

Quitting vs Fighting

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Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0 : 00] We'll go with it. We've got Mrs. West here. Russ showed up. All right. Good morning. Let's find 2 Corinthians 13 to start this morning in Sunday school. 2 Corinthians 13.

We began something two weeks ago and pretty much finished up the first section of it. On the thought of, well, the series is the thought of perfection, of perfecting that which is lacking and striving to, the Bible uses the word holiness.

And I know that's a hard word to live up to. That's God's nature and being. And yet he does say, be ye holy for I am holy.

And rather than weighing yourself down with a list of things that you must do and checklists of each day to make sure that you're not doing this and you are doing this, God does something in a different way.

I'd say what he does is incrementally, little by little, he reveals things to you. He grows you in a time frame and span.

[1 : 25] He doesn't dump the whole book on you and his whole truth on you. He kind of did that to Israel where he just, his laws, statutes, judgments, boom, precepts, now do it. And just from day one it was expected.

But with you and I, the Lord is, he takes us through. He guides us. He opens your eyes to different things in your life. When you got saved, and I can't speak for everyone here, I can tell you about myself, but I'm sure you could acknowledge this, that when you got saved, you didn't have light of every single thing that you were, should be doing or shouldn't be doing.

But incrementally, the Lord revealed these things. He kind of took the blinders off to some things. One of the first things often is language. You just, you notice the things that are coming out of your mouth are wrong, and you start to work on that.

And other things, sometimes it's, if it shouldn't be coming out of your mouth, then it probably shouldn't be coming in your ears. And then you realize some of the things you're watching on TV are probably not in your best interest as a Christian.

And so you start to develop convictions. You start to change. What you're doing is you're perfecting. You're getting cleaner. You're being sanctified. And that's the term that I showed you several verses on.

[2 : 38] I want to start today just by showing you another one, because I didn't cover all three verses on it. In 2 Corinthians 13, look at verse 9, where Paul says, Verse 11, Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect.

Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and so forth. Perfection. This is what Paul says, We wish even your perfection. And that's why he wrote the epistle to them, to perfect those things in their life that was out of order and out of sync and incorrect, and to clean up.

I like how Paul words it. He says that if I was present, I would use sharpness, and not to beat you up or destroy you, but sharpness, I'd be direct with you.

I'd tell you the truth, to edify you, to get you to see black and white, and we need to be on the right side of things. And so using sharpness is a biblical and godly thing in the pulpit of calling sin, sin, and not to destroy somebody, but rather to edify them, to open their eyes, to get them to consider their way.

So again, here we are looking to perfect some things. And the first thing, the first category we looked at over the last two weeks was contrasting isolation and unification.

[4 : 31] And I think we've said enough on those things, showing you that it's quite obvious which one's right and which one the Lord would have for each of his children and which one he blesses.

And so in attempt to perfect that which is lacking in perhaps you, we ought to realize our tendencies in that area, realize our temptations in that area, and not to withdraw, but rather to connect with God's people and God's church.

And so now I want to take you to a new one, a new topic, a new contrast. And this one I'm going to call quitting versus fighting. Quitting versus fighting.

And again, the two words on themselves, I think you can already get the gist of it. We're not going to be talking about quitting smoking and quitting pot and quitting beer and alcohol or those things that should already be quite understood.

But rather quitting is going to be the easy way out. Quitting is giving up or giving in. Quitting is to stop resisting.

[5 : 37] You're told in your Bible to resist the devil. And quitting is to just to walk away before you're done or before you've won the victory or before you've accomplished what you're desiring to accomplish for God.

Quitting is giving up on doing those things that you know you ought to be doing as a believer. And one thing in the Bible you're commanded to do is to fight the good fight of faith.

And so quitting is just kind of just saying, I can't handle this. But the opposite then that we want to gear for and have our attention on is fighting. Not fighting inside the church.

Not fighting in your home. But fighting is what the Christian life is likened to. You're likened to a soldier. And we'll look at those scriptures in a little bit in case you aren't familiar with them. The Christian's likened to a soldier.

And it may not be that you just need to be out there swinging away, swinging away, taking ground from the devil. That's not even what I'm talking about. Quitting is or fighting is just refusing to quit.

[6 : 40] It's just refusing to give up and deciding that I will endure whatever comes my way by the grace of God until Jesus Christ comes back.

Until he calls me home, until this life is over, I'm not giving up. I'm going to stay in the book. I'm going to stay with God. I'm going to keep on keeping on as long as I can do it.

