

THE GOOD FIGHT

Nehemiah 4:20 ... "Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

Scripture more than once, describes our time spent on earth as a fight in the battle between good and evil, between the forces of God and the forces of satan. But this spiritual battle does not necessarily have to be violent. You are not going to defeat the devil by taking a swing at him and knocking his nose out of joint. The promise of Nehemiah in today's verse still applies today: God will fight for us.

Yet, we have some responsibilities in the battle between God and satan. First, we cannot expect God to defend us and fight for us if we are disrespecting and disobeying him. God might let satan drag us through the fire to force us to restore our relationship with God before he tackles satan on our behalf. Second, the battle is truly God's. If we try to fight it on our own without the protection and authority of God, we can disrupt God's plan and delay satan's defeat.

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul speaks of the Christian life as running a race. Not just running to participate, but running to win. It is common today for participants in competitions and school to receive awards even if they do not win. They are called participation awards and it sets a bad example to children who may grow up believing that winning and achieving are not important because they can expect awards regardless of their performance. Those children will be terribly frustrated when they get their first jobs and find out that participating or just showing up, is not enough.

The prize for living according to God's plan is his provision and mercy here on earth, plus eternity with him in Heaven. There are no participation awards. You win and go to heaven, or you lose and go somewhere a lot less attractive. 1 Corinthians 9:26 reads: "Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air." The Christian life must be lived as a race in which we strive for the prize; the big win. If we fight the battle between good and evil by just tossing worthless punches, we will suffer and lose.

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