

# THE CHRISTIAN ARMY

By: Bill Richardson      Edited by: Fay Camp

In this study we would do well to note first, that Army and Armies are mentioned and spoken of over a hundred and twenty five times in the bible. To preface Army with "Christian" gives cause for us to be more aware and to have a stronger desire to study. Take note of, and take interest in what, why, and how we are to be involved in the "The Christian Army."

Let's begin by looking at an Army (without the preface) and note if there is a parallel to the Christian Army. We know that armies are involved in warfare. An army is defined by the dictionary as men organized and disciplined who are trained, prepared, and ready for battle.

With only this said we know that there are applications which can be made to the Christian Army. Knowing this we must let it have place in our duty and responsibility as soldiers, as "A Soldier of the Cross."

In Civil Government, presently, men and women are not drafted. They enlist in the army voluntarily. They are assembled and trained to become proficient in their duties and responsibilities. But that is not voluntary! Their training is a strenuous regiment of highly organized and technically detailed training. It includes bookwork, fieldwork, practice, and on-the-job-training called drills. This way they are ready when called to arms. In fact it could be determined as a matter of life or death under certain situations and conditions. Believe me, soldiers know this...they were taught it, they take it seriously, and they learn.

The soldiers know their Commander In Chief as well as the chain of command up and down. There are many things which can be said of armies and civil duties etc. But the need which we have and which this study is all about is discussing and admonishing one another to enlist in the Christian army, accept the inherent training, gain the knowledge of duty, and the acceptance of performance of duty in diligent perseverance. The reason for doing so.....because the old devil is out there as a roaring lion waiting to devour whomever he can, 1 Peter 5:8. Yes, the devil is one of the enemies which the Christian Army must engage in warfare. In all diligence and perseverance, as already stated, we must engage the devil in warfare.

Get your mind set again on the design and purpose of an army that is organized and disciplined for battle. Now think of the Christian Army and duty or challenge and warfare against an enemy. The Christian Army must be organized and disciplined for battle.

There are many and varied enemies which we must engage in warfare. One has already been named above, (the devil). The seriousness in which we recognize and realize the danger of enemy, defeat of the enemy should be our motivation for

enlisting in God's army. Knowing that victory or defeat means eternal suffering or eternal joy should motivate anyone to take the battle seriously.

The Christian army is in battle and warfare against the world. The counsel given by the bondservant is, "You do know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? *"Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (James 4:4).

Do we know the definition of enemy and enmity? They are synonymous words. As far as I am concerned they are two ugly words. They are wrapped up in ugliness. You've heard the expression I'm sure, "Ugly-as-sin?" That's what those words are; sin! (Enmity: plain and simple is hostility!

Let's look at the counsel of 1 John 2:15-17, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world...the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...are not of the Father but are of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*

Yes the seriousness of the battle can be comprehended when we examine our enemy whom we should, "check-out" against God's word. Thus, "know your enemy!" Know also; he who does the will of God abides forever.

There are many enemies, which engage the Christians' warfare. Now study with me the warfare against the flesh. When we walk in the Spirit we are not in warfare with the flesh. The problem is the sinful human nature is directly opposite to living under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says in Galatians:

*"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law, (the law of condemnation). Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions dissensions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in times past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God",* Galatians 5:17-21.

How does the last statement in the above-cited scripture affect your thinking? The last part of Galatians 5:21, *"...those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God."* What should one think? When we come to the knowledge that our soul *will not inherit the Kingdom of God...* friend, be frightened! If we are not in

God's Army and in warfare against those things, which are listed in the scripture cited above, we better be doing that which we are OBLIGATED to do. War against the flesh in a war for life and that's why diligence and perseverance in doing HIS WILL must be strong and constant in our life. The works of the flesh are not to be practiced, as we have been told in the past.

