



Links Players

A Good Soldier

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since he aims to please the one who enlisted him. (2 Timothy 2: 2-3, ESV)

Every golfer knows that playing golf occasionally requires a battle. We battle the elements, like the rain and wind! We battle our swings! We battle the obstacles of thick roughs, undulating greens, and deep bunkers.

Sometimes, we see matches as more than a friendly competition; we see them as metaphorical battles. Perhaps an inter-squad match between rival clubs has developed into an annual contest that supersedes bragging rights.

If you are a bit “long in the tooth,” you will remember the “War by the Shore,” the 1991 Ryder Cup. The best American players faced the best Europe had ever assembled on the fields of Kiawah Island. It was riveting! America triumphed! Unfortunately, some matches turned a bit ugly.

No one can forget watching Seve or Arnie play championship golf. It was like watching medieval knights slay dragons. Watching these two men attack a golf course indicated much more was at stake than going low. They, no doubt, set out to conquer the golf course. And, as they did, we were all drawn into the drama!

Golf is not always analogous to going to war. There are plenty of times when it is unimaginably peaceful. However, when it comes to competitive golf, the lead-up to the first tee is eerily similar to going into battle—heartbeats race, adrenaline rushes, and emotions are high.

All analogies break down, of course. Yet, there are striking similarities between battling at golf and battling in life. It doesn't take long to see that Scripture is filled with military metaphors. These military metaphors aren't empty rhetoric, either.

To follow Jesus Christ is depicted in Scripture as one who has been enlisted as a soldier in his spiritual army. We are to battle the “flesh,” that is, we are to battle our former manner of life, the “old man” under Adam. We are to battle demonic forces arrayed against the advance of Christ's reign. We are to battle ideas that raise themselves against the knowledge of God.

As Christians, we are in a battle where the stakes could not possibly be higher. Ultimately, we go into spiritual warfare so that we might please the one who enlisted us into his service.

It is helpful to consider what every soldier's life must include in preparation for war. Every soldier must honor and trust their commanding officer. Every soldier must train daily in anticipation of a heated battle. Every soldier must love their country. Every soldier must dress accordingly. Every soldier must be committed to their fellow soldier.

While there are more parallels between soldiering and following Christ, let's consider the following: To triumph over evil, we must deeply honor and revere our Captain—King Jesus. We must study and adopt our King's war strategy to prevail in battle. For Christians, that consists of regular prayer and studying God's word.

To win the day, we must love our nation- the church. If we are appropriately dressed for battle, it's because we've put on the armor of God. And, if we are genuinely committed to Christ and his army, no man is left behind. That is, we don't shoot the wounded. We put them on our backs and haul them to safety.

Paul is clear; we don't fight against "flesh and blood." Yet, we do battle. We fight against sin, Satan and his henchmen, and ideologies that contradict the truths found in Scripture.

Prayer- Lord! Train our hands for battle.

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