

Beneath the Banner of the Cross

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

A. 2Tim. 2:3-4, 4:6-8

1. There have been millions of great soldiers throughout this country's history. Through their service and dedication, we are free, prosperous, and respected.
2. Any preacher, elder, or teacher who shows disrespect toward a Christian who has faithfully served both his Savior and his country, ought to be asked to resign on the spot. He does not know the scriptures or how he should manifest them in his own life.
3. Not all of us have had the privilege of defending our nation's interests, but all of us are given the opportunity to serve the Lord as faithful soldiers of the cross.

B. What goes into the making of a good soldier of Christ?

1. As Paul neared the end of his life, he lived in a Roman prison. But, from that cell, the apostle took steps to ensure that Timothy would know the way to become a good soldier like Paul.
2. Five qualities of a good soldier:

I. HE IS A FOLLOWER - 2Tim. 2:3

A. Follower implies a relationship; the first step is to enlist in the army.

1. This is accomplished only through entrance into the family of God.
2. Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:16-18; Phil. 3:20

B. Follower implies rank; there is always someone greater in authority than you.

1. 1Cor. 6:19, 11:3

C. Follower implies rule; do not refuse to follow orders.

1. Matt. 16:24; James 4:17

II. HE IS FAITHFUL - 2Tim. 2:3-4, 4:6-7

A. He has patience - Endures hardship and does not quit.

1. The good soldier realizes that there will be troubles along the way and is not deterred by them.
2. He knows pain is often part of the Christian experience - John 16:33
3. He is in it for the long haul - Heb. 12:1

B. He has priorities - A good soldier has no higher goal in life than pleasing his commander.

1. He knows that anything interfering with his performance must be set aside - 1Cor. 10:31; 1Peter 4:11

C. He has the practice - Guards the things given into his care.

1. He refuses to do anything to bring dishonor to his commander.
2. Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10

III. HE IS FAMILIAR

- A. With the sound of his commander's voice - John 10:3-5
 - 1. The way to get more familiar with the Lord's voice is to spend more time listening to it. A soldier of Christ gets this by reading his orders, the word of God.
- B. With the use of his weapons - 2Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-18
- C. With the strategy of his enemy - 2Cor. 11:14; 1Peter 5:8; 2Cor. 2:11
- D. With the strength of his superior officer - Heb. 13:5; 1John 4:4
- E. With the shadows of his friends - Heb. 11:25
 - 1. The good soldier not only cares about his own welfare, but he also looks out for the welfare of his fellow soldiers - Gal. 6:1-2.
 - 2. He learns about them by being around them. There is a reason why soldiers train together.

IV. HE IS A FIGHTER

- A. He is determined - The good soldier does not retreat in the face of the enemy; he stands his ground and fights the battle until the battle is over.
 - 1. Far too many Christian soldiers have deserted the battle front.
 - 2. 1Tim. 1:19-20
- B. He is driven - The good soldier realizes that the battle is not scheduled around his timing and plans.
 - 1. He knows that another is in charge of the length of the battle, yet he is driven to finish - Heb. 10:35-39
- C. He is dedicated - He keeps his oath. He is determined to live for the Lord regardless of personal cost - 2Cor. 12:15; Phil. 2:17; 1Thes. 2:8; 2Tim. 2:10

V. HE IS A FINISHER

- A. He has his reward - 2Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1Peter 5:4; Rev. 2:10
- B. What will be waiting for you when you meet Jesus?