

God describes the church in various ways. Two of them are these:

- **Bride** - Jesus' followers are **born to love**, to be intimate and romantic with Jesus, for He is the one who fought for them, suffered and died for them on a cross so they could be set free from sin, death and Satan. He did it all because of His love for the Father and to purchase a bride to be part of a vast family for God to love and enjoy forever.
- **Army** - Jesus' followers are **born for battle** to fight for their king as they resist enemy attacks against them internally and their external world

In both of these roles, they especially have to guard one thing...their **HEART**.

"Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life." - Proverbs 4:23

When Jesus first mentions the church He speaks immediately of warfare. "The gates (the plans) of hell shall not prevail against the church." - Matt.16:18. We are born for battle against the kingdom of darkness. Throughout history, soldiers were to guard the king's territory and people. They were also sent out to gain new territory and possessions for the king. They had to fight.

While living in the United Kingdom, I served as a soldier in the army of the King (Jesus). However, I needed to get away from congested London at times. Thankfully, a friend let me use her cottage in the countryside many times for refreshment in the Lord. One time while there I noticed a very thick book. It was the story of the famous British WW II General, George Viscount Montgomery. As I scanned the book, one section caught my attention. In it, Gen. Montgomery stated that the most important thing about a soldier was his **morale**. A soldier's heart attitude is of utmost importance. Later I looked up the definition of morale.

Morale - The capacity of a group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose..... especially in the face of opposition or hardship.

Jesus knew this truth. Just before his crucifixion, Jesus prepared his disciples for the ensuing crisis and battles they would face. He gave his soldiers this advice:

"Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:1

"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

Later Jesus prays in John 17. He wants his disciples to be one in heart and mind. He also wants them **full of joy!**

As I prepared for my service in England. God had me spend much time meditating on Joshua chapter 1. God told Joshua to '**get ready**' and to have the people '**get their supplies ready**' Four times God gives Joshua this command: "Be strong and courageous!"

When the battle is raging, we will want to quit. We must stand our ground and be brave. Our king wants us to fight for the souls of mankind. We must not be distracted by other pursuits.

There is another battle. **We must fight to spend time with our King.** He desires our love and worship. We must fight off the temptations and distractions of the world so that we can have intimacy with our bridegroom. **Jesus is coming back for a bride without spot or wrinkle, a heavenly minded lover not a worldly minded harlot.**

Jesus wants us to be intimate and militant.....to be romantic warriors.

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