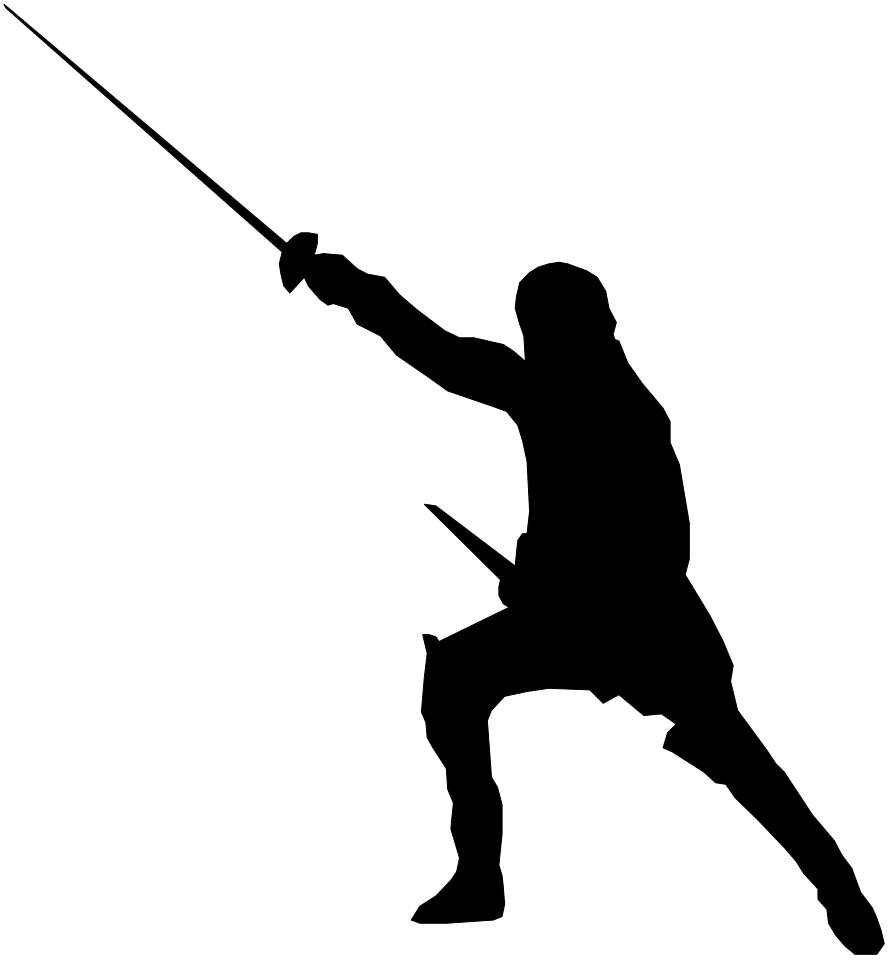
ROUSE THE MIGHTY MEN!

Daily devotions on becoming God's warrior



by: Richard K. Murray

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DAILY DEVOTIONS
ON BECOMING
GOD'S WARRIOR

by:
RICHARD K. MURRAY
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NOTES

DAY 1

"BEAT YOUR PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS"

JOEL 3:10

Warrior, hear the Lord's marching orders for your life: "Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up! Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man' "(Joel 3:9-10). John Calvin said these verses of war show, "God collecting His army, and mustering His forces to punish the enemies of His Church."

Isaiah 2:1-4 tells us of the glorious last days when the warriors of God will fight no more because the Lord has established His reign on this earth. In these last days warriors "will hammer their swords into plowshares . . . And never again will they learn war." While this future peace is rightly longed for, it is just the opposite of the Lord's commission for His soldiers now. Today, God is calling you to learn war His way!

Louis Simpson said, "The aim of military training is not to prepare men for battle, but to make men long for it." In the spiritual, our Lord likewise seeks stouthearted men eager to gut the hosts of hell. George Patton said, "In war, the only sure defense is offense, and the efficiency of the offense depends on the warlike souls of those conducting it." Likewise, the key trait of a spiritual warrior is the "will to fight" fueling his warlike soul. The Jews call it "chutzpah." The Marines call it "guts." God calls it the "good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Regardless of how spiritually mature you are, you can be a warrior for Jehovah. Some are mature men of faith who have become sharp broadswords in the Lord's hand. Others are young in the faith and more like spiritual jackknives. However, it is not the size of the blade that counts, but its willingness to be used in the Lord's hand. The Spartans told their sons, "If your sword be too short, add a step to it." The Lord will add whatever steps are needed to make you a living weapon in His holy arsenal.

Consider King David's Psalm of praise as a mighty man in the Lord's army:

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. . . .
For by Thee I can run upon a troop;
And by my God I can leap over a wall. . . .
He trains my hands for battle,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. . . .
I pursued my enemies and overtook them,
And I did not turn back until they were consumed.
I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise;
They fell under my feet.
For thou hast girded me with strength for battle;
Thou hast subdued under me those who rose up against me.
(Psalm 18:2, 29, 34, 37-39)

Let all long to battle for our King. George Whitefield prayed in 1737, "God, give me a deep humility, a well-guided zeal, a burning love and a single eye, and then let men or devils do their worst." May this fighting spirit burn anew in every warrior's heart!

DAY 2

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND VIOLENT MEN TAKE IT BY FORCE."

MATTHEW 11:12

Why must we be spiritually violent to enter the kingdom of heaven? Each mighty man must answer this question or he will soon lose heart and withdraw from the field of battle. The Bible is full of relentless violence crying out to be understood by warriors of faith. You must receive the Lord's revelation on spiritual violence, "For by wise guidance you will wage war" (Proverbs 24:6).

The truth is that very few Christians grasp the value and necessity of spiritual combat. John Ruskin wrote about the value of war in world history: "All great nations learned their truth of word, and strength of thought, in war; they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace; --in a word, they were born in war and expired in peace." Beloved, how much more does spiritual war forge our souls into greater purity of thought, affection

and strength? At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul labeled his life-long war of faith "the good fight" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Why must it be a daily duel with the devil? First, we are created in God's image and, "The Lord is a warrior" (Exodus 15:3):

> ***The Lord will go forth like a warrior,***
> ***He will arouse His zeal like a man of war.***
> ***He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry.***
> ***He will prevail against His enemies.*** (Isaiah 42:13)

If our Father is a warrior by nature, then this same war drum beats within our breasts as His beloved sons. As long as evil exists, this war drum will drive holy men to holy war.

Second, the New Testament clearly teaches that Israel's violent history recorded in the Old Testament is "an example . . . written for our instruction" (1 Corinthians 10:11). One of God's great principles is, "the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46). This understanding of Scripture reveals Old Testament warfare as an example in the natural world meant to impart a great truth in the spirit realm. This great truth is alarmingly simple. *Just as Israel violently drove the Canaanite devils from the physical Promised Land, we are to brutally drive out all the devils from the spiritual Promised Land.* Jesus taught His kingdom of promise is in the heart (Luke 17:21), and it is from here His enemies must be vanquished.

Every scene of violence in the Old Testament carries with it a lesson or strategy that the mighty man is to use as a weapon against Satan and his dark angels. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the . . . spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). This lets us see certain enemies of Israel in the Old Testament as types of the demonic hordes against whom the New Testament says our true battle rages. Spiritual violence is the force of faith that drives out Satan's dominion over this world. "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "As long as man dwells upon the globe, his destiny is battle." Our spiritual destiny is also one of heated and glorious battle in which an old war slogan takes fresh meaning takes fresh meaning: "**Believe**! **Obey**! **Fight**!"

DAY 3

"THE RIGHTEOUS ARE BOLD AS A LION"

PROVERBS 28:1

The Lord's warrior must be rich in courage. The Lord spoke to Joshua, "be strong and very courageous" (Joshua 1:7). Fear is the major weapon Satan uses to attack our spiritual walk. A warrior must conquer his fear by replacing it with courage born of bold confidence toward his God. Napoleon called the highest form of courage "Two o'clock in the morning courage: I mean unprepared courage." This type of boldness ignites a soldier to bolt out of bed in the middle of the night instantly ready to charge the enemy. This soldier goes to bed brave and wakes up brave. There is no fear in him.

This highest form of courage does not just outmaneuver our fear. Spiritual valor evicts fear's foul presence from our hearts altogether. Consider David's attitude as he arrived on the scene in 1 Samuel 17. All Israel was paralyzed with fright at the challenge of Goliath, yet throughout this chapter David is fearless. He did not battle with fear because he had already eliminated by fervent faith in one flaming fact: "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47).

Stonewall Jackson was once asked by one of his officers about the source of his legendary courage. "Captain, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death, I do not concern myself about that, but to always be ready, no matter when it may overtake me. Captain, that is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave." In this same vein, Thomas Carlyle said, "The courage we desire and prize is not the courage to die decently, but to live manfully."

From where may we draw this highest form of courage? The home of the brave can only be found in the heart of God. As we scale His heart through prayer and scripture we find the courage of "A lion which . . . does not retreat before any" (Proverbs 30:30). His courage becomes our courage as we grow in real knowledge of His strong heart and mighty arm.

Laurence Sterne said, "Only the brave know how to forgive. . . . A coward never forgave; it is not in his nature." It is in tasting the true nature of our Lord's forgiveness that we can begin to see the epic courage Christ displayed in working our salvation at the cross. Jesus Himself related courage to forgiveness in Matthew 9:2 when he told the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." Let us also take courage from being forgiven sons of the Most High God!

