

How To Identify A Christian

Part 7

A Soldier in God's Army

We have to admit there is definitely a military side to what the Christian Bible teaches about God and the Christian life.

Psalms 24:8 [NIV] *“Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.”*

A king who leads an army into battle.

Psalms 45:3-6 [NIV] *“Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendour and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom.”*

A conquering king.

Revelations 19:11-21 [NIV] *“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no-one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron sceptre.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.” Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.”*

Christ the all-powerful conquering king of kings.

Of course we must remember that the Christians’ warfare is in the realm of the spiritual.

Ephesians 6:10-18 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

We should only use spiritual weapons and spiritual armour.

John 18:10-11 [NIV] *“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”*

Peter tried to use a sword to defend his Lord, and Jesus severely rebuked him.

Peter learnt from this experience and at Pentecost he used the “*sword of the spirit which is the Word of God*”, and turned 3,000 enemies into brothers in Christ.

Whether we like it or not, when we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour and are born again into the family of God, we are “*drafted*” into God’s army.

Every child of God is a soldier in God’s army, either a good one or a bad one.

The first mention of the New Testament church includes the military image of conflict.

Matthew 16:18 [NIV] *“And I tell you you are Peter [Greek “pētrōs” – a small piece of rock] and on this rock [Greek “pētra” – a massive foundational rock, Jesus was referring to Himself who Peter had just acknowledged] will I build my church, and the gates of Hades [the grave symbolic of death] will not overcome it.”*

Matthew 28:18 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

We follow a commander who has “*all authority*”.

As Christian soldiers, we are following a commander who has been rejected.

As far as the yet unsaved world is concerned, Jesus Christ is a loser and not worth following.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 [NIV] *“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him.”*

Most of those whom God is enlisting at this time are **not** the great in this world.

1 Samuel 22:1-2 [NIV] *“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered round him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.”*

The army that followed King David were similar to Jesus Christ’s present army.

Jesus offers us:-

Joy to replace our distress.

Forgiveness to replace our indebtedness.

Deep satisfaction to replace our discontent.

To become part of Jesus Christ’s army is an exciting and enriching experience.

Matthew 12:30 [NIV] *“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”*

When it comes to following Jesus our all powerful commander it is impossible to be neutral.

John 15:5 [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

As a soldier of Jesus Christ we have **no** strength of our own.

2 Timothy 2:1 [NIV] *“You then, my son, **be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**”*

Our strength comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that can be ours if we accept the grace God offers us in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 4:7 [NIV] *“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, **train yourself to be godly.**”*

As soldiers of Jesus Christ we are in a training situation.

Our total dependency on Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit explains why we are put through difficult *“manoeuvres”*, to discover just how weak we are and dependent on a strength that comes from outside of ourselves.

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As soldiers of Jesus Christ we need all the defensive spiritual armour including the sword of the spirit, the word of God, with which we defend ourselves but also take the offensive battle to the enemy, Satan and his army.

2 Timothy 2:3 [NIV] *“**Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.**”*

Being part of Jesus Christ’s army will include suffering and discomfort.

2 Timothy 1:8 [NIV] *“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But **join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,**”*

Proclaiming the gospel message will often bring shame and suffering.

Our training manual is the Christian Bible.

2 Timothy 2:2 [NIV] *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also **be qualified to teach others.**”*

We need to know our training manual so well that we can teach others as they are enlisted.

The better we know our training manual, the more we will understand the strategy of our enemy, Satan, as his subtle devices and character are clearly explained.

2 Timothy 2:4 [NIV] *“No-one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer.”*

We cannot be part of this world and a soldier of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 6:24 [NIV] *“No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

No divided loyalty.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 [NIV] *“On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.”*

Our whole aim must be to please our commander.

How do we keep from getting entangled in the world’s way of living?

Five times in the first letter from Paul to Timothy the Greek word used is “*angellos*” which means “*to hand down a military order which must be obeyed.*”

Christians must receive God’s orders from His Word [Jesus Christ] in the same way a soldier receives orders from his commander.

Have respect for these orders, be alert to hear them and have the intention to obey them.

The way the average Christian treats God’s Word deserves their being court-martialled. Remember that the penalty for disobedience when under fire is death!

Every soldier needs constant encouragement from his commander.

2 Corinthians 2:14 [NIV] *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in **triumphal procession in Christ ...**”*

The picture here is that of a “*Roman triumph parade*”.

That took place when a victorious commander returned home from a complete victory over the enemy.

The greatest encouragement we have as a soldier of Jesus Christ is that He has already won the fight we only need to follow Him in faith of this victory.

We are not fighting for victory but from victory.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 [NIV] *“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”*

There is **no** reason for us to feel or act defeated.

Colossians 2:15 [NIV] *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them by the cross.**”*

Through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead Jesus won a total victory over Satan our enemy.

Being a soldier of Jesus Christ is a serious thing, for we are involved in fighting the battles of God against all evil.

It is also an exciting thing for we never know what battle we will be involved in next.

One thing is sure, as long as we obey the orders of our commander, Jesus Christ, victory is certain.