

BATTLEZONE VICTORIES

I am not sure if you are like me but I have a bad habit of missing things that are close by. The other day I could not find my glasses. Normally I keep them on as my sight is so poor, but in this instance I had them off for their own protection. When I went to retrieve them they were no where to be found. I looked high and low in the general area and came up empty. I found them – eventually – in my front shirt pocket.

Such was my experience finding BattleZONE. As a Christian most of my life and a pastor for 25+ years I was always looked for something to keep me charged up for the Lord. I was always on the prowl to find something that could help the men I worked with be better followers for Christ.

In my quest I had attended seminars all over the West Coast and still seemed to find nothing but the latest fad.

Three blocks from my office in the neighborhood across the street was BattleZONE Ministries. (In my front shirt pocket) I met Michael and we began to move forward with a plan for training the men of the church. Two weeks in I realized that I was more needful of the training than the men I was trying to lead. I had become so performance based that I had lost the ability to have a good relationship with Christ. For me it had become about the next sermon or the next study and the endless need to crank them out for the church's consumption.

For me BattleZONE became that tool that God used to awaken the need and desire for me to train to be the man of God that I had been called to be. I realized that I could not coast in my life with Christ. I also learned that I could not live on the past victories or the past failures. I learned in a visual form that my choices determine the direction of my life and that I am as close to God as I have chosen to be.

But my greatest blessing has been the chance to start over again with a clean slate and a renewed passion to follow the Lord. It has been as if I have found an altogether higher gear for my relationship with Christ. This is why I coach other men. Because I know that they like me, have a hunger to know God more deeply. That they like me have longed for God to fill the empty space in their heart. That they like me will be blessed beyond belief for the investment into knowing Jesus more fully.

Now that I am back into the fulltime ministry, I still have to crank out sermons and studies. Now they are an extension of my heart with Christ and not just something I have to do. Now they are birthed from a heart that seeks Jesus first. Now they are all about helping others to be a better follower.

And to think that all of the time it was right in my front shirt pocket.



Pastor Michael Stipe

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