

## Christian Soldiers

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2 Timothy 2:3-4

Tomorrow we observe Veterans' Day. It wasn't always called "Veterans' Day." On May 13, 1938, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November was dedicated as "Armistice Day" — Armistice means a truce to stop fighting. It was a day set aside to honor the veterans of WWI. President Woodrow Wilson stated that WW1 would be "the war to end all wars." Sadly, a few years later WW2 became the greatest mobilization of military personnel in America's history. The word "Armistice" was removed and replaced with the word "Veterans." It became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Today we are proud to honor all our military veterans. They deserve recognition and honor as the Bible says, "*Give honor to whom honor is due*" (Rom. 13:7). May the Lord bless our veterans.

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Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in their eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg—or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking. **(Have vets to stand)**

### ➡What is a Vet...?

- He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.
- She (or he) is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.
- He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL.
- He is the one who sometimes tells his wife that he just can't sleep, when really, he is afraid to return to last night's nightmare.
- He is the Parris Island drill instructor who has never seen combat — but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-accounts, and

gang members into strong Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

- He is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.
- He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.
- He is the three anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless grave.
- He is the old guy greeting customers at a WalMart—who helped liberate a Vietcong death camp.
- He is an ordinary, and yet an extraordinary human being — a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.
- He is a soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation on earth.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say “Thank You.” That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could wear.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU."

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In this message I want to consider another kind of veteran. A veteran of a warfare every Christian is enlisted in as a soldier of Jesus Christ. The warfare I speak of is a spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. **READ TEXT** (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

## **I. The soldier's TASK.**

- A. FOLLOW their commander. Veterans learned to follow the orders of their leaders. The Christian follows the orders of the captain of their salvation—Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:10).

➡ **We seek His approval** (v. 4).

- B. FIGHT the enemy. Veterans fought to defend our country against enemies who would attack her. The Christian soldier fights against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

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KNOW YOUR ENEMY— In 2001, the *Seattle Times* reported about an eighteen-year-old who took a Seattle police car for a joyride. The theft was reported on law-enforcement broadcasts. A patrol officer in downtown Seattle spotted it and immediately gave chase but lost sight of the stolen vehicle after pausing to check for oncoming traffic at an intersection. It was then that a second police car pulled up and, thinking the stopped car was the stolen vehicle, rammed it from behind.

Two policemen in the car that had been hit thought they were under attack. So they pulled out their guns and started shooting. A police spokesperson said the officers involved, two in the rammed car and one in the other, exchanged more than twenty rounds before they discovered their mistake! THEY WERE SHOOTING AT ONE ANOTHER!<sup>1</sup>

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1. Soldiers fight to defend (Phil. 1:7, 17).
2. Soldiers fight to gain ground.
3. Soldiers fight to win.

## II. **The soldier's TRAINING** (2 Tim. 2:3).

- A. DISCIPLINE. Every soldier needs to learn discipline. He learns this by enduring hardness and to **be tough** in bootcamp.
1. You can tell most Christians today are too soft by walking into the average "Christian bookstore." It's a battlefield brother, not a recreation room (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).
    - Vance Havner said: "The church is not developing it's recruits into disciplined soldiers. We are fighting the greatest battle of all time with the most untrained army on earth. If strict discipline is necessary in athletics, how can we ex-
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pect to be advance God's kingdom and stay in the kindergarten?"

2. Most military recruiters fail to mention the hardships a soldier may be called on to endure— Sleepless nights; thankless labors; wasted efforts; enemy attacks; separations from your family; imprisonments; etc. (cf. v. 9).
- B. DEDICATION. Every soldier is dedicated to his work and his cause. A soldier puts his country above everything else. Christ must be first in our lives (Mt. 6:33).
- C. DENIAL. Involves avoiding worldly entanglements. He keeps himself FREE to do his duty.
1. Free in financial matters.
  2. Free in personal relationships.
  3. Free in schedule—Not "too busy."

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Shortly after joining the Navy, the new recruit asked his officer for a pass so he could attend a wedding. The officer gave him the pass, but informed the young man he would have to be back by 7 p.m. Sunday. "You don't understand, sir," said the recruit. "I'm in the wedding."

"No, you don't understand," the officer shot back. "You're in the Navy!"

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### III. The soldier's TOOLS.

- No soldier is sent to battle without proper tools. God has given His soldiers "spiritual tools" to accomplish His work.
- A. Weapons (2 Cor. 10:4).
  - B. Armor (Eph. 6:13-17). These tools protect us from attacks.
  - C. Communication (Eph. 6:18). Prayer is the most powerful tool we can use in this battle. It brings God into the conflict.

### IV. The soldier's TRIUMPH (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

- Our commander will welcome us home after a battle.
- A. Fight—"*I have fought a good fight*" (2 Tim. 4:7).

B. Finished—*"I have finished my course"* (2 Tim. 4:7).

C. Faith—*"I have kept the faith"* (2 Tim. 4:7).

D. Faithfulness (2 Tim. 4:8). A crown awaits us!

### **SUMMATION: "I AM A SOLDIER"**

I am a soldier, a prayer warrior, in the army of my 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 on the battlefield;

But I will not coop out, sell out, be talked out.

I am faithful, capable, and dependable.

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.

### ***I AM A SOLDIER!***

Every Christian is in the Lord's Army. Are you a "good soldier of Jesus Christ?"

- Do you endure hardness?
- Are you entangled with the affairs of this life that it keeps you from pleasing your commander and chief?
- Are you fighting the good fight of faith, or have you gone AWOL?