

Militant Christianity

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The radicals and liberals in our society have put the term *militant* in bad company for many of us. In their militant campaigns on college campuses and in street demonstrations, their nasty and noisy tactics, usually resulting in bloodshed, they have caused saner souls to shrink from anything that resembles their temperament. However, it is never right to use the abuse of a principle to deny the principle itself. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is loaded with military figures and terms designed to inspire Christians to be militant servants of Christ. Perhaps a brief study of them will increase our courage and valor.

The Christian life is compared to a war in which we seek to overthrow spiritual, rather than material fortresses (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Timothy is urged to “war the good warfare (1 Tim. 1:18.) One of the great enemies we face is “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11).

Combatants in warfare are “**soldiers**,” who must be willing to suffer for the cause for which they contend; a “**good soldier**” will suffer hardship for Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:3). An honorable soldier seeks to obey his Commander and denies himself any entangling alliances that would hinder this purpose (2 Tim. 2:4). Paul considered himself a “**soldier**” of Christ and named Epaphroditus and Archippus as “**fellow soldiers**.” (Phi. 2:25; Phm. 2).

We are not participants in mock battles, but the “**fight**” is real. The Christian “**soldier**” is on the side of all things good and true and must “**fight the good fight of the faith**” (1 Tim. 6:12). Paul, ever the one to practice what he preached, could say at the close of his life, “**I have fought the good fight**” (2 Tim. 4:7). If we fail to “**resist the devil**” (Jam 4:7), we will become part of his “**spoils**” (military booty) of war (1 Cor. 2:8).

Our “**Commander in Chief**” (1 Tim. 6:14-16) has equipped His army very well. We have “**weapons**” (2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 4:1) and “**armor**” (Rom. 13:12, 2 Cor. 10:6:7; Eph. 6:11). Our “**armor**” includes “**truth**,” “**righteousness**,” **the Gospel of peace**,” “**faith**,” “**hope**” and “**prayer**” (1 The. 5:8; Eph 6:13-18). This is the “**whole armor of God**,” and we cannot dispense with any part of it if we hope to “**stand**” (Eph. 6:11). Our mighty offensive weapon is the all-sufficient “**sword of the Spirit**,” the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

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