

# A BATTLE ON YOUR HANDS

By

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To hear it on some TV programs you would think that serving Christ is like being on one perpetual honeymoon — fantastic!

It isn't that way for me. It wasn't like that for Jesus, nor for Paul. Early Christians could worship, preach, and practice their faith only under severe opposition from their foes. Paul called the Christian life a warfare.

It is hard to figure where we ever got the idea that we could settle down in a comfortable faith and coast into Glory to the cheers of all the world around us.

It is true that Jesus gives peace which the world cannot give and manifests His goodness to his people in ways completely unexpected and unexplainable, but He still calls us to suffer by His side and sends us out as sheep in the midst of wolves to lose our lives for His sake.

If we are in Christ, we must be in the same battle He fought.

**It Is A Moral Battle**, like Jesus fought in the wilderness — temptation at the beginning of His work. It starts at the beginning of our discipleship, when we are called to deny self and give up all sin, however attractive, desirable, and essential to life it appears to be.

Modern Christians have been losing the moral battle. Not that we don't have enough organizations campaigning against drunk driving, abortion, drugs, child abuse and so on, but because we have all these efforts only as surface battles when the real enemy is still deep within, unrecognized and untouched.

Churches have never been so full, and the Moral Majority is big enough to elect a president, but meanwhile divorce increases, prisons overflow, corruption is popular in high places, and pornography and immorality flourish as never before.

Morals originate in the heart and mind. Legislation and most organizations attack only the effects of evil. A moral victory comes only as one is changed from the inside out. It is not only when one *no longer commits sin*, but when he *no longer wants to commit it*. It is the death of worldly desires and molding of life to the pattern God has given. By contrast, popular preaching promotes comfort and security in the world, so that the Christian does not confront the world with a disciplined life, but conforms to it to gain its acceptance.

Jesus prayed that His disciples be “kept from the evil one” and taught us to pray, “deliver us from evil.” If we pray this prayer it may keep us from things we have come to love and even consider essential to the good life. Do we want to be kept from evil, even if it means being kept from some great worldly achievement? Even if it means being kept from something we have long desired? Even if it means God must disrupt our lives? Even if it means humiliation in the world?

The battle for Christian morals begins with self. Each Christian must realize that he has been salvaged “from the present evil world” to be a servant of God, to uphold the holy standards of Christ and be willing to lay down his life rather than surrender to those evils of the day which the world claims to be the normal acceptable path to success.

**It Is A Battle For Truth.** The first step away from God was belief in Satan's lie: "Thou shall not surely die." Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You are of your father the devil, and the lists of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is not truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for his is a liar and the father thereof"(John 8:44). The Pharisees proved to be both murderers and liars.

There is a direct connection between truth and life and between lies and death. We can know God only through the truth He has revealed. He gives life only to such as believe that truth and follow it. The world thrives on lies and death. In praying for His disciples Jesus said, "I have given them thy word and the world hated them"(John 17:14).

If we believe God, we also believe that we are sinners by His own definition, that we do not deserve to live but are worthy of death, and that the only means of life is to submit to Him and the redemption made by Christ's death.

This is devastating to our natural self-love. It humbles us and makes us dependent upon God. It removes the freedom to govern our actions according to our own whims, moods, and appetites. No wonder the world hates the disciple who proclaims this truth, and seeks to defeat him with lies and deception.

Not only does that world resist the truth, but the modern church has its own defense mechanism against any open examination of the truth. People are comfortable with the traditions in which they grew up and are more firmly set in the traditions of their "Church Fathers" than they are in scripture. Such traditions divide the church and obscure the truth by which believers may be brought to God. We cannot win the battle against lies of the world when the truth is hidden in the entangled web of human tradition.

The weapons of our warfare, according to II Corinthians 10:5-6 are "not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

***Imaginations and things exalted against the knowledge of God!*** This means that we are at war with the evolutionists, the humanists (which includes some elected officials), the media and scientists who seek to replace God with their own theories. It is our task to set them straight about God, His moral order, His laws, and His eternal purpose.

***Every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!*** Not just the thoughts during devotions or on Sunday morning. Daily conversation, business judgments, daily problems, entertainment — every thought is to be measured by the truth revealed in God's word, not by popular opinion or the latest supreme court decision.

We are disciples only if we abide in His word, not because we follow our feelings. The latest fad in our nation's pop culture may be tempting and popular, but if it is contrary to Christ's truth, there is where we pitch battle to bring every thought into obedience to Him.

Confusion, falsehood, and lax morals are the tools of Satan. The mark of a Christian is love of truth and earnest effort to live by it. If this is what you intend to do, expect to have a battle on your hands.

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