

Sprit Matters: Be All You Can Be in the Army of the Lord

written by: Joshua Nicholson

We are at war, my friends. As I write these words, warfare is taking place. I'm not talking about Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, or any other "stan". The battles of this war are not being fought carnally...but spiritually. And, ya know what? Every one of us is a soldier, a warrior in this campaign.

KJV 2 Timothy 2:3-4

3. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
4. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

The word "chosen" in verse 4 comes from the Greek word "stratologeō", which can also be interpreted to mean "enlist". There is another instance where Paul refers to his co-laborers, his brothers in Christ as fellow soldiers.

KJV Philemon 1:1-2

1. Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,
2. And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

You see, God has enlisted us to be in his great army, and just like in the American army, dodging the draft can have serious repercussions. Why would you want to, anyway? If you know you're on the winning side, why try to get out of it?

Just look at the story of Jonah. God enlisted him to go to Nineveh to preach repentance to those lost soul. Jonah thought to himself, "Whoa! Hold on there! Nineveh?! Man, that's one tough crowd! I could get seriously whooped if I go there! Ya know, I think I'll just run in the opposite direction."

So, he did. And...well, you know the story. He got on a boat...got in a big storm...got thrown off of the ship by the crew...got swallowed by a big fish...repented...the fish spit him out...and he ended up going to Nineveh, anyway!

You see, if you try to get out of the great things God has planned for you, things might turn a bit...shall we say...sour. Just listen to your commanding officer, and do something!

This brings me to my next point: Christianity is not a spectator sport. If you've got the fire of God in you and you know that you have a greater purpose, you can't just sit on the sidelines and expect for good things to happen. You've got to get out there and fulfill your duties! When you start following the orders of your leader, your commander in chief (God), then things will start moving for you.

When you see any type of war footage, in the heat of battle, you don't see the soldiers just sitting off to the sidelines, do you? Eating a sandwich...watching the bullets fly by...saying, "Wow! Did you see the lovely reds and oranges in that explosion?" Of course you don't! An army of those soldiers would be destroyed faster than you can say, "Yes, Drill Sergeant!"

You can't make bread without kneading some dough, and you can't fight any battles by watching from the sidelines in a comfy chair. The battle is raging on, and so should we!

"But, Joshua, I'm not sure of what my duties are."

Well, here are a few orders for you that come straight from the top:

1. Keep your spirit-man in top condition; I Corinthians 9:27
2. Keep away from lustful things; James 4:5-7; I Peter 2:11
3. Spread the gospel for the saving of souls like there's no tomorrow... literally; II Timothy 2:1-2

If you follow these orders, you'll do just fine! Once you start obeying the word of God and keep that direct connection with the Lord, you'll notice that you'll hear his orders more clearly. He'll help you to be all you can be in his army!

"That's great, Joshua! But, what can I use for protection when I'm out there?"

Well, that's easy! Just put on the full armor of God!

KJV Ephesians 6:13-18

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And, aside from all of these fine tools, you've got a nice bundle of other spiritual tools, but those are for another lesson.

"Groovy! Now I've got my orders and the tools to work with! But, where can I get the training to use all of this stuff?"

Well, that part is the hardest. This is where you must, as the apostle Paul put it in I Timothy 6:12, "fight the good fight of faith". You've got to fully rely on God, and he'll lead you through all of the bad times as well as the good ones. A tendency of man is to go to God for help only when there's a problem and to almost completely ignore Him when things are good. That makes you soft and causes you to be unprepared for the ensuing battle, and you never want to give the enemy the upper hand. Keep your spirit-man in top condition at all times; then, you'll have the upper hand on the enemy.

"Well, sometimes I get kind of busy..."

Is God ever too busy for you?

"Well...uh...no..."

Then you should never be too busy for God. Make time for God. When you've got few seconds of free time here, some free time there, just check in with God. You'll find that when you keep that constant connection, the connection will get stronger!

And, don't lose faith! Read in Numbers 14, where the Jews lost their faith. See what happened to them! I've said it before, and I'll say it again. When you're in God's army, you already know who's going to win. So, why worry? Don't always trust your mind. When God tells you to do something, then you assess the situation and find it a bit frightening, ignore your assessment. If God tells you to do something, it's because He knows that, with his help, you're able to handle it. He'll never give you more that you can handle (Matthew 11:28-30).

So, you've got your orders, you've got your tools, and you've got your motivation. Now, go be all you can be in the army of the Lord!

NEED PRAYER? Just email me at prayer@actortoactor.com. I'll be sure to add your situation to my prayer list. May God bless you and direct you along the path to victory!

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