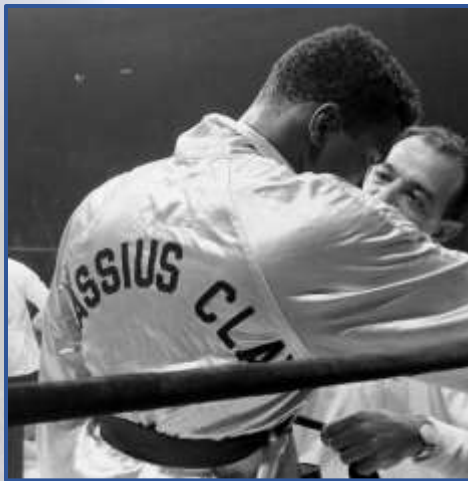


Ali's Greatest Lesson

Muhammad Ali (1942 – 2016), American professional boxer, activist and philanthropist, is widely regarded as one of the most significant and celebrated sports figures of all time. Ali was one of the leading heavyweight boxers of 20th century, and he remains the only three-time lineal heavyweight champion.

His records of beating 21 boxers for the world heavyweight title (shared with Joe Louis), as well as winning 14 unified title bouts (shared with former welterweight champion Jose Napoles), were unbeaten for 35 years.

The editors of *Homiletics Online* recounted Ali's answer to the question of the greatest lesson he'd ever learned. Ali told the story of a heavyweight title bout against Sonny Liston in 1964 in Miami Beach, Florida. Ali said:



"Liston was the strongest man I'd ever fought. Every time I hit him, it hurt me worse than it did him. I gave him everything I had. When the sixth round ended, I was completely spent. I couldn't even raise my arms. I couldn't even stand up to go back onto the ring. 'I'm goin' home!' I told trainer Angelo Dundee. 'I'm not going back in there!'"

Hearing this, Dundee demanded that Ali get ready to go in. Ali refused. The bell rang, and still Ali didn't leave his seat. Dundee pushed him and shouted, "Get in there and don't come out until you're the heavyweight champion of the world."

Ali struggled to his feet. Liston didn't. Liston gave up at the opening of the seventh round, after being clearly dominated in the sixth. Ali (then Cassius Clay) was the new heavyweight champion of the world.

"The greatest lesson I've learned," Ali said, "is to have someone pushin' you and makin' you do things you don't think you can do."

What can we gain from this story?

When you've given life everything you've got and it's not enough, that's when you need someone in your corner, someone to cheer you on. You need someone reminding you that God wouldn't ask you to do anything that you can't finish. You need someone to push you back into the ring until you have become the champion God intends for you to be.

(more)

You were never intended to fulfill your calling on your own. Is there an Angelo Dundee in your life? And have you been the voice of courage for someone else?

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter

