

The Wall of Self

The picture of me sitting in my corner at the end of round two in the 1973 Golden Gloves Tournament didn't hide my gloom. I thought I'd lost the fight. "It's not over, Roy, you can win this fight," my corner man encouraged me as the bell rang for the third and final round. To my joyful amazement, I won.

My corner man and some friends jumped into the ring and carried me on their shoulders in victory. It was a day I will never forget.

That gloomy look masked my face again in 1980 when a judge sentenced me to 45 years in prison. It was another fight I thought I'd lost and another day I will never forget.

I thought my life was over. But then God became my corner man, and when you have God in your corner you have hope. I thought, *Now, this injustice will be corrected.* That was my will. God's will put me nose to nose against the real cause of all my problems—the *wall of self*—the wall that kept me from knowing God's true purpose for my life. The wall that kept me defeated and imprisoned in my own desires.

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When you're in the ring you learn to rely on your own skills to defeat your opponents. But when you seek to do God's will you learn to trust in his strategies and might. He knows how to confuse your opponents. Paul wrote, "my strength is made perfect in weakness," (2 Corinthians 12:9, NKJV throughout).

What kind of strategy is this? It's the opposite of what I've been taught. I've learned many of God's strategies are antithetical to my way of thinking: You live to die.



by Roy A. Borges

Think of others first. Rejoice when suffering.

How can these strategies be successful? I wonder. I grew up believing I had to be tougher and smarter than the next guy. I thought, *The pleasures of life are won by the swift and greedy.* It meant I had to be in control. My way or the highway.

But when God became real to me, I began to realize, "I can do all

things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Not like some kind of super human with the ability to accomplish anything. But as a contender who sets his priorities in order, who can be grateful for a prison sentence (even one I believe is unjust).

I know that Christ strengthens me through troubles, pressures and trials. The walls of self begin to crumble as I detach myself from the nonessentials and concentrate on the right objectives, the ones

that bring me closer to God and help me know him better.

The Israelites must have had that gloomy look when they faced the impregnable wall at Jericho. I'm sure they wondered, *How can we possibly win? Shouting, trumpets, marching, music...just what kind of strategy is this?*

The walls of Jericho tumbled down because the Israelites followed God's plan completely. God's plan always works. His instructions may require us to do things differently than we expect, and we may wonder how they can possibly work. The logic may not register until we have obeyed. Then we will discover "with God, all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). It can be as great as winning a Golden Gloves championship.

Just as God was with Joshua, he is with us as we face the seemingly impregnable wall of self. "I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Joshua 1:5).

Say *so long* to the wall of self, and release every bit of your selfish desires to God's will. This strategy opposes the world in which many think success comes from power and the relentless desire to get ahead. But God's Word says success comes from obedience to our omnipotent God, not from being in control.

The Bible is filled with many people whom God was able to use because they submitted to do His will. God often puts these people in situations where he can do amazing things in and through them. That's when God can raise our hands high, declare us victorious champions of the faith and give us unimagined joy. □

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