

# When Can We Retire?

by K.P. Yohannan

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*We must continue to fight for a lost world, relying on God's strength and guidance, because the battle is the Lord's and so is the victory.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 13:1, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 13:7

**Topics:** "Perseverance in Faith", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

K.P. Yohannan addresses the question of retirement in the Christian life, emphasizing that while society encourages planning for a time of ease, believers cannot afford to retire from spiritual battles against the devil. He highlights the importance of continuing to fight for others, drawing inspiration from Brother Thomas, a dedicated missionary who exemplified faithfulness despite immense challenges. Yohannan reminds us that even in our weakness or old age, there remains much work to be done for God's kingdom, as seen in the example of Joshua. The message encourages believers to persist in their mission, trusting that the Lord fights on their behalf. Ultimately, the call is to remain engaged in the battle for the lost until the very end.

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## Transcript

When can we retire? This is a very real question for us, because we are living in a society in which we have been taught to plan carefully toward a time in our lives when we will have less stress, less responsibility, less work and more time for ourselves. What about a retirement plan from fighting spiritual battles? I suppose by the time we've been a Christian for a few years, we've learned that we really can't afford to retire from fighting the devil without risking major shipwrecks in our lives.

Even though this discovery might be terribly bothersome, we know we have no other choice if we want to make it to the end victoriously. But there is one area in our Christian lives from which we can retire without obvious damage to our faith: the battle on behalf of others! It is definitely easier to retire than to keep fighting this battle. How much effort is enough, we wonder, as we give of our time, strength, money and intercession? The lost world is so vast that God cannot possibly mean that we take it all on our own shoulders for our entire life.

For a little while, perhaps, we might, but surely not until we die. That would mess up all our plans and dreams for an easier life. "Lord," we ask, "when can I shake off these burdens and finally live in peace? Don't you agree that I deserve to enjoy my salvation, my family and my church fellowship after all the work

I have done for Your kingdom?" In Hebrews 13:7, we are reminded to consider those who walked the path before us and to follow their faith and example. With this verse in mind, I want to share with you a little bit about Brother Thomas, one of the senior missionary leaders in India.

As a young man, Brother Thomas gave up everything to follow God's call to become a pioneer missionary in the state of Rajasthan, one of the most difficult areas for the Gospel in northern India. The tremendous suffering, persecution and hardship he and his wife and a few coworkers went through during the past 35 years are impossible to describe. Because of God's grace and Brother Thomas' faithfulness and leadership, today there is visible fruit of his ministry: 482 churches established, 75 mission schools, 14 orphanages, 11 Bible colleges, seven radio programs in three languages, one mission hospital, six clinics, and church-planting work in 20 leper colonies.

Add to this the thousands of lives, including mine, that have been greatly influenced by this man's vision for God's kingdom, his love for the lost and his example of faithfulness and endurance. Several years ago, I received a letter from Brother Thomas that I would like to share with you. My sincere prayer is that his words will encourage and challenge you, as they did me, to continue to fight the battle on behalf of a lost world. Here is an excerpt from his letter: I was reading the book of Joshua during my daily devotions when the Lord particularly brought chapter 13, verse 1 to my attention: "Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, 'Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.'

" Most of 1993 until now has been a time of continuous sickness in my life. It started with a cough and cold, until today even while I am writing this report, I am sick. I feel weak. When the Lord was speaking to Joshua after giving 31 kings and kingdoms into his hands, the Lord told him, "It is true that you are old and stricken in years, but there remaineth very much land to be possessed!" The Lord never gave Joshua any appreciation for acquiring these 31 kingdoms and destroying every individual in them, because it was not done by Joshua but by the Lord.

Even now, to go back and possess more land for the Lord has nothing to do with the age of Joshua. In the same way the Lord is able to give the land of India and its surrounding nations to us in spite of our sickness, weakness and age. I praise God for this promise He has given to us. Dear friend, if you ever feel the desire to retire from the battle on behalf of the lost world because you think you are too old, too tired or not useful anymore, let me encourage you to remember those who have gone before you.

Men like Moses, Joshua and the apostle Paul also encountered the limitations of their physical bodies and mental strength. Yet they stayed in the battle until the end of their lives. Why? They had discovered, like Brother Thomas, that the Lord Himself is doing the fighting. All He looks for is a willing vessel through whom to work. It doesn't matter how fragile that vessel might be, because the battle is the Lord's and so is the victory. Don't quit; stay in the battle.

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