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CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

"NO MAN THAT WARRETH ENTANGLETH HIMSELF IN THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO HATH CHOSEN HIM TO BE A SOLDIER."

II TIMOTHY 2:4

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ADVANCING UNDER FIRE (PART TWO)

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 "...BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS
HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS."**

In part one of this teaching series, we saw that if we're going to be of any use to God in this life concerning the Great Commission (see Mark 16:15-18), we must learn how to "press on", with resistance being applied against us. We continue to advance under fire, because that is what Jesus has ordered us to do. This is what Paul was talking about when

he told the Philippians to do the one thing that had three parts (see Philippians 3:12-16). First, we're to forget the things behind us. Second, we're to reach forward to the things ahead of us. Third, we're to press towards the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Doing this develops the kind of mature mentality God can use on the battlefields of earth, as we go into all

the world to attack in the Name of Jesus!

Our opening verse in part 2 of this study, taken from the "love chapter" of 1 Corinthians 13, shows us what we can be like when we adopt the kind of mature mentality Paul talks about. When we forget the past, reach forward to the future, and press towards the goal of Christ's upward call, we come to the place where

no matter what the devil throws against us, we can take his best punch and keep on moving forward! Notice what Paul says to the Corinthians. When God's agape love

dominates our lives, we can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. All things mean all things! No exceptions, therefore, no excuses for fail-

ing God through quitting, giving up and throwing in the towel, so-to-speak.

2 TIMOTHY 2:3-4 "YOU THEREFORE MUST ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."

JOSHUA 17:1 "THERE WAS ALSO A LOT FOR THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH, FOR HE WAS THE FIRSTBORN OF JOSEPH: NAMELY FOR MACHIR THE FIRSTBORN OF MANASSEH, THE FATHER OF GILEAD, BECAUSE HE WAS A MAN OF WAR; THEREFORE HE WAS GIVEN GILEAD AND BASHAN."

NOT ALL SOLDIERS ARE MEN OR WOMEN OF WAR

If you compare these two passages, you can see several things immediately. First of all, according to 2 Timothy 2:3,4, understand that God calls us all soldiers in the army of the Lord. When you got saved, you got drafted! You may or may not be a member of the US Armed Forces, but you definitely are a member of God's Armed Forces! Whether you see yourself that way or not, that's who you are in Christ – a soldier! Therefore, you must develop and protect what I call the "military mentality". Since you're a soldier in an army that's been commanded to attack the world and assault the kingdom of darkness, you must think and act like a soldier to thrive as well as survive in these perilous times in which we live.

Secondly, we see that from Joshua 17:1, God rewards those who become men or women "of war". This man Machir received two prime pieces of property for no other reason – other than the fact he's described as a man of war.

My point in comparing these two verses is this: not every Christian soldier is a Christian man or woman of war. Some are, most are not! Its like putting two soldiers side by side for comparison's sake, the one a brand new soldier and the other a career military man. The first soldier is a new recruit – just drafted and not even out of boot camp yet. The second soldier is a seasoned, battle-tested veteran of many military confrontations in many places of the world. The new recruit has that single

stripe on his uniform, while the battle-tested vet has rows of citations, medals, awards and merits pinned to his chest. Both are soldiers. Both are in the military. Both wear the uniform. But – they are not the same! One knows nothing about combat because he's never seen any. The other is a veteran of many battles, who has faced the enemy time and again on the battlefield. For one, armed and deadly confrontation is only theory. For the other, its something that has been experienced countless times.

So, if you want advice about how to survive and thrive on the field of spiritual conflict, which of these two soldiers would you want giving you advice? Which soldier would you want by your side – when



you're under fire from the enemy? The answer is obvious, isn't it? And this is what the world is crying out for – men and women of war – Christians who are not afraid of the enemy, but who attack and

counter-attack time and again because we've been ordered to do so by Jesus, our Commander-in-Chief. The world needs the kind of Christian soldier who isn't just a soldier, but a man or woman of

war! Someone who continues to advance under fire, with bullets whizzing by, bombs exploding overhead, and shrapnel flying through the air.

CHRISTIANS NEED TO QUIT FEELING SORRY FOR THEMSELVES

The world needs the kind of believer who will bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. Not most things, but all things! No matter what the devil throws against you, you keep moving forward – especially if you've been wounded! Even if you're bleeding, keep advancing under fire! So what if people offend you, hurt you, take advantage of you, lie about you, steal from you and say or do ten thousand other things that tempt you to quit the game and fall away from Jesus. People like to think that whatever they're going through is something nobody else has ever faced, so everybody else needs to stop their own lives just so they can sit and cry with them for 10 years! The truth is: there is nothing new under the sun (see Ecclesiastes 1:9). Whatever you or anyone else faces as a soldier in the army of the Lord, is what countless others have

faced and fought against from the times of Adam and Eve. What we need today are people who don't wilt under pressure from the devil's attack, but instead, get up off the canvass, dust themselves off, pick up their weapons, put their helmet back on, suck it up, take a deep breath, and get back in the fight, re-engaging the enemy with more grit and determination to succeed than ever before!

