



# FIGHT



## CHAPTER 4 | FIGHT

### Introduction

Physical confrontations are so pervasive in our culture that we are often indifferent to their frequency and numb to their effects. If we aren't careful, the effects of our fight-drenched culture can influence our behavior and take their toll on our spiritual lives. We must challenge the defensive stance we often adopt because of pain and trauma in our past and check the arena in which we are fighting.

More importantly, we must engage in the good fight, the only fight where we can fight, not for victory, but from victory. We must remember who the enemy is and what weapons are powerful against his tactics.

*"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to defeat the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5).*

Let's get straight to the point. The apostle Paul wrote to Pastor Timothy, "Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12) The good fight is a matter of faith and beliefs, and it matters into eternity!

Every fight has an arena, an audience, and a reward or consequence. In daily life, we must choose where to fight. This lesson outlines our daily choices to move the fight from the terrestrial to the celestial, from the temporary to the eternal.

We are encouraged throughout scripture to engage in this battle and to remain faithful until the end.

*"Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:12-13).*

*"The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time." (Psalm 34:19).*

*"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:10-12).*

When we try to fight, even the good fight, in our own strength, we are headed for defeat. As Proverbs 3:5 teaches, we must learn not to trust our natural abilities and reasoning but to seek the Lord and His wisdom and trust His process. This is often uncomfortable for our fleshly, sinful nature and sometimes alien to our natural minds.

But if we submit our thoughts to the Word of God, as 2 Corinthians 10:5 instructs, we will find that God's way always leads us to victory.

This brings us to another important point - God's idea of victory often differs from what we think it is.

God considers it a gain any time our flesh is defeated and the Holy Spirit gains more access to our hearts, souls, and minds.

This is a crucial point to remember as we fight the good fight. People are never the true enemy, and our personal gain, especially our pride, will never be the champion.

In Philippians 3:7, Paul tells us that things he once considered of utmost importance, such as his titles, the name he had made for himself, and his high standing in Jewish society, he now considers worthless as he weighs them against what Christ offers.

So, while victory in fighting the good fight may not look like a victory to the world and may not feel like a victory to our flesh nature, we must keep in mind that a victory for the Kingdom of God is a win for us, even when it hurts our pride or wounds our ego.

It's also important to know our enemy's tactics and his plots as we engage in this battle.

*"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are." (1 Peter 5:8-9).*

This verse instructs us to stand firm in our faith. It doesn't say to get on a soapbox and scream, file a lawsuit, or rant on social media. Instead, Christ instructs us to stand on His promises and see victory.

This verse gives us insight into the enemy's battle plan. He is looking for easy prey: those who don't yet know how to stand in faith and those who react out of emotion rather than responding in faith to trials.

James 4:7 says, "So, humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

This humbling of ourselves is relinquishing our will to God's, exchanging our desire to get even for resting in His peace, and releasing our enemies from any bitterness or unforgiveness we harbor against them.

Fighting the good fight looks far different from natural battles. What looks like weakness is strength, and what may be perceived as timidity is often humility.

Let's look closer at this fight.



# FIGHT part 1

*Where did you learn how to fight?*

## Daily vs. Major Life Stressors

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Daily stressors come each day: waking up late, missing the bus or train, forgetting the cell phone at home, having coffee spills, crazy traffic, etc. These daily stressors happen when we least expect them, but we can quickly overcome them and move on with our day or the week.

Write in your journal a few of your daily stressors today.

Major life stressors are also unexpected but much more impactful than a coffee spill. Major life stressors are car accidents, habitual family conflicts, death in the family, terminal illness diagnosis, home eviction, sudden unemployment, sexual assault/abuse, etc. These major life stressors are more traumatic and tend to take longer than a day to overcome. For some, these unexpected events take an entire lifetime to overcome.

Major life stressors are not as easy to overcome. In Humboldt Park, Chicago, where I come from, they happen daily.

- *Homelessness is a daily occurrence. Drive down any alley, and you will see the furniture, clothes, and belongings of evicted tenants. Take another drive down the same street, and you will hear the rattle of cups at busy intersections.*
- *Health disparities and disproportionate rates of diabetes, asthma, and obesity claim the lives of many at untimely rates.*
- *Every day, children and youth are senselessly being shot and killed in our streets. Stray bullets shoot innocent babies sitting in their living rooms. As I write, I hear the report of sixty-four people shot this weekend in Chicagoland, with four resulting deaths. These are warlike conditions that claim far too many lives.*

When major life stressors occur every day, one never gets the chance to fully recover, redeem, restore, or regain the strength to heal. More importantly, when the stakes are so high, and one's chance to live is so slim, one develops a defense mechanism to protect and preserve a life not valued by much of society.

Have you experienced this in your life? If it is something you are ready to write about, I encourage you to write it in your journal and pray. Naming our trauma and pain is part of our fight for healing.