That's the resolve in the new man. And so fighting is a refusal to quit. And it doesn't mean that you're winning. But it means that you're not quitting.

And so that's the sides we want to look at, quitting versus fighting. Now, both quitting and fighting, this is important to consider this morning, are decided on the inside.

They're decided in your mind. It's not about your talent. It has nothing to do with your ability or your experience or how old you are or how much zeal you have.

[7 : 37] It has to do with something on the inside of you, whether you're going to give up or whether you're going to keep fighting. You could be getting beat and beat and beat and beat, and you can still fight.

You can still say, I'm not giving up. And we've got examples of this in the scriptures. Things on the outside, exterior events, exterior circumstances that can be present in your life, daily, weekly, year by year.

They can pressure you. They can sway you. But they cannot make you choose one or the other. They cannot make you quit. And they cannot make you choose to fight. That's a choice you take on on the inside.

And so what I'm trying to convey to begin here is that ultimately you decide if this is right for you, if this is worth it to you. You decide if you should stick your head down and just plow forward for Jesus Christ, and you decide if, nah, it's just not what I want to do with my life.

It's an inward choice whether you're going to quit or whether you're going to keep fighting. So let's say a few things about quitting this morning, and I don't know what this will come across as to you.

[8 : 52] I think it's pretty simple, but I hope it's helpful. I hope at least get your mind geared to what's right. Quitting is easy. Just like the last lesson on isolation, that's the easy thing to do, is just to stay at a length and not to get in.

But quitting is easy, but it's not helpful. It's not right. It's destructive. It's destructive to what the work of God in your life. In the Christian life, when you're a quitter, quitting leaves a mark.

It leaves a mark on you. Giving up affects you. It affects people around you. But we're aiming at you right now. The potential that God has given you and has called you to be and desires to see you blossom into as a believer, as a child, is never realized.

And quitting just frustrates the new man and the work of God. It's taken the easy road. I've seen people quit jobs after a few weeks.

And it just wasn't for them. And they move on and find another job. And after a few weeks, they quit that job. And you say, well, they're just still looking.

[10:01] And they quit that. And what you find out is just some people just, it's a habit. It's a pattern of just quitting. They're quitters. It's not that they couldn't find a good job or make it work.

It's that they're not faithful and they're not determined. And they're not a grounded man or woman of character. And so quitting is destructive.

And the first thing I want to say is that quitting destroys character. It's destructive. It's a quitter at one thing is far more likely to be a quitter at another thing.

And after enough attempts, you just say, forget it. And you walk away. And it's true in the Christian life and it's true in the world. I've seen many Christians go through this cycle of quitting and then getting up and trying again and then quitting and then getting up and trying again.

And then eventually, you know what happens? They're just gone. And you don't see them for years and years. And then you see them somehow or some way in just a funeral or out and about.

[11:07] And they gave up. They just walked away. And it's a sad thing to think, for the last 20 years, where have you been? What have you been doing with your life?

You've just dumped it out. You've wasted it. You know better. You're going to watch that whole thing burn up at the judgment seat of Christ because you gave up.

And you walked away from Jesus Christ. And I've seen it in the church. You've probably seen it too. It's taken the easy way. People quit their jobs.

People that get divorced are far more likely by statistics to get divorced again. Why? Because they quit the first time.

They're more likely to quit again. They just give up. It becomes a character trait. People show up in church for a few weeks, sometimes for a few months, and then they just disappear.

[12:02] What happened? Why? Well, I guess they never intended on really getting plugged in and getting faithful. They walk around saying, I'm looking for a good church. And then they find one.

And then it seems, well, they hear the truth. They grow a little bit. They learn some things. They say, hey, that was really good. That was really good. I'd like to hear more about that. Study that out. And then they find out that these people are serious about their Bibles and about Jesus Christ. And they believe living the Christian life out there is the right way to be.

And sometimes you find out that, well, the people that are looking for a good church really aren't looking for a good church after all. They're just looking for a form of godliness that, I guess, maybe you could say accommodates their lifestyle.

And they quit. And they walk away. They're church hoppers. And bouncing around looking for that perfect fit for their lifestyle. Because quitting is easy.

[13:02] And you can see it in church. You can see it in the workforce. It's just a character flaw. And quitting destroys character. Something else quitting destroys is confidence. It destroys confidence.

You have a new man. And in that new man, God has put innately in him a drive to love God and to want to grow and to serve him.

