

MORE COMBATIVE THAN LOVING?

John Edwards

When we teach the truth and expose error, we are sometimes said to be more combative than loving. This would imply that one who is combative is not loving, and one who is loving is not combative. This thinking is not compatible with Bible teaching.

ARE YOU MORE LOVING THAN COMBATIVE? You would think that those who are so concerned about us being less combative and more loving would be more loving and less combative. When you call us out for being too combative and not enough loving, refer to us as “sneering” and accuse us of making “snide and mean-spirited” comments, are you more loving than combative or more combative than loving?

WERE GOD, THE PROPHETS, CHRIST OR THE APOSTLES MORE COMBATIVE THAN LOVING? If being combative is unloving and loving is being non-combative, was **God** more combative than loving when He challenged the idol worshippers, *“Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their*

witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth” (Is. 43:9)?

Was **Elijah**, the prophet, more combative than loving when he challenged the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18?

Was **Christ** more combative than loving when He charged the scribes and Pharisees with transgressing the commandment of God by their tradition, called them *“hypocrites”* and said their worship was *“in vain”* (Mt. 15:1-14)?

Was **Paul** more combative than loving when he said to Elymas the sorcerer, *“O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”* (Acts 13:10)?

If you would not charge these with being more combative than loving, then why is the charge made against us when we do what these did? If you would not want to be “allied with such a sarcastic attitude”, then do you not want others to be allied with you when you reflect such sarcasm? Would you want to be allied with Elijah, when he *“mocked”* and massacred the prophets of Baal (1 Ki. 18:27)? Why would you not want to be allied with

“such a sarcastic attitude”, when Jesus was unashamed to be allied with such a man of God (Mt. 17:1-5)?

The truth of the matter is that to be combative is to be loving, and to be loving is to be combative. Paul commanded Timothy to have *“charity [that’s love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience”* (1 Tim. 1:5), and just a few verses later commanded him to *“war a good warfare”* (v. 18). In the sixth chapter, Paul charged Timothy to follow after *“righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”* (v. 11). In the very next sentence, he declared, *“Fight the good fight of faith...”* (v. 12). Combative soldiers of the cross are righteous, godly, faithful, loving, patient, meek men. Jude said, *“mercy...peace, and love, be multiplied”* (Jude 2) and then commanded that they *“should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (v. 3). Earnest faith contenders are merciful, peaceful, and loving. How loving is it to stand at ease with sword in sheathe while men and women are *“taken captive”* at the devil’s will (2 Tim. 2:26)?

GOSPEL MEETING
with
Nicolas Edwards
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THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH

Nicolas Edwards

It was said by an angel that John would come *“in the spirit and power of Elijah”* (Lk. 1:17). The spirit and power of Elijah is certainly praiseworthy, to be imitated, and sorely lacking today. Let’s look at *“The spirit and power of Elijah”*.

CONFRONTING AHAB.

King Ahab was very wicked. *“There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up”* (1 Ki. 21:25). Per God’s instruction, Elijah met with Ahab. *“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, That Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim”* (1 Ki. 18:17-18). Nothing but a courageous spirit will enable a man to stand before such a wicked king and say such things! Do you have this spirit?

MOUNT CARMEL. All the children of Israel, 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves were gathered together unto mount Carmel per Elijah’s request to Ahab. Elijah said, *“I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men”* (1 Ki. 18:22). The spirit and power of Elijah is seen in his standing alone to challenge this multitude of people! Do you have this spirit? He said to all the people, *“How long shall ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word”* (1 Ki. 18:21). The people were limping between two opinions. There are many such “limpers” today. Is your spirit one of taking a stand, confrontation, and action? Or do we serve as a crutch to the aid of such limping? Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal in the effort to prove Jehovah was God in Israel, not Baal or any other! When Baal didn’t answer the people, *“Elijah mocked them”* (1 Ki. 18:27). Due to Elijah’s effort, challenge, and intolerance, *“When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is*

the God” (1 Ki. 18:39). If you want this result in people, adopt the spirit and power of Elijah! Don’t tolerate sin, confront it, challenge it, prove that the Lord He is God!

NABOTH’S VINEYARD.

After Naboth had been killed, Ahab went to take possession of his vineyard. Elijah was sent, by the Lord, to Ahab. Elijah spoke to him, *“Thus saith the Lord, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine...thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord...I will bring evil upon thee...the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel”* (1 Ki. 21:19-23). This was the word of God! When *“Thus saith the Lord”* involved speaking such things to denounce evil, Elijah spoke it! Do you have this spirit? The result: Ahab humbled himself (1 Ki. 21:27-29). Quite a feat for such a wicked king.

John the Baptist came in this spirit and power. He preached repentance. He turned many hearts to the Lord. He told King Herod, *“It is not lawful for thee to have her”* (Mt. 14:4). Do you have this spirit?

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