This writer confesses to you, I am full of human nature. I am weak and sinful! I am in God's company every day and I pray multiple times a day, confessing to God and begging for forgiveness and strength. I pray for His strength of help. I am in the Christian Army, and I am engaged in warfare against the flesh. I am so wonderfully blessed to be in God's Army with the Saints of His church of Christ. I need all of my brothers and sisters, and my needs are for us to be on active duty together. We need each other. Our help-needs are bound to each other; I need you...all of you, all of us need God! However, we each have individual responsibilities, and I know that.

As a member of the Christian Army, we must be at war against the third named enemy herein, and it is "evil men"... against spiritual degeneration of evil men. There is a lengthy list of these evil men or persons in 2 Timothy 3:2-5. Verse 3:1 is a preface verse that to me is a warning of sorts when it says that this spiritual degeneration will be in the last days and there will be perilous times. The last days started at Christ's death and will be, or last, until His Second Coming. We are in that time now and it is a period of difficulty and should grieve all Christians.

Here now is the list of "evil man" from 2 Timothy 3:2-5: *"For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away."*

We are warned against false teachers and are to be in warfare against them. As a matter of fact, anyone or anything that is false is of the devil and is in opposition to purity and thus against God. As Soldiers we must resist all that which is not pure.

If anyone's conduct is not worthy of the gospel of Christ they are false. Paul in his address to the saints in Philippi, Philippians 1: 27 beginning, he urged the church to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not to be terrified by their adversaries... That is advising of strength!

Note: Matthew 24:5 and 24, *"For many will come in My name saying, 'I am Christ', and will deceive many. For false christs' and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

Read with me here, 2 Peter 2:1, *"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them. And bring on themselves swift destruction."* The Christian Army must be at war against false teachers. It is one of our duties, a duty of a soldier of the cross.

Let's notice the counsel of 1 Timothy 4:12, 13, *"... be an example to believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."* I say this! This is great and needed counsel that Christians must follow. In doing so a Christian is abiding in the Word, in proper conduct, in love, in *spirit*, in *faith*, in *purity*, and I think that about covers it.

What do you say? What a blessing this will be to us if we are faithful to those named Christian attributes! And Abide in Him always! We truly will be a great example and leaders that we are supposed to be. We must and it is expected of us. And— well... it's commanded!

We are counseled by God's word that as a Christian, Christian soldier, we will, the bible says "shall", endure hardship, fiery trials, and such like. And to the point and condition *that we think some strange things are happening to us.* (Note 1 Peter 4:12).

*"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"* (2 Timothy 2:3). This will strengthen us. In our service as good soldiers there are the lessons of realization of a soldier's endurance, discipline, and perseverance. In this we can, we must, rejoice to the extent that we are partakers of Christ's suffering, *that when His glory is revealed, we may also be glad with exceeding joy,* (1 Peter 4:12-13). Suffering for Christ makes us partners with Him in His work.

The duty badges of the Christian soldiers are: enduring hardship (2 Timothy 2:3); show courage (2 Timothy 4:7-8); fight hard (1 Timothy 6:12); be pure (1 Peter 2:11-12); be alert (1 Peter 5:8); be faithful (1 Timothy 1:18-2).

The Christian Army—a great "outfit"! And just think; if you are a Christian you are one of the Christian Army soldiers. Are you as described a good *soldier*?

The Christian Army soldier has more identifying badges, two of which are enclosed and described on pages 5 and 6. Be sure to include those qualifications on your honor badge description. Note question and answers of who we are on page 6. Amen!

If you are not a Christian, not a Christian Army soldier, do you want to be one? I hope you want to enlist if you're not. The enclosure page 7 and 8, "What One Must Do To Be Saved", explains the enlistment procedures. The enclosure page 9 is the danger warnings of "Procrastination" Please study it and all advice of the lesson and make the right decision. God will bless you if you do.

You are invited to study with us again. It is hoped that you will. Love You! God Bless! Your servant...

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## DO WE HAVE A SERVANTS HEART

By: Ray Varner – Member, Church of Christ at North Cobb, Kennesaw, GA

Our Lord taught that if we would be truly great in His Kingdom, we must develop a servant's heart. *"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant"* (Matthew 23:11). If we understand this truth, then we will be working more and more to acquire the attitudes and characteristics of a servant. What are some of them?

