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## How to be a Good Christian Soldier

### Part 1 (Jan 2002)

In our last issue of *Prayer Matters* I focused on the dynamics occurring in the spiritual realm in connection with the current evil and terror being perpetrated in our physical world. I pointed out that Satan has temporarily been given a measure of authority over the countries of the world (Luke 4:5-6; 1 John 5:19). Since he lost his challenge of God's supremacy in the heavens, his goal is now set on gaining supremacy in the earthly realm. Towards this end he has seemingly established a parallel, international infrastructure in the spiritual realm with his own hierarchy of spiritual beings assigned to each country (Dan. 10:13, 20; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 20:1-3).

Satan can only accomplish his goal, however, with the cooperation of man. Because of man's free will, nothing is set in concrete concerning the extent of Satan's success or the timing of it. However, the burgeoning numbers of ritual abuse survivors surfacing around the globe who are groomed and programmed to carry out Satan's agenda give evidence of Satan's forward momentum. Of course, we know that God will eventually interrupt Satan's plans, no matter how far they get, and bring in His own eternal kingdom while dooming Satan to everlasting punishment (Rev. 19:17—20:10).

In the meantime, however, the strength of Satan's forces and the extent of his success in the world depends on the number of human recruits he can deceive into supporting his oftentimes camouflaged agenda and their acts of devotion to him as well as the degree of opposition he encounters from the angelic hosts of God's army. By the same token the strength of God's side in this battle seems to depend on the number and spiritual attributes and activities of those committed to His kingdom. For this reason we must not stand idly by but learn to become active Christian soldiers on behalf of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

As any good soldier, we must understand the weapons with which we are to fight in this battle. Because the real confrontation takes place in the spiritual world, we must have weapons that are effective in that realm (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12). Ephesians 6:14-17 describes the spiritual armor God's soldiers must wear. While the Helmet of Salvation is given to us as a gift from God (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9), the rest of our protective armor consists of character traits we must develop and manifest in our daily lives. These include truth, righteousness, peace, and faith.

The primary offensive weapons which God's people can wield are the Sword of the Spirit and prayer (Eph. 17-18). The Sword of the Spirit refers to the internally spoken Word of God delivered by the Holy Spirit at the moment of need when confronting evil. This is something that we must learn to rely upon and boldly articulate when it is given.

Prayer, on the other hand, is initiated by us, and the prayers of righteous men and women in God's kingdom are powerfully effective (James 5:16). Too often, however, Christians focus their prayers on their personal needs and the material realm. They neglect to pray against the spiritual elements affecting their country and the overall advancement of the Kingdom of God in the world, or their prayers are weakened by the lack of appropriate character traits being demonstrated in their lives. Prayers uttered by those who merely give lip service to God's kingdom have little effect in the spiritual realm. Only those who are so committed to Him that they allow their lives to be truly transformed by the Holy Spirit can function as true Christian soldiers in God's army, joining ranks with all those who earnestly pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mat. 6:10).