

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

Anna Surface 2010

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

July
5
2020

ARE WE RUNNING; FIGHTING?

by Jim Stauffer

The apostle Paul emphasizes the need for discipline if one is to enter the fray, such as a race or a fight (**1 Cor. 9:24-27**). The analogy he provides is that of an entry into the games who prepares himself to endure and succeed. He does not bring this up to discuss the subject of sports with the Corinthians but rather to teach them the necessity of discipline to avoid being disqualified or failure.

In **Heb. 12:1** the concept is repeated with the term, *...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.* We should begin to understand the need for special training to compete in the effort called for.

Again Paul uses the concept of training, devotion and discipline in his teaching of Timothy. *"But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;"* (**1 Timothy 4:7**) He further admonishes Timothy in this regard, *"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."*

(**2 Timothy 2:15**) In both of these instances he is teaching Timothy how to combat those who are opposed to sound words and teaching. It will require a devoted effort.

Near the end of Paul's life he refers to his enduring effort to preach the gospel as an enduring fight or race, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"* (**2 Timothy 4:7**)

That brings us to the passage where preparation is defined with armor one might wear into battle. *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our*

struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 6:10-12**)

There are some things we must know in order to be successful in this battle. We must understand the enemy. We are not fighting against fleshly foes who can be defeated with one death blow from the sword. These *spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places* are much more resilient and are fully capable of delivering blows to us as well. Therefore, the need to don the armor described. The shield of faith is designed to ward off such blows.

We should note that each item of armor has a durability level determined by the preparation of the one wearing it. Everyone who girds his loins with the truth does not do so with an equal command of the truth of God's word. The same is true of the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness and the sword of the Spirit. Each of these things designed to protect us and with which we are to attack the foe, are as strong as our preparation.

Therefore, we have to give diligence. We have to run with a purpose disciplining our bodies, lay aside every weight that would hold us back and put on armor that has been prepared for the battle.

There is one exercise each of us can do to prepare in the way the New Testament writers advised us. We must study the word of God. We must ingest the word of life Jesus offers.

The athlete reacts instinctively to the challenges that come up during the contest. He can do this because he has prepared his mind and body for that purpose. We then, must prepare our minds and hearts in such a way to enable us to instinctively fight the good fight.

We cannot be as those who are members of religious organizations originated by men and simply refer the fight to the local preacher or the elders. We, as individuals are to be warriors in the battle. We are to defend the truth, rebuke error and, *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* (1 Thess. 5:21)

These are the words of the apostle Paul as he concluded his dissertation on the bodily resurrection at the second coming of Christ. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* (1 Corinthians 15:58)

We have as our primary task, the fight for truth. Each of us has a role to play in this battle. The church does not fight this battle with a sign in the yard. It is fought with each disciple of the Lord standing for that which is revealed in His word. *“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”* (Ephesians 6:13)

THE SIGN OF JONAH

“As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here” (Lk.11:29-32 NASV)

When asked about where His power to work miracles came from, Jesus said: *“But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you”* (Luke 11:20). The advent of the Holy Spirit of God meant the inauguration of the kingdom; the inbreaking of God’s rule over His creation had begun. The OT prophets spoke of the coming of the Spirit and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (Isaiah 2; 61). Salvation was now possible. Did the multitudes come to Jesus for salvation? What were their true intentions? Did they see the need to repent in order to be part of the kingdom? Jesus called them “a wicked generation.” Jesus refused to satisfy

their desire for another sign; all of the signs were never enough.

The sign of Jonah would be a sign for future generations. Jonah being thrown out of the ship into the water and then being swallowed by the great fish mirrors what happened to Jesus. Jesus was crucified, was buried, and was raised three days later. Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the fish. After reaching dry land, Jonah then went to Nineveh and preached God’s message of repentance. After Jesus came forth from the grave, His message rang forth into all the world. Why should those who heard the gospel believe and obey? Because Jesus is alive! He was raised from the grave! He rules and reigns!

Again, though, could those who continued to ask for signs ever know God’s truth and obey and be saved? If so, how? They needed to do what the people of Nineveh did; the people of Nineveh listened to Jonah’s preaching, believed, and obeyed. Why were they saved? Because they repented at the preaching of the gospel. Why should the sign seekers do the same? Because *something* greater was at work. The preaching of Jonah was God’s sign to Nineveh; it was enough to convince honest hearts to come to repentance. Today, the preaching of the gospel is God’s sign that He wants all to listen, believe, and repent. Is this a miraculous sign like those Jesus performed? No. But it is an adequate sign. The gospel is enough because Jesus was raised from the dead. Jonah’s actions anticipated the ultimate expression of salvation realized in Jesus’ gospel.

