



February 26, 2017

The Fighter

READ: Exodus 20:3 (Common English Bible)

"You must have no other gods before me."

MEDITATE:

Country artist, Keith Urban, recently spoke about the lyrics of his song, *The Fighter*. As one of the three writers who collaborated in the writing of the single, and performed by Keith Urban and Carrie Underwood, he said that it's a song about helping to heal and protect someone you love. Presumably, the emotional pitch of the song is driven by his love for Nicole Kidman, his wife, who was previously married and had to push through a broken relationship within the scrutiny of the public. "I know he hurt you. Made you scared of love, too scared to love." Arguably, the highest expression of love for another is the intense resolve to protect them from hurt, and to advance their healing from previous brokenness. Once hurt, healing is a process that takes time, "And it's gonna take just a little time."

Placed at the top of God's Ten Commandments is this one: "You must have no other gods before me." Read through the lens of human understanding, through the sinful and fallen nature of the human heart, this commandment seems to emerge from a rather large and fragile ego. What is important is that a man or woman, who indeed may be driven by self-importance, did not give it. God gave the commandment. And God is not driven by infantile impulses that haunt and distort the human heart. The God that emerges in the pages of scripture has one longing, one intense desire – to love and protect us from hurt and brokenness. God has a deep knowledge of all other gods that may attract us and seduce our allegiance. That knowledge has shown, with certainty, that each one will promise much and deliver little. Every other god that calls to us will fail us and put us through pain. Keith Urban's words could be God's, "Let me be the one to heal all the pain that he put you through."

That great teacher of the faith, Martin Luther, once declared that whatever the heart clings to and relies upon, that is properly your God.¹ Unfortunately, men and women have the fatal faculty for falling in love with the wrong god, for falling in love with gods that are untrustworthy with our devotion. Initial pleasures may be received and enjoyed but eventually the relationship always ends the same: we fall, we cry and are scared. Keith Urban affirms to his love in the song, *The Fighter*, that in those times, "When they're tryna get to you baby, I'll be the fighter." The scriptures promise no less from our God who never ceases the pursuit of our hearts.

Often our soul is on its knees. Broken and afraid, we desperately want to believe that there is some love that is higher than all other loves, a love that will hold us and will never let go. "I wanna believe that you got me baby," cries the one who has been hurt in this song. "I swear I do from now until the next life," promises Urban. The imagery of resurrection and eternal life is caught here in the lyrics. Jesus of Nazareth has the power to capture our wounded hearts, and our entire trust, and be the God who has us, "until the next life." We claim this love when we finally let go of all other gods and their empty promises.

APPLY:

1. How has this scripture or meditation spoken to you?

2. What insight can you apply to your life this week?

3. What one specific act do you intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or prayer to pray?

PRAY:

O God, it is easy to recite these teachings, but more difficult to live by them. Remind me that my life belongs to you. Amen.

ⁱ Henry Sloane Coffin, "The First Commandment," *The Ten Commandments* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc; 1929) 15.