If I possess a servant's heart, then I will be ready and willing to do any job that needs to be done—even when it is not the job that I really wanted to do. Some tasks are difficult and receive little recognition, but I'll do these anyway. After all, I shouldn't do my works to be *"seen of men"* (Matthew 6:1ff).

With a servant's heart I will worry less (ultimately none at all) about how others serve me, and I will be more and more interested in finding ways to serve others. *"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant"* (Matthew 20:26-27).

As a faithful servant, I will not be rebellious against God, the things in His Word, or to those who are in authority over me (elders, parents, employers. etc.). To do so would be completely contradictory to the whole notion of servant hood (1 Peter 5:5-7).

As I grow in these attributes of a servant, I will begin to see my needs and myself as less important in the "bigger scheme" of things. *"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"* (Romans 12:3).

And finally, as a servant who is seeking to please God, I will grow in the realization that my work is never done—that I have never done as much as I could have or should have done. *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say. We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty"* (Luke 17:10).

Is your heart as a servant's heart? If not, why not start being a true servant today; Love you all, Ray

## WHO ARE WE? III

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Street Church of Christ

The question of who we really are as the church has a multifaceted answer. One facet is this: The church is the family of God. This is based on 1 Timothy 3:14-15 which says, *“These things I write to you, although I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”*

We first note that the passage says *“house”* and not *“family.”* Upon examination and study we find that the word translated *“house”* (OLKOG in Greek) can mean a number of related things. It can mean a mere building, a physical dwelling place. It can mean a place where a human resides, the body itself. It can mean a large building of any sort. But it can also mean *“household”* in the sense of a family. How may we know what the meaning might be in each instance? The context provides the answer.

In the case of 1 Timothy 3:14-15 the context is clear. In 3:4 and following the word is used about a qualified elder who would rule *“his own house well, having his children in submission, with all reverence.”* Here it is easily seen that something like the physical building is not the meaning...it is the man's *family* that he is to lead. The same word is used in the same way about the deacons and their families (3:12). So it is the case that in the verses just before 3:14-15, the word *“house”* is used in the sense of *“family.”* So then we understand correctly that the church is the family of God.

This is a good thing. Everyone understands what it means to be part of a good family. Families have all kinds of folks in them, all ages, abilities and personalities. But they are, when properly constituted and led, ruled by a common love and concern for each other. This is the hallmark of family. It can and should be the place where you find peace, hope and love. It is the place where folks expect you to behave, but will always give you another chance if you'll straighten up and fly right.

So the church is God's family. But it is more. It is a family with an awesome responsibility. Our text tells us that it is the *“pillar and ground of the truth.”* It is the support and foundation of the truth. Who are we, indeed? We are God's family with a message. And that message is the truth of and about Jesus Christ (John 8:32).

## WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

There are five acts of obedience that one must be diligent to manifest in their life and to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" They are:

1. Hear God's Word. (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:23).
2. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repent of passed sins. (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confess Christ as the Son of God. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).
5. Be baptized (immersed) into Christ for remission (forgiveness) of past sins. (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; and Romans 6:3-4).

\*\*NOTE\*\*: After obedience to the above five steps live faithful unto death and He will give you the crown of life (1 Peter 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10).

Framing of these acts are listed below for learning and obeying, and for teaching of obedience.

1). HEAR GOD'S WORD: (Romans 10:14, 17), *"How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?"*

*"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."*

Faith developed by hearing the Word precedes all acts that one must do to be saved.

Faith is our confidence in and the realization of our dependence on and great need to be obedient to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To attain those attributes one must hear the Word and gain knowledge from the Word so as to know one's duty and responsibility.

This is such a great blessing! Always covet this great blessing when being taught to gain knowledge for obedience and teach this great-coveted blessing to others after their obedience.

