

Survival Of The Fittest

The grotesque, snarling face of the elephant seal filled the television screen as I viewed the battle of these huge animals to determine who would be master of the herd. The young in the herd also had a battle for survival.

Some were crushed beneath the giant bodies of females or even their own fathers, while others who got too far from their own mothers were injured by the snapping jaws of other mothers.

In nature it is the survival of the fittest.

There is a constant battle to live and procreate.

Did our Creator intend us to learn spiritual principles from studying the habits of these marvellous creatures He designed and brought into being?

Yes, indeed He did.

Romans 1:20 [NIV] “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

We too have a battle on our hands.

We can be thankful it is not, for most of us, a battle for physical survival.

We are not obliged to kill or be killed in a never-ending struggle for the right to live and procreate.

We are, however, in a battle for survival of the fittest in a spiritual sense.

The rewards don’t necessarily go to the strongest physically in this battle.

Nor the most beautiful, talented or most intelligent.

God has designed other ways to test who is spiritually the fittest.

How important is it that we win this struggle?

It is all important, because this is not just a temporary physical existence that is at stake, but our lives for all eternity.

What about the losers in the animal kingdom – those who don’t survive, those who wind up as food in the winner’s stomach?

Why weren’t they the fittest?

Let’s analyse their weaknesses.

Some losers wandered nonchalantly about, grazing here and there as they pleased, unalert and unaware of danger making them easy prey for a predator.

Others overestimated their personal strength, striking out on their own, sometimes even disdained nourishment, until they were all alone and in a weakened state.

Some started out well, ever alert, growing stronger through experience in conquering the odds, but as time went on grew careless, weary of being constantly alert, tired of the constant battle.

Other losers were young who unwisely strayed from the protection of their mother's sides also becoming easy targets for predators.

There are many reasons that relatively few win out in nature's battles, the majority end up as the victor's lunch.

All share, however, a common characteristic of losers, a grave underestimation of the enemy and of what it takes to be a winner.

1 Peter 5:8 [NIV] *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

Satan is out there, all the time, stalking us, looking for a weakness he can exploit.

Are we daily, fervently, asking for God's protection in this spiritual battle where at present Satan is king?

Or do we nonchalantly go about our day-to-day business, oblivious of any danger?

Or maybe we're the strong, independent type who go out to face the world without sufficient spiritual nourishment - no time for study of God's Word, the Christian Bible, or prayer each day?

Are we weary of well doing?

Haven't we gained a lifetime membership of a Christian church?

Doesn't God understand what we have been through and why we are now so tired of this daily struggle?

Surely what we have accomplished in the past counts for something now we are old and grey?

Are we still hanging on to some of the rebellion of our youth?

Do we try to get to the edge of the spiritual cliff as possible, or stay on the fringes, yet still feel to be part of God's people?

If this is what we are like we are courting disaster.

Winning in this spiritual battle God has called us to is a lot tougher than most of us think.

God doesn't promise everyone is going to make it.

Notice the warning message that Jesus Christ gave to all Christians through His revelation to John the apostle.

Revelation 2:7 [NIV] *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."*

The promises made by Jesus Christ are **only** to those who overcame.

This message was repeated to all seven churches, that is all Christians.

What were they to overcome?

What did this battle for survival and to be given these rewards involve?

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

Who is the “him” referred to in this scripture?

Revelation 12:9-10 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”*

The one whose influence we are to overcome is Satan, our arch enemy.

How do we do this?

By our own strength?

No.

We are to use two spiritual weapons, and one attitude of mind.

First the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.

When we accept this sacrifice as a substitute for our own deserved death due to our rebellion against God, we have access to unlimited power to overcome Satan.

We can receive the Holy Spirit to guide and empower our lives.

This same sacrifice is the message that we give as a testament.

How accepting Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Master has dramatically changed our lives.

What then should our attitude of mind be?

Not to love our lives so much that we are not willing to give it up because of the great grace, love and mercy that God has extended to us through Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

This is how we sacrifice our lives, to overcome Satan’s influence.

Seek God’s will for our lives **not** our own.

Living such a life of sacrifice will protect us from Satan’s onslaught, but will also be a living message to others to follow our example.

Hebrews 2:3 [NIV] *“how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”*

We now have **no** excuse to neglect this great salvation, for if we apply what we have just learnt we will be among the spiritually fittest.