I do not take it for granted that you took the time to write about pain or trauma. It is never easy to admit hurt. In this good fight, we must identify the injuries we have experienced in order to heal from them. Far too often, we encourage you to get in the ring to fight the next round without taking the time to heal from the last round. I know it is never easy; my prayer is that today, this lesson helps you heal and grow in the resurrection power of our Lord Jesus Christ and face each round with victory.

### Choice One: To cover the pain or admit your hurt

It's exhausting—borderline insane—to fight when you have injuries. In our daily lives, we experience so much trauma that we think it is normal to just keep fighting. It is not normal to be hurt all the time. We have become experts at hiding our trauma, slapping on a smile, and wearing the "Blessed" t-shirt, but that cannot be our normal anymore. The first choice we must make is to admit our hurt and weaknesses and bring them to God in prayer.

### Dig Deeper:

- *Spend time in prayer, allowing God to heal your innermost wounds.*
- *You may want to use this prayer as a guide.*
- *Father God, You know my pain, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God." (Hebrews 4:13). You see all the trauma we live through each day, and You know how our hearts hurt. But You, God, are a God for the hurting. You not only see my pain, but You can heal me. "O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health." (Psalm 30:2). I pray that Your healing covers every pain listed on this page and by the power of Your Holy Spirit, we can experience freedom each day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*





# FIGHT part 2

*Jesus Beat Death to Death!*



## The Greatest Fight of All Time!

The good news is that we serve a God familiar with our pain and trauma. If anyone understands why you fight like you do, it is Jesus! Jesus knew pain and trauma and triumphed over it.

- *Jesus knew poverty: "But Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.'" (Matthew 8:20).*
- *Jesus knew weariness: "Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime." (John 4:6).*
- *Jesus knew rejection: "At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him." (John 6:66).*
- *Jesus knew sorrow: "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death." (Matthew 26:38).*
- *Jesus knew brutality: "they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship." (Mark 15:19).*
- *Jesus knew loneliness: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46).*

Jesus faced these traumatic experiences so we can call on Him, who is familiar with our suffering:

*"He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed." (Isaiah 53:3-5).*

Jesus went through the worst kind of death to save us from the grip of sin and our own death.

We no longer have to consider this life a fight for survival. As a matter of truth, "Death has been swallowed up in victory," and we can all say, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). When you call on Jesus, you're calling the One who has been through pain and trauma and intercepted a gory death for the glory of eternal life in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is what distinguishes a worldly fight from the good fight! Jesus already won! Jesus says, "I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever!" (Revelation 1:18).

## Listen to This!

It is crucial that you see the Resurrected Jesus in your life! Don't stay with the image of Jesus on the cross, bleeding to death from the greatest fight of all time. You must fast forward to three days later! Take a walk to the Kingdom Arena with your sisters, Mary Magdalene, Mother Mary, and Salome, who were on their way to anoint the body of Jesus in the tomb.

*"Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. Then, the angel spoke to the women. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you.' The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.'" (Matthew 28: 1-10).*

As you read this passage, imagine that you are walking with your sisters in faith and discovering what they found that day!

With Resurrected Jesus, the Living One, we have nothing to fear! We can fight with confidence!

## Choice Two:

### Walk Through it Alone or Walk Through it with Jesus

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If your daily life includes trauma and it seems like you never get to fully recover before you hear the next set of bad news, I invite you to walk with the One who is familiar with your pain, with the One who triumphed over death! Each morning, despite what the headlines say and what news you receive, choose to walk with the Resurrected Jesus! The presence of Jesus alone is healing, restorative, and redeeming.

The Lord beat death to death and lives forevermore!

## Dig Deeper:

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- *What fears do I need to allow the Spirit to help you overcome?*
- *What is hindering me from releasing these things to the Lord?*



# FIGHT part 3

*Where Are You Fighting?*

## Locate the Arena

Where are you fighting? Where is all your time and energy invested? This is the arena you are fighting in.

To locate the arena of your fight, let's quickly go through a checklist:

- *Is a circumstance or relationship currently occupying much of your time, energy, and thoughts?*
- *Do you spend time, energy, or resources trying to compensate for the harm or void caused by circumstance or relationship?*
- *Does it seem like you face the same problem over and over? No matter where you go, the problem could have a different face or name, leaving you feeling the same anger and resentment.*

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're fighting in the wrong arena. This world tempts us with ample opportunity to engage in a scuffle. If you find yourself fighting in this world and by this world's standards, if you feel trapped in a cycle of conflict, if you are worn out, beat up, and losing hope in an exhausting fight, choose to change today.

## Choice Three: Be Trapped or Find Refuge

It is a daily choice to dodge the snares by taking refuge in Jesus. We must, before we continue to learn about the good fight, learn to dodge all the other entrapping fights and pray like the Psalmist prayed: "Pull me from the trap my enemies set for me, for I find protection in you alone." (Psalm 31:4).

