

# A Fight to the Finish — You Can Do Hard

## Things

*“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against ... mighty powers in this dark world.”*

— Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)

Let me start somewhere honest: a lot of the people reading this spend nine months a year pouring themselves out for other people’s kids.

You learn their names. Their stories. The look on a face that tells you something’s wrong at home. You carry them — and then summer comes, you walk back through your own front door, and some of you arrive on empty. You gave your best hours to a building full of children who weren’t yours, and the ones who are yours got whatever was left over.

I’m not saying that to pile on guilt. I’m saying it because somebody needs to name it out loud. Because the hardest fight you’ll ever fight isn’t the one with the job, the schedule, or the system. It’s the fight to come all the way home — to give your own people the version of you that everyone else got first.

So this summer, let’s talk about that fight. Not the educator’s fight. Yours. The person’s. The mom’s, the dad’s, the husband’s, the wife’s, the grandparent’s.

### ***the battle you can’t always see***

Most of us are wired to quit a little too quickly — and strangely, not at work, where we’ve learned to grind no matter how we feel. We quit at home. We figure the people who love us will understand if we check out for a while. They’ll forgive the distracted dinners, the phone in the hand, the “not right now, buddy.” And they probably will.

That’s exactly the danger. Grace at home can quietly turn into permission to hand our families the leftovers of a life everyone else got fresh.

Here's what Paul was getting at in Ephesians: the struggle is bigger than the surface. You're not just wrestling tiredness or a long year or a phone that won't stop buzzing. There's a deeper fight underneath all of it — the fight to stay who you are with the people who matter most. The present one. The patient one. The fully-there one. A draining season would be perfectly happy to let you coast through summer as a smaller version of yourself and call it “recharging.”

You weren't built to coast through the part of life that counts the most. You were built to show up. To dig in. To be present even when presence costs you the energy you'd rather keep.

### ***you're more equipped than you feel***

On your worst days — the ones where you've got nothing left for the dinner table, let alone a hard conversation — you feel under-resourced and overmatched. I want you to hear the truth instead: you are not facing this on empty.

God's aim was never just for you to survive until the next school year. It was for you to stand firm right where you live — in your marriage, in your parenting, in the quiet of your own heart. You've been handed real strength for this: His Word, His truth, His Spirit — the same way a soldier is handed armor before the fight, not after. The exhaustion is real. So is the equipping. Both can be true at once, and the second one outlasts the first.

### ***what it actually looks like to come home***

I'm allergic to feel-good advice that falls apart by Tuesday, so let me make this practical.

*Be honest about the hard part.* Naming the struggle is the first step to getting through it — not a sign that you're failing as a parent or a spouse. Stop performing “I'm fine” at your own kitchen table. Tell God the truth about how worn down you are. Tell the person you married. Drag the heavy thing into the light, because what you keep in the dark only grows — and the people closest to you can already feel it anyway.

*Train on purpose.* An athlete doesn't wait until game day to get in shape, and you can't wait until you're already short with the people you love to build your foundation. Get in the Word daily, even in summer — especially in summer, when the structure that used to hold you accountable is gone. Find the verses that steady you. Keep reminding yourself who God is and who you are, long before a hard moment at home tries to tell you otherwise.

*Refuse to fight alone.* You were never meant to. The families that last aren't held together by one exhausted person white-knuckling it — they're surrounded by people. Find your circle. A friend who tells you the truth. A couple a season ahead of you. The person who'll watch the kids so you and your spouse can breathe. Build the kind of network that catches you on the days you can't catch yourself, and be that net for someone else.

## ***faith is a verb***

Faith isn't passive. It isn't crossing your fingers and hoping you'll magically have more patience by August. It's active. It moves.

It looks like being honest enough to say *I'm running on empty* and ask the people who love you for help. It looks like staying committed to your family even when the payoff is slow and nobody's clapping — because nobody claps for the dad who keeps showing up, and that work matters more than almost anything that gets applause. And it looks like trusting that the tired season you're in isn't wasted — that it's growing something in you the easy seasons never could.

Be present. Learn from all of it, the bedtime laughs and the hard conversations alike. Keep the long view. The years with your people are shorter than they feel.

### **Three challenges before you close this tab**

*I don't want you to just nod and move on. I want you to do something. So here are three:*

- 1. Pick the relationship you've been tempted to quit on.** Maybe it's a teenager who's gone quiet. A marriage running on logistics. A parent you keep meaning to call. Name it, and commit to staying in the fight — not on your own strength, but with His.
- 2. Choose one verse to carry this summer.** Memorize it. Make it the thing you reach for when you've got nothing left to give and someone in your house still needs you.
- 3. Pour into someone under your own roof.** Not a student. Not a colleague. Someone who shares your last name. A real conversation. An unhurried hour. A prayer over them before bed. Be, at home, the support you spend all year being for everyone else.

## ***A final word***

You can do hard things. Not because you're flawless, and not because you've got the whole family thing figured out — but because the One who gave you these people also gave you everything you need to love them well.

The fight isn't over when school lets out. Some days summer asks more of you than the year did. But you are not alone in it, you never were, and you are stronger than the tiredness trying to convince you otherwise.

Come all the way home. Finish well.

*Love your people well. The time is now. — Duke*