

172 - WARRIORS

BY - WUL -

-72- Warriors

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About

This short book of devotionals is a collection of “truth” personified in the form of faithful warriors. This was written to encourage, educate, warn, and be all-around helpful to the reader as it shines a light on what was written long ago.

This is to you...

To you who long for truth, to know it, and to walk in it—

This is for you (and the ones you love).

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

Malachi 4:5-6 NIV



Abiding

I met an “abiding warrior,” and he talked with me about *abiding*. He was in a deeply loving relationship with the Lord; he and the Lord were one in Spirit.

They were devoted to one another.

The warrior showed his devotion in their relationship by doing what was asked of him day by day. And the Lord showed His love by filling the warrior with “His” life, so that the warrior could experience life to the fullest.

He trusted the Lord, who is faithful, and he lived to please Him.

He said to me, “The Lord has given himself fully to me, so I too have given myself fully to Him.”

Because of the warrior’s obedience, the Lord was able to live and flow through him, in order to touch the hearts of others. The warrior *could not* do this on his own, so he left this up to the Lord and trusted the Spirit to guide him and to accomplish the real work.

I knew the love that this warrior had was real, and that this type of relationship was what the Lord desired for all of us. His desire is for us to abide in Him as He lives through us...

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5 NIV | Luke 15:31 NIV

“My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.”



Believe

I met a “believing warrior,” and he talked with me about *belief*.

He was strong in the face of opposition.

He believed in truth, and he stood for it.

Many opposed him claiming, “there was no absolute truth,” but the warrior knew this was a lie. Those who claimed this lie wanted to justify their own desires and be affirmed in their own actions. But this did not change the truth; the truth cannot change or be changed.

So he continued to live in truth and speak the truth in love, regardless of the opposition. And because of this, there was a clear distinction between right and wrong.

He helped me see how important it was to live this way because without him, over time many would never know the truth.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:31-32 NIV | John 8:42-47 NIV

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you

believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”



Builder

I met a “building warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *builder*.

He thought deeply about the way he built because he wanted his work to last.
So he built carefully and with the *Lord’s* wisdom.

He showed me that many people build structures that look good for the moment and appear to be sound, but they don’t last. They were built with cheap materials, and because of this, the builder suffers loss.

“These builders didn’t use solid instruction from the Lord,” he said. “They combined their own worldly wisdom with some of the Lord’s teaching, which weakened the people they taught, instead of strengthening them. This is not good.

I urge you to patiently allow *The Lord* to build *His* structure *through* you, and to keep your eyes *not* on the structure itself, but on the *Master Builder*.”

From this warrior I realized The Lord is the one who actually builds. Truly,
“*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.*”

Psalm 127:1a NIV | 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NIV

If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.



Childlike

I met a “child warrior,” and he talked with me about being *childlike*.

He was young at heart and humble.

Like a child, the warrior *believed* his Father, and he received whatever the Father promised because the warrior trusted Him. He knew the Father was truthful and good. And what he received by faith, he was able to share with others. Being a child was fun; faith in the Father was joyous.

And he realized he could do nothing without the help of his Father, so he learned to *depend* on the Lord, and to walk with Him.

I pray that I always keep the humble position of a child in need of God’s help, because He is faithful to provide *what’s needed* and more.

Luke 18:16-17 NIV

But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”



Chosen

I met a “chosen warrior,” and he talked with me about being *chosen*.

He was commissioned for a task that proved to be difficult at times.

In those tough times, the Lord would always remind him of the truth.

He comforted the warrior, saying, *“You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.”*

With this, the warrior was always reminded of *who* was actually in charge of all things, and that the weight of his task was never on himself to bear alone. The responsibility was the Lord’s. So the warrior rested in this trust.

He helped me better understand the sovereignty of the Lord.

John 15:16 NLT | Revelation 1:17 NIV

... Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”



Contentment

I met a “content warrior,” and she talked with me about being *content*.

She was a warrior at peace.

She was content with what she had in life. She didn’t strive for material gain or positions of power, nor did she desire the praise of others. Rather she stored up treasure in heaven by being rich in good deeds.

“Be content with what you have,” she said. “You will hear the teachings of many false teachers *‘who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.’*”

Her message surprised me because it was the exact opposite of the message from the world. And I knew this was a safeguard for my heart.

1 Timothy 6:5b-8 NIV | Hebrews 13:5 NIV

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”



Correction

I met a “correcting warrior,” and he talked with me about the importance of *correc-
tion*.

He was strong in heart.

He had to say many things to people he loved that went against what they
wanted to hear.

I realized this was a very difficult and painful job, but he encouraged me by
sharing how correction was necessary at times.

He said it was essential to straighten out paths that had been bent, because if
they continued unchecked, these paths could lead them in the wrong direction alto-
gether.

He sometimes used creative ways to make his point known, but his goal was al-
ways to help others see the truth.

“Correct gently, and with patience,” he advised me.

Because of this warrior, I learned that correction, with wisdom, was actually a
good thing, and that this too was love.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in
righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*



Decide

I met a “deciding warrior,” and he talked with me about making a *decision*.

