

WAR FOR ONE

Welcome back to our The War for ONE series, where we've been learning that there is a spiritual battle that is being waged to DIVIDE US. Why because it's God's greatest desire, for us as his kids, to be ONE, united in our love for one another. We've been learning that the devil is a real being that will turn us against each other and use every trick to divide us, and sadly, we've given him way to much authority to do so. We've also learned that we can go to battle with different kinds of spiritual weapons, all to fend off the attacks that will come our way to keep us from being united as ONE.

And today, I get to speak on one my greatest passions for the church, and that is, Fighting as One, and share about the power that we have in fighting as ONE hui, one unit, one team, one ohana, in this spiritual battle to remain united as ONE! As a church, we've camped on this One theme since the start of 2021 and you might just think, nuff already, I get the importance of being ONE, but we at NHCO know that if our being ONE is that important, it's good to shed light on another angle on, perspective on, this Jesus mandated value of being one, especially in the battle that we are facing.

I hope you are ready to learn about the power we have in Fighting as One, if so, say "I'm ready" I can't hear you? If so, say, "We're ready" cuz as one of our NHCO shirts tell, "We mo betta togedda" fo shua! Tell the person next to you, "We Mo betta togedda."

I know there are some covid casualties as this extended social distancing has caused God's people to be too comfortable in isolation. It's been months since we've opened up our new campus at our Hope Center in Wahiawa hoping is that our NHCO ohana would start coming back in droves, but that's not quite the case yet. By the very definition church, "Ekklesia", "the assembly", the gathering of God's people, that's a Covid casualty, as some have gotten sadly too comfortable in this new form of weekend church attendance, church online.

Don't get me wrong, our online church services have been outstanding, done with so much excellence that it almost encourages people to stay away and worship in your underwear! And we've reached so many more people from afar! But there is something missed from not gathering with our extended ohana.

Yes, there have been some unforeseen benefits of this pandemic. I've not gotten a cold in two years! Yeah! I'm sure many of you have remained healthy. Many have taken up a new hobby. I'm now into Kayak fishing. And many have learned the importance of "Me-time" "Me time" is a good form of self-care. Everyone needs time to recharge by being alone with God, (yes, even extroverts, like me). Taking a break from friends, family, and coworkers can be a great way to reset, time to get recharged, get refocused, reengaged so you can jump back into your work life, relationships with a little more vigor and purpose. We've had more time of solitude than ever through this pandemic. And that's good.

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But that's different from Isolation:

Isolation is more than being alone. It's the result of feeling detached physically and being disconnected from support groups of family, friends and community. Ask yourselves these questions?

- Do you participate in social activities or organized groups at least once a week?
- Do you see or talk to a family member or a friend like before?
- Is your extent of social interaction primarily on zoom, google meet, phone, or text?
- Do you provide frequent care to someone who needs help with everyday tasks like grocery shopping, preparing meals, and getting to appointments?

If not, you may just be living in ISOLATION.

When we choose to avoid others and do life without intentional interaction, that can cause all kinds of problems.

This is what a wise proverb says "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment," (Proverbs 18:1).

When we walk alone we become an open target. Da devil is looking fo stragglers. Looking for Lone Rangers types who go it alone. But even the Lone Ranger had Tonto a kemosable, "his faithful friend and a trusty scout,".

And that's one tactic of Da devil uses, to keep us alone, not together. Isolated. Yes, the devil is defeated! And we're fighting from victory, not for victory, as we've learned, but if we succumb to being isolated, as Da smart guys tell, we go against all wise judgment. A case in point.

King David himself succumbed to defeat cuz he isolated himself. One evening of temptation changed his life forever. Let's me read to you that infamous story from (2 Samuel 11).

I go read um from da DGASB version lidat: Try lissen dis:

"Da nex spring time, wen time fo kings go an fight wars, dis wat wen happen. King David sen Joab out wit da king officer guys, an all da Israel army guys. Dey wipe out plenny mo Ammon guys, an go afta dea main town Rabbah. But David, he stay inside Jerusalem.

One time wen almos dark, David get up from his bed, an walk aroun on top da flat roof a da palace. From up dea, he spock one wahine bafing. She real good looking! (She jus pau her period, an she bafe fo her go back in front God one mo time.)