If our faith is genuine, there simply is nothing to fear. The ever valiant Stonewall Jackson on another occasion instructed a soldier, "Never take counsel of your fears." Our Supreme Commander gives us like charge: "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Brothers, let us declare war on fear by setting our confidence on knowing God.

Remember, the goal is not just to overcome fear but to vanquish it altogether from our minds and hearts. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4). This form of courage doesn't just bear the yoke of oppression--it smashes it into splinters.

DAY 4

"WHEN YOU GO OUT TO BATTLE"

DEUTERONOMY 20:1

A spiritual warrior must first establish his heart before God. In the above chapter of Deuteronomy, God lays down the conditions for being a warrior in His service. In between exhortations to courage in verses 1 and 8, the Lord requires three things of a warrior before he can successfully take the field of battle: a dedicated house, an enjoyed vineyard, and a consummated marriage.

Beloved, hear the heart of our Lord beckoning you to union with Him in every corner of your soul. As you read these verses, remember that you are God's house, His vineyard and most importantly His bride (1 Corinthians 3:9; Revelation 21:9-27). He longs to live richly in you, to partake of your life fully and to love you passionately. Know also that God is your dwelling place, vineyard of life and love of your soul. As He consumes and loves more of you, you are then able to consume and love more of Him. Out of this union is birthed "the power of an indestructible life" (Hebrews 7:16).

The dedicated house speaks of our Lordship commitment. This is a commitment that must charge out of our hearts and mouth at the dawn of every new day. Joshua, at the end of his long life of faithful service to God, still renewed this commitment, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In Nehemiah 12, we read of the walls of Jerusalem being dedicated with gladness and hymns of thanksgiving. The warrior must joyfully dedicate all that he is to all that God is. Before we count ourselves as warriors, let us check our foundation for the marks of true dedication. These marks are gladness, thanksgiving and zeal to follow the Lord of Hosts wherever He may lead.

The enjoyed vineyard speaks of the continuous drawing of our strength from His holy presence within us. Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear

fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4). As David gorged himself on the Lord's presence, so he was able to stand against lions, bears, giants and kings. The same vineyard David partook of is just a heart cry away for us. Those who would be daily warriors for Christ must first be daily partakers of Christ. Seek right now with all of your desire to feast of His vineyard.

The consummated marriage speaks of a state of holy union and passion the Lord seeks with His warriors. This is more than abiding. It is high romance with our Lord. It is admittedly rare in occurrence, but it is in these moments of mystical union that God imparts His seed of love anew into our heart. A life will forever change after this encounter. A man can dedicate his heart to his wife. He can also continually abide with her in devoted affection. But, until they are one flesh, their relationship is not consummated. Likewise, we who are the spiritual bride of our Christ must ever cry, "Let his left hand be under my head, And his right hand embrace me" (Song of Solomon 8:3). It is in this burning intimacy that we know our Lord as "Ishi," which means "my husband" (Hosea 2:16). Oh Lord, let us know you this way now, this very moment!

The Deuteronomy passage is clear. Before we can be warriors for God, we must be established as lovers of God. "So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the Lord your God" (Joshua 23:11). Purpose in your soul right now to draw your heart to God before you draw your sword for Him.

DAY 5

"RAIDERS SHALL RAID HIM, BUT HE SHALL RAID AT THEIR HEELS."

GENESIS 49:19

Warrior, hear the bad news and the good news. The bad news is that there is a demonic host of raiders who wants to destroy every good thing you are and steal every good thing you have. These raiders have already robbed you thousands of times of joy, love, peace and strength. In place of these treasures, they have left you with depression, fear, fatigue and hardness of heart.

In the past, you have tasted the beginnings of revival, breakthrough and deliverance. But, a short time later a day of distress comes and your last state seems worse than your first. You have felt embarrassed at your inability to hold on to the treasures of God. You battle with developing a "victim mentality" where you begin to expect the raiders to steal whatever good thing God has given you. But, in your warrior's heart there is a yearning to stand and contend against this "roller coaster" spirituality.

The good news is that there is a combat blessing available that enables the hunted to become the hunter. This is the blessing bestowed on Gad by his father Jacob quoted above in Genesis 49. This blessing drives the warrior of Jehovah to take back what has been stolen by these demonic raiders.

An example of this blessing in action occurs in 1 Samuel 30, where David and his men return to Ziklag to find all their families and possessions carried off by the Amalekites. Upon David's inquiry, the Lord tells David to, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them, and you shall surely rescue all" (1 Samuel 30: 8). David pursued and found the raiders "spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of Judah" (1 Samuel 30:16). He then killed every raider and recovered all the spoil unharmed.

Warrior, rise up from your slumber! The enemies are rejoicing with dance at the spoils they have robbed from you in the past. Whatever they have stolen you can, and must, recover. It may be family relationships, friendships or spiritual gifts. It may be passion, commitment or even your ministry calling. It is time to "pay attention to your herds" (Proverbs 27:23).

View the land and meditate on what good things God has given you before but are now missing from your life. Next, boldly ask God for the blessing of Gad to recover every good thing Satan has stolen. Finally, walk in determination to fulfill this blessing, for at its root the blessing of Gad is a supernatural gift of dogged determination to recover that which is lost. Let the chase begin this day!

"And from the Gadites there came over to David in the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men trained for war, who could handle shield and spear, and whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the gazelles on the mountains. . . . These of the sons of Gad were captains of the army; he who was least was equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand. These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its banks and they put to flight all those in the valleys, both to the east and to the west" (1 Chronicles 12:8, 14-15). The blessing of Gad produces mighty men well able to pursue, overtake and plunder the enemy!

DAY 6

"I WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNLESS YOU BLESS ME."

GENESIS 32:26

God wants to teach His sons to fight. An earthly father will wrestle a young son to test his desire for victory. While the father can easily win the match at any time, the father will often allow the son to take the victory when he puts forth his best effort. Likewise, our Lord wrestles His beloved sons to test their desire for His blessing.

In the above passage, Jacob's goal in wrestling God was to lay hold of His blessing. Jacob won his struggle with God because his desire was wholehearted. We too can prevail with God if our desire satisfies His desire. God longs to bless His warriors with every spiritual blessing, but he only pours forth fullness on those who cry out to Him from a heart of faith. "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

It is when the Lord's eyes fix their gaze on our heart's condition that the wrestling match begins. Our natural strength, which in this passage is represented by Jacob's thigh, will eventually be dislocated by the touch of God. The meaning is clear. The only way to prevail with God for His blessing is to cling to Him out of weakness, not strength. A man strong in himself will not prevail with God. But a man who is willing to dislocate his natural strength before God is able to lock his soul onto the Lord's Spirit. From this union the fullness of blessing will flow and a warrior-prince will be born.

Jesus speaks of this very same test of desire in Luke 11:5-10, where He tells the parable of the man knocking on the door for bread. Though the man inside initially refuses, the seeker's "shamelessness" (margin note to verse 8) convinces him to get up and give him bread. Jesus tells us the Father responds the same way to shamelessly persistent seekers. A "shameless" man is one whose thigh, or natural strength, has been broken. His pride no longer bars his desperate submission to the work of the cross. He will not let go of the Lord until he is knighted by the Holy Spirit as a prince of the Kingdom.

Remember, God wrestles us not to hurt us, but rather to test and hone our desire for His blessing. The Genesis passage tells all warriors for Jehovah to first declare war on their own strength. Ask God to reveal your own natural strength to you. Then take hold of His spirit and demand that He fracture your thigh of self-reliance. It will hurt. All of your talent, willpower and pride may be ripped to shreds. But you must not let go until your rebellious self-will is broken.

No longer will you be able to make it through the day without the help of God. Once upon a time, you would sprint through the day using your own pride, desire and ambition as your fuel. But now you will limp with God as your only rod of support. The world will see

your limp and know you are broken. But praise God, the world will also see Christ as your rod and marvel! They will see that your rod gives you more power than a thousand olympian legs. The more we let God break our natural strength, the more that He will replenish it with the strength of His might. Never, never, never let loose of your heart-grip on the Lord's strong arm! Let every wrestling warrior take up Paul's cry, "I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." (Phillipians 3:12).

DAY 7

"DAVID RAN QUICKLY TOWARD THE BATTLE LINE TO MEET THE PHILISTINE"

1 SAMUEL 17:48

The most daring of all military maneuvers is the "quick march." This is a sudden and all out dash to strike an overconfident opponent before he can prepare his troops for battle. Masters of this bold technique include Alexander, Napoleon and Frederick the Great. The nation of Israel modeled this maneuver in the Six Day War of 1967, launching a lightning quick offensive against the vastly superior forces of Egypt.

However, no one has ever displayed the "quick march" better than the shepherd David in I Samuel 17. After forty days of fear and paralysis on the part of Israel, Goliath watched a mere boy approach him with a stick and a slingshot. Goliath, who probably was accustomed to taunting his enemies into surrender, challenged David to "come to me." David did just that at top speed. Goliath had to be momentarily stunned at David's bold charge. In this moment of surprise, David concluded the matter by smashing the rock of faith into the skull of arrogance.

Warriors of Jehovah must covet and develop this "quick march" mentality for use everyday against an arrogant adversary who mocks "the word of their testimony" day and night (Revelation 12:10-11). How many times do we, when faced with a spiritual challenge, linger near the battle lines without ever charging into combat? How often do we start our day with the cancerous attitude that we will seek God when a convenient time presents itself? These attitudes of delay have cost us enough battles!

