



TAKING A BEATING

KEY SCRIPTURES: Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Samuel 17

I was struggling with something I was trying to write. Every time I sat down at my computer to work on my project, I felt like everything that could be against me was against me. Progress was brutally slow, and when I did take a step forward, I felt like I was walking in mud up to my knees.

At the time, I was at the point in my project where I was writing about the enemy. I was revealing his tactics and his weaknesses, daring to expose him for what he really is.

And I am pretty sure I was really ticking him off.

I couldn't hold on to my concentration for more than just a little while, and it was beginning to be excruciatingly frustrating. It felt like I was trying to write in a room full of people who were banging on pots and pans with wooden spoons and making cymbals out of the pot lids. And that is when it began to make perfect sense.

I was taking a beating.

If you have ever watched a movie about dueling knights, you will know the noises of their battles are unmistakable. When sword meets armor, there is a heavy clanging that echoes in and out of every space around.

And it is precisely what I was hearing as I was taking on the enemy with my words. I was taking blows on my armor because I was doing battle.

Battles aren't exactly pleasurable walks in the park. That truth is why there is a need for protection in the first place. And because we want to hang around a little bit longer, minimizing the bruises and scrapes we will receive, our first choice is simply to avoid any battles at all.

It is what the Israelites were doing in the Valley of Elah when Goliath was coming after them with his taunts. Goliath was a big guy. And we are not just told how tall he was—a whopping nine-plus feet—the point is driven home for us when we are told how massive his armor was. No one

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"...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**"



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wanted to take him on until David came on the scene with a sling and bag of rocks. (See 1 Samuel 17.)

Thankfully, we know that battle ended well for David and the rest of God's people.

But we have to learn a lesson from the Israelites; battles cannot always be avoided. If we don't go to them, they will find their way to us. And those we fight will have big swords. So we have to be ready because we will take a beating.

When I realized that, the picture in my head changed.

I could picture myself sitting at my computer, writing away with my armor on while the enemy swung away at me.

"He is a liar!" Clang! A strike to my shoulder.

"He is a thief!" Clang! A jab to my back.

"We owe him nothing!" Clang! Clang! A double swing at my head.

It was noisy and distracting, and I had to stop every now and then to straighten my helmet and tighten the grip on my shield. But my armor was holding, and there was no way I wasn't going to keep pressing forward.

I was grateful I had not gone into battle unprepared. The enemy likes to make us think that putting on our armor is too cumbersome and totally unnecessary. But our battles are too important to yield to the temptation to leave it off.

And wearing our armor is the only way we will stay safe, see the battle to the end, and gain the victory.

Like I did when I finished that part of the chapter.

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“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm, then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:10-18).

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