



A Battle of

BY DALE SMITH

As the scriptures fell open and I read their words, I knew what I needed to do.

My decision to quit a good job as an engineer to start my own company selling computer test equipment had not come easily. Although I had some success designing and selling simple analyzers to friends in the data-storage industry, it was mostly a hobby providing some extra spending money.

It took more than a year of hard work and pinching pennies before the first product was done, but I finally had fulfilled my dream. The orders began to come in, and our company grew. We expanded with new products, hired more engineers, and moved to successively larger buildings at the end of each lease. The initial risk had turned into a great reward and an accomplishment I was proud of.

The Challenge

Then, unexpectedly, a delivery came that changed our lives. My family had just arrived in Alaska for a two-week

vacation when a competitor served us with a lawsuit for patent infringement. It demanded that we immediately remove a significant feature from our primary product line or risk paying a fine on every unit shipped. I hopped on an early flight home and began working with attorneys in order to prove that the patent claims were too broad and shouldn't be interpreted to cover our product line.

Negotiations with the competitor were frustrating and time-consuming. Our legal expenses were rising, employee morale was sinking, and every attempt to reach a fair settlement had failed. As the timeline for going to court kept extending, it became apparent that we couldn't afford to see the lawsuit to completion before going bankrupt.

I knew I needed inspiration. My own efforts had failed, so I decided to take a day off work and go to the temple in fasting. I felt calm as I sat in the temple's chapel and silently offered a prayer and meditated. I noticed a Book of Mormon in the pew in front of me, and though I knew it contained little in the way of advice on legal or technical problems, I decided to open it and see if there might be a message I could apply to my situation.



Pride

Surrendering My Will

The book fell open to Ether 15. As I began reading of the battle between Coriantumr and Shiz, I was overcome by the Spirit, recognizing that the story was about proud men sacrificing everything in a battle of cunning and power. I read how millions had been slain in the battle and how Coriantumr, in remorse, sent an epistle to Shiz offering to give him the kingdom so that his people might be spared. But Shiz, in his pride, refused the offer unless Coriantumr would allow himself to be slain. I recognized the similar impact of pride and emotion in my own conflict as I read how the people of Coriantumr were angered by the counter-offer and how the battle continued. After more battles, Coriantumr again tried to surrender the kingdom in exchange for the lives of the people, but the fighting continued until both armies were dead. Coriantumr finally beheaded Shiz and almost died himself.

Years before, I had wondered why the gruesome battles between Coriantumr and Shiz were included in the

RIGHTEOUS MOTIVES



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“Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did ‘always those things’ that pleased God. (John 8:29.) Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 5.

costs of fighting this legal battle. I learned that sometimes settling a conflict can be more important than winning it.

Through the influence of the Holy Spirit and my experience with the scriptures that day, I was able to learn the principles of conflict resolution that applied to my specific problem. The settlement was expensive and required us to work around our competitor’s broad claims; however, by putting it behind us, we were able to get back to business, and the company once again entered a period of profit and growth. My biggest regret was that I had not been ready to receive this answer sooner. ■

scriptures. Now I understood that, among other things, this story could teach me important lessons about conflict and priorities. Through them, I realized that my own pride was clouding my ability to weigh the