Warrior, learn the discipline of the "quick march." Bolt out of every oppressive circumstance and draw strength from your God by desperate prayer and fierce devotion. Don't be weighed down by yesterday's failures or tomorrow's burdens, but charge to the sound of the fighting for this day. The Duke of Wellington instructed his soldiers, "Do the business of the day on the day." When Peter tells us to apply "all diligence" in our faith (2 Peter 1:5), the Greek word for "diligence" literally means "speed."

The U.S. Marine Corps Book of Strategy defines combat speed as "the consistent ability to operate fast. . . . In other words, speed is a weapon. Superior speed allows us to seize the initiative and dictate the terms of combat, forcing the enemy to react to us. Speed provides security." If we are to be the Lord's marines, we must heed our need for speed.

In Nahum 2:4 the Lord's mighty men are said to "dash to and fro like lightning flashes" in the midst of the enemy. Aspire to be a lightning bolt in the Lord's hand! Satan will be disheartened by your sprinter's zeal, and in the battle of faith he who is disheartened is disarmed. When a spiritual attack comes, don't delay the counterattack for one moment or the enemy's poison will spread to your heart and you will be spiritually weakened. Hit your enemy fast and hard with fervent prayer and zealous declarations of God's might and goodness. Let our battle cry for the "quick march" be Psalms 119:60, "I hastened and did not delay to keep Thy commandments."

DAY 8

"RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU."

EPHESIANS 6:11

A classic rule of war states never do anything your enemy wants you to do for the simple reason that he wishes it. The purpose is to deny the opponent anything which may boost his confidence in battle, regardless of how insignificant the contested point may be. If the enemy is forced to fight on battlegrounds of inconvenience, he is more easily defeated.

One of Satan's key strategies is to keep us occupied on the fields of battle he has chosen, fields he is far more familiar with than we. These fields are laden with his hidden traps of deception and despair. On the one hand, things like television, sports and appetite seem relatively harmless when we consider our freedom as sons of God. However, rest assured that Satan has mined these areas of our lives with countless lusts meant to weaken and destroy our testimony.

Satan would much rather fight you on the battlefield of which television show to watch than which scripture to set your soul on for revelation. Satan would rather fight you on the battlefield of which sports team to enthusiastically cheer for than how you can zealously fulfill the Lord's calling on your life. Satan would rather fight you on the

battlefield of how much food you eat than how much you hunger for Him in your devotions. And the list goes on.

We are free to enjoy things we can receive it in faith according to Romans 14. But we must also be wise warriors in the attacks we open ourselves to by every choice we make. Paul stated that when he became a spiritual man, "I did away with childish things." (1 Corinthians 13:11). As we too grow into spiritual men, the childish things must be left behind on the battlegrounds of past weakness and temptations. It was for this reason that the Psalmist asked the Lord to "Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity" (Psalm 119:37).

Undue affections for sports, entertainment and food are sinful not so much for their inherent wickedness as for their inherent childishness. Childishness is poison for a warrior because it diverts his aggression for his cause. The result is a "defensive" spirituality that seeks present comfort rather than full victory. Napoleon rightly observed, "he who remains behind his entrenchments is beaten; experience and theory are at one on this point." Warrior, you must never grow comfortable in the trenches. The cry of your soul must echo the motto of the French Revolution, "The attack, always the attack."

Instead of just surviving the daily battles with Satan, we can take the attack to him by fighting on battlefields with which he is not comfortable or familiar. These battlefields are zeal, love for God, brokenness, prayer and devotion to His word. It is on these battlefields that we become fully armed and fully dangerous to Satan. If we are to get to this point of battle-readiness, we must purpose to do nothing Satan wants or expects of us. The great preacher Billy Sunday advised when you are not sure of the Lord's will, just do the opposite of what you know Satan wants. In other words, do not give the devil an inch of ground. Start choosing the better battlefields now. Daily victory will become a glorious way of life, well pleasing to our Lord!

DAY 9

"AS THE MAN, SO IS HIS STRENGTH."

JUDGES 8:21

There is a challenge being hurled at you this very moment! Your enemy is mocking you. He thinks you lack the strength to pick up the gauntlet he has hatefully cast at your feet. Warrior, you must pick up the gauntlet and strike your challenger with all your might. Your calling as a mighty man depends on your response to this challenge. What is the

challenge? One thing and one thing only; will you assault the dark angels of Satan with violent intercession?

After leading the army of Israel "weary yet pursuing" on a long chase to capture the evil kings of Midian, Gideon finally cornered the kings after routing their "whole army" (Judges 8:4-12). These kings confessed to Gideon that they earlier had killed his brothers. He then ordered his son Jether to, "Rise, kill them," but Jether, "was afraid, because he was still a youth" (Judges 8:18-20). The kings, upon seeing Jether's fear, then hurled the challenge to Gideon, "Rise up yourself, and fall on us; for as the man, so is his strength" (Judges 8:21). To this brazen dare Gideon responded in the only way a mighty man could. He, "arose and killed" the kings (Judges 8:21).

This whole episode is a clear type of Christian encounter "written for our instruction" (1 Corinthians 10:11). The kings are types of demonic powers who seek domination of our lives as well as the death of all our brothers. Jether represents the immature Christian whose fear keeps him from destroying the works of Satan. Lastly, Gideon is a type of modern warrior who intercedes for the spiritually weak by sword thrusts of fervent prayer. The choice is clear for us; to be either a Jether paralyzed with fear or a Gideon who will seize the challenge of evil by the throat.

There is also much mercy to be drawn from these verses. In them we see the high calling of our role toward our weaker brothers not strong enough in God to break the bondages in their lives. Our role is not to judge, condemn, despise or give up on these brothers. No, our sole role is to draw our sword and to do battle for them until they can draw their own swords by faith. This is true intercession and it is a glorious battlefield on which to lay down our lives.

These verses especially speak to the calling of the father to intercede for his children. Instead of expecting our children to slay their own dark angels, we must see that their youth limits their strength. They simply don't have the intensity of faith to recognize, hate and fight certain enemies. It is here we must stand and contend for our children's souls. Satan seeks to poison, harden and pervert our children's hearts from the day of their birth onward. Only the sword of the Lord can stay the attack.

Perhaps no military leader has personified the character of Satan more than Genghis Khan, who said, "The greatest pleasure is to vanquish your enemies and chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth and see those dear to them bathed in tears, to ride their horses and clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters." Know that Satan is making this same declaration to you right now. Pick up the devilish gauntlet by the Spirit of God and start hitting back. "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1

Corinthians 16:13). Draw the mighty sword of intercession now and start wielding it for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

DAY 10

"THE END OF A MATTER IS BETTER THAN ITS BEGINNING"

ECCLESIASTES 7:8

God is more concerned with where His warriors finish than where they begin. As glorious as past spiritual victories may be, the warrior of Jehovah is to press on into greater battles and greater victories. It is said that Alexander the Great wept when he saw that there were no more lands to conquer. Praise be to God that the spiritual warrior will never face that dilemma, for every new day brings a new land to conquer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This new land to conquer may be in our own heart or it may be in the heart of another, but rest assured that God wants all the enemies driven from the heartland of His people. There are many warriors who started well in driving out the enemy but ended poorly. Conversely, there are many warriors who started wickedly but ended as sharp swords in the service of the Lord. Consider two of Judah's kings: Joash and Manasseh.

Joash started off well at age 7 becoming king and doing "what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (2 Chronicles 24:2). Joash restored the house of the Lord and was well on his way to becoming one of the great kings in Judah's history. However, when Jehoida the faithful advisor and priest died, Joash's heart was turned to idolatry by his new advisors (2 Chronicles 24:15-18). Thereafter, Joash became a murderer who forsook the Lord (2 Chronicles 24:19-22). His end was so horrible and spiritually weak that a "small number of men" defeated and pillaged all of Judah, with Joash himself being killed by his own servants (2 Chronicles 24:23-27). He ended poorly.

Contrast this with Manasseh, who in his initial years committed the most abominable sins in the history of Israel's monarchy including: murder, witchcraft, idolatry, defiling God's temple and even sacrificing his own son to a foreign god (2 Kings 21:1-8). Incredibly, he provoked the Lord "to anger" to such an extent that whoever was to hear of His forthcoming wrath on Judah, "both his ears shall tingle" (2 Kings 21:6, 12). This divine wrath began with Manasseh being bound in chains and taken to Babylon. Then, something wonderful happened. Manasseh "entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" (2 Chronicles 33:12). God heard Manasseh's prayer, restored him to his throne, and "Manasseh knew that the Lord was God" (2 Chronicles

33:13). He then instituted mass reforms and "ordered Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel" (2 Chronicles 33:16). He ended well.

Warrior, know that God wants you to finish the fight of faith in the best spiritual shape of your life. In the physical, fighters can only improve their conditioning by increasing their resistance. So too, in the spiritual, God increases our conditioning by sending us into greater and greater battles so that the inner man is built up and "renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16). Praise God for past victories but don't grow slack for battle. Until Satan is brought under our heel, the battle is the thing. As the apostle Paul said, "one thing I do . . . I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). No matter how weak you are now, you will succeed if you resolve to move ever onward and upward in Christ.

DAY 11

"WITH THE JAWBONE OF A DONKEY . . . I HAVE KILLED A THOUSAND MEN."

JUDGES 15:16

In Samson we see the greatest warrior of the Old Testament. In a time when "the Philistines were ruling over Israel" (Judges 14:4), Samson stood alone against the enemies of God. Time and time again he savagely and single-handedly slaughtered Philistine armies by the thousands. In his bold heart we find an arsenal of spiritual weapons to hurl at our adversary.

