

The Battle I'd Rather Be David

Battles are both the bane and the glory of our existence. We adamantly abhor them when they're forced on us by vengeful adversaries who mean us all the harm they can muster up, or when they randomly befall us through indiscriminately cruel circumstances over which we have no control. On the other hand, we rather bask in them when there's something gallantly heroic about them, or they serve to right a great wrong. Indeed, battles are both the bane and glory of our existence.

Battles as Daily Challenges

The battles that we fight come in all shapes and sizes. Some are nothing more than things we would define as the day in and day out challenges of living out our lives. We've come to see these battles as a natural and acceptable element of life and living. It's finding the right job, or working out the knotty kinks in a relationship, or tediously molding the mind of an entrenched teen, or wrestling with entirely opposing choices that will ultimately leave us with a loss no matter which choice we make. Although these kinds of battles can be acutely troubling and unduly painful, they become something less than battles and something more akin to the ordinary ebb and flow of life that swirls around each of us in either gentle rivulets or turbulent undertows.

Battles as Battles

But then there are those things that have little or nothing to do with the natural course of life and living. There are these acutely harrowing moments either forged on the anvil of our poor choices, or violently struck on the revengeful anvil of someone or something else. There are those things borne of us or borne far outside of us that force us into a maelstrom that we don't have the speed or ingenuity to outrun. These are those events that are not about pressing through to the next thing, rather they are about surviving so that we can get to the next thing. These are those moments when the whole notion of progression is completely swallowed up in the far greater crisis of unadulterated survival.

Battles of Justice

Then there are also those battles that we choose to engage in. It may well be that nothing has advanced against us, or challenged us, or stands looming over us armed to the teeth with crushing intent. The cause of the current battle may have nothing to do with an external force as it may be prompted by an entirely internal one. It may be that we have witnessed a searing injustice, or that a line has been crossed that should never have been crossed. It may arise from something strong bullying something weak and thereby creating a litany of traumatized victims strewn along the road that we likewise trod. Any number of these things enflame our ire and prompt us to step into the fray.

Battles of Calling

Or we may sense some innate calling that's compelling beyond any of our best efforts to resist. There might be a compulsion borne of some deep inner essence that whispers that we were born for such a moment, or that the entire purpose of our existence is to wage the singular battle before us. It may well be that engulfing conviction that calls us to right a wrong that has been granted slothful permission to keep breathing, or to wage a single war in order to stop a hundred others that would otherwise follow. Of warrior stock or not, we may feel an irresistible call to a battle either large or small.

The Goliath's Superiority

Whatever the nature of the battle or the circumstances that set the various forces careening against each other, sooner or later we will all fight a battle. And it seems that in fighting these battles of ours, we've developed a mentality of superior warfare. There's something in our construct that envisions what superiority is, whether that's sheer numbers, or the extent of our resources, or timing, or any of an innumerable number of things. It seems that we tend to judge the value of the battle, the potential sacrifice in the battle, and the likely outcome based on how we've defined superiority. This is more akin to a Goliath mentality.

Clearly, wisdom would dictate inventorying such resources as held up against whatever foe we face. Yet, I would wonder if this idea of superiority elevates itself above our convictions, our calling, our sense of justice, and the whole notion that we were raised up to lay ourselves down. Could it be that the calculations that we've devised to determine what battles we will fight or not fight have entirely removed our convictions, our calling, our sense of justice, and the whole notion that we were raised up to lay ourselves down? It is possible that we've granted fear a place at the table and elevated personal safety in a manner that battles have become shrewd calculations rather than passionate crusades?

And if that is so, is it possible that we've gutted the very heart the battle? Could it be that any resources that we have will always be secondary to the heart that we have to use those resources? Would it be reasonable to conjecture that any instrument of war, regardless of how devastating, only takes on life when those who hold those weapons are driven by deeply core convictions that bring them to the battlefield? Have we taken passion and conviction and calling, which are the most potent resources of war, off the battlefield? And if we are not driven by those things, is the battle really a battle or is it just a slug-fest?

The David's Battles of Conviction

In that sense, I would much prefer to be David. I would prefer to know my weapon well and be practiced in its use. Yet, I would want the heart behind the weapon so that the nature of the enemy and the weapons arrayed against me do not hold the power for me that they might otherwise hold. I certainly don't want to be foolish or naïve and thoughtlessly take on an enemy without careful consideration. However, I don't want to winch in fear when I need not be fearful. Neither do I want call a battle lost that is winnable when the core convictions that undergird the weapons that I possess are sufficient to overcome when others would think I could not. I much prefer to be David.

It would seem that the greatest victories and the glories that have stood the test of time came on the heels of battles fought of great conviction and deep passion. These are the battle from which stories are spun and heroes arise. It is the common man energized with uncommon conviction that has stood against superior enemies and brought the battle home. And it is not that men weren't wounded and that many perished. It is that they won when the world said that they shouldn't have. It is the singularly compelling fact that conviction prevailed over might and stunned those who knew nothing of conviction. I would much prefer to be David.

Admirable Convictions

Yet, many people purport convictions that appear rather dubious and often outright destructive. It would seem that admirable convictions are driven by a greater good, a willingness to lift up another at great cost to self, and to adamantly refuse to dress evil in the garb of good in order to justify one's actions. It may be that in a world of convictions centered on the good of oneself, the gorging of one's own appetite, the spinning of belief systems to serve personal agendas, and the shrewd pabulum spun from these that such agendas have been misinterpreted and embraced as convictions. And when these kinds of convictions are brought to the weapons of war, we are no longer David's.

Our Battles

It may be wise to survey the landscape of our lives, as well as the far greater landscape of the lives around us and ask whether we've fought battles or run from them. And whether our choice has been to fight or flee, where were our convictions and what role did they play or not play in those decisions? For a life that has forsaken conviction is a life lived in hiding, deaf to purpose, and robbed of victory. And since that is the case, I would much prefer to be David.