

Getting Back Your Fight



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) August 17, 2020

Using the Strength that God's Spirit Has Given You

The apostle Paul exhorts us, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (*1 Timothy 6:12, NKJV*). Paul lived the kind of fight he describes. Near the end of his ministry, he could boast, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (*2 Timothy 4:7*).

Paul was filled with fight to his dying day. So were centuries of our spiritual ancestors who died with their fight intact. The writer of Hebrews said of them, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (*Hebrews 11:33-34*).

What kind of fighting faith have you been putting up? Have you lost it? Have you been so overwhelmed you've grown discouraged, wounded, perplexed, a passive soldier of the cross? If so, it's time to get back up and fight the good fight.

Jacob is a good example of how to get back our fight. When the prophet Hosea wanted to challenge Israel for their cowardly spiritual condition, he reminded them of Jacob. "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him" (*Hosea 12:3-4*).

In this brief passage, Hosea sums up the secret to getting back our fight and prevailing with God to overcome every battle in life.

Jacob's very birth revealed he was a fighter, eager to overcome and obtain God's blessings.

Jacob's twin brother, Esau, was first to emerge from his mother's womb. As he came forth, however, a tiny hand gripped Esau's heel. It was the hand of his twin brother, Jacob. A godly instinct was in the child, as if he were saying, "Brother, get out of my way! If you don't want the birthright of this family and the fullness of God's blessings, I do."

The family birthright that Jacob sought represents all the blessings that we have in Christ Jesus. I believe Jacob wasn't just after the double portion of his father's wealth. He desired something more. He wanted the blessing of God so he could be in the lineage of the Messiah and have the priestly blessing to bless others.

This kind of godly desire is required of believers in these last days. God wants to raise up a people who aren't solely concerned with making their own living, owning a nice house or driving a nice car. He seeks those who are greedy for God's blessings so they can in turn bless the world.

Jacob's brother Esau was the opposite of this. His life represented everything that God hates. Esau lived only for his own appetites, pleasures and self-satisfaction. He never considered God's eternal purposes. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the Lord. "Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness" (*Malachi 1:2-3*).

By contrast, Jacob lived for God's purposes, and his hand on his fleshly brother's heel made a powerful statement. He was saying, "I will lay hold of all that hinders me from God, resisting, fighting and being victorious. I was born to be a channel of God's blessing."

Jacob spent years fighting to get and keep the blessings of God. This same desire ought to put fight into all of God's people. If you don't hunger for Jesus—if you only want to make it to heaven and not be bothered to help meet the needs of others—then you have nothing to fight for. You have made yourself an easy mark for the devil who knows you won't resist his onslaughts.

We're told that, despite his own sinful flesh, "by his strength (Jacob) had power with God" (*Hosea 12:3, KJV*).

Jacob had deceived his father, Isaac, into giving the family birthright to him instead of to Esau. Years later, he thought he would pay for his deceitful act when he learned his estranged brother was racing toward him with 400 rough riders, appearing set for revenge. "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed" (*Genesis 32:7, NKJV*). In that lonely hour, Jacob must have cried, "Oh, Lord, I'm about to lose everything. My very life is on the line!"

Just when Jacob sought a comforting word from God, the Lord came to wrestle with him, as if he were an enemy. "Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day" (*32:24*). The "man" mentioned in this verse is thought by theologians to have been the Lord himself, wrestling with Jacob.

This passage contains one of the greatest lessons a Christian will ever learn. Our battle is never with people—not our coworkers, not our neighbor, not our unsaved loved ones—but with God himself. You see, as we settle things with the Lord, making our lives right before him, everything else falls into line. It won't matter what other battles you face in life. All the demons in hell can't make a dent in what God wants to do through the fight he puts in you.

Jacob's biggest fight wasn't with Esau. It was with the Lord, and God had something specific in mind to accomplish through this wrestling match. You see, Jacob was never in danger from Esau—we discover this later in the story—but instead was endangered by his own weaknesses. God knew that Jacob's character wasn't adequate to face the things that would come later in his life. That's one reason why God came to wrestle with him. The Lord was serving as Jacob's trainer, a sparring partner to shape him into a strong warrior who could prevail over any enemy.

How many Christians have never been tested or trained through trials? We hear so much talk about prayer warriors, but sadly many of them have never been in true battle. Indeed, when hard times come, many Christians quit the battle. Deeply tested saints, however, are leaders in God's last-day army. He causes them to wrestle mightily with him, and through the work of his Spirit they emerge as warriors tried and tested. The more intense the trial, the greater the work he has planned for them to do.

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Jacob threw his whole body into the battle with the angel, using all his human ability. A fighting spirit had risen up in him, and "by his strength he had power with God" (*Hosea 12:3, KJV*). This verse has great meaning for all who want to prevail in prayer. Jacob prevailed "by his strength," and so must you and I. That strength comes from the Holy Spirit. "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (*Colossians 1:11, NKJV*). "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (*Ephesians 3:16*).

The question that Hosea posed to God's people was, "Are you using the strength you've been given?"

Hosea said, “The Lord also brings a charge against Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his deeds He will recompense him” (*Hosea 12:2*). What was this controversy God had with his people? It is the same controversy he has with his people in this generation. In short, it is spiritual laziness. We want miracles, blessings and deliverances but at no cost, with no effort.

Who among God’s people wrestles with him to see his kingdom come on earth? Who prays all night, fighting with their own self-seeking soul, weeping and crying out to the Lord? Who disciplines their flesh to seek him, bringing their body under subjection to spend hours in fasting? Who is so consumed with pleasing God that they’re desperate to be delivered from all habits and lusts, wrestling until he breaks all chains?

Bethel, where Jacob wrestled with the Lord, is a symbol of our prayer life, the place we go to meet God. At Bethel, Jacob declared, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it” (*Genesis 28:16*). Bethel means “house of God,” signifying a place to meet the Lord. “He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us” (*Hosea 12:4*).

What did God speak to us at Bethel? His words to Jacob there apply to every generation: “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go” (*Genesis 28:15*). In other words, “I am with you from this day on, wherever you go.” If that kind of promise doesn’t give a servant of God a fighting spirit, what will?

Bethel is our secret closet of prayer, the place we go in our time of distress. The Lord is saying to us today, “Every time you’re in trouble or distress, run to the altar. Call out to me, and I’ll meet you there.” Once you’re shut in with him, blocking out all other voices and noise, you’ll hear his voice. It happens when you’re on your face before him, wrestling and crying out, “Lord, I won’t let go until I hear your voice say you’re with me.”

Do you wonder why God is urging you, “Come on, fight”? It is simply because he loves you. He wants you to claim and obtain all his blessings. So, rise up in faith and lay hold of his promise. You have been given his strength. Now use it. You will see his kingdom come on earth. Amen.

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