

# Playing at Soldiers

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the call for Christians to be lifelong soldiers in God's army, dedicated to evangelism and discipleship without seeking shortcuts.*

**Duration:** 49:58

**Scripture:** Acts 20:19, Acts 20:31

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Sanctification"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that there are no shortcuts to holiness and discipleship. He highlights the example of the Apostle Paul, who dedicated three years of his life to warning and teaching others about the gospel. Paul served the Lord with humility, tears, and perseverance, not holding back anything that was profitable for others. The speaker encourages believers to have the same dedication and willingness to finish the work that God has given them, just as Jesus and Paul did.

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## Transcript

Back to Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter 20. I want us to look at Acts 20, and beginning at verse 24.

Acts chapter 20, beginning at verse 24. Paul had just described some of his suffering, some of his hardships, some of his trials, and then he says this, But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. With that word grace in mind, we'll write down to verse 32, And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Paul said none of these things moved him. He did not count his life as dear unto himself. His one desire was to finish the course.

It reminds me somewhat of the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, My meat is to do the will of the Father, and to finish his work. My meat is to do the will of the Father, and to finish his work. God has given us a work to do, hasn't he? He's left us on this little earth.

It is very little, really, compared to this galaxy we're in, this universe with its billions of stars and galaxies and all that's involved, things we're still discovering, left us on this earth to finish a task, to do a work. I love that song, There's a work for Jesus, ready at our hands, just the task the Master has given to us. And the

Apostle Paul seemingly was just caught up in this task, in this work, to finish it, to do it, to accomplish it.

And you can't get around this when you read the life of the Apostle Paul. Look at verse 31, Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone, night and day with tears. Whenever I read that verse, I almost feel the throb of Paul's view.

Therefore watch, remember, by the space of three years I ceased not, I ceased not to warn everyone, night and day with tears. In another place, the Apostle Paul said, Woe is me, woe is me, I preach not the gospel. It seemed to almost possess him.

Back in verse 19, in this same chapter, we read these words. Paul said, verse 19, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptation, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews. And in verse 20, And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but I've showed you, and I've taught you publicly, and from house to house.

Our burden in this work is to follow, in all aspects, the New Testament and the method that is set forth there for evangelizing the world. We are living in an age when everybody's looking for shortcuts. Everyone's looking for do-it-yourself projects.

Everyone's looking for push buttons. In my country, we are literally gadget mad. Absolutely.

And now, the last time I went back, I only go back for a week or so on my way to Mexico, I discovered that my friends are investing in electric toothbrushes. I mean, after all, you can't expect modern man to brush his teeth without an electric toothbrush. And there I went into one of my friends' house, and there were six toothbrushes and the special little gadget that, of course, makes them electric, so that you do not have to move your arm at all, you know, very strenuously.

You just hold the toothbrush. No doubt they'll soon have some kind of a thing coming from the ceiling to hold the electric toothbrush, so that all you'll do is open your mouth and your teeth will be brushed. Of course, eventually, they'll have to find something so that it can be done while you're still in bed in the morning.

Absolutely gadget mad. Shortcuts. Time savers.

But you know, when it comes to reaching the world for Christ, there's no shortcut. When it comes to producing a disciple, when it comes to producing a man of God, there's no shortcut. I'm not sure it was who originally said this.

Things get quoted over and over again. But it's true, whoever said it. There is no shortcut to holiness.

And I believe that for the one who wants to be a disciple, for the one who wants to follow in the steps of the Apostle Paul, who led the way in world evangelism, there's no easy road. There's no shortcut. And Jesus is looking tonight for those that are ready for long-term service for the King of Kings.

You know, in America, if you're drafted, that means called up into the army, you get, I think, four years. If you're volunteer, you get only three. If you go some other way, I think it's through college and some other special course, you get only two.

And if you quickly get married and have children, you don't have any. They have short-term military service. But not so with the Lord.

And some people, no doubt there's some here tonight, think that OM is your opportunity for short-term military service. I call it soldiering for a summer. Soldiering for a summer with Operation Mobilization.

And let's get on the bandwagon. Let's see what this thing is like. And away we go to the continent for Christ.

