

## **Good Soldiers**

### **1 Timothy 1:12-18**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Memorial Day is a day that we have set aside to remember those who have died and given their lives fighting for this country. It is a day to remember and honor those good soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice.
2. Did you know as Christians, we are commanded to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ? **2 Timothy 2:3**
3. Our commander is Jesus Christ. He is called "*the captain of our salvation*" in **Hebrews 2:10**.
4. What a commander in chief we have! Our commander didn't simply bask in the luxuries of heaven and send us into battle. He went before us! He left heaven, invaded enemy territory, and destroyed our enemy (Satan) by dying on the cross for the sins of mankind and rising up again the third day. **Hebrews 2:14-15;**  
**1 John 3:8b**
5. When we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are enlisted in God's army and God's desire is for us to be good soldiers and war a good warfare. **1 Timothy 1:18**
6. How can we be good soldiers for Jesus Christ? This text will explain and teach us.

#### **Good soldiers fulfill the assignment they have been given.**

1. A good soldier takes orders from his commander and does them - no questions asked. Imagine a private in boot camp taking an order from his sergeant and then saying, "That is an okay idea, Sarge, but I think I have a better way. What we need to do is..."
2. We laugh, but isn't that what we do many times with the commander in chief of this universe? The One who created everything and holds all power in His hand?
3. But the apostle Paul is a great example of a good soldier. Notice verse 12. God had called Paul into the ministry and Paul obeyed. It meant that Paul lost a lot (Paul had attained a very high position in Judaism as a Pharisee). It brought persecution.
4. Listen to Paul's testimony in **Philippians 3:5-8**. Paul says, "I gave up a lot, but I'd give up everything to follow my Savior, Jesus Christ." Spoken as a good soldier!
5. Jesus gave Paul an assignment - to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul fulfilled that assignment. **2 Timothy 4:7**
6. Paul isn't here any more. Paul gave his life for the cause of Christ. Do you believe there is a cause worth fighting for? Do you believe that souls are worth sacrificing for? What does God want you to do in His army?
7. Isn't it time to surrender to Him and fulfill the assignment you have been given?

#### **Good soldiers grow and change.**

1. I have had many good soldiers tell me that when you enlist in the armed forces and serve, you never come out the same. It changes you, usually for the good. (They instill in you character, diligence, discipline, a respect for authority.)
  - If a soldier in boot camp isn't willing to grow, learn, and change, he probably isn't going to make it. He won't make a good soldier.

2. In the same way, as a soldier in God's army, you should be growing, learning, and changing. You must be willing to grow and change.
3. Paul was a great soldier for Christ, but he wasn't always this way. vs. 13
4. When you enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ, His Spirit comes to live within you and begins changing you from the inside out. **2 Corinthians 5:17**
5. In the military, they know they must change the entire attitude and mind-set of the recruits. Rebellious attitudes must be dealt with and bad habits must be broken. They have to overhaul that recruit to where he/she can be useable and learn to take orders.
6. God's Holy Spirit takes the Word of God (sword of the Spirit) and begins to do this in **our** lives after we are saved. Have you been resisting the work God is trying to do in your life? Allow God to mold and shape you into what He wants you to be.

**Good soldiers understand their commander's purpose.**

1. A good soldier knows the heart and passion of his commander.
2. Do you know our commander's (Jesus Christ's) passion and purpose? Verse 15 makes it very clear. He came to save sinners.
3. He was so committed to this plan that Jesus endured the cross, paying the death payment for our sin, so that we could be saved and fully forgiven.
4. Paul knew that he was one of those sinners that Christ came to save. Paul knew where grace and love were to be found. vs. 14
5. If we are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we must understand Christ's purpose - His heartbeat. It is to save sinners. This should become our passion. If our commander cares, we should care.
6. Are you saved? Have you ever trusted Christ to save you from your sin?

**Good soldiers follow the correct pattern.**

1. In the military, they give you a pattern for how they want things done, and you better follow the pattern that is set. If you don't follow the pattern, it can be very detrimental.
2. Our Commander in Chief has given us a pattern to follow. vs. 16
3. God used the apostle Paul as our pattern in salvation. What a beautiful pattern.
  - Paul was Christ's chief enemy - the leader of rebellion against Christ.
  - In grace and mercy, God reached down and saved Paul and forgave him.
  - An unworthy sinner saved because *"the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant."*
4. Paul is our pattern. We, too, must admit that we are sinners and that we need a Savior. We must simply believe on Jesus Christ for our salvation.
5. What happens when we do this? Verse 16 declares that we receive everlasting life.
6. When we take our place with sinners and believe on Jesus Christ to save us, He transforms us from sinners to saints. He places His Spirit inside of us and begins to develop us into good soldiers for Jesus Christ.