Samson's legendary strength stemmed from God's calling on his life as a Nazirite (Judges 13:7). Numbers 6:2 tells us that a Nazirite is one who "makes a special vow . . . to dedicate himself to the Lord." He who makes this vow separates himself from the defilement of the world as one holy to the Lord. At its root this Nazirite vow is a Lordship commitment. Beloved, know of a certainty that the strength of Samson resides in every Nazirite heart, then and now. Make the vow and grow "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).

Samson's great victories stemmed from his focused attitude toward the enemy. Samson knew that the source of all of his problems was the Philistine. Samson's attitude was to continually hold them accountable: "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease" (Judges 15:7). Whenever Samson faced trouble or frustration, he always reacted the same way. He killed Philistines. Samson's mind set was one of immediate, full and violent retaliation against the oppressor: "As they did to me, so I have done to them" (Judges 15:11).

The Philistines here are a clear type of the demonic oppressors who try to thwart the people of God. The apostle Paul made it clear that our fight is not with man but is with the demonic (Ephesians 6:12). Much, if not all, of the violence in the Old Testament is meant to instruct us today in warring violently against the dark angels of Satan. Jesus taught that "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). As you become a spiritually violent Samson, you will be marked by the enemy. Your demonic enemies will know you as "the destroyer of our country, Who has slain many of us" (Judges 16:24).

These devils were Samson's doormat and they should be ours. "And he struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter" (Judges 15:8). Christ showed this same savage aggression in that "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them" (Colossians 2:15). These words in the original Greek describe a triumphant emperor who has completely plundered the enemy's goods and now brazenly parades the spoils of war for all to see.

Pick up the jawbone warrior! Forget the odds. Samson killed thousands all by himself and so can you. The time for fear is over. Look the hosts of hell in their wicked eyes and tell them you are ready to do to them as they have done to you. Read the story of Samson and become strong. If you have dedicated your heart to God; if you realize that your true enemy is the Devil's brigade and not man; if you are ready to inflict an all out massacre on evil; then reach down into your spirit, pick up the jawbone and let the slaughter begin.

DAY 12

"THE LORD YOUR GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST, A VICTORIOUS WARRIOR."

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

In the movie *Wyatt Earp*, the legendary lawman is portrayed as a western warrior who ruthlessly roots out evil. After cleaning up Dodge City from a state of complete lawlessness, his violent methods eventually lose the popularity and support of the townspeople. He is fired, lawlessness quickly returns and the town is again enslaved to evil. The townspeople cry out for their deliverer to return, which he promptly does with great impact. He enters the town saloon where all the outlaws are engaging in drunken

destruction. He fires a warning shot in the ceiling and shouts the following declaration: "I'm the new sheriff. It all ends now!"

The Holy Spirit will likewise declare Himself to all the outlaws terrorizing the streets of our heart. If we give the Holy Spirit free reign, He will not allow evil to prosper. He will disarm it, defeat it and destroy it. It will be brutal and we will be often offended at the merciless violence the Lord inflicts on our sin man. We will be tempted to push the Holy Spirit away and rip off His badge of authority over our lives. Some days we will give in to this temptation and for a time we will be our own Marshall. But then sin will begin to run rampant in our souls and we will begin to long for our Deliverer to return and restore order. When our longing becomes a heartcry, He will hear us and He will come and declare Himself strong and victorious over our enemies.

The book of Judges could well be called the "wild west" of the Old Testament. Here, the pattern of deliverance described above is repeated time after time in Israel's history. God gives Israel rest from their enemies; Israel does evil in the sight of God; Israel falls into bondage to their enemies; Israel cries out in repentance to God; God sends a deliverer; the people are set free; then the cycle begins again. Beloved, take heart because this same Lord of deliverance is in your midst right now.

"And when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them" (Judges 3:15). The promise is clear that when we repent to God of the sins our hearts have embraced, He will send the Eternal Lawman, the Holy Spirit, to vanquish our enemies. This brave Captain of the Lord of Hosts will boldly declare to all the demonized strongholds within us, "IT ALL ENDS NOW!"

The news gets even better if we continue to love and obey the badge of authority the Holy Spirit shines in our hearts. He will deputize us as His beloved sons and fellow warriors into greater anointing and authority. Jesus' greatest ministry promise for us will no longer seem like a far off fantasy: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father" (John 14:12). With the Holy Spirit as our High Sheriff and Lord, we shall become His mighty men who ride at His side. This faith posse will hunt down and destroy the works of Satan and establish God's glory on this earth.

DAY 13

"SOMEONE DID TOUCH ME, FOR I WAS AWARE THAT POWER HAD GONE OUT OF ME."

LUKE 8:46

The Lord's warrior must never forget the lone source of his power. Christ alone is our strength. Any theology that hints at any other source of strength is a devil's doctrine. The only way to draw His strength into our soul is by touching the hem of His presence with our faith. Only from such an encounter can one truly begin to grasp the limitless wonder of Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

The most striking event in the miracle of the woman who touched Jesus' cloak (Luke 8:43-48) was not her healing. No, the most incredible part of this story concerns the crowds who were all touching Jesus with no effect. The woman's touch was so different than all the others that Jesus felt "power" go out of Him. This clearly suggests that there are two ways of touching Jesus. One way taps into the power of God and one way does not.

Beloved, how many times do we touch our Lord out of a sense of routine? How often do we accompany Him on earthly ministry, brushing up against Him but remaining unchanged and unstrengthened? These touches reflect His nearness and availability to us but betray our heart's hardness and distance from Him. The whole counsel of scripture cries out one unalterable truth: when we touch Christ in faith we receive strength, healing and deliverance.

All mighty men who truly take hold of Christ are the spiritual brothers-at-arms of those saints of old "who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight" (Hebrews 11:33-35).

Taking hold of Christ is the most important maneuver any spiritual warrior can learn. "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1 Timothy 6:12). In wrestling it is the strength of the grip which is the key to success.

Likewise, in the fight of faith the strength of our grip on God will determine whether we win or lose. Jacob knew this rule of war (Genesis 32:24-32). Paul knew this rule of war (Philippians 3:12). David knew this rule of war: "Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle" (Psalm 144:1). Now we know this rule of war. Touch God and with the touching add the grip strength of faith.

Let us purpose never again to touch the Lord in a faithless grip. Let every encounter with our Christ be one which empowers us to greater victories. May the Lord say of us every time we seek to touch Him in prayer or devotion: "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me."

DAY 14

"THE YOUNG LIONS DO LACK AND SUFFER HUNGER; BUT THEY WHO SEEK THE LORD SHALL NOT BE IN WANT OF ANY GOOD THING."

PSALM 34:10

A lion is most powerful when its hunger peaks. The lion's appetite and strength combine to sharpen its senses to their full potential. This is why the lion is the most dangerous warrior in the animal kingdom. Likewise, spiritual warriors are at their best when their hunger for more of God combines with their strong confidence in what He has already done. The result is a courageous mighty man whose spiritual senses are honed for all out war on Satan and all out love for God.

The danger is in waiting too long to act on our hunger pangs for God. If the warrior delays responding to his hunger for more of God, then starvation will soon set in and rob him of the strength the Lord has already established in his life. The result is a weakened warrior whose confidence in God suffers. This is the equivalent of the lion waiting to hunt until after starvation has already set in to weaken its senses. Although food may still be found, it will take striving and agony to regain the strength that need never have been lost.

There are two "always" in God's plan for us. First, God always wants us to hunger after more of Him. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). Second, God always wants us to stand in the strength and courage born of His testimony in our lives. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

"It is good that you grasp one thing, and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them" (Ecclesiastes 7:18). The root truth of this verse is that those who follow after God must both grasp the new and hold on to the established. To grasp the new is divine hunger. To hold tight to the established is divine strength. To walk in both hunger and strength is divine success.

The lion's two most astonishing characteristics are its hunger and strength. God, through His prophet, attributed these same traits to His beloved Israel: "Behold, a people rises like a lioness, And as a lion it lifts itself; It shall not lie down until it devours the prey, And drinks the blood of the slain. . . . He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him" (Numbers 23:24 and 24:9). God has this same ferocious vision of faith for us right now.

Every mighty man must stalk these twin treasures of hunger and strength. In them lies the way of the winning warrior. King David kept hunger and strength as medals pinned to his heart: "O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee . . . My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. When I remember Thee on my bed, I meditate on Thee in the night watches, For Thou hast been my help, And in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me" (Psalms 63:1, 5-8). Let every mighty man walk in the way of the lion. Always hunger for more of God and always proudly display the great mane of His past testimony in your life.

DAY 15

"FOR DAY BY DAY MEN CAME TO DAVID TO HELP HIM, UNTIL THERE WAS A GREAT ARMY LIKE THE ARMY OF GOD."

1 CHRONICLES 12:22

Thomas Jefferson once said, "Every citizen [should] be a soldier. This was the case with the Greeks and the Romans, and must be that of every free state." Similarly, all who seek full citizenship in the Kingdom of God should also be soldiers. "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Moreover, God longs for His warriors to be eager volunteers rather than reluctant draftees who inwardly long for civilian comfort.

Men of valor have always enthusiastically enlisted in the armed services to fight for this country in time of war. In the same way, spiritual soldiers of eternal fortune have always enlisted their hearts to serve the Lord in time of battle. Such a mass enlistment

occurs in 1 Chronicles 11 and 12 where we see the incredible drawing of the mighty men of Israel to their once and future King David. These mighty men joined him at different times and places and were from different tribes and houses. Yet, they all had one thing in common; they "were of one mind to make David king" (1 Chronicles 12:38).

