



# Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 31.0

May 29  
2014

## Christian Maturity Through Battle

**“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh” (2 Corinthians 10:3).**

Paul often used the picture of a soldier as an illustration of the very real war Believers are in spiritually. While not perfect, this metaphor has profound implications for understanding how Christian maturity develops. For the sake of this illustration, let’s divide Christian maturity into 3 military classes: a new Recruit, an Officer Cadet or Private, and a War Veteran.

The immature Believer—recently saved or untested correlates to the new Recruit. If you’ve ever been around them, Recruits are often eager, and impatient to see action and apply what they “know” or what they’ve learned in “basic training.” They can project bravado and are often vocal about the “shortcomings” of others, which they see as a sign of weakness and inability. They may even believe their combat tactics, field training, and knowledge of “The Art of War,” mean they will come out of the fight unscathed.

Similarly, an immature Believer often has very strong viewpoints and can be judgmental of other Believers and how they are walking for the Lord. They don’t have a lot of grace for their brothers and sister in Faith. Just like a Recruit who hasn’t yet seen battle, this attitude often changes when they move on from training and become Privates on the ground in their first tour of duty. Here, the bullets begin to fly as they are dropped into a firefight in Vietnam or the shells begin to fall when their landing-craft doors open at Normandy Beach. Here, they watch helplessly as all their tactics and knowledge mean nothing to the stray bullet, “friendly fire,” or landmine. Strong men fall and weak men survive. War isn’t what they

thought it would be like and fear and shock take over as the blood begins to pour.

The Believer at this stage experiences their first suffering for Christ and may be overwhelmed by their trials. The “prosperity” gospel of health, wealth, and success is demolished in the face of persecution or physical pain. “God, why is this happening to me?”, “I followed the rules, why am I not winning?”, or “What did I do wrong?” are among the questions we often cry out at this stage as we begin to doubt our training and question God’s authority. We are in a state of crisis.

A soldier remains in this state of crisis until they accept the situation and proceed to obey their orders even if they don’t understand the “why.” Some Believers remain a long time in crisis—discontent, restless, flailing from one teaching to the next, searching for answers and a way out or a way forward other than the one they have been given: to obey the command of Jesus Christ to take up their cross and follow Him through the fire. Those that push forward in obedience now understand what Paul meant when he said, “*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 2:3) - unlike deserters who disregard their orders in order to “save themselves.”

Those that overcome are like a humble War Veteran. How often do you see a boastful or proud Veteran? Through obedience, they’ve come to know victory isn’t just about them, and they push forward in their work, intent on fulfilling their duty and completing their mission. They understand they have a role to play that may be different from others, so they support those other roles and strengthen weakness to make the whole unit strong. Similarly, mature Believers humbly obey Christ and support and encourage fellow believers selflessly. May we too be good soldiers, willing to serve and suffer for Christ—He is worth all! Amen.

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