of the fight. And the reason they had become weary of the fight is because they were fighting the *wrong* battle. Instead of fighting against *sin*, they were fighting against *sinners*!

Our fight is not with men. It's against sin and contradictions. And, understand that 'contradictions' or strong oppositions may come from *without* (in the form of persecution) or from *within* in the form of sin.

Hebrews 12:1

¹ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Opposition can ALSO come from principalities or powers in the form of thoughts and imaginations.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

It's important we understand that opposition doesn't come to keep us from receiving something. It often comes because we've already received something!

Matthew 13:20–21

²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Notice, opposition (tribulation and persecution) came because of what the ground ALREADY received. And this is important because we sometimes think that the presence of trouble is evidence that the promise is false. But, the promise can be true and opposition still be present!

Numbers 13:26–28

26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

The spies reported that the land flowed with milk and honey. So, the promise was indeed true. Nevertheless, there was strong opposition or giants! This is because promises don't ELIMINATE opposition, they INVITE opposition.

Hebrews 10:32

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Notice, the fight came *after* they were “illuminated” or received the promise. Therefore, sometimes the promise comes BEFORE the opposition, not after. When this happens, the opposition is trying to cause you to give up the fight.

You WILL give up the fight if your vision of the problem (opposition) becomes bigger than your vision of the promise!

Numbers 13:33

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Notice, when their view of the problem (the giants) became greater than their view of the promise, they gave up the battle. When you become preoccupied with the problem, it will eventually cause you to want to give up the battle!

Not only that, but if we're not careful we'll start interpreting ourselves by our problems. (When our problems are BIG, we'll see ourselves as SMALL.)

Hebrews 12:2–3

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

The reason we often become weary in our minds is because our problems become bigger than the promise (or the “joy set before us”) .

Hebrews 12:5–6

⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

This is the author’s way of saying they were allowing their troubles to cause them to forget they were sons!

Trials do not come to test whether we’re sons or not. According to this verse, trials come to develop us or make us mature sons.