Today, God is drawing His mighty men to keep ranks and to march together to establish His kingdom on this earth. Do you aspire to be a mighty man? Will you drop your agenda of life and pick up the cross? Will you don the armor of God and destroy the works of Satan? Will you hate evil as you have never hated before? Will you love the Lord your God as your King, General, Father and Friend? If you would do these things, then look hard and close at the magnificent calling and character God has for His mighty men.

The Lord's warrior's are "mighty men of valor, men trained for war" (1 Chronicles 12:8). This verse stresses the training that mighty men undergo to breed the resolve of lions, the agility of gazelles and the power to break through flood waters. A philosopher once said, "To lead an untrained people to war is to throw them away." God will not throw His people away. He will train them in the elite combat training school of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 5:14 speaks of such mighty men of God "who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." Start relishing with joy the boot camp where God has placed you for training. David received combat training by overcoming lions and bears long before his combat with Goliath. Likewise, God trains us by the trials we face at home, work and church. Let us set our hearts on vanquishing every lion and bear in our path that we may be fully trained to slay the Goliaths to come.

Moreover, the Lord's warriors are not just trained for war, but they are mightily "equipped for war . . . according to the word of the Lord" (1 Chronicles 12:23). This speaks of God equipping His mighty men with increased revelation of His will and nature. This equipping according to His word produces wise warriors who, like the sons of Issachar, have "understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). David had loving fellowship with all his mighty men. Our Lord will do the same for us as He fills our longing souls with more of the Holy Spirit's love and counsel. Rise up and join the march of the mighty men today!

DAY 16

"FOR THIS COMMANDMENT WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU, NOR IS IT OUT OF REACH."

DEUTERONOMY 30:11

The best news of all is the nearness of our Lord's blessing. "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it ?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it" (Deuteronomy 30:12-14). Beloved, take courage from these verses because they guarantee your potential for absolute spiritual victory in every area of your lives. This limitless potential bursts forth from one fact--God is so near and so available.

Our constant challenge as spiritual soldiers is to victoriously exercise our spiritual willpower to take hold of God's incredible nearness. This willpower to be an overcomer must be rooted in the awesome arsenal our Lord has bunkered in our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

One such fortress that must fall is any defeatist attitude that has established itself in our daily walk. NFL Coach Tom Landry said, "The basic problem you face is developing a losing pattern. The most difficult thing in coaching is to overcome the feeling that you're going to lose." Similarly, God's greatest work in us is changing our "losing patterns" of thought into winning attitudes of "power and love and discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

We are to declare war on mental defeat as did the Apostle Paul: "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The loftiest thought that ever raises itself up against the knowledge of our Lord is vile unbelief. This thought hisses the accusation in our own mind that we cannot wield the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome all challenges set before us.

The best cure for defeatist thinking is stirring up the right kind of arrogance within us. Wrestling coach Howard Ferguson wrote, "All true champions have inner arrogance. It's that confident feeling they have that says, 'I have the edge over you,' or, 'You don't have a chance against me.' " David powerfully displayed this inner arrogance when he stood toe to toe with Goliath and declared, "This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you" (1 Samuel 17:46). David was completely confident in declaring to Goliath the Lord's presence and power in this combat: "the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17:47).

Our edge over this world system and its dark prince is the matchless power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. This razor sharp edge should ignite our inner confidence to boldly rebuke Satan and his hordes that they don't stand a chance against us and our indwelling Captain. Remember, this inner certainty comes from the Lord's inner nearness "in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him" (Ephesians 3:12).

DAY 17

"YOUR HAND SHALL BE ON THE NECK OF YOUR ENEMIES"

GENESIS 49:8

An artist once engraved an unforgettable scene of war. It pictured two huge warriors locked into a unique battle to the death. Both were standing erect and at arm's length from each other. Neither had a weapon. Their only point of contact was the fierce two-handed grip each had on the other's throat. Their glaring eyes reflected mutual hatred as their neck muscles bulged to protect their airways from being crushed. In this titanic struggle war was reduced to its simplest form -- throttling the neck of your enemy. In this day of elaborate strategies for spiritual warfare let us not forget the direct approach of a determined death grip on the adversary's neck.

The neck is important in scripture because, as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, it is "the part of the body where the yoke, emblem of labor and hardship, dependence and subjection, is borne." We are born, as was Israel during the days of Moses, with the yoke of a Satanic Pharaoh around our necks squeezing the life and hope out of our hearts. But then comes the Deliverer. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect" (Leviticus 26:13). It is in this spiritual deliverance that we are enabled to start acting like true men of faith and raise our empowered hands to grasp Satan's throat.

There is no option for the warrior other than to engage Satan in all out combat. Even though God delivered us at our salvation, Satan's hands stay firmly around our necks seeking to reestablish his choke hold on our lives. Remember, Satan's yoke only stays broken to the extent we stay broken before God and violent before devils. If we don't keep our hands continually at Satan's neck, then his hold on our lives will strengthen and we will allow ourselves to be "choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14).

Warrior, if someone were physically trying to choke the life out of you right now, you wouldn't need motivation to strike back with every ounce of strength you have. In the spirit realm, you must see the death grip struggle going on at this very moment. You must stir your anger, furrow your brow, plant your feet, raise your hands and start throttling the enemy. No compromise, no exceptions, no excuses and no peace between you and the dark angels of Satan. "Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies" (Genesis 49:8).

Joshua 10 tells the story of Israel defeating and tracking down the five evil Amorite kings who had hidden in the cave at Makkedah. "Then Joshua said, 'Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.' And it came about when they brought these kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, 'Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.' So they came near and put their feet on their necks. Joshua then said to them, 'Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.' " (Joshua 10:22, 24-25).

Beloved, know well that the same fate awaits whichever devil dares to cross swords with the Lord's mighty men.

DAY 18

"SO THE THREE BROKE THROUGH THE CAMP OF THE PHILISTINES"

1 CHRONICLES 11:18

The noblest warriors seek above all else to fulfill their King's desire. King David had just such an elite fighting force made up of thirty mighty men. All thirty will forever be hailed in heaven as heroes. But, three attained a special place of recognition in God's eyes. Against these three all the other mighty men were measured (1 Chronicles 11:21, 24). In these three valiant hearts we find the first and best destiny of spiritual soldiers.

1 Chronicles 11:15-19 tells how these three men risked their lives to bring their parched King water to drink. David and his forces were secured at the rock cave of Adullam. Here, he longed for water from his home well of Bethlehem. The difficulty was the presence of the Philistine garrison which occupied Bethlehem. Regardless of the opposition, the three warriors considered the King's desire their passionate obsession. "So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines" and brought their beloved King the water he craved (1 Chronicles 11:18).

In this heroic story we see precious types of spiritual service meant to inspire us today. First, David craved the water that was in the midst of the enemy. Our Lord also craves those souls enslaved and encircled by the garrison of Satan. This applies not only to the lost souls of others, but to areas of our own souls still in bondage to Philistine devils. To bring the souls of men to our thirsting Lord, we must break through the enemy and "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). No ground will be uncontested in this battle, so gird up your loins warrior!

Second, the men did not drink of the water themselves. Their sole purpose was to bring their King's desire to his lips alone. Our Lord likewise directs us to bring Him the souls of men for His consumption alone. Many today minister the gospel from an impure motive of wanting to consume the Lord's portion as their own. Our only purpose in bringing a soul to Christ must be for the Lord to wholly consume that person in His love and high calling. We must avoid the sin of drawing any soul to ourselves. We must not drink men's praise. We must deliver it to God alone. Let all self-promotion and possessiveness be doused as strange fire that has no place in the heart of a mighty man.

Third, King David honored the heroes with an act of eternal meaning. He refused to drink the water but instead poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord. In like manner, our Lord Jesus will sanctify and offer the souls we bring Him. He honors us by offering the souls directly to the Father as only the faithful High Priest could do. Let there be only one reward the true mighty man seeks. It is to behold the lives of those we touch genuinely be poured out as precious offerings well-pleasing to our Lord.

Let all mighty men take heed! When Christ spoke from the cross that "I am thirsty" (John 19:28), your King was making His desire known to His warriors. This high calling of a mighty man is to devote our lives to breaking through the enemy lines to bring back what our Lord longingly thirsts for -- the hearts of men. Let the warrior first bring his own soul before the King daily. Then, let the battle rage for the lost souls of men.

DAY 19

"HATE EVIL, LOVE GOOD, AND ESTABLISH JUSTICE IN THE GATE"

AMOS 5:15

Some warriors zealously love their king. Other warriors fiercely hate their enemy. The strongest warriors do both. This twin passion of love and hate must fill the belly of the believer in just the right mix of power and peace. Of Christ it is written: "THOU HAST

LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY COMPANIONS" (Hebrews 1:9). Let our anointing likewise be founded on our love of our awesome God and our hatred of Satan, in whose power "the whole world lies" (1 John 5:19).

Though He was a man of peace in the physical, Jesus is the most violent warrior ever to fight in the spirit realm! Jesus taught clearly that the kingdom of heaven is taken by the spiritually violent (Matthew 11:12). Our brave Captain did not come to"bring peace but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). The demons trembled at the sight of Jesus. It was not a Lamb they saw in the spirit but a stalking Lion.