Are you seeking some kind of sign from God before you decide to obey His gospel? Be careful. If you won’t accept the gospel, neither will you accept a sign. For you, any sign and the gospel are not enough. *“He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead”* (Luke 16:30-31).

Randy Harshbarger

Troubled Marriages

Mike Thomas | Kokomo, Indiana, USA

Most marriages will have difficulties at one time or another, even among the people of God. If left unchecked these problems can seem unsurmountable and without hope of improvement. How should God’s people respond to troubled marriages?

Remove Divorce.

When Jesus was asked if a man may divorce his wife,

He said, *“What God has joined together, let not man separate”* (Matthew 19:6). This was consistent with what He said earlier in His ministry: *“I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery”* (5:32). He taught against divorce because it not only violates God’s original intent in marriage (19:4-5), it also promotes immorality. The only exception He made is with those whose mate is sexually unfaithful (19:9). Other than that, the rule is: *“A wife is not to depart from her husband... and a husband is not to divorce his wife”* (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Thus, divorce should not be in our thinking as Christians. Our goal should be to work past our conflicts with our mate because of our lifetime commitment to one another. “Till death do us part” was more than a phrase in our ceremony; it was a promise we made before God and man. “I will be married to you until death separates us” was a binding contract we made with our mate that was based on Scripture (Romans 7:2-3). If we would remember that promise when trouble enters our marriage, and dismiss the thought of abandonment, we will find ways to forgive, appreciate, and be content with one another.

Render Service.

I fear there are “innocent” parties in divorces for sexual immorality that are not so innocent and have acted in ways to encourage their mate’s infidelity. Not that the guilty party is justified in committing adultery because that is never acceptable (Proverbs 6:30-32). However, some people neglect their mate by being unmerciful, unloving, and unwilling to serve them as God instructs (1 Corinthians 7:2-5), then turn to Jesus’ exception to divorce when infidelity occurs. God is aware of these motives and will judge accordingly (Hebrews 4:13). So, instead of trying to find ways to disguise our unwillingness to serve our mate, we should commit to a higher calling by actually treating them with honor as *“heirs together of the grace of life”* (1 Peter 3:7).

Indeed, *“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Phil. 2:3) is a principle that is needed in all of our relationships.

Respect One Another.

Tell your mate you love them on a regular basis and demonstrate the qualities of a loving person (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Take an interest in life from their point of view. *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them”* (Colossians 3:19). And *“let the wife see that she respects her husband”* (Ephesians 5:33). We may not be able to control how our mate treats us, but we can control how we treat them, which is why we

should strive to always have a kind and loving disposition. Christians in a congregation were told: *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering”* (Colossians 3:12). If showing respect to others is needed in keeping people together in a group relationship, while learning to love one another, it is definitely needed in the most intimate relationship on earth.

Conclusion

Marriage is one of life’s richest blessings, which is why God gave it to mankind. He said, *“It is not good (beneficial) for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper [one who balances him—a counterpart who is] suitable and complementary for him”* (Genesis 2:18, Amplified Version). I have been blessed to find the meaning of that statement in my own marriage. Life is so much more bearable with a loving and godly companion by my side. But we both must continue to apply ourselves and let God’s will define our behavior if our marriage is to thrive and flourish. Again, *“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it”* (Psalm 127:1). Thus, let us remove divorce from our thinking, and learn to serve and respect our mate instead. Life is too short to miss the beauty of this special relationship.

Taken from MOTT; Meditate on these things

Our Young People Are Not Being Taught

Some time ago a preacher said to me: “Our young people are not buying the old arguments against instrumental music.” I replied: “No, our young people are not hearing the old arguments against instrumental music.” Some of them are soft on the issue of instrumental music - not because they have rejected what they have been taught, but because they have never been taught at all. They do not understand the principles involved. They have never heard the old arguments relating to Bible authority, speaking where the Bible speaks, and remaining silent where the Bible is silent. They have grown up in ‘socialized’ churches where the youth program was strong, but the teaching program was weak. They were never exposed to “book, chapter, and verse” preaching. Some of them grew up on a style of preaching in which the favorite text was “what is wrong with the church.” The old preachers, the old ways, and the old message, so dear to many of us, became to them an object of scorn and laughter, as they were incited to mirth by a new breed of preachers and youth specialists. It is little wonder that some have abandoned the church in our day!

selected; Taken from Beacon Electronic Edition; Colledgevue church of Christ; Columbia, Tn.

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY IS

THE BOOK OF DANIEL - BILL

MILLER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS

THE BOOK OF MARK

JIM STAUFFER (ZOOM)

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON

YOUTUBE ALSO - FALSE TEACHING

(MY RESPONSIBILITY)



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10