Whoopee-hoo, a Christian holiday with all the frills and all the fun and all my friends. And I'm becoming a soldier for a summer. Is there anybody like that tonight? Soldier for a summer? Well, I hope by the time we're through with this message, we'll have no soldiers for a summer.

God is looking for lifetime men to enroll in the armies of God. And whether you stay on the continent the rest of your life or in Britain the rest of your life, he has called you to be a soldier. And if there's anything we see in the life of the Apostle Paul, it was that he was a soldier of Jesus Christ.

And oh, how little of this we have in our day. How little we know of the military life, the religious or the Christian military life. We just so love the soft way, the easy way.

You know, I have become very fascinated with the history of the British people, and especially with the history that took place around World War II, World War I, and the life of Winston Churchill and some of these other men. And it has been a great challenge to my own life to read about some of these men who took Britain through their roughest years. The stamina, the literally, literal iron they seem to have for their country.

Some of you perhaps, older ones, remember what Winston Churchill promised those who would come out on the home guard and be ready to defend the country? What did he promise? Sugar, chocolate bars, candy, a new home. Is that what he promised? No, he didn't. He promised sweat, toil, tears, and everything that went with it.

And yet the people volunteered. I'll never forget one day I was down in a funny town, the funniest name I've ever heard of, called Bury St. Edmunds. I don't know how a town got that name, Bury St. Edmunds.

Anyway, I met a nice man down there, his name was Mr. Staff, and he told me that during the war, they took his iron fence away. They just came and they told him that they needed his fence, maybe they paid him, I guess they must have paid him something for it, and they took it away and melted it down and used it to make weapons. And you know, when you read about war, you read about when the men came back from a continent on the retreat, then you read about when they went over again on D-Day, and how the British and the Americans finally got their heads together and moved into France for D-Day.

It's a marvelous thing. I recommend that everyone read that book, The Longest Day. The Longest Day, the story of that invasion.

When harbors as large as Dover, called Mableys, were floated across, and when these men, almost all of them seasick, went across the English Channel, landed on the beaches of France to give their lives. And as we read the history of war, it's shocking, isn't it? You almost think, well, this couldn't really have happened, could it? And yet it did. It did.

And I know my wife and I at times have felt it. We realized that her father was scooped up in a bucket in Germany and sent back to a grave, almost unidentified, in the United States. And some of you know similar stories, and maybe your own father died out there in one of these atrocious battles.

Now, with all the knowledge of war that God had--he knows about war, omniscience--with all the knowledge of war that Jesus had, he still decides in his book to call the true Christian a soldier of Jesus Christ. And I have never been able to fully understand it. The inspired writer, Paul Timothy, writes these words.

2 Timothy chapter 2, he says, verse 3, Now, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. To command a definite, specific command. Verse 4 says, No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

A soldier. And if you look over at 1 Timothy 1.18, you'll see that the Apostle Paul himself was a soldier. 1 Timothy 1.18, we read these words.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest--what?--war a good warfare. War a good warfare. I want to ask you tonight, are you a soldier? Are you a soldier of Jesus Christ? Are you in God's army? God's invasion army? Or are you just sitting on the grandstands, watching the troops go by, sitting along the road, waving your handkerchief as someone else goes to war? It's God's call to every believer to be a soldier of Jesus Christ.

And the burden of this work is to see God make soldiers--real soldiers--of Jesus Christ. And this is probably the roughest thing you could ever take on. When I first began out in evangelism, shortly after I was converted, the main thing I pressed for was decisions for Christ.

Boy, I tell you, we got to get soul saved, they used to say. And that's what I used to pray for. I used to pray that we'd get soul saved.

And now I pray for soldiers. Because I'm convinced that if we just get literally hundreds of decisions and no soldiers, we'll never reach the world for Christ. Because when it comes to going to the regions beyond, you just must have soldiers to do the job.

And the reason that 90 percent of all Christian work is done among 10 percent of the world's population--Canada, Britain, the United States, New Zealand--is because we don't have too many soldiers. And those who don't want to be soldiers, they seemingly can get along at times quite well at home. After all, you have your own culture, you have all the things that you're used to having.

If you're used to seven cups of tea a day, I mean, you have no trouble getting that here. If you're used to 15, like some people I know, you can even get 15 cups. And if you're used to a certain kind of climate, a certain kind of people, and a certain kind of church, and a certain kind of everything, as we all are, because life is nothing but a great series of habits.

