

GETTING STRONG NOW!

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Recently, I had gone through a window of not feeling well, and went through a series of hospital scans. Having a history of cancer, of course concerns-- since they could not find out why the pain was initiating. Thanking God for His faithfulness and the power of prayer. After 4 weeks the pain finally subsided and the tests all came out clear! Glory to God! As God works all things together for good, along the way much favor, and He had given me many divine appointments during that time to share His love and Gospel in many ways wherever it seemed like this personal missionary journey took me. After managing the pain, life and ministry felt the Lord say... it's time to now REST, and I took some sabbatical days to come apart offered by a brother and sister in Christ who did not know me but heard I was sick. (Thank you! Philemon 1:7)

During that time of rest and meditation, a song kept going through my mind. It was the theme to the movie Rocky! Now you have to understand, I never saw the series of movies, so to hear this movie theme in my head was at first puzzling. Yet, I knew God could use anything so I leaned in to listen. After praying and feeling empowered, I got up, put on sweats and began to walk the Ocean Grove Boardwalk to listen and pray more. Each day reading His Word, and looking at YouTube clips to have a deeper understanding of the movies. I continued to walk and pray throughout that time, and began to see God's revelatory message to my heart... (Watch the YouTube clip ... [Rocky Balboa Getting Strong Now](#)).

The movie "Rocky" may not be a Christian theme, but there is a spirit-life application we can glean. You see after the death of Rocky's former Trainer, Mitch, a once rival fighting opponent Apollo-Creed steps up to become Rocky's new-trainer. These two men of different color begin to enter each other's lives together for later an unforgettable win.

In the midst of his grueling training by Creed for the big fight against Lang, Rocky begins to deal with guilt about the death of Mitch, and his own personal insecurities. But Rocky's wife Adrian, confronts the real deal, which is Rocky's fear of losing. Fear comes in many forms and can be rooted in rejection, abandonment, historic abusive experiences or failures or coming future events--which can bring about a paralyzing cycle-that only can be dissolved by awareness, admittance, forgiveness, repentance, where needed and of course the perfect LOVE of God! (1John 4:18)

As Rocky, sometimes we need an Adrian in our lives, who will read our mail revealing the truth of the matter, and sometimes those that seem to be once opponents can regroup now having a true unified eternal personal win- pressing forward for the heavenly prize! (Philippians 3:14). But through it all, spiritual growth comes through going to the mats, resistance training, foot work and punching the bag beating against

the flesh, exercising our faith, as most of our growth does not come from Easy-Street or Broad Street, but it comes from the Narrow-Street as we walk with the Lord. I have never experienced the deeper growth without the struggle. We ALL have a sweet spot Satan will target, or a weakness he will go after -none of us is exempt. But I can tell you it will only make you stronger in Christ!

There may be times we can feel as though we took a sucker-punch ., as the reality of news hits your heart leaving you whirling! Besides Prayer, The Word, and Praise...the other weapon in our arsenal --against these things comes in the form of "OTHERS" as God has called us into community, authenticity and accountability. This will thwart enemy tactics, which is isolation as he tries to bully you into a corner to slowly take you out...

The days of black/white/yellow, brown-race-ism, male/female gender-ism, church denominational-ism and every other "ISM" that brings discrimination and exclusion has been our adversary's tool to divide, and has no place amongst us. Each one of these "isms" have banged hard on the church doors, and we ALL have been in one way or another touched by them. We are living in a unprecedented window of time, when there's been an unleashing of evil that has worked on the sidelines watching and waiting, and comes now with the territorial spirit too try to take over as he understands clearly that ... "No kingdom divided against each other will stand." (Mark 3:24) You see I have been around long enough as decades passed to watch emotional experiences of what seems to be repentance of these "isms" fade into a memory and the cycle continues. What will it take?

In a day where good is evil and evil is good--you might get a left-hook as Satan continues to accuse (Revelation 12:10)...Remember, he even used the religious leaders who were envious of Him to ACCUSE JESUS of being the devil! (Matthew 12:24) BUT friend don't lose your footing to his low blow insidious plot! Shake it off! Is a servant less than His Master? Set your face as flint- feet planted, armored up in the Gospel, and STAND strong in the Lord! Satan wants to accuse YOU and render you helpless-- to diminish your God ordained spiritual authority, and finally remove you from where YOU are being effective ...because you are a threat to his systematic demising work!

Maybe you feel as though you have been in the ring, but the Holy Spirit in and through the life of another (fellowship), can move you to VICTORY! We are exhorted in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 --"Two are better than one, because they have a good [more satisfying] reward for their labor; For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up."

As I began to feel refreshed and rebooted --the intended plot, the enemy was rendered helpless & the Lord impressed on me to speak into these areas, the power of Fellowship "true unity of the spirit" being connected--as arsenal against the wiles of the enemy! There is no place for ALL these "ISM'S", nor can we ignore them, secretly deny them, or sweep them under the carpet!

Finally, as I watched the clip of these two men running on the beach working out together, where a deep friendship developed, I could see prophetic symbolism -also how a friend is born in adversity (Proverbs 17:17) but ultimately how the Holy Spirit is WAKING us and EMPOWERING us to STAND in the evil day preparing us for the FINAL WIN ≠