

Waiting or Warring: Contending for Prophetic Purposes

When God has given a prophetic promise, how are we to respond? Are we to wait for Him to bring it about in His divine timing, or are we to war for that which He has promised to see it speedily brought forth?

This is not really a trick question. Hopefully you will agree that the answer is—both! Scripture gives clear direction that we are to wait for the Lord and to war for His promises. But sometimes walking this out can be harder than it at first appears. So while both are important, today I want to emphasize the importance of contending for the promises of God and fighting the good fight of faith—both personally and corporately.

“This command I commit to you, my son Timothy, according to the prophecies that were previously given to you, that by them you might fight a good fight” (1 Tim. 1:18).

I call you to fight! When it comes to prophetic promises, hearing God’s voice and responding to God’s voice are two necessary and interdependent aspects of seeing them come to pass. In other words, there is the *promise revealed*, and then there is the *promise fulfilled*. We are called to fight the good fight in a battle called spiritual warfare. God is moved by faith and by people who take action (Dan. 11:32). This is an important part of contending for the promised word to bring it into actual reality.

In between the positions of the promise revealed and the promise fulfilled, there is a gap that I call the “until clause.” So, how are we, as believers, supposed to respond in this transitional phase?

We are to actively engage in seeking the Lord for the conditions—whether spoken or not yet revealed—that must be met in order to unlock the promises He has given. We are not meant to stay in the valley, throw up our hands, resign, give up or just sit there. No! We must learn the ways of properly responding to the voice of God and contend for the promise in order to step into our promised land.

Why Contending Is Necessary

If we are honest, each one of us asks questions like, “*Why am I going through this anyway?*” In these times, we need to remember God’s Original .—the pathway to His glory. All three components—His Will, His Word and His Ways—work together in our lives in birthing a promise. The following four principles are tools of understanding to keep you moving forward toward fulfillment, rather than stuck in a paralyzing rut. So why is contending necessary?

1. It’s for more than just you. Realize that when you are contending for a breakthrough, you are doing this for more than just yourself. What you are going through is bigger than you! Every personal breakthrough is given so that you can turn around and impart that same faith, courage and gift you just received from God to others. It is called multiplication, not just addition!

Your personal victory builds a testimony, which helps others receive strength and encouragement to persevere too. You might just be contending for deliverance for your entire family, church culture, city and nation. Come on, now. You are contending for more than just yourself!

2. It strengthens you in God. If you do Crossfit or some other workout regimen, you have a greater probability of looking buff. If you are a couch potato, then you will likely resemble one. In the ways of God, contending in the spirit is a lot like lifting weights—there is a resistance factor that

eventually works in your favor. Your tenacious response causes you to grow up spiritually, tests your motivations and builds you up. The process of becoming mighty seem intense at times, but believe me, it strengthens you in the long run. Contending builds you up!

3. It threatens the enemy. Why is contending necessary? Because we have a real enemy, and your success is a threat to the kingdom of darkness. Your fulfilled dream is one of the enemy's worst nightmares!

You must put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17) because your wrestling match is not against your boss, spouse, pastor or children. It is against evil demonic powers arrayed against you, your promise and God's purposes.

Our battle is against the powers, principalities of darkness and evil spirits in the heavenly places. We were born in the middle of a great cosmic war between the forces of good and evil, and as believers in Christ Jesus, we were born to be effective spiritual warriors. It is up to us to enforce the victory Jesus Christ won on Calvary.

4. It prepares the next generation. Others are watching. Your leg of the race inspires others. In fact, we must realize that we are not racing in a solo sprint; we are engaged in a relay race. It takes a team effort including the joining of the generations to come into the greater works that Jesus promised. Often, the fulfillment of the Lord's prophetic invitations does not just depend on us; it involves the will, attitude and fortitude of an entire generation of believers. Some people, churches, cities and nations just give up too soon. When they are at the brink of crossing over from promises revealed to promises fulfilled, they quit. Not on my watch! I have seen promises of revival or breakthrough for entire cities dropped by one generation, only for another generation to rise up later and pick up the dropped promise until it is birthed on Earth as it is in heaven.

In all honesty, we all get weak and fail from time to time. But then God, strong in mercy and loving-kindness, comes through, revives us again and calls others to step up to the plate alongside us. Contending together is essential if we are going to cross over into the greater works.

What You Can Know for Sure

In order to succeed in life and ministry, some basic, fundamental decisions must be applied every time—no matter what. These basic wisdom decisions fall into the categories of yes and no. You can never go wrong by sticking close to these basic principles.

Say Yes to the Lord!

1. Focus your faith on the Giver, not the gift (Heb. 11:6).
2. Hold on to the words God has given with “open expectancy.”
3. Be thankful for what you’ve received. We are to not despise God’s words (1 Thess. 5:20).
4. Follow Daniel’s example and pray the promise into existence (Jer. 29:10; Dan. 9).
5. Fight the good fight of faith—do spiritual battle according to the word from the Lord (1 Tim. 1:18).

Say No to Ourselves!

1. Put down fantasy and unrestrained speculation, and bring every thought captive to Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 10:5).
2. Embrace discipleship and the death-and-resurrection process (John 12:24).
3. Embrace patience! There are no shortcuts with God.
4. Learn to give grace and mercy to others, as we are all still in training.

So is it waiting or warring? The answer is an obvious yes! Together, let's wait upon the Lord, fight the good fight of faith and contend for His promises to be fulfilled. I pray that you will apply these useful tools as you grow in responding to the voice of God.

Father God, I am grateful for the progress we (as the body of Christ) are making together. Help me to properly respond to Your whispers, dreams, visitations and various encounters. I want to listen and obey! Lead me by Your grace into greater applications of contending and into the fulfillment of your promise—that we would see your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, and do the greater works of Jesus together. {eoa}

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