And we develop habits and habits and habits. That's why mission boards won't accept any older people, or very few, because they just don't believe they'll ever change. So how can they ever go to the mission field and be soldiers? I personally don't fully agree with that policy, and we've seen some soldiers well on over 50 moving out more than some of the young people.

Praise God for that. But in any case, we realize that it's pretty easy to sort of exist in a so-called Christian environment, going to the meetings, singing the hymns, praying the prayers, taking part in the choir, and everybody will consider you a Christian, maybe even an evangelical Christian, and you've got good theology, and all the rest. But there's no militancy.

There's no soldiering. There's no advancing spirit. There's no conquering spirit.

There's no Pauline spirit. And I don't believe, I don't believe that's God's plan, do you? Do you believe that it's God's plan that the Jehovah Witnesses out-distribute us, out-dedicate us, and out-shine us, and out, well just about out everything? They are. We don't like to admit it, but they are.

We don't like to admit that the Mormon Church sends out more missionaries from Salt Lake City than all the churches of the British Isles, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia all put together, but they do, and they got 20,000 young men on the march tonight, and every one of those men wins an average of two every year and sees them baptized, and it takes 500 hours on the knocker--that's what the Mormons estimate, 500 hours on the knocker--to win one single convert. Have they been to your door? How many people have had the Mormons at your door? Just slip your hand up there. A good part of us, probably ones who haven't raised a hand, seem to be Amy's students, and O. Emmers.

I don't know if they come to our door at Dean's Gate. I had a round with them there once. I don't think they've been back since.

They didn't exactly expect to find another hard-headed American there when they came in. But it's really something, isn't it? And they're the fastest growing religious cult in the British Isles. And I met a young girl once down in Cornwall, down that area of England--West Country, I think they call it--and she was a schoolgirl of 16.

She was spending four hours every day on the knocker for the Mormon Church. She came into our meeting collecting names and addresses of potential contacts at our meeting. She was wearing a big question mark on her lapel.

Big round question mark. Everybody was coming up to her, what's that thing on your lapel? It was on her dress. And she said, oh, that's just to get you to ask me what it is, and then I can tell you that I'm a member of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, and I want to invite you to have a conversation with me.

Sixteen years old, she knew the Book of Mormon back and forth, and she knew many, many passages from the Bible. Sixteen! You find what the average evangelical girl is doing at sixteen years of age, huh? You find what the average evangelical girl is doing at twenty-one. I tell you, you won't find many of them winning many souls to Jesus Christ.

You know, I find that most people have a stale Christianity. It doesn't excite them. I don't know, there must be something wrong with me.

I don't know. Ten years ago when I was saved by the grace of God in Madison Square Garden, I got excited. And I've been excited ever since, every day ever since, because something happened.

And I meet these people who claim to be Christians, claim to be evangelical. Sometimes you sit Sunday morning in the church with them and you just about feel that you're being taken to the moon or to the North Pole and back in an hour. There seems to be so little joy, so little excitement, as if we had been saved to sob.

But we've been saved to serve. And I believe that the reason some of us are not excited, some of us are not around, is because we're not in the battle. We're not soldiers.

We're not using our weapons. We're not advancing against the enemy. It's like peacetime soldiers.

Have you ever been with any peacetime soldiers? It can be pretty sad. You sit around, sort of like the firemen down at the firehouse, except when there's a fire. Everybody's sitting around playing cards.

Nope, there's no firemen here tonight. And actually some firemen work quite hard when they have to go around and inspect all these buildings that look like they're going to burn down any minute. But it's sort of a peacetime thing.

And you know the way many Christians act, and I'm speaking to young people, you'd think there were no war going on, there were no fires to put out, there were no battles to be won. You'd think we were mainly all sitting on sort of a conveyor belt on the way to heaven at the least possible cost. And you know that's what Christianity is to a lot of people.

It's a fire escape to hell and a ladder to heaven at minimum cost to everybody. And if that's Christianity, I tell you, it's hard for me to believe. Certainly God has a greater purpose than that for our life.

Certainly God didn't create us for that. What was the purpose of God's creation in the first place? I don't believe God just created us to lose us and save us and bring us back to where we started from. He saved us for a purpose.