David sen one guy fo find out mo bout her. Da guy tell, "Fo shua, a7 Batsheba. Her faddah, Eliam, an her husban, Uriah da guy from da Het peopo." Den David sen messenja guys fo bring her. She come by him, an he wen fool aroun wit her. Den she go home. Da wahine come hapai. Wen she find out, she sen one message fo tell David, "I stay hapai."

King David, Israel's bestest warriors, the one who experienced great victories, da guy who killed Goliath, lions and bears, fell to temptation cuz he chose to isolate himself and didn't have other armor bearers to warn him, speak into his life, to cause him to pause! He acted on his own and he fell hard! The greatest warrior of Israel fell, not because he didn't know how to fight. He fell because he fought his battles of temptation alone.

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And this Covid pandemic has amplified the reasons for choosing to be isolated. Covid or not, people isolate themselves for different reasons.

1. Complacency (I comfortable being disengaged with others) no need bother with other people. I'm good with myself. And covid has caused this.
2. Shame is a powerful cause of why people decide not to include others in their battles. They feel like people will condemn dem, look way down on them cuz of how they are. Look you, how you act. Shame isolates. So you end up hiding da problem and you don't go to someone for help cuz shame what you wen do or neva do.

James says this, *"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective"* We should get good with confessing our wrongs with others so that others pray for us and guide us to Jesus.

Another reason for isolation is this:

3. Let me do life on my own, I can handle my own issues, I no need nobody. I no need bother nobody kine attitude. That's an arrogant attitude if you ask me. And that attitude led David to his demise.

OG Discussion Question: Can you relate to these reasons? If so, explain.

We know how much value there is in fighting our battles in numbers! Fighting as ONE: Let me remind you again why we are fo real kine, "Mo betta Togedda" I'll remind you of the WHYs.

We'll face many kinds of battles in our lifetime: I'm not saying all our battles are direct assaults from the devil. We live in a fallen world, less than perfect world. Stuff happens! Excrement hits da fan all da time! Only in heaven will there be no problems. Let me list a number of battles that I know that people in our church ohana battle through. Why?, cuz I hear bout um:

- Dealing with the loss of employment, waiting like it seems forever for your unemployment check to come in (frustrating)
- Coping with the death of a love one (sadness)
- Navigating through a relational rift, in your marriage, in your family, workplace, relational issues (that so heavy)
- Going through a health scare (that's scary)
- Experiencing a loss of a child (painful grief)
- Living in addiction, dealing with a difficult habit to break (feeling hopeless)
- being betrayed by someone (feeling bitter)
- Being offended by what someone did to you (feeling anger)

And if you've lived long enough, I'm sure you've gotten in most of these battles.

OG Discussion Q: What battle have you fought with others in support of you? How did those people go to battle with you?

That's why we are "Mo betta togedda".

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We don't have enough wisdom, experience, maturity to handle some of those battles on our own. With all the victories we've experienced in our life, we are living treasures of wisdom and experience to offer others because we've gone through so much with Jesus by our side, carrying us through, and we can share so much hope to others who are going through something we've gone through. I don't know how many times I've battled through issues dealing with my kids and my wife Gayle and I are so blessed, so good inside, cuz God allowed us to have others carry us through those battles from their experiences. I don't have to make the same mistakes.

And Jesus, the one in charge of our lives modeled this: When he wanted his boys to go out and share about the good news and do battle against the rules of the day for being holy: He told them to go out two by two. Why, so they could share their experiences and Help each other. Jesus taught and lived out being "Mo betta togedda"

Remember my new hobby, Kayak fishing. I've been catching fish and people have been giving me fish. So I've been smoking some of my catch and a couple weeks ago this guy gives me poundage of marlin to smoke. So I've been learning how to smoke fish with kiawe, local kine mesquite wood. If you've used kiawe, da buggah good fo charcoal fo smoke. And there is a skill in making um perfect. You bring the kiawe logs togedda, and you lite um up. Pretty soon get big fire. But gotta control um. And gotta add mo kiawe when da initial ones burn out, or take away some cuz too hot da heat. And the logs gotta be close enough fo da kiawe burn smoke and not burn out, and not too strong and hot fo burn da meat. Gotta be just right! And wen you make um perfect, da fish, or da tako come out ono, broke da mouth good!