> ***For thus says the Lord to me,***
> ***"As the lion or the young lion growls over his prey,***
> ***Against which a band of shepherds is called out,***
> ***Will not be terrified at their voice, nor disturbed at their noise,***
> ***So will the Lord of hosts come down to wage war on Mount Zion***
> ***and on its hill."*** (Isaiah 31:4-5)

The book of Revelation describes our Lord as both Lion and Lamb. In Revelation 5:5 Jesus is the Lion of Judah who has overcome the world. Thereafter, Jesus is the Lamb who was slain. Christ always shines forth the nature of both Lion and Lamb. The Lion wages war on evil. The Lamb lovingly lays down His lifeblood for the world. This same dual nature of the Lion and the Lamb must live in us if we are to be effective warriors for Jehovah. As Lambs we must humbly lay our lives down in the service of our Lord. As Lions we must savagely stalk all devils of darkness.

The problem today is that our warrior spirit has been buried in an incomplete image of Christ. We have been taught to become a Lamb without also overcoming as a Lion. Men today are spiritually sick because the Lion spirit has not been released against their demonic enemies. It is time to reclaim the Lion spirit now. Roar ferociously against Satan and sin with every inch of guts you possess. God made you and your fellow soldiers to resemble "the faces of lions" (1 Chronicles 13:8). Hilaire Belloc rightly said, "All men have in them an instinct for conflict; at least all healthy men." Violent conflict with Satan, though

painful, will produce spiritual health and increased energy in the lives of God's mighty men. Love your King and hate your enemy!

DAY 20

"FOR THE LORD OF HOSTS HAS VISITED HIS FLOCK, THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, AND WILL MAKE THEM LIKE HIS MAJESTIC HORSE IN BATTLE."

ZECHARIAH 10:3

Every warrior needs a strong steed. In the battlefield of the spirit, the war-horse is a special gift the Holy Spirit gives to mighty men who long for more power in their fight against the kingdom of darkness. Job 39:19-25 gives a bold description of the character, emotion and strength of the war-horse:

> *Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrible. He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He goes out to meet the weapons. He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; And he does not turn back from the sword. The quiver rattles against him, The flashing spear and javelin. With shaking and rage he races over the ground; And he does not stand still at the voice of the trumpet. As often as the trumpet sounds he says, 'Aha!' And he scents the battle from afar, And thunder of the captains of the war cry.*

These verses show that a spiritual war-horse aids the mighty man in mighty ways. The war-horse, above all else, is an animal of instinct. He instinctively longs for battle. He instinctively knows where the battle is raging. He instinctively laughs at fear. He instinctively channels his own great strength into one purpose -- to utterly trample the enemy. In a word, the spiritual war-horse represents the supernatural zeal, valor and strength God bestows upon His mighty men.

Warrior, you have a stallion waiting for you in the spirit this very moment. Consider the army of God as described in Revelation 19:11-16:

> *And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. . . . And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations . . . . And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

These verses show the true army of God are horse-soldiers who gallantly gallop into battle behind their great General. If your heart is to follow your Lord into battle against the hordes of hell, then get equipped. The Roman historian, Livy, wrote of the brave commander Hannibal:

> *No toil could exhaust his body or overcome his spirit. . . . In his dress he was in no way superior to his equals, but he was conspicuous in his arms and his horse. He was always by far the first in the ranks of both cavalry and infantry and - foremost to enter the battle - he was the last to leave it once the battle had begun.*

You too must be "conspicuous" in using your arms and horse. Mount your steed mighty man and your faith will be turbo-charged to ever increasing victory for your King! "The horse is prepared for battle, but victory belongs to the Lord" (Proverbs 21:31).

DAY 21

"AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY, AND THEY DID NOT LOVE THEIR LIFE EVEN TO DEATH."

REVELATION 12:11

The above verse reveals how God's army will overcome Satan and his kingdom. As we fulfill this verse in our lives, devils are crushed under our feet. This battle-plan of the over-comer has three keys to victory for the mighty man.

First, the mighty man overcomes by the blood of the Lamb. The shed blood of Christ is our supply line of power which breaks the yoke of evil off our lives: "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Without this purification from our sins, would-be warriors are hopelessly enslaved to Satan in whose power, "the whole world lies" (1 John 5:19). The blood of Christ is our spiritual Declaration of Independence from the Devil. America celebrated its Declaration of Independence with great joy and the ringing of the Liberty Bell. The redeemed of the Lord should also ring out with songs, dance and shouts of joy for the blood our loving Savior shed to liberate us.

Second, we wage war with the testimony of God's presence in our lives. In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Testimony contained the presence of God which was powerfully displayed in Israel's history. Inside the Ark were three symbolic relics: Aaron's rod, a jar

of heavenly manna, and the covenant in stone God gave Moses (Hebrews 9:4-5). Aaron's rod which budded speaks of God's resurrection power. The heavenly manna God daily poured on Israel speaks of His continuous provision. The covenant tablets speak of God's supernatural revelation to His people. Israel used the Ark as a hammer to smite its enemies:

> *Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, "Rise up, O Lord! And let Thine enemies be scattered, And let those who hate Thee flee before Thee*. (Numbers 10:35).

Just as Israel used their Ark of the Testimony in battle, we must use our Ark of Testimony to slay the devils in our path. Every mighty man has in his heart an Ark of Testimony which contains the Holy Spirit's resurrection power, heavenly provision and supernatural revelation.

Third, a mighty man must not fear his own death. Death means not only our physical death, but also our soul's death to the cares and anxieties of this world (Revelation 2:10; Luke 9:23-25). To fear either kind of death is to mistrust the cross. Jesus modeled perfect courage as "the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Let us also joyfully hurl our self-life on death's lance.

All three keys of an over-comer spring from the grace of God. The blood of Christ purifies us from our sins and breaks the shackles of Satan's bondage. The word of our testimony is the sword of the Lord's presence we wield against our spiritual enemies every day of our lives. Finally, the fearlessness of physical death and death to self allows complete victory over our vile adversary. Let every warrior of Jehovah hide this most precious verse in the midst of his heart.

DAY 22

"THE SOUND OF JOYFUL SHOUTING AND SALVATION IS IN THE TENTS OF THE RIGHTEOUS"

PSALM 118:15

Teddy Roosevelt described true warrior's zeal as his Rough Riders charged the strongholds of Cuba: "All men who feel any power of joy in battle know what it is like when the wolf rises in the heart." Warriors throughout the ages describe this same spirit of the

wolf energizing their hearts with supernatural enthusiasm for battle. Beloved, God desires His army to bathe in the "power of joy" as we charge the spiritual strongholds of evil.

A mighty man is to have mighty joy as he wrestles devils: "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). The absence of such happiness is the garment of defeat, a garment every spiritual soldier must rip to shreds. The only alternative to being a happy warrior is being a defeated one:

> *Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and he will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you.* (Deuteronomy 28:47-48)

William Wordsworth penned the question: "Who is the Happy Warrior? Who is he that every man in arms would wish to be?" The answer is crystal clear for those born of God. A mighty man's unquenchable cheerfulness comes from experiencing God's forgiveness, love and restoration.

> *And I shall strengthen the house of Judah, And I shall save the house of Joseph, And I shall bring them back, Because I have had compassion on them; And they shall be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the Lord their God, and I will answer them. And Ephraim will be like a mighty man, And their heart will be glad as if from wine; Indeed, their children will see it and be glad, Their heart will rejoice in the Lord.*
> (Zechariah 10:6-7)

As God strengthens us, no longer do arrows of rejection poison our hearts. God embraces us as His beloved sons whose hearts become drunk with the wonderful wine of His Spirit. It is through this ecstasy that our houses are filled with His joy.

As we taste this joy, we become spiritual swashbucklers who laugh in the face of fear. Winston Churchill said, "I like a man who grins when he fights." Our Lord also likes His soldiers to smile as they brandish their spiritual swords. The great healing evangelist Smith Wigglesworth said that the goal of his ministry was to fill the believer with faith which would "laugh at the impossible." Such laughter reflects a heart full of confidence, cheer and hope in our King.

> ***Let the Godly ones exult in glory; Let them sing for joy on their beds.***
> ***Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,***
> ***And a two-edged sword in their hand*** (Psalm 149:5-6).

DAY 23

"BE STRONG, AND LET US SHOW OURSELVES COURAGEOUS FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PEOPLE AND FOR THE CITIES OF OUR GOD; AND MAY THE LORD DO WHAT IS GOOD IN HIS SIGHT."

I CHRONICLES 19:13

The battle cry is a key to victory for every spiritual warrior. It states the purpose of his mission. It fuels his heart with passion for combat. Most importantly, it declares the glory of the King he serves. In the above verse, Joab gives the battle cry to his men as they are surrounded by the Ammonites and Arameans. The battle that followed saw both enemy armies flee before Israel.

England's most popular King was Henry V. His life ablaze with heroic exploits, he was truly a Christian man of war. He would not allow his bent sword and dented helmet to be put on display after his legendary victory at Agincourt. He feared it would rob God of the glory in giving the English such a great victory. Henry's use of the battle cry was legendary. Shakespeare emphasized this in Henry V when the King gives the battle cry as his exhausted army seeks to charge a breach in the enemy wall:

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with your English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of a tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favored rage;
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect. . . .
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height.

Battle cries do not speak to the mind but to the gut. A Ukrainian proverb of war states, "When the flag is flying, all reason is in the trumpet." When the glorious flag of our

Lord is flying over our lives, our reason no longer lives in our self-will. Our reason lives only in our trumpet call to battle. Search the scriptures for the Lord's battle cries. They will inspire, strengthen and direct you to plunder the enemy. "Then the men of Judah raised a war cry, and when the men of Judah raised the war cry, then it was that God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah" (2 Chronicles 13:15).

Let the Lord's mighty men receive the revelation of the battle cry. Every warrior must have the coals of his zeal stoked to battle the spiritual forces of darkness. He must first inquire of the Lord as to the day's battle. He must search his own heart to make sure it is pure before his Master. His purpose must be for the glory of his King and not for himself. When the warrior has this focus of spirit, then let the battle cry ring out and the enemies of God be scattered! "The Lord will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies" (Isaiah 42:13).