He saved us for conquest. He saved us for victory. He saved us for worship.

He saved us that we could have life, a life in abundance. It says that in John 10.10. Do you know that life tonight? Are you experiencing that life? I pray. I pray that tonight we'll go from here with a determination in our heart, that this life that Paul had, in which he could say, for me to live is Christ, to die is gain.

In which he could say, there's only one thing that counts, that I can finish the course. This would be my prayer tonight, that all of us could leave here like that. You know, most people, whenever you speak to them about revolution, revival, reformation, or whatever word you want to use, they think, well, we've heard that before.

I mean, but everybody knows it's not gonna happen. We've heard these zealots come and go before, but everybody knows that that can't happen. And I want to tell you, by the grace of God, I have met with a little group, they're not all within OM, and I have met with groups of young people in different parts of the world who are determined at any cost to see this thing happen.

To see out of this dead, sleepy, giant church, an army raised up, who will determine at any cost to see the commands of Christ obeyed. And that's what it hinges on. Absolutely.

And that hinges on what we talked about this afternoon, whether we really love God or not. For the Word of God says very clearly, in John 14 and 15, that if we love him, we're going to keep his commandments. You'll turn to those passages, we'll see them in their context, and see what God has to say.

In John 14, we see these words. Verse 21, He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved to my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. It doesn't say, he that hath my churches and attends them, he it is that loveth me.

And yet, you know, the average person I meet today thinks that if they go to church twice a week, that they're getting quite spiritual. And if they go to a special prayer meeting, why, I mean, they're just getting in

what I call the super-dedicated, going to prayer meetings. You say to somebody, you go to a prayer meeting, they sort of look at you, don't they? What do you do in that kind of a meeting? One church in my hometown, they had thrown out prayer meetings so many years ago, that when they had a prayer meeting, a cottage prayer meeting, it made headlines in the daily paper.

It's really tragic, how prayer has been slowly pushed. And now, well, we have plenty of messages and lots of speakers and lots of films. We've got everything, every possible kind of meeting you can think of.

And yet, I don't find, I just don't find many praying people in our day. It hurts the missionary effort of the church. It hurts the cause of Christ, that prayer has been just pushed to one side.

But you see, prayer is a part of soldiering. The weapons of our warfare since Corinthians are not carnal, but are mighty unto God, unto a pulling down of strongholds. Oh, I would love to speak to you tonight about the strongholds we've seen pulled down, about what God has been doing in Iraq, a so-called closed country, about the church that God is planting in Turkey that has been closed for years, about the 200 Indians that God has raised up in this short time that we've been out there, about the souls that have come to Jesus Christ in some of these lands and that are going on for Christ, soldiering for Christ.

It's exciting. It's exciting to be in God's army. It was said of some men after World War II that they had such a hunger to fight, they could not any longer go back to civilian life.

That's right. We had one such man, especially in America. He came back from World War II.

He killed off more Germans than you could imagine. He had seen these horror films and he was pumped up with such a hate for Hitler that he came back with a desire to fight. And wherever he went, he got in fights.

He was always punching somebody. He was always wanting to go out and shoot. And he was just a maniac.

He was starting to lose his mind. He had to fight. He had to fight.

Wherever he went, he wanted to fight people. He thought he was dreaming of fighting. When he woke up in the morning, he thought he was out in a foxhole.

He just was possessed by this desire to fight, to conquer, to win. Oh, for a few men like that in the Church of Jesus Christ. Oh, for a few young Christians that have such a desire to pray, such a desire to fight, such a desire to stand against the powers of darkness, to intercede, to witness, to win men and women.

I tell you, with a handful of men like that, the world would turn on its axis. It was said in the 17th chapter of Acts concerning the Apostle Paul, that he was a world revolutionist. In Acts 17.6 in the Berkeley version, it reads this way.

And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city father shouting, these world revolutionists have come here too. That's Christianity. And it's that Christianity that has kept me from being a devout communist.

It is that Christianity that dragged me through the cesspools of agnosticism like the University of Mexico. It's that Christianity that holds me when everything else seems to be toppling all around me. It's that Christianity that holds me when I read through Nietzsche and Spinoza and Niebuhr and Barth and

Bultman and all the rest of these false philosophers, because this is so real, so dynamic, it makes Marxism look like a holiday in the mountains of Scotland.

