

Avoiding and Overcoming Battle Fatigue



- ✓ If we have become aware that we are in war with the 1st Five Seconds being critical to how successfully we react in specific battles (trials and temptations) . . .
- ✓ If we embrace repentance as a friend (instead of holding on to the notion “How dare anyone say I’m not perfect . . .”) . . .
- ✓ If we finally realize we can and must (if life is to be a success) refuse to retreat to and live in a bunker; rather, instead, by grace, taking the offensive and meeting trials and temptations head-on . . .

We then still face the difficulty and test of battle fatigue.

We won’t win the war without finishing the war;
many people start hard and fast only to “peter out” before the end.
As has been wisely said: “Life is a marathon, not a sprint!”

He who stands firm to the end will be saved. Mt 10:21

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Jas 1:4

If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.” 2Pe 2:20 - 22

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb 12:1 - 3

Jesus told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown . . . Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” Mt 13:3 - 23

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Lk 14:28 - 30



Words are cheap. Starting is easy. Finishing, not being defeated by battle fatigue, is victory!

The typical approach to life is either:

- **Secular** – this is all there is; “Grab for all the gusto you can – eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die . . .” This is a foolish denial, in the face of continual and compelling evidence otherwise, that evil exists and it is trying to destroy us. Success, for these folks, is based on having luck to avoid many problems others face and to overcome the unavoidable trials by developing educational, emotional, financial . . . skills and reservoirs to help them get through these “scrapes” with the least headache and heartache so they can return to the party train delivering them to the casket at the end of the line (while evading, as much as possible, thinking about this ultimate reality).
 - **Religious** – recognizes, in one way or another – to varying degrees of success, that there is a spiritual reality and aspect to life. Narrowing specifically to Christianity, the direction the spiritual aspect of life takes is one of the following general approaches:
 - ✚ Living in an essentially un-Christian manner between the extreme crises of life – this is effectively the life of a hypocrite, professing faith in Jesus Christ while depending, virtually all the time, on themselves or others for provision and security. As we saw earlier, in *Winning the War of Terrorism*, the tendency is to fall prey to a *Bunker-Mentality* when trials and temptations come – living solely defensively without any hope or expectation of success and victory.
 - ✚ Increasing seeking and developing disciplines (thus rightly called *disciples*) to successfully confront and overcome the waves (small and large) of trials and temptations everyone faces. The tendency here is to develop *Battle Fatigue* – worn down by being on “alert” 24/7/365; not able to enjoy anything in the face of the lurking dangers. You don’t have to read 15 minutes in the *Bible* until you are scared by the reality: “Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Ge 4:7
- Somehow, to be successful and not fall prey to Battle Fatigue, we must reconcile the reality of being in a **real** war with The Commander’s promise:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Mt 11:28 - 30

Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:31 - 32

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Gal 5:1

Pacing – The Key to Making it to the Finish Line

An undefined finish line is the most frustrating part of any trial. If a person is sick, but has an expectation they will be “over it” in x days (an acute illness), most will endure fairly well. Take the same person with a smaller chronic (no defined end-line) illness and they will be less able to effectively cope and live with it; not knowing how long or how far is a primary cause of battle fatigue.

The *Bible* is clear (with one of its key themes being) that our earth is not heaven; it is the battlefield between and until Heaven and Hell. If we forget this, mistakenly seeing this short life as “all there is,” then we will not make the ultimate finish line. To successfully make life’s finish line we must learn to live within the context of war – making the most of the times of relative peace while preparing for and

remaining vigilant for the next battle. We see a good example and picture of this in Nehemiah, as the Jews were rebuilding in the face surrounding enemies:

When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.

From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, ^{Ne 4:15 - 17}

Nehemiah knew his had to pace, rather than rush, the effort – the important task of rebuilding the wall – to ensure he would complete the task, not falling prey to battle fatigue and failure.

Focus, Focus, Focus

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th keys to not falling prey to battle fatigue are focus, refocus and refine the focus! Life does have a purpose and trials do have meaning with my attitude and approach being critical to success. Focus on the hope that is stored up for you in heaven, hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you . . . hope!

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven. ^{Col 1:3 - 5}

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ^{1Th 1:2 - 3}

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. ^{2Th 1:3 - 4}

All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ^{2Th 1:5}

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ^{1Pe 1:3 - 9}

There is a very real, very personal, yes very selfish reason to stay engaged in this war – the ultimate salvation or damnation of our souls!

Take the Offensive

As intimated earlier, if not precisely said like this, an enemy will not stop attacking until and unless they have something to lose. When confronting an appeaser (“Please just stop – I will do what you want . . . all I want is to be left alone . . .”) a bully will keep attacking – they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Being continually on the defensive, expecting at best a draw WILL result in battle fatigue!

So, yes, life is a life-long war with many win. But with developing knowledge, skills (chew gum) we can march toward the correct



battles – some we lose and some we and discipline (learning to fight and finish line).

To Recap

- ✓ If we have become aware that we are in war with the 1st Five Seconds being critical to how successfully we react in specific battles (trials and temptations) . . .
- ✓ If we embrace repentance as a friend instead of holding on to the notion “How dare anyone say I’m not perfect . . .” . . .
- ✓ If we finally realize we can and must (if life is to be a success) refuse to retreat to and live in a bunker; rather, instead, by grace, taking the offensive and meeting trials and temptations head-on . . .

We then still face the difficulty and test of battle fatigue.

We won’t win the war without finishing the war;
many people start hard and fast only to “peter out” before the end.

As has been wisely said: “Life is a marathon, not a sprint!”

He who stands firm to the end will be saved. Mt 10:21

This standing firm to the end will only happen if we thwart the real threat of battle fatigue by:

- **Pacing** – To successfully make life’s finish line we must learn to live within the context of war – making the most of the times of relative peace while preparing for and remaining vigilant for the next battle.
- **Stay Focused** – on the goal and reward (or punishment) of success (failure). The reward for success (price for failure) is very high! There is a very real, very personal, yes very selfish reason to stay engaged in this war – the ultimate salvation or damnation of our souls!
- **Take the Offensive** – the bullies we face (the devil, the world . . . even ourselves) will keep attacking if we do not make them pay, and pay dearly, for their attacks. Being continually on the defensive, expecting at best a draw WILL result in battle fatigue!

Success requires that we overcome the very real danger of battle fatigue.

Next “session:” Some Vital Offensive Strategies.