DAY 24
"BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS"
JOSHUA 1:7

The coin of the realm for the spiritual warrior is strength and courage. Every mighty man needs a "gut check" for these two treasures. Without strength and courage burning in our belly, our faith walk is week-kneed and lily-livered. Three times in Joshua 1 the Lord exhorted His people to be strong and courageous as they stormed the Promised Land. The Apostle Paul gives us like charge: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13). Just as atoms are brought together in violent collision to produce nuclear power, so are strength and courage the twin dynamos that energize our faith to overcome the world.

Something is missing in the faith that is preached today. We are taught that faith is mental agreement with the word of God. We keep agreeing, yet keep losing the daily battles with Satan. The missing element is in the realm of the gut. Here the battle of faith is truly fought.

Mere mental assent is just wishing and takes no strength or courage. Gut assent is deepest desire ignited by all the strength and courage a mighty man can muster. A.W. Tozer said, "It may be said without qualification that every man is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wants to be. He may not be as full as he wishes he were, but he is most

certainly as full as he wants to be." True faith is born in the bowels of passionate "wanting" rather than the stagnant waters of mental "wishing."

The Jews believed the deepest affections of man were related to the area of the kidneys and bowels. The King James translates this place as the "reins" (Psalm 7:9). The New American Standard translates this area as the "inward parts" (Psalm 139:13) and "inmost being" (Proverbs 23:16). Common sense translates this word as "guts." Jesus confirmed this when He said, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38 KJV). Fox's Book of Martyrs describes Martin Luther having "stoutness of stomach" as he single-handedly fought the apostasy of the Holy Roman Empire. Let every mighty man seize this same stoutness of gut in the battle against evil.

Legendary Olympic runner Steve Prefontaine said, "A lot of people run a race to see who's the fastest. I run to see who has the most guts." Prefontaine understood the currency of true competition is not ability, but inner desire. Spiritually, God also values guts above ability for "the race is not to the swift" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). The spiritual "race" is won with gut wrenching "endurance" that refuses to "lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1-4).

Disraeli said, "Man is only truly great when he acts from the passions." Let every mighty man aspire to passionate greatness in the service of our Lord. Men feel the most alive and are the most successful when their guts are on fire. This holds true in war, sports and love. True passion flows from the belly in the form of excitement, desire and effort. Value strength and courage as the fuel of faith which puts lightning in your belly and victory in your life. Remember, spiritual strength plus spiritual courage equals spiritual guts. Solve the equation now by fervently seeking God for this blessing. "On the day I called Thou didst answer me; Thou didst make me bold with strength in my soul" (Psalm 138:3).

DAY 25

"BENJAMIN IS A RAVENOUS WOLF; IN THE MORNING HE DEVOURS THE PREY, AND IN THE EVENING HE DIVIDES THE SPOIL."

GENESIS 49:27

The goal of spiritual warfare is to plunder the enemy. True warriors of faith keep their hands gripped on their spiritual swords ever ready to attack and plunder Satan. Each day the Lord has a parcel of spiritual blessings allotted to us for our great benefit. These blessings include deliverance, zeal for the Lord, spiritual gifts, joy, peace, love and wisdom. However, these blessings of God are locked away in enemy strongholds. The only way to

lay hold of these treasures is to pummel and pillage the hosts of hell. Through these raids on the enemy our spiritual weapons are honed and tested for battle.

God has always exhorted His spiritual soldiers to plunder the enemy. God commanded Moses to deliver His people and "to plunder the Egyptians" in the process (Exodus 3:22). In the wilderness wanderings, God likewise instructed Israel to "divide the booty between the warriors who went out to battle and all the congregation" (Numbers 31:27). Finally, as Israel waged war against the Canaanites for the Promised Land, "all the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder" (Joshua 11:14).

The greatest warriors of the Bible were also the greatest plunderers. King David plundered his lambs from the mouths of lions, his sword from Goliath and his crown from an Ammonite king (1 Samuel 17:34-37, 48-54; 2 Samuel 12:29-31). Samson plundered clothes from the Philistines (Judges 14:19). Gideon plundered gold from the Midianites (Judges 8:22-26). God instructed His mighty men as they raided the wicked city of Nineveh to "Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! For there is no limit to the treasure -- Wealth from every kind of desirable object" (Nahum 2:9). In these scriptures we see a deep truth: "the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous" (Proverbs 13:22).

The Lord Jesus is the greatest plunderer of all. Colossians 2:15 paints Him as a triumphant warrior leading a victory parade displaying the plunder He seized in defeating all the demons of hell. Isaiah 53:12 prophesies the resurrected Jesus "will divide the booty with the strong." Jesus described Himself as a strong raider who overpowers Satan and "distributes his plunder" (Luke 11:22). All mighty men must join our Lord in plundering the enemy. Charles Wesley once exhorted his brother-in-spiritual-arms George Whitefield: "Go where the darkest tempest lowers, Thy foes, triumphant wrestler, foil; Thrones, principalities and powers, Engage, o'ercome, and take the spoil."

The riches your spirit hungers for can come only from persistently plundering Satan's strongholds in your life. As an example, the stronghold of lust imprisons the blessing of zeal for the Lord. As lust is driven out by the Holy Spirit, the same energy once used for perverted fantasies is now used to fervently love God. The stronghold of pride imprisons a victorious confidence in God. As this stronghold comes down, vain thoughts of self-promotion are replaced with bold vision of God's might and goodness. Every such stronghold of sin has a powerful blessing chained in its dungeon. We must become righteous Robin Hoods who rob from the demonically rich and give to the spiritually poor. All the weapons you need are faith, the word of God and the Holy Spirit. Gird your sword and start pillaging the enemy now! "Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord" (1 Samuel 30:26).

DAY 26

"THOUGH A RIGHTEOUS MAN FALLS SEVEN TIMES, HE RISES AGAIN"

PROVERBS 24:16

The label "iron man" is reserved for a special kind of mighty man. This hero never gives up, never lets up and always rises up. This title of honor is reserved for overcomers.

In sports, an iron man is an athlete who always takes the field of play. He continues to play wholeheartedly through injury, fatigue and adversity. He trains tough, plays tough and recovers tough. He refuses to quit, relax or compromise in the pursuit of victory. This attitude burned bright in boxer Gentleman Jim Corbett. He once fought a sixty round fight and was the only man to ever defeat the legendary John L. Sullivan. "Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired that you have to shuffle back to the center of the ring, fight one more round. When your arms are so tired that you can hardly lift your hands to come on guard, fight one more round. When your nose is bleeding and your eyes are black and you are so tired that you wish your opponent would crack you in the jaw and put you to sleep, fight one more round. Remember that the man who always fights one more round is never whipped." Warrior, take these words to heart as you answer the bell each day in your brutal boxing match against Satan. No matter your condition, your dogged attitude must always be to "fight one more round."

In war, an iron man is a soldier who never tires of the fight. Napoleon said: "The first qualification of a soldier is fortitude under fatigue and privation. Courage is only the second; hardships, poverty and want are the best school for a soldier." Winston Churchill personified this character when he exhorted the French resistance during Nazi occupation to "NEVER STOP, NEVER WEARY, AND NEVER GIVE IN." Let this be our spiritual battle cry for today and always: to never stop following hard after God, to never weary of the fight of faith, and to never give in to Satan's occupation.

The Apostle Paul cites this same virtue when he commands us to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Von Clausewitz in his classic *On War* uses the terms "staunchness" and "endurance" to deepen our understanding of a soldier's steadfastness: "Staunchness indicates the will's resistance to a single blow; endurance refers to prolonged resistance." As God's iron man, you must have staunchness to resist Satan's knockout punch and endurance to resist his constant jabbing. His knockout punch comes wrapped in one disastrous event meant to cripple your faith. His jabs are the daily attacks meant to wear you down into surrender. Iron men withstand both kinds of blows.

God describes His iron men in James 5:10-11: "As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we count those blessed who endured." One such iron man was the prophet Ezekiel. In preparation for spiritual battle, God gave him a forehead harder than flint (Ezekiel 3:9). Ezekiel could take a punch. Knocked down maybe. Knocked out never! Just as our Lord refused to stay dead in the grave, so must we. Armed with His resurrection power, there is nothing that can keep us on the mat of defeat. Rise up warrior and get back in the fight! The Lord's iron men "Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary" (Isaiah 40:31).

DAY 27

"AND THOU SHALT HAVE A PADDLE UPON THY WEAPON THOU SHALT DIG THEREWITH, AND SHALL TURN BACK AND COVER THAT WHICH COMETH FROM THEE"

DEUTERONOMY 23:13 (KJV)

God gives us divinely powerful weapons for two purposes. The first is to slay the demonic enemy in front of us. The second is to bury our sinful waste behind us. Faith demands all out violence on the enemy. Holiness demands all out cleanliness in our own camp. "Since the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you lest He turn away from you" (Deuteronomy 23:14).

Webster's defines human waste as material "excreted from the body as useless or superfluous." In other words, waste is substance which has no benefit for the owner. For the spiritual warrior, waste is anything the Holy Spirit has ejected from our inner man. It may be past sins. It may be past demonic strongholds. It may be past failures or mistakes. It may be past fears. It may even be past theology or beliefs which have produced no true life in us. In short, spiritual waste is the darkness God's holy presence drives out of our being.

