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We Already Have the Victory

One of the greatest things I've ever seen was a smile. I know that there are lots of amazing things out there, and it can seem odd that a simple smile can be so impactful on me, but it's the truth. Maybe I'm just getting older. It might be that I've learned a few things, or it could even be both. Life can be so busy and so captivating that there are times where you can feel as if you are just squeaking through. This happens to many of us, especially if we are traveling through difficult times.

When life throws hard moments at us it can push us into survival mode, where one day turns into the next. At the end of the day we are happy to have made it through. We can become so focused on the problem we are facing that it's easy to lose sight of the big picture. It can feel like you are drowning, and find yourself only searching for a breath of air. It can be hard to not allow ourselves to become so lost in a moment of struggle that we no longer have hope for the future. I believe this is one of the enemy's greatest tactics to distract believers from moving into victory.

In ministering to people over the years, I've watched many people miss out on their victory because their entire being is looking at their fight, instead of looking at the victory that is ahead. For instance, I know one lovely lady who was given a death sentence from the doctor. She was so motivated to prove she had faith for healing that she would not receive any help, and was also determined not to show any weakness. I saw in her an idea that it wasn't "faith" to look needy. Her whole life revolved around receiving her miracle. Her time with God was solely concentrated on her need for a healing.

She would not allow her family in closer, even though they wanted to spend extra time with her while going through her struggle, because she didn't want to act as if she was giving any sign that looked like she might think she wouldn't be healed. In her mind, spending extra time with her family seemed like she was agreeing that she was going to die, so she kept them at a distance. I understood her reasoning, until she passed away. Then I saw how hurt her family was at her and at God.

We should never judge anyone's battles, nor think of them as failures in their battles. It is okay for us to learn from them. I realized that she believed that she had to prove her faith to God for her to be healed, and this caused her to focus on her fight instead of her victory. If I could go back in time, I would share with her to look into the future as the place of victory. The price has already been paid for by Jesus, and as it says in Psalms 84:11, "*For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.*"

I would tell her that it's not a lack of faith to embrace those close to you, and when those hard times hit us it can make us see what is really important in life, and to appreciate the people in our lives. I would tell her to keep living and enjoying as much as possible each day while she spends time building her faith. The foundation of our Faith is always on what Jesus has already done. Finally I would tell her to keep her heart and eyes on her future, and not in the moment; keep her eyes on God and not on the struggle. To keep "*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,*

and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2)

I know in my own experience I became so self-judgmental in my trials. Asking questions such as, "Why is this happening?", "Why me?" And "What am I doing wrong?" We know that God never sends anything evil our way, so it is easy to over-analyze and to self-condemn instead of searching for hope from God. Difficult times exposed a fear within my own self that I was unworthy of victory.

Even though I could tell you all about God's goodness, I still felt that the reason I was in a hard season was because I was not good enough. My eyes began to look at myself and my problem instead of seeing the perfect work of my savior Jesus. It says in Isaiah 41:13, "*For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'*"

I've learned that just because I'm in a hard moment, it's not always because I'm failing, and it doesn't mean I'm stuck there. It's because of Jesus that I can place my hope in complete victory before I'm totally in that victory. Knowing that I'm not alone, and that even in my imperfections that God is still holding my hand brings a smile to my face. What a beautiful, surprising and amazing thing to see in the mirror right in the midst of a battle! A smile built on hope in what Jesus has already done. No matter what it looks like we've already won and it's okay to smile.

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