

What happens *after* a raging spiritual battle has come to an end and how should we proceed? In reality, there is no “after” when it comes to spiritual warfare; there is only “between.” Our lives often consist of a series of spiritual clashes, like a driver advancing through traffic lights, exerting his energy at each struggle and recuperating in the interludes. With regard to our spiritual lives, scripture reminds us to never sleep in this war against Satan. It portrays Satan as a predator who quietly creeps about waiting for our heads to nod and our eyes to droop so that he may lead us into evil.

Life is like an arduous journey in which we are constantly being presented with temptations from the Devil. However, we can take solace in the fact that God has allowed us to

venture on this dangerous journey. We must meet our challenges and bear our pains; if we do not face these tribulations our existence will become nothing more than a burden. One of the greatest feats we can achieve is to *accept* our mission. A great act of courage is to cheerfully go about overcoming life’s difficulties to the best of our abilities.

Albert Einstein once made a notable comment, “Life is like riding a bicycle: you must always move forward in order to keep your balance.” Now Mr. Einstein was no religious mystic, but he did manage to capture the essence of the spiritual journey - *we must never lose our momentum*. In a brilliant passage about our spiritual race, St. Paul tells the Philippians that he must leave behind all of the useless dust of his

past, and *press forward* to the prize placed before him by Christ Jesus: “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” *Philippians 3:13,14* In essence, he is telling us to never look back at a past full of sins that have already been forgiven, but to only keep moving forward towards a future of salvation.

Lorenzo Scupoli, in his book *Unseen Warfare*, states that the path of spiritual life differs from an ordinary journey in two important respects. If a traveler on an ordinary journey halts temporarily, he loses nothing of what he has already gained; but if a traveler on the

path of virtue stops for awhile, he loses much of the virtue he worked so hard to acquire. Good moral qualities can fade over time and eventually disappear if they are not continually replenished through strenuous efforts. Secondly, the further a traveler progresses on an ordinary journey, the more tired he becomes. However, as a traveler progresses on the spiritual path, his strength becomes continuously replenished until he feels a terrific surge of energy, like a bonfire that has been fed a stream of kerosene.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (*Ephesians 6:10*) In the end, there is no power but God’s power, for all spiritual warfare must be supported by earnest prayer. The only time a person will truly feel victory over a particular sin is when he feels God’s strong hand lifting him up to overcome it. We might feel as though we wield the sword for a time; and in slaying the mighty dragons we may begin to rejoice in our own arm until we realize that it was God holding both hand and sword, guiding us as a mother guides a child’s hands when writing his first rough letters. The Savior is prepared to save us...He is waiting for our call.

Spiritual Warfare Series Part 4

The Journey

