

Soldiers of the Cross

Raising a child of God in a Godless World.



While watching the Civil War movie *Glory*, starring Denzel Washington, I was very much surprised how much the main characters resembled our current generation. They were all struggling to find a sense of who they were, who they were meant to be and a place to belong ... the same troubles that face every child and parent. They needed strength to survive a world that did not want them, a world filled with poverty and selfishness. As African Americans, they were born at the very bottom of the heap a

feeling every child and most parents can understand. Joining the Army, they found something larger than themselves and as a bonus found themselves, the two things our current generation of young people need. If they are not to be crushed by the world. There the movie ends and real life begins.

How do we raise a child with the feeling that he is a soldier for Christ, a child of God who can win all the battles he is sure to face and come out standing tall and confident that his Commander in Chief can be trusted? I think of words written centuries ago by a man known only as Terrence: "When we cannot build good roads for our children we must build children strong enough for the roads they must face."

For most parents this means taking our faith seriously, signing up and wearing the uniform every second of the day-looking not to ourselves for the strength to go on, but to our Commanding Officer. His yoke is easy. He asks only two things of us: to do what He says and to believe that He will keep His promises. If this total commitment seems too much to ask, we should consider the possible consequences: drug addiction, prison, lifelong loneliness and instability.

No child beats the enemy of our souls with a potato chip in one hand and a soft drink in the other. Flabby, casual soldiers are always the first to fall. Children asked to live in today's world need God's Word daily, unfailing faith that He does answer prayer and sharing with other soldiers. Putting God first is no longer a respectable thing to do it is absolutely necessary. In my own experience there are certain minimum daily requirements to raising a Christian soldier.

1. One Bible verse a day. It is a child sized portion that can easily be served at meals. Parents can keep a Bible on the table or purchase card-sized Scriptures from a local Christian bookstore. Best of all is to send a child out the door each morning with a Scripture in his or her pocket (see Deut. 11: 19-21). No soldier should ever leave the house unarmed. It is foolish. It is also disobeying a command given directly by the Creator and lover of our souls. He longs for each of His children to be safe. Carrying God's Word is the only way.

2. Pray with your child each time he or she leaves the house. A simple, one sentence prayer like: "Lord Jesus make me smart enough to tell the difference between You and Satan (right and wrong) and strong enough to always choose You." Another good prayer is: "Remind me Father that You are always there and when in doubt to call on You."

3. Put as many decisions as possible into your child's hands.

I like the way Pastor Charles Stanley did it with his own children. When they wanted to do something or go somewhere, he made them ask God first. He would not give an answer until they had talked to God about it. In the beginning he often had to tell his children he was pretty sure that they needed to talk to God again because God would never go along with what they thought He said. "If a child is not enough of a soldier to recognize God's voice, He is not enough of a soldier to leave the house."

4. Perhaps the most important part of raising a soldier is to make sure he is surrounded by other soldiers.

This means attending services at the citadel/church, but it also means having your children's friends into your home. Having your children's friends into your home is the perfect way to influence them before they influence your children. And they will learn from being in your house what you allow and do not allow and where you stand.

I never thought that I would think of Denzel Washington and William Booth as brothers. But after seeing the movie "Glory," I realized that they both understood what being a soldier is all about. It is about being a follower of God and leader of men. It is about being excellent instead of average. Children who grow up understanding this one thing will grow strong and straight, the one thing our nation and world needs most. If your child is not a soldier, it is almost certain that he will be a casualty. Today is the day to tighten up the ranks and get in step.

Charles White is a retired Christian pre school teacher and web editor of www.bibleparent.com