Contender – Convenience or Contender #1

Can we celebrate Jehovah Jireh! The God who sees and the God who provides.

As it is Legacy Sunday, we get to celebrate Jehovah Jireh.

This year, 2025, is the year we Engage with God and Engage our Faith. We are going after the detached, the drifted, and those who Don't Know!

I want to focus on the word Engage for this series of Contender. We will examine biblical accounts of how things were not just given to people, but they had to Contend for them or Contend for the Faith to fight for what they believed God was calling them to.

The Contender Series is about “Fighting For Your Faith.”

To get this result “He cannot be just a Sunday morning Jesus.”

Engagement generally implies involvement, participation, or commitment. Engage comes from the French word "to pledge" or to make a deep, long-lasting, if not lifetime commitment to someone or to a cause.

When a butterfly breaks out of its cocoon, a contending process occurs. Scientific facts show that without contending, the buffer fly will die because it is the contending process that strengthens its wings, enabling it to survive.

When any animal is born from a shell, whether it is an alligator or a chicken, it is the hatching or contending process of breaking free from the shell that enables it to live outside the shell.

When a seed is planted, it has to contend with the soil and push through to grow. The astonishing part of the growth of any seed is that before it grows up to break through the soil, it grows down and roots itself in the very substance that it will contend with to break through and reach daylight.

Christianity has never been about our convenience but our contending.

One of the most common verses of scripture is quoted at weddings, graduations, and baby dedications, and is often found hanging on walls in our homes: Jeremiah 29:11.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare[ and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

The struggle is that we think God is developing the plan. God has a plan; He is developing individuals to fit His plan.

This is the part of the process when God develops ***you***, not just the plan!

Plans are worthless until a capable person crafted to carry them out. Crafting or forging comes through contending.

God desires contenders to expand His kingdom, but Contenders must go through the process of contending.

Jeremiah 12:5 "If you have raced with men on foot, and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses?

Genesis 32:22-30 **22**The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23**He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. **24**And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25**When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.**26**Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” **27**And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” **28**Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” **29**Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. **30**So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

Genesis 32:24 “And Jacob was left alone.”

Perhaps God is separating you to sanctify you, enabling you to walk in His favor.

Sanctify simply means set apart for his service.

We pray for God’s perfect will, but what if the first step is separating you from imperfect influences?

Genesis 32:24 “And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.”

When you can Wrestle or Contend with God, you'll win every fight with the world.

I am a loving father to my kids, and some of the greatest joys I have are when I get to contend with my kids.

When they were kids, we would wrestle, much to their mother's dismay. Today, we contend in everything from Soccer, CrossFit, and Card Games, and we still wrestle today.

I don't contend because I want to beat them, but because I want to make them better.

God wants you to keep coming back for more.

I purposely hang out with people who are smarter than I am. If I can't explain the vision to a Godly person more intelligent than me, who loves me, without getting my feelings hurt, then I can't win the battle against people who don't like me.

Genesis 32:26 “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

When you cannot be shaken by God, you will not be shaken by the world.

Romans 5:3-5 “**3**Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4**and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5**and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

I will not be shaken!

I love sitting down with people who think differently from me.

If I am shaken by Godly people who love me, just because they think differently than I do, then ungodly people who don’t like me will crush me.

Genesis 32:28 "Then he said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven (wrestled or contended) with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

"When you can 'contend' with God, you can 'contend' with the attacks of the world."

"Israel" means - contend, have power, compete with, persist, exert oneself, persevere.

When you can spar with the God of the universe and prevail, He knows you are qualified for the task at hand.

I purposely sit down with people and ask them to take the opposing side.

If I cannot contend with a believer who loves me, then I will be defeated by a world that hates me.

Hebrews 10:34-36 **35**Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ***36For you have need of endurance,*** so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

This is your moment. Will you get alone with God?