

Grace Bible Church  
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Tree of Life  
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As believers who desire to glorify the Lord, we must begin with the glass being half-full rather than half empty.

The main issue here is the viewpoint of the individual, is it positive or negative? In PHI 4:6-13, we read, **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.**

**The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.**

**Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled**

**and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

Notice the positive attitude that the apostle Paul had, even though he was chained up to Roman soldiers, Paul still had a positive attitude even though he was in prison. In fact, it was in prison that the apostle Paul wrote about the weapons of our warfare in EPH 6.

While in prison, the apostle Paul observed the different weapons and clothing that the Roman soldiers used and that is why certain passages in the Word of God, especially EPH 6, relates the military to the spiritual life. Let me show you an example of the Apostle Paul using military language which the Holy Spirit inspired him to do so.

First, let me remind you that EP 6, is one of the greatest passages on the military metaphors and the Roman soldier's weapons that was ever written. In EPH 6:10-12 Paul writes: **Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

This is a reference to the spiritual warfare that believers who have become mature can expect from the enemy. There is a very popular quote that one of the greatest military generals who ever lived named Sun Tzu was known for, though there are some who disagree that he wrote this.

In reality, Sun Tzu was quoting a Proverb when **Sun Tzu** wrote “know yourself, know your enemy, and you shall win a hundred battles without loss.

Now, in **EPH 6:13-14, Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,**

This is a reference to the combat belt and the breastplate that the soldiers would use.

**EPH 6:15, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;** a reference to the shoes or the boots that the Roman soldier wore. In EPH 6:16, we have the military shield which for us refers to operating in faith-rest as you protect yourself from the flaming missiles of the evil one.

**EPH 6:16, in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.**

Next we have a reference to the Roman soldier’s helmet and his sword

**EPH 6:17-20, And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Note that the apostle Paul mentions chains because he was chained up to four Roman soldiers and that was one of the main reasons that God the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use military weapons as an analogy to the weapons of our spiritual life.

It's interesting that the apostle Paul, while in prison wrote the following books: Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians, and many believe that he also wrote the book of Philemon.

Why?

Because the apostle Paul believed that a curse can be turned into a blessing and that what Satan means for evil, God can turn into good.

**2Ti 2:1-5, You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. and the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.**

**Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on active duty entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life [a person on active duty does not live a normal life], so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**

**Furthermore, if anyone competes in the athletic games, he does not receive a winner's crown unless he competes according to the rules.**

Now, in the ancient world, at the time that the apostle Paul wrote this, the athlete had to undergo ten months of strict training just to qualify to participate in the games. First of all, you had to enter a registered state gymnasium, analogous to living in the Pre-designed Plan of GOD

(PPOG). This requires dedication and devotion on the part of the believer if he desires to glorify the Lord.

Secondly, every athlete went through identical training no matter what his event. In the spiritual realm, we gather together with believers, no matter what their race, color, status, happens to be, we are all one and on an equal plane with one another. This is analogous to every believer having the identical PPOG as the place in which we train and compete.

We must fulfill the training rules of the PPOG and not to cheat or try to do anything against the rules. Therefore, only the protocol Christian is living the Christian way of life, therefore, is qualified to compete in the spiritual games found in the Angelic conflict.

The athlete or, the athletai as they were known, were the ones who trained under the rules of the national gymnasium for ten months. It was an extreme rigid form of training that everyone had to go through if they desire to be a soldier or a spiritual soldier in the kingdom of GOD.

Another interest gem is that you were not allowed to leave the large walled area of the gymnasium for ten months, and had to exercise under the authority of the gymnasiarch, the ruler of the gym (analogous to the pastor-teacher). It was a very well-paying job.

And it required extreme training to make it either in the military, or in the “Games” of the ancient world as athletes, or the ultimate motivation for all of us who desire to become winner believers.

The gumnasiarch or the pastor-teacher had marshals under him who watched the athletes. He wore a purple robe with white sandals and is analogous to the pastor or evangelist bringing forth the good news **ROM 10:15, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!”**

The marshals were comparable to the deacons. They also had the authority to disqualify any athlete if they did not follow the rules.

Disqualification is analogous to the loser believers who function inside the cosmic system. Disqualification meant that the one “being disqualified” broke the rules in both the military and the Athletic Games. There are always individuals who cheat and try to get ahead and try to cut corners, even in life, but the only one that really gets deceived is the individual himself.

Disqualification meant that the one being disqualified is the ones who have wrong motivations. Disqualification is analogous to being in reversionism and apostasy. They also trained not only the body, but the mind as well. Then after the completion of the 10 month course, the athlete was then allowed to compete.

The athlete followed a set of very strict rules which constantly tested his motivation, decisions, and momentum. This is like the analogy that the apostle Paul compared this principle to when he taught about the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**1CO 3:12-15, Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work**

**will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.**

**If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**

Whether or not it is the military or in the athletic games, everyone was to reveal their motivation for doing whatever it is they had done.

This is analogous to the concept of daily perception of doctrine and momentum testing to reveal what your true desire is. Another principle of both the military and the athletic games in the ancient world is the fact that you could not leave for any reason or you would be disqualified either from the games or from the military. Everyone did the same exercise under the same authority.

There were eight to ten exercise periods during the day which demanded that everyone would be *prepared and ready* at all time to a positive. Everyone received group exercise naked outdoors regardless of the weather (analogous to everyone getting the same doctrinal teaching). Daily trumpet calls had to be met at various times and if you missed one you were disqualified). Everyone had equal privilege and opportunity to compete.