

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.! No man that wore and tangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who have chosen him to be a soldier.

Commitment. When you become a soldier in the army of the nation, you enlist, you sign on, you make a commitment. You make a commitment that no matter what, you're going to continue through with that commitment to serve your country, to serve your queen, your king, your nation, through whatever it takes to whatever comes your way in the service of your nation.

We enlist too as a Christian. We enlist in the army of the Lord. We sign on. We make a commitment. A life long, an eternity long commitment that we're going to belong to Christ and in his army, in his service, no matter what.

It's a full time enlistment too. This is not a part time commitment. This is not just some time bound commitment. This is a full time, full on, a lifetime commitment. We pledge allegiance to our sovereign, to our saviour, to our king, to the king of kings and the lord of lords, the lord of hosts. And hosts means armies. He's the lord of armies.

He's the great commander in chief, our lord and saviour. And we give him our allegiance. And really that's just the beginning. That commitment that we make as a Christian soldier is just the beginning.

[1 : 28] It's just the start. And when you go through the boot camp, the training, the recruit camp of being a soldier in the regular Aussie army, Aussie army, likewise too, as a Christian, you've got to go through the assault course, the obstacle course of life.

Obstacles are going to face us. Hardness is going to face us. We've got to toughen up. It calls for endurance. Paul tells Timothy, endure hardness. There's trials and testings, things that we've learned and grown through in life.

And every measure of difficulty that we encounter is going to seem as nothing in glory. All the trials, the troubles, the light affliction, as Paul calls it, is really just going to be nothing compared to the glory that's going to be revealed as we enter heaven's glory.

And so discomfort battled through it, the Christian life can mean hardship and suffering and sacrifice. Every measure of difficulty that you encounter is going to make you ever stronger.

And really, as a Christian, you can see beyond trouble and test to the ultimate goal of the glory that awaits us. And we can press on. Paul tells us to fight the good fight of the faith. To fight.

[2 : 42] The fight will be hard, but we're assured of victory. As it tells us in the Word of God that the battle is the Lord's. And he has won the victory for us. It's like one preacher put it, if you read it in the back of the book, it tells you who wins.

As a saved person tonight, you're assured of his victory in Christ. And so your commitment, it's a part of being part of the army. And you're not a stand-alone soldier too.

You're a part of a fighting unit. You could think, as we picture here, a soldier going through an obstacle course. They put the soldiers through that training of going through the hardness.

You know, as a soldier, we're part of an army of God. We're not a stand-alone soldier. We're part of a fighting unit, the army of God. And that's how we get our strength as we join together as God's people.

You know, it's been said of the Roman soldiers as they used their shields when they were attacked. They used to put their shields together, interlock their shields as a kind of armour that went over the top of them as they went forward as an advancing unit.

[3 : 45] And likewise too, you belong together. Friends, it calls for commitment. Our Saviour wants us to enter into that battlefield, into the battlefront.

It talks about an active duty. No man that wareth. It's talking about active duty, active service in the war. We are at war today. We are at war. We're truly at war today.

And it's time to take up arms, to enter into the frame. And we don't want to get entangled in things that are going to divert our energies from what matters.

Here's a picture of entanglement. You know, you see this goalie's got caught up in the soccer net. And it's a picture of someone getting tangled up. Tangled up. We want to be like that soldier there that's pictured there.

Avoiding entanglement. Paul tells Timothy, We don't want to get entangled in things that are going to divert us from energy from what matters.

[4 : 43] And war means that we have an enemy. You have an enemy who is hell bent on taking you down. He's got his target sight aimed at you all the time.

He's trying to track you down and tear you down. But thankfully, the Word of God tells you that you've got the shield of faith. And it's going to hold back. It's going to...

All the fiery darts of the wicked are going to bounce off that shield of faith as you hold it up. And this hostile enemy, he's determined. He's on the attack. He's on the war path.

Campaigning against us. Every step of the way, determined to dog our steps and harass us. And war means that we have to contend with him. To be ready for conflict.

To be ready for fight. Are we prepared for the battle? That's the question for every Christian here today. Are we prepared for the battle? Get into that training. Enjoy that hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

[5 : 42] Be willing to go through and press on and press through whatever life throws you away. Friends, have you got that combat readiness that's called for today? I urge you to take it seriously.

We're going to want to please our Saviour. We're going to want to please our Commander-in-Chief. Our commanding officer who's watching over us. There's going to be wonderful recognition for those works of love to Christ that you've done.

The works of witness. The works of testimony. The works of living a godly life. God's going to recognize those things. And it's going to be a wonderful commendation as he welcomes you there. There's going to be some recognition. There's going to be rewards. If you like medals, so to speak, that the commanding officer will acknowledge that which you have done as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

It's going to be a wonderful well done, a commendation. He's going to commend you. And our last mission really is to bring him honour and glory. Our last mission is to please him.

[6 : 43] That's our goal. I am a soldier in the army of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct.

Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare. I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this army.

But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out. I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there.

If he needs me in Sunday school to teach children, work with the youth, help adults or just sit and learn, he can use me because I am there. I am a soldier.

[7 : 42] I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up. I am a soldier. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me.

I am a soldier. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my king, obeying his orders, praising his name and building his kingdom. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, cards, food, candy or give me handouts.

I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to. I am committed. I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around.

I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit. When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing.

If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even. I will win. My God will supply all my needs. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph.

[8 : 47] I can do all things through Christ. Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me.

Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me. And hell cannot handle me. I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, he will promote me to a captain.

And then bring me back to rule this world with him. I am a soldier in the army. And I am marching, claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around.

I am a soldier. Marching, heaven bound. Here I stand. Will you stand with me? And so victory is assured. The question is, will you join the battle? Will you sign up?

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