

# Chapter

# 1

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## Time Out

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Boxing has never been my favourite sport; curiously though, there's a principle in the boxing ring that works just as well in life's ring.

*The principle?... Time out.*

Twelve short breaks in between every round where the boxer does everything, from changing his gum shields, to having ER service for the gaping cut over his eyes. His trainer talks to him: as do most of the guys around him - he catches his breath, and prepares for the next round. He may have had a previously good round but he still goes for the break; the previous round may have been terrible, he goes for the break. Each time the bell goes, no matter what position he's in - he takes the break.

Let's step out of the boxing ring and enter life's ring. My guess is, few of you have ever worn boxing gloves or stepped into the highlights of Las Vegas; but if my train of guesses are right, you've worn life's boxing gloves (and probably still have them on) as you daily battle a life that doesn't seem to tower any less over you. Another miscarriage, another lost job, more mortgage payments due, increasingly disobedient teenagers, a husband who never has time, an aching pain at the same spot, another broken heart.

Trying has never been too bad; you're usually loaded with enthusiasm and open-eyed optimism. Trying Again...now that's a whole new ball game; going back after a string of defeats, that takes...what? Guts? Gumption? No. It takes grace.

There's probably nothing more exhilarating than clubbing down the last in the row of foes as you leave a field of dead opponents in your wake; and there's probably nothing as disheartening as wiping your hand over a bloodied mouth, as you rise with knees which are still knocking, and gaze at what seems to be an indestructible foe, all the while wondering why you even bothered to try.

Most battles aren't won on the first try. Some are...but most aren't; so you need a time out, a respite, a time alone...hold it! Not alone...with someone...with God. It could be on your bed as a tear drops on the pillow and you wonder how many more would follow. It could be by your laptop, playing solitaire and wondering if sleep will ever come. It could be in the waiting room or as you pace the corridor (and wonder if you will be disappointed again).

He's there. You may not think so, it doesn't matter. You may not feel Him, you don't have to. If you will speak; He will listen, He said so<sup>1</sup> and God isn't a man that he should lie<sup>2</sup>. Time outs are special, they are sacred, and you need them.

Sometimes you need to talk, to let out the personal hell you've been wrestling with, to dissipate the frustration, to let out the pain. Sometimes you need to listen, for a word of hope, for a new direction, for a revival, for a word of peace. Sometimes you need to just sit, as He bathes your wounds with the balm of the Holy Spirit. Listen as He mends your heart and restores the broken harp that once echoed sweet melody in your spirit. It could be with a quiet time early at dawn, as the sparrows sing, or it could even be with this book, as you meditate on truths you've always known.

Life doesn't give you too many respites; you have to make them. Slit the throat of your impossible schedule and give Him a possible time to minister to you. You need it. It's a respite for the next round; you won't survive without it, the bell might soon go, besides, you never know, the coach might just tell you where to hit.

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1. Jeremiah 33v3

2. Numbers 23v19