

Quote: *Unbroken* – “If you can take it, you can make it. You train, you fight, way harder than those other guys. And you win. You get out from under them. Or... you keep going the way you're going and you end up as a bum in the streets.”

The Kingdom of God Requires Warfare

- Matthew 11:7-12 - 7 ...What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” 11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”
- Luke 16:16 – ...the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.
- Quote: AW Tozer in *This World: Playground or Battleground* - “In the early days, when Christianity exercised a dominant influence over American thinking, men conceived the world to be a battleground. Our fathers believed in sin and the devil and hell as constituting one force; and they believed in God and righteousness and heaven as the other. These were opposed to each other forever in deep, grave, irreconcilable hostility. Man, so our fathers held, had to choose sides; he could not be neutral. For him it must be life or death, heaven or hell, and if he chose to come out on God’s side he could expect open war with God’s enemies. The fight would be real and deadly and would last as long as life continued here below. Men looked forward to heaven as a return from the wars, a laying down of the sword to enjoy in peace the home prepared for them. ... How different today: the fact remains the same but the interpretation has changed completely. Men think of the world, not as a battleground, but as a playground. We are not here to fight, we are here to frolic. We are not in a foreign land, we are at home. We are not getting ready to live, we are already living, and the best we can do is to rid ourselves of our inhibitions and our frustrations and live this life to the full.”
- 1 Timothy 6:12 – Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
 - “fight” = n. *agon* / v. *agonizomai*
 - We get our words “agony” and “agonize” from this Greek word.
 - This word was used to mean competing in the Olympic games
 - “Take hold of eternal life” = There’s a forcefulness and violence to this word
 - Jesus “took hold” of Peter as he began sinking in the water (Matthew 14:31)
 - Jesus “took hold” of a blind man in Bethsaida and led him outside the city to heal him (Mark 8:23)
 - The Romans “seized” Simon of Cyrene and made him carry Jesus’ cross (Luke 23:26)
 - The Jewish rioters “seized” Paul and dragged him outside the Temple (Acts 21:30)
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 – 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.
 - “waging war” = *strateuomai* = to engage in a military campaign, to be on active military duty, to make a military expedition
- 1 Timothy 1:18 – This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

We Have an Enemy Fighting Against Us

- John 10:10 – The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

- Ephesians 6:12 - For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
 - “wrestle” = pale = the Greco-Roman sport in which two contestants fight each other with all their strength. The winner is the one who can hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck.

In this World You Will Have Tribulation

- Mark 10:29-30 – 29 Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands – with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.
 - “persecution” = diogmos = lit. means hunting someone like an animal, in order to catch them and punish them for their convictions
- John 16:33 – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
 - “tribulation” = from latin tribulum = a spiked log that was dragged across the ground to break it up before plowing
 - Gk. thlipsis = lit. “pressure”... used of a narrow place that hems someone in (ie. “strait... Straits of Gibraltar”)...
 - Not just the external pressure of the circumstances (Greek stenoxoria) but the internal pressure that causes you to feel trapped, as if there’s no way of escape...
- Matthew 10:22 – ... you will be hated by all for my name's sake.
- Acts 14:19-22 – 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- 2 Timothy 3:12 – Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...