

## **To Fight With Sin (In a Allegory)**

(The characters in this allegory are completely fictitious. The story/details may differ but friends the moral of the allegory itself is very real. I believe we have all been here at some point in our lives and the lessons to be learned and the outcome obtained can belong to everyone struggling in the mire today. Friends, as you read this allegory maybe you can place yourself or someone you know in the picture, remember the struggle is very real, the fight frightening, but please remember friends the outcome is eternal.)

Benji rose from his bed with his head in his hands. What had happened the night before? he really couldn't remember. Filling up his coffee cup from the kettle Benji sat down at the table and tried to calm his foggy head. What had happened? Rubbing his hand over his eyes Benji let his mind roam over the events leading up to the night before.

It had all started about six months ago. It seemed innocent enough, just a game of cards at a friend of a friend's place. As soon as Benji had got there though warning bells started to ring. Benji wasn't a bad person, he had been raised in a religious environment but he had never really taken much notice, after all he reasoned, religion was for the older folk, he himself had a lot of 'living' to do. He had got himself a rather good paying job in the centre of town and although he didn't normally go to the pub his 'friends', as he had called them at the time, assured him it was harmless and 'just a meeting place'. This is where the 'needling', as he called it had really started. He had heard this 'needling' before, whenever he was about to do or go someplace bad, his mother referred it to 'The Holy Spirit', gently prompting him that he was about to enter into enemy territory. "Jesus was with him", his mother always said and she always reminded him that "Jesus was his Saviour and would help him along the way". There was that voice again gently remonstrating with him not to pursue the path he was about to enter. He was at the door of the pub and his (Benji) friends were admonishing forcefully with him to come in and take a seat, someone had already brought him a beer and was pushing it into his hands. Benji never drank, but feeling cornered, sat down. The warning bells rang louder and became more persistent, Benji's 'friends' became noisy and obnoxious.

Let's put this scene (allegory) on hold and have a look at what is going on behind the scenes. Basically the devil is tempting Benji to enter his playground and Jesus via His ministering angels and The Holy Spirit are trying to protect Benji and keep him out of harm's way. The difference here is the devil and his angels use force, 'they pushed the beer into Benji's hands', while Jesus and His angels can only use reason, they cannot physically pick up Benji and remove him from the scene, it's totally Benji's choice. The warning bells ringing louder are Jesus' angels while the noisy and obnoxious 'friends' are being driven by

Satan. Friends, always remember when you find yourself in a compromised position that Satan is somewhere in the mix. He is always behind someone urging them on to destruction and if possible using them to tempt you into the mix as well. It would be wise to pull back from the scenario and just observe for a while, you will soon see the devil in the detail. But let's go back to Benji.

Benji is in the fight of his life and the outcome here could change his life. How many disasters, jail terms, fights could be avoided? how many lives saved if we just took a step back and thought about what we are doing. Reason could save many a person. But the devil is bent on his victim and Benji isn't listening to his guarding angel friends, oh yes he put up bit of a fight, reasoning to himself that he was in control of himself and he definitely wasn't going to do anything stupid or embarrassing. Benji had been 'fighting with sin'. He had heard The Holy Spirit prompting him to leave, he had also heard the devil (via his friends) urging him to stay and the battle had gone on for a while. But instead of getting up and leaving the environment, Benji stayed. This indecision gave the devil a advantage and Satan (once again via his (Benji's) friends) gained the victory in this fight. Satan managed to convince Benji that he was in control of himself in a situation where the devil ran rampant.

But back to Benji. Benji was, as he made himself to believe, actually having a really good time. He shouted himself and his friends to a few rounds and before he knew it he was laughing as loud as any of them, but that persistent nagging was still going on in his mind. Benji had shrugged it off and joined wholeheartedly into the card games. The manager of the pub came over and curtly told the boys that the pub was closing and it was time to go home. They all raucously tramped out and the night was over. The next day at work Benji's head felt a little light and his boss questioned if he felt ok, Benji assured him that he was but halfway through the day the boss came back to give a little 'fatherly advice' (via the impression of The Holy Spirit). The boss gently admonished Benji, he did know Benji had come to work with a hangover and it was impacting on his ability to do his job satisfactorily. It was just a gentle warning, smooth, like a father would give. So Benji took notice and when his friends called him that night he politely declined. But the devil wasn't going to let Benji go without a fight. Benji plunged into the fight head on, he was determined to keep his job and to do it to the best of his abilities. But late one night when he was feeling down the devil came knocking again. His friends were at the door pleading with him to join them. This time they wouldn't go to the pub, they would go to a mate's house and just play a few rounds of cards. The needling and warning bells rang again, louder this time. Benji put his head in his hands as the war raged in his mind. He was fighting with sin again. He reasoned it out in his mind, yes he knew it was wrong, yes he knew he was taking himself out of Jesus' protection. The battle raged on, his friends were getting impatient. Finally with threats of abandoning him his friends cast down the ultimatum, to come now or be left behind. Benji picked himself up, left his house and closed the door behind him. Once again he put his faith in himself, shut out The Holy Spirit and gave a ear to the devil, he had lost the fight with sin. The Holy Spirit had given Benji every opportunity and while the fight had been vicious Benji did have within himself the ability to withhold the devil. Jesus was with Benji, strengthening him for the fight, giving him power to withstand the temptations of the devil but Benji discerned Him not. Benji went out into the night unaware that his life would change forever that night.

The abrupt banging on the front door brought Benji back from his reverie, slipping into the bedroom Benji looked out the window. It was as he suspected, flashing red and blue lights and blue uniforms demanding entrance. He hung his head in shame, he hadn't been in control and his 'friends' had driven him to ruin. Benji's heart ached, if only he had listened to the needling and pleading he wouldn't be in the position he was now. Somewhere in the back of his mind he heard The Holy Spirit again, maybe it wasn't too late? yes he was in a mess but just maybe? The banging on the door became more insistent and Benji knew he had to face up to his fate. Moving towards the door he banged into a object just sticking out from under his bed. Bending over and picking it up he realised it was his mother's Bible, he had forgotten he even had it. The Bible had fallen open and with tears in his eyes Benji realised yes, the night had been bad but it wasn't over, there was still hope yet. Benji clasped the Bible close to his chest and peace came to his soul as he recalled the words he had just read.

Isaiah 43:1 "...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Friends, it doesn't matter how black the night is, it doesn't matter where you are or what has happened. Friends, Jesus knows your pain, He sees your struggles, Jesus knows the fight with sin can bring us to our knees. Jesus knows us intimately and Jesus will succour us, He has walked this path before us, He can empathise with us, He can redeem us. It doesn't matter friends how black the night or how bad you have lost the fight, please friends turn to Jesus, He will carry you out of the dark and into the day. Put your hand in the hand of our blessed Redeemer and let Him lead you home. And next time you hear the 'needling' please friends, listen.

Friends I'd like to point you to our beautiful Saviour and leave you with one of the most beautiful of Bible promises.

### 23rd Psalm

"...The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

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