I tell you, this is real. And if you haven't experienced the life of New Testament Christianity, the excitement of being a soldier for Christ, you're missing, you're missing of 90% of what God has for you. Billy Graham himself even said in Madison Square Garden, he believed 94% of all Christians were living in defeat.

They didn't know the reality of New Testament Christianity. They didn't know the thrill of being a conqueror for God. They didn't know the blessing of being on the front lines for the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega.

And I would challenge you tonight with all of my heart to enroll in the armies of Zion, to determine that for the rest of your life, you'll make Christ your captain, you'll make Christ your king, you'll make Christ your cause. And though it be death, though it be martyrdom, though it be suffering, though it be China, though it be India, though it be heat, though it be ice, though it be with wife or without wife, you're determined to follow Him no matter what. It might seem like a hard way.

It might seem like you're losing your life. It might seem like you're forsaking everything. It might seem like you have to leave everything that is so nice and so wonderful.

And yet the Bible says, Jesus said, he that loses his life, what? He that loses his life will find it. And the great problem today is that so many of us are trying to find life. We're trying to find happiness.

And we think it's here, we grab at that. We think it's here, we grab at that. And many of us have what I believe is just a back-pocket Christianity.

When it's convenient, we take it out. You know, sort of like our wallet. Most of the day, you don't worry about your wallet, do you? But when it's convenient, you take it out and you use it.

That's the way many people's Christianity is. At diverse times, we take it out and we use it. It's sort of a psychological salve to ease our conscience.

We know we've sinned during the week. We know that we haven't done what God has told us to do. And so we gather on Sunday and we sort of take a little psychological salve and then we feel a little better.

It's phony. It's no better than Romanism in which we go to confession week after week and confess the same sins and go out and do the same thing. And I want to tell you, if going to church on Sunday morning and gathering around the Lord's table Sunday morning doesn't revolutionize your life, doesn't give you something to live for and to die for, you're just passing through a pantomime.

That's no different than what many others are passing through in the unregenerate world. I was speaking last Sunday at the breaking of bread in Bromley. I said with all my heart, and I believe it, that if we've gotten anything here in the last 20 minutes, the people we meet this week are going to feel it.

They're going to know it. Alan Redpath was an ungodly man led to Christ by a man who worked in his office. The man in the office was living a godly life.

The man in the office was on fire. The man in the office was warm with the love of Jesus. And Alan Redpath, despite all of his resistance, he couldn't resist and he melted and had become one of Britain's greatest preachers.

And he said this. He said, you cannot remain neutral in the presence of a man of God. It's true.

You cannot remain neutral in the presence of a soldier of Jesus Christ. You cannot remain neutral in the presence of a man who's following in the steps of the Apostle Paul. You cannot remain neutral in the presence of a man who says for the space of three years, I cease not to warn men and women night and day with tears.

When the Apostle Paul went out to preach, when the Apostle Paul went out to witness, he went to impart his very life as a soldier goes forth to give an arm or a leg or an eye or an ear. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he said this in a very unique way. He said in verse five of 1st Thessalonians, for our gospel came not unto you in word only, it came not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

This was the man who said for the weak I become as weak that I might gain the weak. I become all things to all men to win some. Can you find any other life in the New Testament? I can't.

I've tried. Believe me, I've tried. My friends have tried.

My enemies have tried. You can't find it. You read about Paul.

You read about Stephen, this fanatic, complete, not he was, Stephen. He could have saved his life just like that. This ferocious sermon he was preaching at these enemies of Christ.

Roaring out at them, telling them they had crucified Jesus. When they began to stone him, what did he do? He kept preaching. Kept preaching and when these men were violently coming down upon him, gnashing on him, what did he do then? He said, forgive them.

They know not what I'm going to tell you. It's men like this that have planted the seeds of the Church. We read about the English martyrs.

We read about the Scottish martyrs. We read about the martyrs in the catacombs. We read about those who went through the Inquisition in Spain.

What is all this fantasy? Today we don't have that. We read about the sufferings of the men of the Old Testament. We read about the God of Elijah.

We read about the God of Daniel and how he threw open the windows and bowed on his knees, bold as a lion, praying out to God when he knew what was going to cost him his life. You read about men like Moses. Although he was a murderer and had an inferiority complex as deep as the sea, when the chips were down, when the hard time came, he stood at the shores of the Red Sea and believed God.

