

## **SOLDIER**

Dear Lord,

There is a spiritual battle raging, and it is into the heat of this battle that You have sent me forward, fully equipped and fortified by my commander-in-chief, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why am I a soldier? You have fought for me all the way to the cross, defeating the enemy of my soul at the cost of Your Son's life. Therefore, I am a soldier of the cross, following Your commands to the end and fighting for Your name.

You have fitted me completely with Your armor, from head to toe, from the helmet of my salvation through the blood of Christ, all the way to my feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, so that I can stand against the enemy in the name of my Lord and Savior and be victorious in battle.

Your Word has told me not to fear, that the battle is Yours and You will fight for me. I must admit that there are times when I feel alone or weak in the battle. But as I look with Your eyes, I can see Your army that stands before me and behind me, to guard and protect, to contend and to strive, to engage and to win. And, I fight alongside the saints, with a common goal and with the same Spirit to empower us. I thank You that I am not alone in combat.

I know our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against an invisible enemy that seeks to destroy me. While my salvation is sure and my eternal state is secure, the evil one does not want me to finish this race well. He desires to undo me, to discourage me in my walk with you, and to defeat me in my daily sanctification. Like a lion, he walks about seeking to devour me. But I can rest in Your promise of victory, in Your strength to uphold me, and in the assurance that his doom is sure. I cling to these promises and choose to claim them daily because Your Word is true, and Your Word is sure.

Wanting to please his commanding officer, a good soldier will endure hardship and will not get sidetracked. Your commands are not burdensome, for by obeying them, I can overcome the world. Help me to keep my eyes on You and to live an undivided life.

Keep me from retreat, but help me always to be moving forward. Help me not to just be on the defensive, but to be on the offensive as well. I want to be proactive, wielding the sword of truth and standing for Your holy name. In battle, it is not possible to be neutral, so help me always to wave Your banner high no matter what the cost, and do my part in Your great army. May I bravely move forward in the knowledge that nothing can harm me unless Your hand allows it, and I can trust Your hand.

Help me fight the good fight and finish well. Amen.

*BlytheField Hills Baptist Church*

## **A Biblical Self Image**

Our self image fuels our behavior, requiring radical surgery in our thinking process. "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out." (Romans 12:2 Msg) Biblical self image is built on the platform of truth and begins to replace our cultural self-image when we identify ourselves as God does - as *sons, servants and soldiers*:

### **SON**

*Platform of Truth* – God is for me. He loves me from what He finds in Himself, not in what I do for Him. Romans 8:15 - "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry 'Abba, Father.'"

*Measuring Growth* - What is the quality of my worship? Sitting at the feet of Jesus, I'll be filled with gratitude as I fully understand all that He has done to save me and to make me His child. If my worship lacks this element, I'm not fully grasping my sonship and my self image is not Biblically complete.

### **SERVANT**

*Platform of Truth* – Jesus served me. "He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status. When the time came, He set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human." (Philippians 2:6-7 Msg). When Jesus substituted Himself in death, He both purchased me and identified my future as His servant.

*Measuring Growth* - Do I know how to access the power of God in the face of difficulty? As we daily serve Christ, we will often face conflict, difficult people, trials and sorrows. But in the face of these struggles, our loyalty to Christ can remain constant. How? By depending on God and His enablement. We learn to "turn the other cheek" and enter into the sufferings of Christ.

Philippians 3:10 - "I want to know Christ...and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings..."

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*Platform of Truth* – God plunged me into the heat of battle. God's unfolding drama involves turning around the enemy's destructive intent. Trials graduate into our eternal gain and His eternal glory. This larger story helps us sort out all that life brings.

2 Timothy 2:3 - "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

*Measuring Growth* - Do I know the purpose of pain in the midst of God's story? Through pain we learn to know God deeper, depend on Him more completely and trust Him more fully.

Order and balance are critical when it comes to being a son, servant and soldier. View yourself first as a child of God so His love can both hold and motivate you. If we don't start here, it will seem that Christianity is asking too much and we can burn out. But if we fully absorb our adoption with grateful hearts, we will want to respond to this love through servanthood. And we'll have the courage to stay in the trenches, fighting as a soldier.