## Dig Deeper:

- *In what arena am I fighting my battles?*
- *Where is my initial place to look for protection?*



# FIGHT part 4

*The Good Fight*

## Win Before You Fight

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*"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12).*

The devil's number one scheme is to lie. Identify the lie! He is the father of lies (John 8:44) and uses the same lie over and over-- that you can't trust God; you must do things yourself. That's how Eve tripped. That's how we trip. As soon as we believe that we cannot trust God, we start taking matters into our own hands. We leave the Kingdom Arena and go back to the worldly fighting arena.

## Listen to This!

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When we recognize the lie, we declare not just a fight; we declare war!

*"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).*

These verses are key to understanding where the good fight is and how it is fought.

Verse 3: We are human, but don't wage war as humans do.

Our bodies are living in this world, but we are not from here. When you said yes to Jesus and decided to follow Jesus, that decision made you a child of God and a member of the Royal Family of Christ! This decision gave you access to the Kingdom Arena.



*"Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact." (John 8:17).*

*"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him." (1 John 3:1).*

## Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

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- *What do these verses say about our relationship to God?*

We are not from this world. We've got to stop fighting like we represent an earthly hood. We fight from the Kingdom of God. Remember, where we have come from, we already won!

Verse 4: We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.

We see two significant concepts here: weapons and strongholds.

## Weapons:

In the Kingdom Arena, our greatest weapon is the Word of God.

*"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." (Hebrews 4:12).*

*"So, the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." (John 1:14).*

### Write your responses in a journal or notebook:

- *And who is the Word?*

Our greatest weapon is the all-powerful name of Jesus, who has all divine power and authority in heaven and on earth!

We know Jesus has all the authority we would ever need because of this verse: "Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18).

### Strongholds (Arguments and Pretensions):

A stronghold is a fortress built to gain and maintain military control of a specific area. In this verse, the stronghold is built on lies, an argument against the Word of God. This tells us that the actual place of the fight is in our minds!

The place where we must wage war and square up to fight is actually in our own minds!

Do any of these lies sound familiar?

Write in a journal or notebook the following items  
that ring familiar to you:

You are not:

- *Beautiful enough*
- *Thin enough*
- *Thick enough*
- *Smart enough*
- *Strong enough*
- *Confident enough*
- *\_\_\_\_\_ enough (you fill in the blank)*

You are not worthy of love because:

- *your father or mother did not express love*
- *of sexual abuse or assaults*
- *of toxic relationships*
- *you cannot conceive a child*
- *you have had an abortion*
- *you \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)*

You:

- *have no purpose*
- *have no gifts*
- *have no talents*
- *always fail*
- *always quit*

*If you believe any of these lies, even if for a moment, the narrative in your mind about yourself can quickly turn to "I am helpless, I am unlovable, I am worthless."*

## Choice Four: To Believe Lies or Believe the Truth

If any of these lies have been on repeat in the playlist of your thoughts, I urge you, my sister, to press pause! Don't let those lies keep playing mind games with you.

### Listen to This!

We must call this liar out. And we must fight back.

Verse 5: We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

Take captive every thought; make it obedient to Christ.

### Action Steps:

*Select one of the lies you noted in your journal from the lists above.*

*Arrest that thought! Now, look that lie straight in the eyes and interrogate it. Ask it, "Who sent you? What is the enemy trying to scheme against my life or my marriage, family, or church?"*

*Once you see why the enemy is trying to attack you that way, with that particular lie, tell the lie the truth! We demolish lies that say we are anything but who God says we are!*

## I AM LOVED.

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)*

## I AM HIS.

*"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him." (1 John 3:1)*

## I AM WORTHY.

*"For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."  
(Zephaniah 3:17)*

## I HAVE PURPOSE.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)*

*We each have four significant choices to make each day. If we do not choose, our flesh will make the default choice for us.*

- *Your flesh will lead you to hide pain out of shame or pride.*
- *Your flesh will lead you to walk through dark valleys in isolation, making you feel like no one can relate to your pain.*
- *Your flesh will lead you straight into argumentative traps because it wants the last word.*
- *Your flesh will lead you to lies because they entertain and distract you from the truth.*

## CHOOSE TODAY!

*Choose to admit your hurt.*

*Choose to walk through the pain with Jesus.*

*Choose to find refuge.*

*Choose to believe The Truth.*

*You choose the kind of fight you want to fight. You choose whether you are fighting for victory or from victory.*

*"Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses." (1 Timothy 6:12)*

*The good fight is a matter of faith, a matter of choices, and it matters into eternity!*

### Dig Deeper:

- *What am I using as my weapons against the enemy?*
- *Are these the weapons that promise victory?*
- *What changes do I need to make in my battle plan?*

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**Judy Diaz-Rodriguez** is a woman dedicated to building a sense of homeplace community wherever she goes. As a mother, she works to build a home in which her children are loved, can learn from, and thrive. As a wife, she partners with her husband to lead equitable changes in institutions nationwide through The Equity Imperative. As an educator, she develops a sense of belonging in schools. As a Radiant Women's Ministry leader, she works to create greater intergenerational and interracial connections among women at New Life Covenant Church. In her spare time, you can catch Judy reading a good book with a cup of Cafe Bustelo (for real, that is her definition of fun!)