What we don't need today are a bunch of cry-baby soldiers, spiritual wimps who whine and complain about every little difficulty or hardship that comes their way. Remember what 2 Timothy 2:3 says. We must endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Hardship! Now there's a word that most Christians want nothing to do with! But if you're going to be one of the few who actually make a difference for Jesus in their lifetime, you're going to need

to know how to not just face, but endure, all kinds of hardship.

I was just in a service recently where I shared along these lines, and someone in the audience emailed me a day later to thank me for helping to remind them of these things. This was a Christian couple who had adopted three children when they were infants – and each child turned out to be autistic – each one of them! The odds of that happening with just one adopted child is remote, but all three of their adopted children, who were not related to each other, is so off-the-charts remote it boggles the mind. And you and I think we've got challenges???. What an honor and privilege to inspire such soldiers! When you hear about situations like that, it really makes you stop all of the complaining about how "tough" we have it in this life.

PROVERBS 24:10 "IF YOU FAINT IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY, YOUR STRENGTH IS SMALL."

Most of us aren't nearly as strong as we think we are. Our strength isn't proven when everything is going the way we want in life. Our strength is proven when things are not going the way we want, and we hang in there anyway! People who quit under fire, who desert God and their fellow soldiers on the battlefield, are basically useless to God, and to the rest of us. We're commanded to attack, and we must attack, attack, attack! We're not called to

live a passive, defensive life on earth for Christ Jesus. We're ordered to attack, and to advance against the enemy, anywhere we're sent in the name of Jesus. When we do, expect demonic resistance to try and stop you (see 1 Peter 4:12). Expect it, and gear up for it. Don't be surprised when it comes, because it surely will.

And whether the enemy's attacks are major or minor, know this. The devil will do whatever he can to defeat, discourage,

depress, disillusion, deter and deceive you, and not necessarily in that order! And the more you want to do for God in this life, the bigger a target you're going to become when it comes to spiritual conflict. That's not something to fear, but just something to know and to prepare for! Greater is He in us than the devil in the world (1 John 4:4).

I was talking to a good pastor friend of mine along these lines recently. He pastors



a 10,000 member church, who continued to regularly preach and minister while he himself is going through a very painful 16 month fight of faith against a form of terminal cancer that when discovered, was so far gone the doctors didn't give this man even one year to live. As of this writing, he's four months past his one year "death sentence" from the medical community, and the "terminal" cancer is now officially in remission. In fact, when his doctor gave him the wonderful news concerning remission, he told my friend that his healing was the equivalent to someone winning the million-dollar lottery! Thank God we both know better! That good report has got nothing to do with luck, but everything to do with the choices we make to advance under fire in this life for Jesus.

I know my friend is not just a soldier, but a man of war! He is a faith man who knows how to believe God. He has stood for 16 months. And will continue to fight

and stand for as long as it takes until he's completely pain free and 100% back to normal. And as we were talking, rejoicing and praising God together over his triumph in faith, I heard myself say this: The fights of faith ahead of us will be much more severe than the fights of faith behind us. He agreed with me, and you better agree with me too, because that's what up ahead for all of us in these last days.

These are not the days for the faint of heart, or the weak in faith. You better know who you are in Christ, and know how to use the weapons God has given you as a soldier in His army. You better understand that whatever you've faced and fought your way through in the past will pale in comparison to what's ahead should Jesus tarry. The devil is going to do all he can to stop us, to apply resistance as we continue moving forward, but praise God, that doesn't have to stop us, or even intimidate us! No!

We're not hunkering down in our foxholes, crying and feeling sorry for ourselves! We're not ruled by fear of the future, but by faith in God. We're part of God's end-time army; ready, willing and able to charge the enemy across whatever battlefield lies before us. We're going to attack, and keep on attacking. We're going to advance under fire, and we need you by our side as we charge the enemy! The choice is yours to make. You were made a soldier by choice, and you can become a man or woman of war by choice as well. When you decided to accept Jesus as Lord, the devil could do nothing to stop you. And now, raise the bar and become not just a soldier, but a man or woman of war! There's a place just your size on the front lines as we prepare our next assault against sin in this world. Jesus has commanded us to charge – so its time to charge with us!

ADVANCING UNDER FIRE (PART TWO)

