



THE BOOK OF  
**DEUTERONOMY**

Sermon Series Notes



## “God’s Volunteer Army” (Deut.20:1-9)

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Intro: Did you know that God is a warrior? Numbers 21: 14 That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says...

See Joshua 5:13-15; II Kings 18:17-20, 31-35; 19:15-19, 35; Rev.19:11-14

God is a warrior, and he wants us to be in his army. His army is a holy armor, and his wars are just.

God does not draft people into his army, it is a volunteer army. And there are certain character qualities he is looking for if we choose to enlist. We find them in Deuteronomy chapter 20.

vv.1-4 The first thing I’d like to take note of is that it was the priest who addressed the army. The spiritual leader was the one to initially speak to those who would head into battle. We will never win the physical battle in life if we do not listen to our spiritual leaders. Ultimately our victory in life comes from winning spiritual battles (Eph.6). See II Cor.10:4-5.

Character qualities required for God’s army:

### ***Courageous***

Fear has many times kept someone from winning a battle against the enemy!

Gideon’s army (Judges 6:11-16. 36-40; 7:1-7)

Israel & the Philistines (I Sam.13:5-7; 17:1-11)

Secret disciples in the NT (John 12:42)

Proverbs 29:25a Fear of man will prove to be a snare...

Deut.31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Joshua 1:7 Be strong and very courageous...18...be strong and courageous!

Joshua 10:25 Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous...

It is natural to fear (see Matthew 14:22-27); The only way to overcome fear is to grow in faith. Even God’s greatest servants need encouragement to overcome fear. See Acts 21:27-23:11 (summarize the story).

vv.5-8 Let's deal with verse 8 first. God doesn't want anyone giving in to fear in His army, because the fearful person will influence others to cower as well.

In the same way someone could be affected negatively as a result of fear, they could also be affected positively as a result of courage; Jonathan (see I Samuel 14:1-23; Philippians 1:12-14).

But God's character requirements for his army go beyond just courage. The second characteristic of a good soldier for God from our text is:

***Not dominated by domestic concerns***

II Tim.2:4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

Characteristics of a good soldier:

- First duty to commander and country
- Lives a holy life
- Mobile; no limits to where he will go in the world
- Willing to die for the cause; life on the line

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple.

Luke 8:14...as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures...

Life's worries - legitimate issues, but issues that are not submitted to the Lord. Priorities are lost as the focus now becomes worrying over all the cares of this life. This is DISTRACTION.

The devil does not have to destroy us, he simply needs to distract us.

See Matt.6:25-33; Luke 10:38-42; Haggai 1:3ff

Life's riches - DECEPTION (See I Timothy 6:9-10; Gehazi, I Kings 5:15-16, 19-27; note v.26b; Ananias & Sapphira, Acts 5).

Life's pleasures – DEVOTION (Fishing, football, baseball, hot dogs, apple pie & Chevrolet...The American Dream).

II Tim.4:10...Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted...

What was it that led Demas to desert?

One final characteristic is mentioned in Deut.20.

***Not detained by romantic relationships***

This is perhaps the most powerful pull that could make one ineffective for the work of the kingdom. One of Samson's repeated mistakes was getting involved in romantic relationships out of the will of God. His ultimate defeat was brought about through a woman named Delilah. Solomon was led astray by romantic relationships (see I Kings 11:1-4). But even David had a weakness for women. It was a romantic relationship that made David willing to murder one of his own mighty men, Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheeba's

husband. And I have seen scores of Christian's pulled down and completely defeated as a result of a romantic relationship. And please note with me, it does not have to be a romantic relationship out of the will of God. It can be a romantic relationship completely within God's guidelines of holy matrimony. Even within those guidelines, some are made ineffective in the battle (Note Luke 14:20).

v.9 Commanders are essential for the success of any army. So the kind of commanders God is looking for have these characteristics:

- Courageous
- Not dominated by domestic concerns
- Not detained by romantic relationships

Note: Even godly commanders do not automatically ensure that those they command will not fail; Gehazi's commander was the prophet Elisha, Ananias & Sapphira had the apostles, & the apostles had Jesus. Ultimately our faithfulness in the battle depends on us. We must be courageous, not allow ourselves to be dominated or distracted by domestic concerns, and not detained by romantic relationships.

Note: God cares more about the character of His warriors than the size of his army; God can do more with one brave, committed, undistracted warrior than with thousands who are not; David & Goliath; Jonathan & his armor-bearer; Gideon & the 300; Esther, Mary, etc.

## CONCLUSION

So how are you doing as a warrior for the Lord? Has your courage failed? Have you become distracted by domestic concerns? Has a romantic relationship weakened or ruined your commitment to Christ? The great thing about our commanding officer is that he is gracious, merciful, and forgiving. Failure doesn't automatically mean "court martial." Peter denied the Lord three times, but afterward became a courageous example for the Lord. He would later fail again (Gal.1), and again receive grace, mercy, and forgiveness. John Mark deserted the apostle Paul in Acts 13, but would later be restored to his position, and would ultimately pen one of the four gospels, the gospel according to Mark. Even great warriors for the Lord can experience times of weakness & failure; Elijah ran from Jezebel, and this right after bravely confronting 850 false prophets on Mt. Carmel and seeing God send fire down from heaven.