Anytime the New Testament speaks of being saved "by faith," it is referring to a faith that includes whatever action God specifies as necessary. This is made clear in James 2:22: *"Do you see that faith was working together with His works, and by works faith was made perfect?"* Notice his concluding remarks in James 2:24, 26: *"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*

2). BELIEVE: (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:10), Faith alone will not save.

Faith in JESUS CHRIST developed into confessed belief is just the beginning. If you confess with your mouth the LORD JESUS and believe in your heart and faith that GOD has raised CHRIST from the dead, you will be saved.

3.) REPENT: Man is a sinful creature! (Acts 17:30) teaches us that, *“In times past, time of ignorance God overlooked, but now HE commands all men everywhere to repent.”* Repentance is expressed by remorse or regret for past wrongful acts done or of the failure of not doing, and with determination changes to one’s heart to do good and to do GOD’S will.

4.) CONFESS: (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32, 33), JESUS said, *“Who ever confess HIM before men, HE will confess them before MY FATHER who is in Heaven.”* The confession one makes is the belief that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of God. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

5.) BE IMMersed- (BAPTIZED) (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5). After the acts of 1 through 4 above one is baptized into Christ. Jesus died, was buried, and was resurrected on the third day. The act of baptism symbolizes a death, a burial, and a resurrection. So the question, *“Why be baptized?”*

- A). for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT;
- B). to be saved;
- C). to put on CHRIST in baptism; and
- D). to be added to the church, THE BODY OF CHRIST!

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Jesus came from heaven for the express reason to *“seek and save the lost”* (Luke 19:10). Paul declared, *“...all have sinned and came short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). Everyone needs Jesus and without Him, there is NO salvation (Acts 4:12; John. 14:6).

Therefore, those that “obey him” (Heb. 5: 9) are saved. Obeying Jesus involves, faith (John. 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3, 5), confession (Mark 10:32, 33) and baptism (Mark 16:16). We must also remain faithful to Him (Revelation 2:10).

Remember, God is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus died for you and me.

These are TRUTHS’ of the Bible. These are words of truth to hear, or read, study, learn, accept, and obey, then live by them. May GOD bless us in our diligent effort in learning, obeying, and teaching these great truths to others and enjoying the blessings of them in our lives!

Please (I implore of you), use this outline and build on it when teaching others. Fold it up and keep it in your Bible. Please, pray always for the success of all our efforts in teaching and serving others, and in doing God’s Will.

## Searching the Scriptures

By: Mark N. Posey – Minister Austinville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL

QUESTION: How can I overcome procrastination?

ANSWER: Procrastination is a major cause of waste and failure. It means, “To defer action, delay, to procrastinate until an opportunity is lost.”

The Bible has many examples of people who failed to act when they should have. Luke 14:15-24 contains the parable of God’s invitation to man to partake of His blessings. However, the parable shows that many will not partake of God’s feast.

Some will defer because they have “bought a piece of ground” (Luke 15:18). Another said, “*I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them*” (Luke 15:19). A third said, “*I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come*” (Luke 15:20). They each deferred action and missed out on a wonderful opportunity; they procrastinated.

One way to avoid wasteful procrastination is by having the right value system. As seen in the parable of the Great Supper, each had their own priorities that kept them from accepting the invitation from God. “I do not have time to serve God,” simply means that people have priorities ahead of God.

We must first seek matters pertaining to God (Matthew 6:33). Successful people in the Bible were always people of immediacy; they did not defer (Acts 10:33; 16:33). It has been said that “tomorrow” is the busiest day of people alive. This is because many people defer until tomorrow what they should do today. Hence, they never really address and perform these tasks.

The emphasis of the scriptures is on “today,” not tomorrow (Hebrews 3:15). “For he saith,” Paul wrote, “*I have heard thee in a time acceptable, and in the day of salvation have I succored helped) thee: behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Beloved, opportunities are missed, lives are ruined, and souls are lost because of procrastination.

If there are any questions you want answered, please send them to the address below. If you would like to study the Bible, please send for a free Bible correspondent course.

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