

Keep Fighting in 2025

In early December I hosted a men's retreat at a camp near my home in Georgia. We hiked four miles, enjoyed wonderful Southern food, enjoyed fellowship around an outdoor fireplace, slept in bunkhouses, worshipped and prayed together, and listened to several of the younger guys give short sermons. Because of the relaxed atmosphere, many of the men opened up and shared that they were feeling battle-weary.

Let's be honest: 2024 was an intense year for many of us. The Christian life is compared to warfare for a reason. When we struggle to trust God in the midst of challenges with finances, relationships, temptations, regrets, disappointment, depression or anxiety, many of us want to give up. That's when we must pick up our spiritual weapons and fight, even on those days when we don't feel like it.

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At the men's retreat I reminded the guys about Eleazar, one of King David's "mighty men" listed in 2 Samuel 23. Scripture gives him hero status because of his determination in the midst of a fierce battle. At a time when all the other soldiers had withdrawn from the conflict—probably because of fear—Scripture says Eleazar kept going. Second Samuel 23:10a (NASB 1995) says: "He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the Lord brought about a great victory that day."

This brave soldier won special commendation because he stayed in the fight even when everyone else quit. Even though he was exhausted, he kept swinging his sword. Because David had mentored him, Eleazar had learned a lot about how to rely on the Holy Spirit's power during warfare. He was so determined to fight that his hand was literally stuck to his weapon. He

refused to relinquish his grip until he had finished the job.

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Why is that story included in the Bible? It's because God wants you to be a determined fighter, not a quitter. Too many of us today shrink back when life gets tough. We allow our emotions to take charge. We are easily dismayed by every negative circumstance. Our spines are squishy, our resolve is weak and our grip is feeble.

King David spent plenty of time in the Lord's boot camp before training his mighty team of warriors. He wrote in Psalm 18:34, 39: "He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze ... You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me."

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