

How to Win ANY Battle in Life

You've tried it your way and failed. Don't give up! Choose to stay in the game and see how God even takes our mistakes and builds them into our greatest victories.

How many times have we heard this one: "It doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you play the game that counts." Some of us realized winning meant a lot when we noticed that the guys who got the girls were the ones who won the starting positions on the team. Even if how they played the game was anything but nice, they still won and got the girls.

Go out in life thinking that winning does not matter and you will be very disappointed. Winning matters a lot.

Winners get the best stuff. The world talks about and celebrates winners, while it shuns the loser who seems to not have what it takes or has it for a while and then loses it. Few can tell you who raced in the Indianapolis 500 in any given year. The winners are the ones that count.

Your Personal Battles

Everybody struggles with something and battles it day after day. Your main battle might be overeating, pornography, drinking, anger, depression or one of many other things that could have been tripping you up, perhaps for years.

You have made two choices that most everybody else has made: (1) You have tried real hard to fix it yourself; (2) You have asked God to take the battle from you and just heal it right now.

You may have begged Him and even questioned whether or not there actually is a God, or whether or not He loves you based on the fact that your battle has continued. You may have even defended your problem, saying it is just the way God made you since He hasn't seen fit to change it for you.

It is always good to ask for God's healing, but if you are still struggling, still losing the battle, now is the time to make some different choices that will turn your life around.

When dealing with your innermost battles, keep in mind that winners are not just those men who develop a plan for their life, go out and execute it and then watch everything fall perfectly in place. Winning also comes from the response we choose when things don't go so well.

Great coaches train the team to go out and win. But championship coaches take it a step further: They train their teams to respond when the other team scores first. Great teams know how to come back when they are behind. It is the response to things not going well that often determines whether or not a team wins or loses. The same goes with individuals.

You have a choice of how to respond when things go wrong. Most likely there is some area, some battle in which you have experienced defeat over and over again. Now you have choices before you that will either turn your life into a succession of loss upon loss or a life defined in every way by winning.

Giving Up Old Choices

One choice in response to mistakes and personal failures is arrogant defensiveness. This is the choice to justify, rationalize and stand your ground. It is the choice down a path of repeated failures and stunted growth. I have used this response often and have to surrender it up every day.

It always feels good for the moment to exercise my right to defend what I did and stand my ground. But it never helps me

move forward, and, eventually, I have to acknowledge my arrogance and let it go.

I have to replace the choice to remain stubborn, resistant, arrogant and defensive with the choice of a winner. It is the unattractive choice of humble willingness.

The Choice of Humble Willingness

Those who are both humble and willing realize they do not have all the answers, and they are willing to do whatever it takes to find them. This place of humility allows them to seek help from others and shift their reliance from themselves to God.

Proverbs 3:5-7 tells us to not lean on our own understanding and to not be wise in our own eyes. A humble willingness to do whatever it takes, to reach out and get the help that is needed is a sign of character and strength. It is the beginning of the path to the victory circle. But to get there you have to allow God to use your struggle to teach you to rely less on your own resources and totally on Him.

Over the years I have watched people reach this crucial point where they are willing to do whatever it takes, and I have watched everything in their lives turn around. I have also seen those who reach the point and turn and run in the opposite direction. The biggest reason is that they are unwilling to make a bold move toward healing.

You can't just declare yourself a winner. You have to heal the things that are preventing you from having victory. The biggest reason you have lost the battle is that you have relied on your own strength, trying to win on your own.

Once you are humbly willing, you can move to connect your life with others who can help you. This means that you are willing to call someone or get in the car and go to a meeting or find a counselor to help you. In humble willingness, tell your wife or close friend that you are finally willing to look into

getting some help that they suggested. Humbly acknowledge that you are only as sick as your secrets, and you must break out of secrecy and into connection that heals and helps you to win whatever battles you are facing.

The winning life starts by moving beyond trying harder and merely asking for healing. You give up the old ways and defending the old ways, and you are willing to become involved in the healing by reaching out and connecting.

The connection begins the healing process that will include several difficult processes, such as grieving your past losses so you can move forward. It may involve forgiving those who have hurt you, and giving up old resentments and grudges. And rather than numb your feelings or deny they are there, you will need to acknowledge them and feel the depths of your emotions.

Then, as the reality of your situation becomes clearer, it will require that you embrace your life, the good and the bad of it all, and allow God to do with it what only God can do.

Embracing Rather Than Rejecting Life

God takes our mistakes and blends them and builds them into our biggest wins. I know that may sound strange, but it is true.

You're probably familiar with the Old Testament story of Joseph. The guy went from being the favorite son in his father's house to the depths of an Egyptian prison. Some would say that he had it coming.