He had to choose whom he would serve.

He was compelled to know the truth, so he pursued it.

He said, “Many believe that if they don’t choose a side, and they accept all beliefs, then they are safe because they are neither for nor against another. This is simply not true; there is, in fact, no middle ground. If you are not for, you are against.

And if you are against the Lord, you will live contrary to His ways, and even worse, you will teach others to do the same. Indeed, in every manner of life, if you are not for, you are against.”

“But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

I’m thankful for the teaching of this warrior. I too have decided, *“I love you, Lord, my strength.”*

Joshua 24:15 NLT | Psalm 18:1 NIV | Matthew 12:30 NIV

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.



Diligence

I met a “diligent warrior,” and he talked with me about the importance of diligence.

He was a skilled warrior, well trained in many areas.

He was attentive in his work and always aimed to do well in all that he did. He taught others to do the same, and he warned them that laziness was a dangerous attitude.

“One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys,” he said.

From this warrior, I learned to be persistent, but even more, to be patient as I trained, moving step by step, and little by little. This brought me great peace in the midst of my pursuits.

Proverbs 18:9 NIV



Discipline

I met a “disciplined warrior,” and he talked with me about being *disciplined*.

He was at peace amid great storms.

After a while, I learned he had endured many hardships in his life. The Lord allowed these things to happen for the warrior’s good.

And though the discipline was painful, the warrior was pleased by it because he knew he would be better off in the end. He learned that this discipline was actually love.

The warrior gave me a perspective on love and on the hardships of life that I did not realize before. In light of this, I will no longer complain about the troubles I face because I too am loved.

Hebrews 12:5-8 NIV

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.



Dreams

I met a "dreaming warrior," and he talked with me about *dreams*.

Over the years, he had many dreams as he slept. Sometimes his dreams were messages concerning his life and the lives of others.

He always prayed for understanding when he had dreams that were out of the ordinary.

"The Lord will communicate with us in many ways, even as we sleep," he explained.

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams."

Acts 2:17 NIV



Education

I met an “educated warrior,” and he talked with me about *education*.

He took great joy in what he learned because the Master trained him.

The warrior was given wisdom to understand the *methods* behind each desired task he was given to do. He used his education to develop knowledge and skills that the Master could then use for “His” purposes.

And the Master knew just how to instruct the warrior.

The warrior amazed many because of his wisdom, and the people wondered, “Where did this man get such knowledge, and who was his teacher?”

He professed to all, that the Lord taught him. This was the work of God.

Isaiah 28:23-29 NIV

Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.

When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil?

When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field?

His God instructs him and teaches him the right way.

Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it, but one does not use horses to grind grain.

All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent.



Encouragement

I met an “encouraging warrior,” and he talked with me about *encouragement*.

He knew the power of his words when they were professed in truth and love.

He taught me, the way to make it through a journey was to travel step-by-step and day-by-day. His encouragement was given to help those who needed it, pushing them to continue moving forward.

He told me, “The difference between someone completing a journey and someone stopping short of completion is encouragement.” With those words, it all seemed so simple.

Romans 12:8a NLT

If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging..



Endure

I met an “enduring warrior,” and he talked with me about *enduring*.

He lived solely to please the King.

The warrior made pleasing the King (by doing His will) his goal because he was taught that the deeds he did while on the earth, would outlive him and impact others for generations to come.

But in contrast, he saw many people achieve great things in their lifetime, but when they died, it all came to nothing. Their work *did not* endure.

The warrior made it clear to me that the will of the King was the only thing that would last. So I too made this my goal.

2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV

So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.



Eternity

I met an “eternal warrior,” and he talked with me about *eternity*.

He knew his life on earth was only a mist, a vapor that lasted for a short time, and then vanished; *so he did not focus on this life.*

He believed in his eternal dwelling, and he longed to be there forever. Because of this faith, he lived his life on earth, storing up treasures for the life to come, living a life of good deeds, fully surrendered to the will of God.

“Most people live in such a way as to preserve their lives,” he said.

“They want to store up things to live their best lives now on this earth. Their lives and actions are shaped by what they cherish most. I pray that this changes.”

“For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”

He left me with a reminder of his way of life, saying, *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

As I reflected on our encounter, I prayed to have this understanding in increasing measure... *“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.”*

Hebrews 13:14 NIV | Matthew 6:19-21 NIV | Psalm 84:5 NIV | Psalm 39:4-6 NIV

Show me, Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure. Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom; in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.



Expression

I met an "expressive warrior," and she talked with me about *expression*.

She was full of life. She said to me, "I'm extremely thankful for the wonderful gift of expression. It is truly the sum of life!"

After some thought, I realized she was right! For all of life is an expression of the heart. *“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.”*

Because of her, I continued to pursue the One who could fill my heart and renew my mind, helping me to naturally express what is good, pleasing and perfect.

Luke 6:45 NLT



Faithful

I met a “faithful warrior,” and he talked with me about being *faithful*.

He lived well.