Want to keep your self-image aligned with the truth? Use these sample prayers:

## SON

Dear Father,

How great is the love that You have “lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!”

I have been born again by Your Spirit into the family of the redeemed, as You called me out of darkness into Your wonderful light. I have been adopted into relationship with You at the price of Your own dear Son and have become Your child, enjoying the inheritance and the many privileges of sonship. As Your child, I enjoy the forgiveness of sins, Your unconditional and everlasting love, and continual access to You as Abba Father. There is not a moment that I am not under Your watchful and caring eyes, finding refuge under the shadow of Your wings.

Thank You for teaching me every day what being Your child means and helping me to lean hard on You, resting completely in You. Thank You that no matter how imperfect my own earthly father may have been, I am learning every day what You intend my relationship with You as my heavenly Father to look like: I can love You. I can trust You. I can rest in the knowledge of Your faithfulness. I can trust that You, like a potter working the clay, will continue to form me into Christ's likeness one day at a time, pressing and smoothing areas in my life as You make me Your new creation. Thank You for using Your Spirit, Your Word and Your people to do this work of sanctification in my life as I submit to You each day.

Please help me not to be fooled by the father of lies, who daily tries to make me doubt Your love, take back control of my own life, and wander from “Your rod and Your staff.” Help me not to stray. And if I do, help me, like the eager prodigal, to run back to Your waiting arms without delay. Help me to rest in Your presence as a child can rest in a dark room, knowing that my Father is there and He will never leave me or forsake me.

Thank You that no one can take me out of Your hands, that I am secure in my position as Your child. Just as a good parent does not disown a little child who disobeys or makes a mistake, You will never disown me. But as a child looks to his father and desires to please him, help me always seek to please You and not to grieve or quench Your Spirit, who lives in me. Help me not to resent or fear Your loving discipline, which is not pleasant at the time but is for my own good. Help me to learn and grow from it. May it cause my love and faith to grow deeper.

Finally, help me to make the daily choice to trust You and be the best child I can be. Help me to obey You, not in an effort to earn Your love, but because You are my Father. Help me to understand Your unconditional and everlasting love, abound in Your measureless grace, die to self and experience the resurrection to the new life You have for me each and every day.

Amen

## SERVANT

Dear Lord of my life,

I come to You as Your servant today, humbly kneeling before You in complete adoration and worship, and seeking to be worthy of the calling to love You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Even though You have paid the price for my soul with Your own Son, I submit to You as a bondservant, wholly Yours by my own choosing, bearing in my body the sign of Your ownership and control by Your Spirit, who dwells in me and with whom I have been sealed for the day of redemption.

Your Son came to earth and took on the very nature of a servant, humbling Himself and choosing to be obedient unto death, even death on a cross. You command me to have that same attitude: to serve You willingly without selfish ambition and, with humility to consider others as better than myself. Help me daily to choose that life as Your servant - to the very best of my ability and by Your great power.

I am so often weak, and in my flesh I sometimes lack the will to obey. It is then that You empower me both “to will and to do...Your good pleasure.” Even as my Lord and master, You have allowed me to choose to trust and obey. You never force Your will on me. When I am weak, You make me strong, and it is by Your power that I am able to serve You. When I fail, You pick me up, and in forgiveness and love You continue to use me as Your vessel. May I be faithful to exert myself, willingly being poured out as a drink offering to You, a debtor to You, not a deserver—always giving from the riches I have already received—denying myself and picking up the cross to follow You.

Help me to discern the gifts You have given me to equip me for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Help me to recognize my place in that body as we cooperate together in unity and peace, depending on our Head who is Christ. Help me to be willing to serve and be last, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

As I grow up more and more in the likeness of Christ, I find the joy and reward of obedience to You. Serving You has brought my life more joy and purpose than I ever knew. Life has become more about being than doing, more about gratitude than sacrifice, more about contentment than comfort. You are so good to me.

I will daily be dressed and ready for service and keep my lamp burning, so that when my Master comes, He will find me watching and ready. I look forward to that day when I will see You face to face and will hear the words I have longed to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Amen