

“What Round Is This?”

I'm sure we all know at least a little bit about how boxing matches work; there are anywhere from three to fifteen rounds; at the beginning of each round, a ringside bell sounds one ring to begin a round, and then three rings to end a round. At the end of each round, each fighter returns to his corner to rest and get advice from his trainer. The other night I was praying for a couple dealing with some serious marital problems; the wife said the devil is fighting hard to bring division and defeat.

Jesus told us when He left, God would send the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), also known as the Counselor, who would come to lead us to the truth and teach us all things. I have found myself calling upon the Counselor, both for myself and others quite often lately; who better to give us good advice and wise counsel than the one called the Counselor! As I prayed for this couple, I sensed God saying He had rung the bell to end the round and give the wife a much needed break, but the enemy was distracting her, and she didn't hear it, and she was about to give up.

This made me wonder - how many of us have been “in the ring” with our adversary the devil for a long time, duking it out but never seeming to get anywhere, and we are just bone weary from this prolonged fight that never seems to end?! If you are one of these battle weary fighters, there is good news for you - God has rung the bell to end this particular round, and you are to go to your corner where your trainer, your Counselor, is waiting to give you fresh new strategies for winning the battle that you thought was not winnable!

Hear what Jesus is saying to us: *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Mt. 11:28-29 NKJV) So... when we retreat to our “corner,” or in our case our prayer closet, Jesus is there waiting for us as our Counselor! He will give us rest, refresh us, and give us divine strategies that will help us defeat the enemy.

Engaging the enemy is a daily battle we must wage, but it is imperative that we make time every day to retreat to our quiet place with the Lord, so He can revive and refresh us, and tell us how to defeat the enemy in any given battle we are fighting. *“So we fix our eyes (focus) not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”* (1 cor, 4:18 NIV) Keep an eye on your adversary, but **focus** on Jesus, and you'll win this round! Amen!