It may be small for you. But as you feed it, it grows. It gets a taste of the good life and of Jesus Christ. And it gets confident. It wants to walk with God.

It wants to spend time in the Bible. It wants to learn as much as it can learn. And that drive to obey God is inside of you. But when you give in to your flesh and quit and walk away, you just destroy. You throw cold water. You quench the spirit. And it destroys confidence. It gives their flesh justification to just do it again. Just to live that life.

[14:00] Just get warm and then quit. I always say this about reading your Bible. I say when you read your Bible, you should always move forward.

You should always, wherever your bookmark is, that's where you are. And if you struggle with a discipline to read every day, sometimes those little calendars are helpful to you.

And you can locate where you are in the month and the date. And you can read that passage. And you'll get through your Bible in a year. I'm sure if you haven't seen those, they're everywhere. You can find one. And they're helpful for somebody who's disciplined and structured to do that every day.

But it never fails that you miss a day. And then you have to decide, oh, I need to double up. And so you do that. Sometimes, though, after two weeks, you miss two days.

And it's sad and it's a shame, but it happens. And what happens eventually? I don't know if you've been down the road, but I've been on that thing for years of my life to where I quit.

[15:02] I never read my Bible through from cover to cover in its entirety until I was 24 years old.

24, I think. And that's pathetic to tell you that for me, growing up in a Christian home with this book and being taught that it's the right thing to do.

And to him that knoweth to do good, doeth it not. To him it is sin. And so that was my life story. No relationship with God. And no relationship with the Word of God and him through the Word.

None of that. Till I finally got serious and got right with God. 24 years old till I finally read my Bible through. But earlier in those years leading up to that, I had started in January many times.

I started January 1st, Genesis 1, 2, and 3. Genesis 4, 5, and 6. 7, 8, 9, or what have you, going through the Bible. And I don't know how many times I got going through Exodus.

[16:07] Maybe even got up into numbers. And then just couldn't hack it. Quit. And I know Christians, and there's a boatload of Christians that have never read their Bible through from cover to cover.

Why is that? Why? Because they quit. And so when it comes to Bible reading, my goal, my advice rather, is that you just keep moving forward. If you miss two days, throw the calendar away, and then pick it up right there.

And if it takes you five years, then let it take you five years, but get through your Bible and write the date down when you've finished your Bible. If it takes you ten years, okay.

You know you can do better. And it might be embarrassing to stand up in church and say, it took me ten years, but I got, but I don't, who cares? It's a blessing. You know how many Christians have never, ever, ever, ever, and will never read this book in its entirety.

Most, they're not Bible readers. They're quitters. And in this area, it destroys your confidence when you quit.

[17:17] You give up. And when you give up once, it's easy to give up twice. Back in August, Riley Peterson came to visit for a week, and he was around town, and he and his dad got this idea that they wanted to go hiking on Mount Baldy.

And we had talked about that a few, you know, like, we've talked about Baldy a few times and thought, like, that'd be cool. And I thought to myself, that'd be cool one day.

Got to get in shape first. And I said to Eric, I was like, let's do it sometime when it's not hot out, when it's not the summertime. But here's Riley. He's home in August, and the goal was, we have a window, we have a day.

I think it was a Monday morning. We want to go do Baldy. And they asked if I wanted to go, and I did not, I did not get in on it. I just said, I don't know. I'm not ready for that hike.

I'm not in shape for hiking up that far. You guys are in shape. I'm not. And it's a hot day. I had two good excuses. It's too hot. I mean, it's August. I said we do this in the spring or later in the fall.

[18:21] But they were going, and come to, like, the night of, I just finally was like, you know what? When am I going to do this? I do want to do it. If I don't do it now, when am I going to? So I said, okay, I'm in.

And I was nervous. I was nervous about the hike because I thought, this is going to really whoop me, and these guys are in better shape than I am for hiking and climbing these hills. And so we went, and it was a warm day, and it was a long hike, and it was a lot of climbing, elevation change. But we did it. We pushed through, and we did it, and we got up to the top, and it really wore us out. We were taking breaks. The further we got, the more frequent our breaks were.

It got to where we were getting close to the summit, and I think it was like every 50 steps we were stopping and getting our breath and trying to get our legs back under us and then taking another 50 steps or something like that until we finally made it up there, and then the way back down was not easy either.

But we did it. And I remember getting home and just getting rehydrated and recouping over the next few days and just feeling like, you know what? I can hike that.