God commanded Israel to bury all their physical waste. God's command to us is to bury all our spiritual waste. Many warriors are weak today because they have not buried their past. They may have received the Lord's forgiveness. They may have received the Lord's deliverance. They may have been filled with divine revelation about their condition. Yet, they have failed to bury their refuse out of sight and smell. The foul stench and horrid image combine to distract the soldier. The troubled warrior then wrestles with past sins,

failures and mistakes. He questions his own calling. Unworthiness burdens his bones. The smell of his past burns his nostrils with disgust.

Enough! Put your paddle on your sword and start digging. God does not want you paralyzed with the past. He wants you energized with His presence. He wants your conscience crystal clear. He wants your heart full of confidence and cheer. Does your past sin taunt your memories? Repent and bury the guilt. Do you come out of a lifestyle of adultery, pornography, homosexuality, drugs, alcohol or abuse? Get delivered and bury the shame. Do past failures or mistakes chain your faith to the wall of fear? Receive truth and bury the condemnation. Does a bad day knock you out of the saddle for weeks? Bury the setback and charge the enemy. Put your confidence in this: "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). Every mighty man must likewise distance himself from the vile waste of his past.

"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:21). Warrior, keep your King's commandment. Use the blade end of your spiritual sword to gut the enemy. Use the other end as a shovel. Bury the spiritual waste that seeks to defile your conscience before God. Know that in the Lord's breast there is full, final and perfect forgiveness: "let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

DAY 28

"I ENTRUST TO YOU . . . IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPHECIES PREVIOUSLY MADE CONCERNING YOU, THAT BY THEM YOU MAY FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT"

1 TIMOTHY 1:18

A soldier must have marching orders. They state his mission, method and motive for battle. By them the soldier is empowered to victory. Henry IV, at the Battle of Ivry, commanded his army: "I am your king. You are a Frenchman. There is the enemy. Charge!" God also gives his mighty men clear marching orders. He uses scripture, preaching and teaching. But God's most awe-inspiring orders come by the prophetic.

In the above verse, the apostle Paul exhorts his spiritual son Timothy to wage war with prophetic weapons. These weapons were prophecies Timothy had received from Paul concerning his gifts and ministry calling. The prophecies were bright flares of faith which

would lift Timothy's head to the heavens and spur him on to battle. Paul knew all dark discouragement would flee before such prophetic fireworks.

Amos 8:11 describes the deadliest form of famine, "Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the Lord." This kind of famine disarms the soldier. It deprives him of the prophetic bread, meat and water he needs to wage combat. Warrior, does this famine afflict you? Do you feel spiritually starved? Are you too weak to pick up your sword? Is surrender becoming an option? Or worse, have you called a truce with the enemy because you have lost the will to fight?

Hear your Lord's marching orders. "A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power. For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory" (Proverbs 24:5-6). Prophets today are commandos who arm the saints with "weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left" (2 Corinthians 6:7). These weapons build up faith and tear down fear: "one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (1 Corinthians 14:3). For the mighty man, prophetic counsel supplies protein to the spirit and energy for the battle.

When King Saul led Israel against the Philistines, he foolishly forbade his weary men to eat the flow of honey which covered the forest they traveled (1 Samuel 14:24-46). Saul's personal agenda was more important to him than the welfare of his men. His only desire was to personally avenge himself on the Philistines. The valiant Jonathan did not hear his father's order not to eat the honey. He tasted of it and "his eyes brightened" (1 Samuel 14:27). The rest of the army wearily fought on. Though Israel won the day, the slaughter of the Philistines was not great. In fact, only the presence of the honey-energized Jonathan "brought about this great deliverance in Israel" (1 Samuel 14:45).

Beloved, prophecy is sweet honey covering the spiritual forest before you. Eating it will brighten your eyes and quicken your step. Many forbid to you eat the honey because it does not fit their agenda of theology or control. You must turn a deaf ear to their foolishness. "Desire earnestly" and "especially" to give prophecy and to receive it (1 Corinthians 14:1). For a soldier, a prophetic word is a medal of honor the Holy Spirit pins on our chest. It may be for past valor. It may be for future valor. Either way, we are to draw strength for the fight and "press on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

DAY 29

"I PURSUED MY ENEMIES AND OVERTOOK THEM, AND I DID NOT TURN BACK UNTIL THEY WERE CONSUMED. I SHATTERED THEM, SO THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO RISE; THEY FELL UNDER MY FEET."

PSALM 18:37, 38

No prisoners. Shoot on sight. Shoot to kill. No quarter asked. No quarter given. These commands are the rules of engagement you are to use against the armies of hell. Anything less invites defeat. Follow these rules and you will walk as a champion of God.

In the heart of every mighty man, there is a Kingdom in conflict. There is a good and powerful King Jehovah. There is an evil rebel leader Satan. There are faithful knights like Moses and wicked renegades like Korah. There are sincere sympathizers like Rahab and lying spies like Delilah. There are strongholds of good like Jerusalem and strongholds of evil like Jericho. There are mountains of blessing like Mount Gerizm and mountains of cursing like Mount Ebal. As these forces do battle within us, each side seeks to expand their possession of the heartland. If you seek absolute victory for your King, you must have absolute obedience to these rules of engagement. Remember, Israel's greatest sin was their failure to follow God's rules of engagement (Psalm 106:34-40). Obey them.

First, no prisoners. Every devil must go. Every stronghold of sin must be razed to the ground. Every undercover agent of evil emotion must be exposed and killed. Every spiritually rebellious thought must be assassinated. Every lustful collaborator who has accepted the bribe of the enemy must be executed for high treason. "For the weapons of our warfare are . . . divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).

Second, shoot on sight and shoot to kill. Our battle with evil is like a western gunfight. The fastest draw wins. No explanation. No warnings. No threats. No tolerance. We are not called to be fair with devils. We are called to massacre them. We can shoot them in the back. We can ambush them. We can draw first. We can joyfully aim between the eyes. The only good devil is a dead devil. "I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets" (Psalm 18:42).

Third, no quarter asked and none given. In other words, once you draw your sword on the prince of evil, throw away the scabbard. There will be no truce or cease-fire. There is no room for self-pity, compromise or surrender. The devils will stroke such weakness to

their own advantage. They may bring you offerings of peace, but rest assured they will be laced with poison. As a mighty man, you must fight until your hand freezes to the sword (2 Samuel 23:10). When you cross this threshold of endurance, hell will hear of your faith and tremble.

King Agis of Sparta described his warriors this way: "The Spartans are not wont to ask how many the enemies are, but where they are." Our King seeks the same ruthless attitude in us. Jesus was ruthless with Satan. He could say after His lifelong duel with the devil: "the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me" (John 14:30). Mighty men must also be ruthless in rooting all evil out of their heartlands. Let every mighty man fight furiously until he can declare in faith, "Satan has no place in me!"

DAY 30

"TAKE . . . THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD"

EPHESIANS 6:17

The sword is the symbol of war, strength and honor. Richard F. Burton, in his classic *The Book of the Sword*, declares the sword to be, "the best friend of bravery, and the worst foe of perfidy; the companion of authority, and the token of commandment; the outward and visible sign of force and fidelity, of conquest and dominion, of all that Humanity wants to have and wants to be." By the sword heroes are knighted, kingdoms are won and evil is vanquished.

The sword of the spirit is the Word of God. Everything the physical sword means to the physical warrior, the Word of God means to the spiritual warrior. The Word is the best friend of the brave heart and the worst enemy of the hard heart. The Word is our arsenal of authority as soldiers in the Kingdom of God. By it we walk in conquest and dominion over Satan. From it we draw on the faith, love and power of our Christ.

Are you ready to walk as a knight of the Holy Spirit? Then, you must master the sword. First, joyously covet the riches that await you in His Word: "I rejoice at Thy word, As one who finds great spoil" (Psalm 119:162). Second, eagerly seek *His* guidance through *His* Word: "Establish my footsteps in Thy word, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me." (Psalm 119:133). Third, draw your combat power from His Word: "Strengthen me according to Thy word" (Psalm 119:28). Fourth, allow His Word to expose, attack and conquer all areas of rebellion in your body, soul and spirit: "Deliver me according to Thy word" (Psalm 119:170). Finally, release His Word to liberate others oppressed by Satan:

"He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions" (Psalm 107:20).

Warrior, the key skill you must develop as a master swordsman is wielding the spoken Word against the enemy. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). Ephesians 6:17 translates "word" from the Greek "rhema" which literally means the spoken word. Thus, the sword of the spirit is not held by the hand, but with the mouth. The tongue is the hilt of the sword. The Word of God is the blade. Jesus is pictured in Revelation 19:11-16 as a fierce warrior whose name is "The Word of God" and "from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations." We must follow our Captain's lead. Beloved, your sword of absolute victory must be forged on the anvil of your speech.

Take the Word sown in your heart and temper it with your tongue. Boldly declare out loud scripture, prophecy and spiritual prayer. Speaking the Word honors God, strengthens you, shreds devils and sets captives free. Honor God by declaring praise verses to the heavens. Strengthen yourself by zealously quoting the promises of God for your life. Shred devils by ferociously hurling scriptural battle cries at their trembling strongholds. Finally, free others by fueling the Word of life into their parched hearts.

Legend tells of a sword firmly imbedded in stone. The man able to pull out the sword would win the crown. Many tried, but only one man of destiny succeeded -- King Arthur. Warrior, *your* spiritual sword lies firmly imbedded in the Rock of Ages. You alone can withdraw and wield it. Seize your destiny by its hilt and pull with all your desire. Fulfill your high calling by walking as a king on the earth (Revelation 5:10 KJV).