And the whole camp was murmuring and everybody was complaining. The Egyptians were behind him. The Red Sea was in front of him.

He looked. He believed. And the waters moved back.

Where has that God gone? Is he sleeping? He's dead? We pick up our biographies. We read of Hudson Taylor, George Miller, C.T. Stodd. We read of Norris Groves.

We read of all these great men. And then we put the biography down. And instead of falling on our knees for an hour of prayer and intercession, that God would make us that kind of men.

Oh, young people. Am I am I coming in? Am I on your wavelength? Is this what you've been looking for? When we went into Cambridge University, we found there were dozens of students that were hungry for this. When we went into Oxford, we found there were students hungry for this.

When we went one Bible college after another, we found students that were literally seemingly waiting for years for this. They had seen this in the Word. They had comprehended it to some extent, but they hadn't quite realized that there was literally something moving, something actually going on with this as its core, as its heart.

God has gathered young people from all over the world who have felt the same impetus, that there was something more to Christianity than songs and conferences and messages, that it was a battle, that it was a struggle, that it was a fight. And they're beginning to gather together. And God is beginning to use them to plant new churches, not on their own, not a new denomination, but laboring with the existing churches, laboring with existing missionaries, with love as the core, so that love can cover a multitude of differences and ideas, and we can unite in believing before breaking.

And if what I've said to you tonight, what I've been speaking about tonight, as poor as I can put it, if it's coming through to you, if you feel that's right, that's Christianity--I've seen that in the New Testament. I agree with that. I feel that this is what I need in my life.

I need to be disciplined. I need to be a soldier. I need to be excited about Christ.

I need to know something of soul winning, something of intercessory prayer, something of laying aside all the tinsel of this world, all the sugar-coated poison pills of the devil, and follow Christ with all my heart. That's on your heart. We want you to join with us.

But if it isn't, if there's something else, some idea of a Christian holiday, some idea of being a hero for Christ in terms of people saying, isn't he dedicated? He's going over to the conference. If there's something else, then we'd ask you, please don't come. Tear up your application.

Write us back. But don't come. I'm not saying we expect perfection.

We're, I guess, perhaps old enough to know we won't find that inside of heaven. But we're expecting people who are pressing for perfection, who are pressing for the mark. You might not be there.

I'm not there. And sometimes when I see how far I've got to go, I feel like just about quitting right here. And maybe you're like that tonight.

Maybe my words have just been one big heap of discouragement for you, and say, man, if that's Christianity, I'm through. I haven't got enough discipline to pick up my toothbrush at the right time of the day. I haven't got enough discipline to hardly get out of bed on time.

I haven't got enough discipline to stop my ten cups of tea. I haven't got enough discipline to go out on the doors. I haven't got enough--I don't either.

I used to lop down seven Coca-Colas, two ice cream sodas, and a good couple of dozen sweets in any one day when I was first at college. And I called myself a Christian. I tell you, I was so undisciplined, well, I

won't even go in to describe it.

And when I began to see this message in the New Testament, I thought, this is the most impossible mythological thing I read about the Apostle Paul. I thought, that man is the most oddbod that ever walked the face of the earth. Who could ever live like that? Who could ever be disciplined like that? These words I bring my body in a subjection, lest after having preached to others I myself become a reprobate.

These words I please all men in all things to win some. These words I'm ready to give my salvation for the sake of my brothers. This is just impossible.

And then when I came across that verse in Corinthians 4, where the Apostle Paul says to the carnal Corinthian Christians, now look, he had just finished describing his life--I won't read that tonight--and the suffering he went through, the trials, the battles, the hardships, the fastings. He just finished describing what to me looked like the last thing I'd ever want on the face of the earth. And after all that, he says, now be ye followers of me.

And at that point, I tell you, I just about hit frustration alley. How can I ever be a follower of the Apostles? How can I ever live the life of a soldier? How can I ever think of going to be a missionary for Christ? I used to be as scared of snakes, scared of spiders. I was scared of so many things.

I used to have dreams about spiders in my bed. I had all kinds of fears. When I think just a month ago I was out in a little house in a village in India, and a snake, a poisonous snake, dropped right out of the roof, right onto the man in the next room, and crawled across his belly, and went out the door.

