FIRE IN MY BONES: Are You Letting Satan's Mind Games Discourage You?

Many of my friends are walking through tough circumstances right now. One man's business has failed. Another man is experiencing chronic pain, and doctors can't find a medical solution. Another is battling an addiction. One married couple I know is struggling with infertility. And several friends are feeling they have failed as parents because their adult children have walked away from God.

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Meanwhile even many pastors are experiencing discouragement. Some of my pastor friends have even been thinking of leaving the ministry because they feel like failures.

My message to them is blunt: "Don't even think about quitting!" If a cloud of heaviness has settled over you recently, don't let this stop you from fulfilling your mission. Take these steps to regain your strength:

Go to your secret place often. What did David do when he felt like he was sinking in a pit of depression? He took refuge in God's presence. David said in Psalm 55:16: "As for me, I shall call upon God, and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice." David found the best therapy in the act of honest worship. He poured out his soul to God and placed his trust in Him alone. And he knew that God would rescue him.

Don’t let Satan’s constant assaults wear you down. Pray hard, sing loud and then pray again. Pray until you hear a refreshing word from God that will override the lies of the enemy. Sing until the darkness lifts. When the breakthrough comes, the joy of the Lord will spring up from the wells of salvation. The heavy clouds of discouragement will dissipate. You will resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Find your fellow warriors. This warfare we are engaged in is best not faced alone. I pity the lonely person who has no friends in the day of battle. David had 37 “mighty men” (2 Sam. 23:8) who fought beside him, and they loved him so much they risked their lives to protect him.

If you want to overcome discouragement, you need “foxhole buddies” who are willing to pray with you, carry your burdens and help you stay encouraged. Don’t wait until you’re ready to quit to recruit these comrades. Like Moses, we also need Aarons and Hurs to lift up our arms when we don’t have the strength to pray alone (see Exod. 17:12-14). Don’t ever think that you have to face your trials alone. God has placed us in His family, and we are surrounded by brothers and sisters who love us.

Don’t submit to the devil’s mind games. Satan knows how to discourage us. He knows our triggers. His lies are sharp arrows that he hurls in our direction—causing us to doubt God’s promises, or to question our identity as triumphant believers in Christ. You can’t submit one moment to his psychological warfare.

Goliath’s taunts didn’t dampen David’s zeal; Sanballat’s threats didn’t coax Nehemiah off the walls of Jerusalem; and the self-righteous Pharisees who criticized Jesus’ every move didn’t stop Him from showing compassion to sinners and outcasts. Like these heroes, you must fight the fight of faith and use the shield of faith to repel Satan’s attacks.

Satan sometimes uses people to discourage us, and some of his best tools are actually Christians who thrive on drama and negativity. Like Lucifer, they invent lies, entertain suspicions, spread toxic gossip and tear other Christians apart with their words. I honestly believe the devil could go on a long vacation, and Christians would be happy to do his work for him!

You must tune out the irrelevant noise made by small-minded people who would rather tear down the work of God than build it up. Forgive them and move on. Don't ever allow people's petty weaknesses to convince you to throw in the towel.

Reenlist for the war. It was Winston Churchill who said: "You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life." Churchill knew what all seasoned leaders understand: If you are out in front, people will pick you apart like vultures eat a carcass. Opposition comes with the assignment. Accept it and move forward.

Jesus never told us that life would be free of problems. He told His disciples: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world," (John 16:33). Paul told Timothy: "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," (2 Tim. 3:12). This is what we signed up for, but some of us need to renew our commitment to fight the good fight. Let's pray for each other as we face the battle.

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