You see dass jalike us: The master smoker, dass Jesus, he like bring us togedda, we jalike da kiawe wood. He like place us togedda fo burn bright. Fo keep us on fire. But when da kiawe logs become isolated, away from da oddas, da buggah burn out. Hard fo burn strong alone. Catch dis, Jesus da master smoker, like put you togedda with oddas fo burn bright, hot enuff fo make perfect smoke. But you gotta be willing fo come togedda. Be open to be lite up. Maybe you not dakine perfect kiawe, too wet, or small kine branch, but dass ok, be open fo da master smoker fo put you togedda with others.

Dass why at NHCO get plenny ways you can come togedda for burn bright with others. Dass why, first gotta come out church, den da master smoker, can connect you, us pastors, Da master smoker helpas. We can help put you togedda, with odda kiawe. Hard fo put you togedda from afar. Get OGs, Bible Studies, TA classes, ministries fo serve, plenny kiawe fires stay making nice kine smoke. Just need moa of you! All to often, we try fo burn brightly by ourselves and go through life's battles on our own. That was never God's plan. But he no goin force you fo come togedda fo burn bright with others. You gotta be willing to do so.

OG Discussion Q: Can you relate to this illustration? If so, explain.

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I didn't grow up in a Christian family, no church background, so there were a lot of gaps in my understanding of Jesus and the ways of Jesus. I didn't realize it at that time, but I was in such a great smoker pit with others. I surrounded myself with many believers, all different kinds, different maturity levels, and I was the small kine kiawe branch. Look now, what I get fo do with others.

Always surround yourselves with others who can pour themselves into you and others you can pour yourselves into as well. Why? You'll get filled, and the best way to fill yourselves up is to wring yourselves out. That's the best way to be prepared for the battles that come our way.

Another thing about coming together as Christians, is jalike the kiawe that burns too hot at times, yeah very hot! And plenny sparks fly. It's inevitable, when you draw close to others, like the kiawe, we'll eventually rub each other the wrong way and sparks will fly. Most times unintentionally, or because of our SAPpy ways. No one is perfect in their character, so we'll rub each other the wrong way. And sometimes those who we get close to, burn us! Have you ever been burned from someone who was suppose to be your spiritual friend? Those burns hurt the most.

But never mistake that the real enemy is not that person. Remember PMike sharing, beware of friendly fire. The real enemy is Satan who wants to convince you that the battle is against your brother or sister.

Proverbs 27:17 says, *"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."*

Smart guys tell um lidis: *"Fo make sharp someting iron, Need iron. Fo make sharp one fren. Need anodda fren."*

And wen you commit yourselves to sharpen one another, jalike iron make sharp iron, going get wat? Sparks goin fly.

When is the last time you had a friend call you just to ask how you were doing? When is the last time you called a friend and asked her if she needed to talk? Encouragement and moral support from a friend are sometimes the missing ingredients in fighting the battle against Satan. Being accountable to one another can provide those missing ingredients.

If you are not hanging out with others cuz you have been burned in the past, I urge you still, yes it's inevitable we'll clash, sparks will fly, but we'll grow stronger and brighter together and for Jesus. And the world we'll be drawn to that warmth and light that comes out of our love for one another.

Our pastoral team has been together for years. Almost 20 years. Don't you think we've gotten into our share of clashes! All of us are passionate in our own ways! Just because I'm

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Japanese, no mean, I'm passive! I was the one in everyone's face plenny times. I'm so glad God and my teammates didn't give up on me. I'm a better man today! Cuz, I've been sharpened by them. Better pastor, husband and father cuz of my fellow pastors, and those in my various OGs.

I wanna urge you if you have surrounded yourselves with others and are burning brightly because of that continue to do so. If you are not, let me help you get connected so that you can burn brightly with Jesus and others in those battles we face. Trust me, or I should say, trust God, and allow the holy spirit, Da Good an Spesho Spirit to help you take the next steps in Fighting as One. And when you do so, you watch and you'll see that you'll face your battles with victory for you and the world to see that WE ARE ONE! Dass it!

OG Discussion Q: What next step is God prompting you to take to fight with others?