And I tell you, if somebody had told me ten years ago that I was going to be within five feet of that experience, I would have said, I never in all the world can go to the mission people. You know, there's one reason you can live the same life as Paul did. There's one reason you can be as militant as the Apostle Paul.

There's one reason that you'll be able to say the words that Paul said. And that's because you have the same Savior. You have the same Jesus.

And Jesus basically is all you need. The Lord Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient Savior. He says in Corinthians, my grace is sufficient for you, whether it's snakes or spiders or hardship or heat, whether it's sleeping in tents or sleeping on the floor, whether it's living with a group of Spaniards or going with a group of people you don't understand, no matter what your problem, what the trial, whether it's forsaking this or forsaking that, His grace is sufficient.

And you know, this is the message. To me, this is the message of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, is all we need. And though the mountains seem high, and though this kind of life causes our knees to tremble, and though we think, I'll never be a soldier, I'll never be a missionary, I'll never win a soul, I'll never be an intercessor, I'll never be a man like Constantin Taylor or D.L. Moody, no matter what you say, God comes back and says right to your face, stop.

You, but I will in you. Because Paul's secret was that he was crucified with Christ. He said in Galatians, I am crucified with Jesus Christ.

He went through, as it had said in Romans 8, he had been up for the slaughter, dead. I died early, the Apostle Paul said. I bear my body in the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He had been crucified with Christ so he could say, now I live. That's a victorious life, the militant life, the conquering life. Now I live.

Yet, not I, but Christ. And when you think you can't live it, when you think you can't make the attack, when you think you can't reach that man or be that soldier that God wants you to be, you better remember the words of God, the word of God that says, my grace is sufficient. And every time you tell the Lord you can't be a soldier, every time you tell the Lord you can't do this, you can't do that, you're calling him a liar.

That's right. You say, well, God, you said all things were possible. You said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

You said you supply all my needs. You said that we were more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, but not me, Lord. In other words, for everybody else, Lord, maybe for George Borwer, Lord, maybe for Keith Beckwith, not me.

In other words, as far as God's concerned, you're making him a liar. You know, that's pretty dangerous. And I believe as many of us with our lives, with our lives, not with our mouths, oh, we'd never do that, but with our lives, with our lives, we're saying, Lord, I don't believe you.

Lord, you're a liar. Your word isn't true. You said your grace is sufficient, but not for that, Lord.

It's sufficient for all this, but not for that, Lord. It's sufficient for me to do this, but not that. But it is sufficient.

And all tonight that we fall before him and say, Lord, I believe, I believe that your grace is sufficient for this summer to take me right through this operation mobilization, which, to be honest with you, Lord, I'm sort of scared. Do you believe that his grace is sufficient? That he is an all-sufficient Savior? And that when he said you are complete in him, in him dwelleth all the fullness, all the fullness of the Godhead Father. Do you believe that? I pray you do.

And I pray that tonight you'll reaffirm and believe that his grace can make you his soldier, not for a summer, but for a lifetime, for the glory of God, for the extension of the gospel, and for the praise and honor of Jesus Christ, who has called you to be a soldier. Let us pray. Oh, Father, when we think of the warfare in front of us, when we think of the discipline and the suffering, when we think of the trials and the hardships, we tremble.

In ourself, we cannot do it. In ourself, it seems like an unmovable mountain. In ourself, it seems like we're hopeless cases.

But, Lord, thy grace is sufficient. Thy strength is made perfect in weakness. And, oh, God, we know that thy message of grace is a great message, a strong message for weak people.

And though we be weak, we shall be strong in thee. And thou, in this generation, will raise up an army of soldiers disciplined by grace, transformed by grace, in the battle by grace, conquering by grace, rejoicing by grace. For thy grace is sufficient, and Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient Savior, in whom we are complete, in whom we are accepted, who satisfies and fills the deepest longing of the human heart, that though the mountains be high, though the valleys be deep, though the nights be dark, Jesus is there, a friend, a helper, our life.

Oh, Father, we pray thee for this. Make it real. Make it real in the ranks of those who go forth this summer.

Make it real in the ranks of those who stay behind and stand by the stuff and intercede. For we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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