

MercEmail

A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

Picking Fights

by Steve Higginbotham

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When I was a boy growing up, my mom and dad taught me not to fight. For the most part, I lived in harmony with those instructions, however, I had a neighbor who was always doing "mean" things to me. Yet, because of my teaching, I endured his behavior. Well, one day, my mom happened to be looking out the window when this boy was tormenting me, so later that day, she had a talk with me. She told me that while I was not to "pick fights" with other boys, I did need to stand up for myself. Well, that's all I needed to hear. I promptly went outside and "beat up" my neighbor.

I don't think I understood exactly what my mom was telling me. Defending myself was one thing, going off, looking for a fight was quite another.

In a similar vein, did you know that God authorizes us to "fight" (1 Timothy 6:12), "wage war" (1 Timothy 1:18), "contend" (Jude 3), and "wrestle" (Ephesians 6:12) for truth's sake? However, just like the instruction from my mom, God's instruction is not to be understood as permission to pick a fight and quarrel with others (2 Timothy 2:23-24. Romans 12:18).

The next time you're tempted to get into a spat with someone, ask yourself if you're defending the faith or picking a fight. There's a difference. One is honorable, the other is shameful.

"It is honorable for a man to stop striving since any fool can start a quarrel" (Proverbs 20:3).

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