

## KEEPING RANK continued from page 1

Certainly, this lack of commitment and the failure to responsibly do what God has authorized cause great harm to the effectiveness of God's army. God is not pleased with this situation.

Every member of the Lord's army must have those characteristics which were found in David's army. Every member in this army is important (Eph. 4:16). Notice how these same qualities are taught in the New Testament as essential for each soldier of Christ.

1. Every member has to have singular loyalty to Christ, not of double heart." The soldier of Christ has singular vision (Matt. 6:22-23) as Paul affirmed "this one thing I do" (Phi. 2:13). To receive "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14) must be the chief goal of life. The soldier must "count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" (3:8), forsake all he has (Luke 14:33), die to himself (Gal. 2:20), and not allow affection for others to interfere with his commitment to the Lord (Matt. 10:37). Jesus summarized this commitment in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
2. Every member has to follow the rules and regulations of the army, "keep rank." Only by following the same standard is it possible for the soldiers to *keep* in order and act in perfect harmony." and precision, to keep rank. That standard is the Bible (II Tim. 3:16-17). Only by following the Bible, forsaking human opinions and traditions, God's people are able to "speak the same thing... perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). God has authorized certain works to be done (Eph. 2:10; II Tim. 3:17). Those who are not willing to do these things, or who persist in doing that which God has not authorized, are walking out of rank (i.e., out of step, disorderly, unruly).

God tells us that those who are disorderly (unruly) are to be warned (II The. 5:14). Corinth illustrates dearly the need for those who walk "out of rank" to be warned and finally, if the sinfulness goes unrepented of, withdrawn from. Far from overlooking and allowing these sins to continue, Paul warned the unruly and urged them to "not to keep company" (I Cor. 5:11) with those who do not repent. Whether idle or active disobedience, these people are not to be tolerated or overlooked but warned concerning the sinfulness of such behavior. If such behavior persists, the faithful are to withdraw from the disorderly (II The. 3:6). There are some within every congregation who are doing nothing for the cause of Christ. There are some whose disorderliness is evidenced by their complete disregard for the prohibitions of Scripture. All of these need to be warned about the consequence of their sins and when necessary withdrawn from.

It is time for every Christian to wake up to our God-given work (Rom. 13:11-12). Victory is promised to the loyal soldier who works faithfully until the end (II Tim. 4:7-8). One day each person will give an account for the deeds he has done or failed to do (II Cor. 5:10).

Are you keeping rank and loyal as a "good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3).

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## Keeping Rank

The army of God which assembled in Hebron to make David king over all Israel following the death of Saul had characteristics which are worthy of duplication by the Lord's people today. For example, there were fifty thousand men from the tribe of Zebulun who "could keep rank: *they were* not of double heart" (I Chr. 12:33). In fact, every soldier was one who "could keep rank" and came to Hebron "with a perfect heart" (12:38). To "keep rank" means that these men were disciplined through the practice of the rules and regulations of the army and were, therefore, able to function efficiently as a soldier in battle array. Because of this they could march and fight shoulder to shoulder with each other—they could "keep rank." The references to the heart suggest that these men had a single loyalty to their king which allowed them to give their lives, if necessary, for the king's cause.

Today, the church is God's spiritual army following the directives of the "captain of their salvation" (Heb. 2:10) and fighting their "adversary the devil" (1 Pet. 5:8). The Lord's army has "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11). This army requires soldiers who will "keep rank" and are "not of double heart." There are rules and regulations for these soldiers (II Tim. 3:16-17). Singular loyalty to Christ is a must (Matt. 6:24; 12:30), a loyalty which calls for faithfulness even "unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

Regrettably, there are many within the ranks of local congregations who are not willing to "keep rank" and do have a "double heart." These people weaken the Lord's army, render it inefficient, and open it to defeat. Albert Barnes observed:

Many a church is like an army where half of the soldiers are out of the line; where there is entire insubordination in the ranks, and where not half of them could be depended on for efficient service in a campaign. Indeed, an army would accomplish little, if as large a proportion of it were irregular, idle, remiss, or pursuing their own aims to the neglect of the public interest, as there are members of the church who can never be depended on in accomplishing the great purpose for which it was organized (*Notes on the New Testament, I Thess.-Phile. 58*).

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# OVERCOMING SATAN

We must be concerned about Satan. We are warned in I Peter 5:8: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Satan is real and is actively seeking the destruction of everyone; especially Christians. However, our heavenly Father has not left us defenseless against the wiles of the devil.

In James 4:7 we read, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Truly, this is one of the greatest blessings afforded to Christians. Although Satan has power and influence and directs such toward Christians in temptations, we are given the ability to put him to flight. This ability to chase Satan away is based upon one’s willingness to “submit to God.” Only by submitting to God’s will can we cause Satan to flee.

By submitting to God, Jesus was able to overcome Satan when He was tempted. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the temple, and on the mountaintop. Each rime He relied upon the Word of God for His defense.

Finally, Jesus simply said, “Get thee hence, Satan” (Mat. 4:10). By submitting to God’s will and trusting in His Word, we too can overcome Satan.

However, we cannot successfully resist Satan if we do not care about the will of God. In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 7:21: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Neither can Satan be resisted if we are inattentive to our responsibilities in the kingdom. Satan gains a great advantage over us if we fail to attend worship services (Heb. 10:24-25). Also, when we fail to pray and study the Bible we become weak and easy prey for Satan. In I Peter 2:2, Peter exhorts, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” and in I Thessalonians 5:17, Paul instructs us to “Pray without ceasing.” We must remember that it takes strength to overcome Satan. According to Ephesians 6:10 that strength is “in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

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Huntsville, TX*

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

There will be no news and notes while Ken Chumbley is away in England. Plese keep him and the work their in your prayers.

Ken Chumbley is scheduled to return home from England on Friday October 23, 2009

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SIN?

1. Stealing is now .....Kleptomania
2. Adultery *is* now..... Trial marriage
3. Sex is now ..... A sexual relationship
4. Gambling is now.....An investment for the Future
5. Fornication is now.....Living together
6. Lying is now .....Freedom of expression
7. Homosexuality is now..... An alternative lifestyle
8. Cursing is now..... Colorful speech
9. Abortion is now .....Birth control
10. Euthanasia is now..... Showing mercy
11. Nakedness (Immodest apparel) is now ..... Styles
12. Drunkenness is now ..... Alcoholism

A school boy asked his father, "If you count a cow's tail a leg, how many legs does the cow have?" The father replied, "five." The boy said, "No, because calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

Call sin by any terminology you desire, it is still a sin and sin will separate you from God (Isaiah 59:12) and the pay day of sin is death (Romans 3:23).

*Thomas Eaves  
Deceased*