

A Three-Front War

Introduction. Those recognizing the sovereignty of, and pledging allegiance to, the God of the Universe are sometimes biblically described in military terms, such as a “soldier,” “armor,” and “war/warfare.” In keeping with the analogy, they are urged to take up a soldier’s mantra and methods (2 Timothy 2:3-4; Ephesians 6:10; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4). However, understand that this particular war is composed of at least three distinct battlefronts, where troops are in direct contact with the enemy.

I. Personal – The Battle For Self

- A. Each Christian soldier must first wage spiritual war for his own soul. Paul described this fight in Romans 7:13-23. While Paul was not talking about a battle while he was in Christ, every Christian soldier feels this way at times. We feel as if we are losing on this most important front. The fight against sin (Romans 1:28-31) and discouragement (Joshua 7:7-9) is an epic battle.
- B. But remember two critical points. First, as long as you feel this way, you have not lost yet — you are still fighting and have not surrendered. Second, you are not alone — Jesus is fighting with you and for you (Romans 7:24-25). You also have “battle buddies” in your own local congregation ready to step into the fray with you at a moment’s notice, if you will call for backup and let them know you are in trouble and need help. There were numerous people in the New Testament who faithfully labored in the Lord’s work:
 - 1. Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17).
 - 2. Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21).
 - 3. Epaphras (Colossians 1:7).
 - 4. Onesimus (Colossians 4:9).
 - 5. Silvanus (1 Peter 5:12).
 - 6. Antipas (Revelation 2:13).
- C. Arm yourself according to Ephesians 6:11-17, and then “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10). Your destiny is worth the fight!

II. Kingdom – The Battle For Church

- A. Each Christian soldier must also wage spiritual war for the souls of his company — the local church of which he is a member (Romans 12:10-11). He does “nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind” he regards his fellow-soldiers “as more important than himself,” and does not merely look out for his “own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).
- B. His kindred spirit and fellowship with his fellow soldiers leads him to answer the question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” in Genesis 4:9 with a resounding, “Yes, with every fiber of my being and all the strength I can muster because I love him” (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 12:15-16; 1 John 3:16). This means that I am willing to correct issues that arise between us (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17), always remembering to be patient and longsuffering (Ephesians 4:1-3), and never gossiping or backbiting (Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 3:10). The souls of your fellow soldiers are worth the fight!

III. Dominion — The Battle For People

- A. And finally, each Christian soldier must wage spiritual war for the souls of others. Beyond our own souls, and those of our fellow-soldiers, the souls of others — even those actively fighting for the opposition forces, are just as valuable. This is why the “blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15) said, “love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).
- B. What do we need to get involved in personal evangelism?
1. We need a commitment of prayer. If we neglect prayer we risk rendering our work a complete failure (Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 6:12-13; Acts 13:1-3). It may be that we have so few opportunities to teach because we spend so little time in prayer.
 2. We need a commitment of time. There is a great deal to be said for planning and forethought (2 Corinthians 9:5-8). If you want to get serious about becoming active in personal evangelism, your first step is to make an honest commitment of time each week to that work. We all have 168 hours every week, most of which we spend working and sleeping. Is two hours a week (1.2% of our time) too much to devote to rescuing souls from being lost?
 3. We need a commitment of help. It is interesting to note how easily and naturally the apostle Paul found people to teach the gospel, even in unfamiliar surroundings (Acts 27:16-17; 28:30-31), but I think every person benefits from someone else with whom they can “compare notes.” I liken this to the arrangement where the Lord sent out His disciples two by two (Luke 10:1). Two people can encourage each other to spend personal evangelism time in increasingly better ways. Also, each Christian needs to have a brief introductory lesson he or she is able to teach on short notice. This lesson serves two purposes:
 - a) First, it allows us to teach in situations where we may never have another chance with a particular person.
 - b) Second, a basic lesson will tell you if a person is interested in further study. A Christian also needs to have a series of more detailed lessons ready to teach.
- C. Assuredly, this is the most difficult of all battlefronts. It is one thing to wage spiritual warfare, even to the death, for our own or the souls of our fellow soldiers, but it is quite another to be willing to love enough fight and lay down our lives for the souls of those actively opposed to us! But is this not exactly the legacy left us by our Lord? To borrow from His words in Matthew 16:26, what will we give in exchange for the souls of others? Are we willing to love sufficiently to battle for their souls? True soldiers of the cross do just that!

Conclusion. So, fight “the good fight” for the souls of others, finish “the course” you began as soldier yourself, and keep “the faith” by helping your fellow-soldiers to final victory (2 Timothy 4:7). It is a three-front battle, but through God’s mighty power you can and must win!