

Let's Face Our Giants

Not gonna lie—it's been a tough season on our battlefield. The fight has not been as much with our ALS battle but with a host of other issues, like all three cars needing big repairs in the past month, several expensive items to replace, an unexpected tax bill and an odd assortment of stress-inducers too varied and tedious to mention.

None of these things would be enough to sink a ship individually, but all piled together they have created quite a force, and I have been fighting the feeling that we are surrounded on all sides.

Battle seasons like this always push me to my knees. There in the comfort of face-in-the-carpet nearness to God, I ask the hard questions: Is this an attack? Is there repentance needed in my life? Are we uncovered? Is there an area of delayed obedience? It's not that I believe God sends problems to those who don't get everything right. I just want to live in a way that is lined up with His principles.

So many times King David begged God to show him His way. That's what I want. I want to walk in *His* way, knowing His way leads to life. Other paths may seem attractive, but they lead to something less-than-life.

After asking the questions and waiting for answers, here is where I landed on the "why" for this current season of life: These are our Amalekites. My Bible heroes were trained to greatness by honest-to-goodness enemies. Sweaty Philistines. The fiery furnace. Roaring lions. Nero's sword. They faced famine and peril on every side and came out shining like gold. Refined. Strengthened. Beautiful.

I live in an era of relative peace, comfort and freedom. This can create a false sense of my own goodness, intelligence and power. I can be totally certain I'm trusting God with

everything, but it's the prospect of losing something dear to me that reveals the truth of my trust.

You would think that facing a giant like ALS would put all the other battles in perspective. You would imagine that a silly car repair would have very little power to steal my peace or purpose. But I'm finding that all these giants seem to work on a different part of my faith.

Financial giants reveal some holes in my armor that need filling and fixing. I can look back over the past few weeks and see the issues that have impacted me the most, and I can clearly see the areas where I need more strength, more discipline, more trust.

So, I'm thankful my home is not surrounded by flame-throwing Philistines. But I'm suiting up to face the enemies that *are* at the door with faith and five stones. They cannot kill me. They can, however, make me stronger than I was before I met 'em.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of the newly-released *Beautiful Battliefields* (NavPress). She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Ore.