

Subject: Requirements of a Christian Soldier

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1-4

The New Testament describes the Christian life as a battle and the Christian as a soldier.

1 Timothy 1:18 ...war a good warfare

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Some of our hymns remind us of that we are soldiers: *Onward Christian Soldiers; Stand up, Stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross.*” The life of a Christian soldier is a high calling and it’s not for the weak or the half-hearted.

1. Be strong in grace (vs. 1)

- Saving grace

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- Serving grace

1 Corinthians 15:10 By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

- Sustaining grace

2 Corinthians 12:9 My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

2. Be careful with truth (vs. 2)

We learn and believe the truth. We commit the truth to others – The word “commit” means to deposit something valuable (same word found in 1:12, 14). We must guard the deposit. Truth must be handed down and handled carefully. Biblical truth is hand-me-down truth.

In this process we are called to be faithful – A soldier is a steward. *1 Corinthians 4:2 It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful.*

Paul refers to a series of four generations of believers passing on the truth to one another. First, Paul had the truth. Then he taught Timothy. Next, Timothy was to teach other faithful

men. Then those faithful men would teach others. There is no place for innovation or altering the truth. Truth came from Christ and He taught the apostles including Paul, then it passed down to Timothy and others and now it is our turn. Passing on the Christian faith is like a relay race. One runner carries the baton and then hands it off to another runner, and on it goes until the last runner crosses the finish line. Every believer is involved in this great relay race. We run the race, carry the baton, and pass on the truth to somebody else who will do the same. One commentator told of his personal experience running track in college. He was part of a fine relay team and during an important track meet, one of the best runners on the team stopped running, walked onto the infield, and sat down. The first thought was that he pulled a hamstring or twisted his ankle. The team ran to check on him and when they asked what happened, he said: "I don't know. I just didn't feel like running any more." As you can imagine all his teammates were disgusted and they said, "Don't you know you're not just running for yourself, but you represent the team and the whole school?"

3. Be steadfast in trials (vs. 3)

We must endure hardness (compound word that means "suffer hardship with someone else"). A good soldier does what he is supposed to do...even when it means sacrifice and suffering. He must have endurance and courage. The soldier's life can be demanding and difficult. Christ said to count the cost. There's no fine print in the contract. He said, "Take up your cross and follow me." It's not easy to live for Christ and serve Christ.

4. Be free from distractions (vs. 4a)

A Christian soldier lives in the real world, but he must separate himself from the things of this world. He doesn't live like a civilian. Being a Christian soldier is not a 9 to 5 job. It is a 24 hour a day, seven day a week job.

5. Be devoted to Christ (vs. 4b)

Every soldier of the Lord has one goal: to please his commander. Subjects of a king usually say, "If it please the king" (found many times in the Book of Esther). The same kind of words are spoken to the judge in a courtroom, "If it please the court." We ought to say, "If it please the Lord." About five years ago our family visited the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, VA, near Washington, D.C. The Lord allowed us to be there when they were having a retirement ceremony for a decorated LtCol who served with distinction. He pleased his commanding officer and was honored for his service.

That should be our prayer every day, "Reporting for duty, Lord. I want to please you."