[19:33] And Eric's like, I'm ready. I want to do it again. I'm just thinking, when are we going to do it again? I was like, Eric, do you not remember how hard that was and how many times I wanted to just be done? It was tough.

Beat the knees up. But when it was all said and done, all of us were thrilled and happy that we did it. We accomplished it. You know what? We have confidence that we could go hike Baldy if we wanted to tomorrow because we know what it's about.

We could do it because we didn't quit. But when we got started on this hike, probably just in the first or second leg of the hike, there was three fellows that came walking by us. And one went on past and the two stopped and chatted for a minute and they said, yeah, we were hoping to go summit this morning, but he quit.

He wouldn't do it. And now we're going back. And they were disappointed. And they were all kind of frustrated that this one guy quit on him and wouldn't take the hike all the way and push himself through.

And I'm thinking on this for a second. Do you think that that quitter is more likely or less likely to try again? That's what I think.

[20 : 42] You might say, well, he probably wants to try. You know, he wants to accomplish it. Maybe he does. But he's probably less likely to try again. And even if he does try again, do you think he's more likely or less likely to quit again?

Because he's already quit once when it got tough and he didn't even get to the tough stuff. So he might try again and push a little further. But I bet you, I would bet you that guy would never get there because he's a quitter.

He quit when it wasn't even that hard. And so quitting destroys confidence. Quitting destroys character. And giving up when it's the right thing to do, it's a work of your flesh and you need to recognize that.

Now I mentioned that the Christian life is likened to a fight. And the Christian's likened to a soldier. Let me take you through a few of these verses. If you're in 2 Corinthians, look back at chapter 10. 2 Corinthians 10. And I'll run you through a handful of verses here all close together.

[21 : 53] Just in case you're not really aware of these or familiar with them, that this Christian life is likened to a fight and you're likened to a soldier that's in a battle or in a war.

And it's a spiritual war. So it doesn't matter how physically fit and strong you are. It's something that goes on in the inside. Look at verse 3.

Verse 3, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. This morning you woke up in the flesh.

You got out of bed in the flesh. You got ready and dressed in the flesh. But on the inside is where you made the choice whether you're going to come to church or not.

Even on the inside is where you made the decision whether you're going to get up or not and whether you're going to come. And some people all around the world made the decision not to.

[22 : 52] But it was on the inside. So though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.

Verse 4 says, For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

And he goes on to talk about some things with the mind and the thought. Alright, I want you to look at Ephesians. Chapter number 6. Moving to the right.

Skip a book and hit Ephesians chapter 6. So that battle, that war is not after the flesh and there's weapons of our warfare and they're mighty through God.

Not through you, through God. And so it's God on the inside that's actually the fighter. chapter 6.

I think we're pretty familiar with this. Verse number 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might matching what we just read mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

[24 : 01] In the power of His might put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. So standing there is not just being in an upright position on your feet but rather it's withstanding.

It's standing against something. It's holding ground. Not giving in. Not quitting. Verse 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities.

Against powers. And while this might sound spooky to you or even scary to you that this is something you can't touch and it's something you can't control and it's obviously much wiser and more powerful than you are as a man or woman you don't have to fear because verse 10 told you to be strong in the Lord who created these things and in the power of His might who's stronger than these beings that are against you that you're to stand against.

You're going to stand against the devil? Who in the world are you? You can't stand against the devil but you can in His power and in His might. Wherefore verse 13 take unto you the whole armor of God.

Things that God fits you and the new man with you better take them and put them on. And some of that is truth in verse 14 and the breastplate of righteousness and you're familiar I trust with some of these things 15, 16, 17 you've got the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit and so all of this has this language of warfare and battle and a soldier.

[25 : 43] Alright, look to the right keep moving to the right find 1 Timothy chapter number 1 you're not told to take unto you the whole armor of God so you can quit so you can give up and lay down but rather to fight that's the command.

1 Timothy 1 and verse number 18 this charge I commit unto thee son Timothy according to the prophecies which went before on thee that thou by them mightest war a good warfare war a good warfare keep moving to your right to chapter 6 1 Timothy 6 and here he says it in verse number 12 fight the good fight of faith turn to the next book warring a warfare fighting a fight this is an analogy of the Christian life 2 Timothy 2 and look at verses 3 and 4 thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier a soldier fighting warfare a good soldier of Jesus

Christ enduring hardness not quitting in verse 4 no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier so God chose you to be a soldier and God fits you with his power and might to stand and to resist now look at chapter 4 this is Paul's departing words and looking back on the life that he lived for Christ he calls it a fight I have fought a good fight verse 7 I have finished my course I have kept the faith Paul said oh where was that I think it's in Corinthians he said I have fought with beasts at Ephesus he was fighting all along the way look keep going to your right and find 1st

Timothy I'm sorry it's not to the right 1st Peter hopefully that was the first time I made a mistake there with a number a reference 1st Peter 2 1st Peter 2 and verse 11 dearly beloved I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul fleshly lusts which war in Romans Paul talked about the inward man he talked about the flesh and that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing and he described the one warring against the other

I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind bringing me into captivity is what he said and so there's a battle of fight that's that's on the outside in the sense of with the world and with spiritual opposition to you doing what's right in your Christian life and being a child of God that's pleasing him that called you to be a good soldier and yet at the same time there's within carnal lusts that are warring against you and trying to cause you to quit and so the battle is all around you it's everywhere but quitting is not an option for the believer quitting is easy but fighting is right I want to take you to one more verse this morning and we'll quit probably here a little bit early come all the way back to

[30 : 17] Nehemiah just before Job or Esther and Job Nehemiah chapter four there's a cool thought here that I am intrigued by and I think it's helpful because you read your Bible as you should you'll see that the people of God have always been in a fight and in the Old Testament I mean it's a theme of your Old Testament is war and enemies of God of Israel and that was literal battle and fighting and bloodshed and swords and shields and spears and it was survival but the picture of this Old Testament is teaching us today that it is for the new man's survival that you fight and stand and defend your ground now in Nehemiah chapter 4 look at his thought here

I really like this in verse 14 they're trying to get their footing in the new land and some wall built around the city of Jerusalem there's opposition to them even just getting things established and in verse 14 he says and I looked and rose up and said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people be not you afraid of them remember the Lord which is great and terrible and fight for your brethren your sons and your daughters your wives and your houses I love the speech the stirring up of the people as he looked and rose up and said to these leaders and the people don't be afraid of them remember the Lord and fight he doesn't say don't be afraid fight but before they determine to fight they're to remember the

Lord now you could go different directions with this and talk about Calvary and remember what Jesus Christ did for you but I just say no just remember the Lord remember your calling of God remember he's your father remember to put on the armor the whole armor of God instead of being intimidated instead of realizing I can never live up to this I just keep falling it's a great thought to first remember the Lord and then fight for whatever it is that's right in your life whether it's Bible reading

whether it's marriage whether it's keeping your home a clean sanctuary or rearing your children to fear the Lord and to walk in truth it's a great admonition to be a fighter is to remember the Lord and fight he called you he chose you to be a soldier so remember that calling remember this fight is given to you by your father to engage in he called you to stand he called you to resist he called you to war a good warfare and fight the good fight of faith and then remember along the way he equips you to succeed in this fight remember that you're not alone remember that you're dependent upon his strength not your own now there's a lot of things that

I have to say and can say about fighting and I think we'll stop this thought here just it's a little bit more introductory but I think it's powerful I don't know if I articulated it quite clearly enough or as much as it hit me but be not afraid of them remember the Lord which is great and terrible and then get to battle get to business and do what you're supposed to do you're not on your own and when you feel like you're on your own you quit so remember the Lord remember his calling and his word and what he's outfitted you to be and to do and remember the outcome it's your character and confidence and you're weakening your new man and so the church doesn't need to have quitters this church doesn't need to be filled with quitters the Bible says the just man falleth seven times and rises up again he won't quit he won't give up seven times yeah seven times and he keeps coming back for more because he's not a quitter so don't be a quitter church

Christian believer be a soldier be a fighter like I said at the beginning fighting doesn't mean you're winning it means you're not quitting that's what you're called to do let's pray father thank you that we could meet this morning together and regardless of the few in number may the word of God and these thoughts be powerful and be helpful to each one I pray that we have inside of us a resolve instilled by your spirit in the new man to always choose first to fight and Lord we fall we're flesh we're prone to some things that just are strong against us and certain lusts and certain desires and certain things we've given a place to in our lives and hearts and

[36 : 13] God I pray that as we try to expose some of these things this morning as we try to perfect those things that are lacking those excuses that we continue to make Father I pray you give victory and before the victory give the courage to fight and we'll give you the glory we long to be like you and to get victory in our Christian lives and all of these things and so pray that you give victory for Jesus sake amen amen all right let's take a break a damn Thank you.