Joseph was so arrogant that he was not smart enough to edit what he tells his brothers about God's plan for his life: "One night Joseph had a dream and promptly reported the details to his brothers, causing them to hate him even more. 'Listen to this dream,' he announced. 'We were out in the field tying up bundles of grain. My bundle stood up, and then your bundles

all gathered around and bowed low before it!’ ‘So you are going to be our king, are you?’ his brothers taunted. And they hated him all the more for his dream and what he had said” (Gen. 37:5-8, NLT).

So Joseph’s brothers decided to kill him, but they changed their minds and sold him into slavery instead. He found favor with his new master only to be thrown in jail after the lady of the house lied about Joseph, accusing him of an impropriety. At some point, I’m sure Joseph was kicking himself for the way he had bragged to his brothers, which started the chain of events leading to his imprisonment. But he didn’t give up.

In prison he connected with his fellow inmates, telling them what their dreams meant and that eventually led to his release. Once again, he gained favor by telling Pharaoh what his dreams meant and ended up running the country, enabling him to save his family and, ultimately, an entire nation.

Now, I don’t think God meant for those mean brothers to sell Joseph or for him to be falsely accused and thrown in prison. But, somehow, God worked out a big win in the end. As Joseph notes, “God turned into good” what his brothers meant for evil (Gen. 50:20).

You may feel like you are living in your own self-constructed prison. You may think your life is wasted and you are the loser of all losers. But it is not true. If you will stay true to God, God will work with your circumstances and weave them into a wonderful win. But you must humble yourself and become willing to do whatever it takes to heal.

You must reach out and connect with others, getting support, accountability and even treatment for the character defects within you. You must open up your life to others and allow God to manage the outcome. Then you must embrace the reality of your life and allow God to use the things you are most ashamed

of. Allow God to weave them and wind them into your future.

Perseverance

The final element to win at anything is perseverance. Whether it is a personal battle or a new project, be in it for the long haul.

Too often, we want the quick fix and the instant solution. We want the big win now and when it does not happen, we give up, throw in the towel and walk away a loser. But if we persevere, hang on and hang in, the win we so badly want may be just around the corner.

Here is how perseverance worked for me. One of the things I feel best about in my life is the creation of the Women of Faith conference. God gave me a vision for discouraged and disappointed women, and we began conferences for women in 1996. Now, almost 10 years later, they are stronger than ever with more than 3 million women having attended, more than 400,000 attending each year. Nothing has ever made me feel more like a winner than the success of Women of Faith and the hundreds of thousands of lives that have been changed by it.

But in 1995, the year before the conferences started, I felt like the biggest loser around. It was then that I created a traveling conference that toured the country in 12 cities. That year, my efforts at creating conferences resulted in a grand total of less than 1,000 people showing up ... total.

I remember the grand ballroom in Chicago where we had less than 30. No one looked like or felt like a bigger loser than me. But I did not take the loss as an indictment on who I was. A losing idea and the mistakes I made in implementing it did not make me a total failure. So I persevered with conferences, and it was the next year that Women of Faith started filling every seat available.

Had I given up, I would have never experienced the joy of

seeing Women of Faith become the ministry that it is today. The win was not in pulling it off. The win was persevering with God and watching Him do what I had proved I could not do alone.

Perhaps you are about to give up. You don't feel there is any hope for you. If I were sitting there with you, I would encourage you to look for the big win just around the bend or just over the next hill. You may not see it, but it is there.

Stand strong in God's Spirit and resist Satan's lies that you will fail. Take Paul's encouragement in Ephesians 6:10-13 to heart: "Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms. Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm."

No matter how low you feel or the degree of humiliation you have experienced, you can choose to keep going and stay in the game rather than quit right before you see what God is about to do. Your loss could actually be the springboard to living the life of a winner because of what you have experienced and what you have learned in the heat of battle. But to experience the life of a winner, you must have a willingness to wait on God and to persevere.

Rather than give up on life, I encourage you to give up your old ways of handling your battles and turn your life over to God. Trust in Him and those He chooses to use to help you. You will heal, and you will win. And, you will find purpose for your life that you never dreamed possible.

Romans 8:28 will unfold before your eyes over your lifetime:

God really “causes everything to work together for the good.” But first you must choose to win His way and not your own. And once you experience winning God’s way, you will want to share the message with others and help them understand the path toward creating a winning life.

KEYS TO WINNING ANY BATTLE

- Give up your old ways of trying to win.
- Give up arrogant defensiveness and stubborn resistance.
- Humble yourself and become willing to do whatever it takes.
- Reach out and connect with those who can help you heal.
- Heal old wounds by grieving your losses, forgiving those who hurt you and feeling the depths of your emotions.
- Embrace the reality of your life, including the past you want to forget.
- Persevere and watch God create something amazing from it all.
- Reach out to others who need to find the way to win.

Stephen Arterburn is the author and co-author of more than 60 books, including *Every Man’s Battle*. Contact him at .