

# A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

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As Paul wrote his last letter, he encouraged Timothy to endure hardship. He said, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3,4). The concept expressed by the apostle is “suffer hardship with me.” Persecution was rampant as Paul was imprisoned, and Timothy needed to endure persecution while he labors for the gospel.

In the first epistle to Timothy, Paul exhorted the young evangelist to “war the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18). The apostle, then, speaks of how one must do this. The Christian who wars the good warfare must not be involved with the affairs of this life in such a way as to take priority over the affairs of living as a Christian. What is really important in life is not what most people pursue which are the things of this world. What is really important are those treasures which our Lord spoke of when He said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). Wise Solomon realized the things “under the sun” (things of this life) are “vanity of vanities.” Therefore as Christians, we should pursue those things that will last throughout eternity and not those things that will be destroyed at our Lord’s second coming (2 Peter 3:10).

It is true that we live in the world, and there are some things about which we must be concerned. These things, however, are not to take priority over our soldiering! Remember it was Jesus who said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). God will take care of our necessities if we will put Him first in our lives! When we take a close look at our lives, we realize what we think are real problems are not the necessities of life, but those things beyond necessities — the luxuries of life. Luxuries seem to blur our vision of what is really important.

The good soldier makes the soldier’s sacrifice in order to “please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” The rewards of this sacrifice are found in verse 10, “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” By being a good soldier, one will both save himself, “and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

We noticed four most basic points as to the good soldier of Jesus Christ. First, the good soldier must endure hardship. We are in a battle, and with any battle, hardship must be endured. Second, the good soldier must not be so involved in the affairs of this life that he cannot “war the good warfare.” Third, the good soldier strives to please his commanding officer, the one who leads our ranks — Christ Jesus. Fourth, the good soldier will receive a reward if he will continue in

faithful service. That reward is salvation in Christ with eternal glory. The reward is worth the war!