He encouraged me by saying, “Be faithful with the little you’ve been given.

So often we think about giving from abundance, but can we give from the little we have? Can we do right with the little we already possess? Can we be faithful with little?”

Lord, help me to be faithful with little.

Luke 16:10 NIV

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.



Fight

I met a “fighting warrior,” and he talked with me about *fighting*.

He loved the truth.

He cast down every *wrong* thought that entered his mind that went against the truth, before it was able to take root. And he was able to do this more and more as he continued to learn the truth.

Being united with the Truth helped him *know* the truth. So he offered up every thought to the Lord, to know what was true.

He said to me, “There is one who speaks lies and there is One who speaks only truth. Whoever you listen to is the one you give permission to influence your life.”

His words were very helpful to me. I pray for the wisdom and discernment to know the truth, and to listen only to Him...

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6 NIV | 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NIV

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.



Find

I met a “finding warrior,” and he talked with me about what he had *found*.

He was blessed to find something that many longed to find, but could not see.

He found a treasure of great value, and he realized it was more precious than anything he owned. In order to obtain it, it would cost him *everything*; but he was willing because he understood its value. So happily, he gave up all he had to possess this valuable treasure and he received it with joy.

The Lord told many, *“In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”*

Luke 14:33 NIV | Matthew 13:44-46 NIV

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.



Fishing

I met a “fishing warrior,” and he talked with me about *fishing*.

He was a man of many talents and languages, allowing him to wear many hats.

Because of this, he was able to fish in different places.

“There are many ways to fish,” he told me, “not just one way. *‘I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.’*”

He said he learned to be a fisher of men when he followed the Lord. The Lord Himself taught him this. In His love, I pray that He teaches me as well.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 NIV | Matthew 4:19-20 NLT

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him.



Flying

I met a “flying warrior,” and he talked with me about *flying*.

I asked him, “How did you gain this ability?”

He answered, “I had many struggles, and I knew my problems were too great for me to handle alone.”

He acknowledged that he needed help, so he *prayed* for it.

In fact, he learned that the Lord himself would fight for him. And in this hope, he believed it was done, so he followed with actions that proved his faith.

I asked the reason for this hope and he said, “*God blesses those who are poor (in spirit) and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*”

And with a heart *full of joy* he laughed and flew away.

In him, I saw the joy of *knowing* God. I saw the importance of true humility and faith.

Matthew 5:3 NLT



Follower

I met a “following warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *follower*.

He had no home, a foreigner in a land not his own.

I asked him why he lived this way.

And he responded, “This is sometimes the cost of being a follower.”

He was told, “*Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.*”

He accepted this and continued to follow. He said he would follow wherever the Lord went, even when he didn’t understand where he was being led. He did this because his true desire was a deeper, personal relationship with the Lord. He was warned there would be a cost, but he was willing to pay it.

I wondered where he gained the strength to keep going. He had such peace. It was a peace that nothing in this world could give. I asked for this peace, and I learned that the true children of God were those who let God’s Spirit *lead* them.

Luke 9:58 NIV | John 8:12 NIV

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever **fol-**
lows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*



Forgiveness

I met a “forgiving warrior,” and he talked with me about *forgiveness*.

He was dealt many painful blows, but each time he forgave. He found the strength to do this continuously because he remembered, he too had been forgiven much.

As we talked, he made it clear that forgiveness was extremely important to maintain peace in all areas of life. He learned that forgiveness was just as important for him, as it was for the other person.

He reminded me to live this way by saying, “*Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*”

I was astonished by how easily he forgave those who wronged him. I know his journey wasn’t easy, but I pray that I too can forgive like him. In moments when I need it most, I pray for this strength.

Colossians 3:13 NLT



Generosity

I met a “generous warrior,” and he talked with me about *generosity*.

He was a warrior of great teaching and he displayed his knowledge generously by the *life he lived*.

While he pursued a life of wisdom, he thought about how he could apply the things he learned to better help those around him. Because he learned in the way of love, meaning with “others in mind,” he was given much understanding. And because he put to use, or managed well what he had, he was given much more.

“No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.

*Therefore consider carefully **how** you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them.”*

These words were a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.

Luke 8:16-18 NIV | Proverbs 11:24 NIV

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.



Gentle

I met a “gentle warrior,” and he talked with me about being *gentle*.

He was humble in heart. He had a peaceful demeanor, along with a great sense of humor. I knew right away that we would be friends—brothers in Spirit.

I also knew he was destined to do great things. I felt strengthened as he encouraged me to continue on my journey.

As we walked he reminded me how to grow in relationships with those around me.

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Because of him, I could feel the importance of these words; but even more, he made me wonder, “Why is this demeanor so effective?”

And he said to me, “Be completely humble and gentle—because hearts are fragile.”

Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV



Gifts

I met a “gifted warrior,” and she talked with me about *gifts*.

She was motivated by a deep compassion for others. Because of this, she made an effort with the gifts she had been given. She didn’t worry about comparing herself with others; she just used her gifts to the best of her ability each day. More importantly, she offered up her gifts to the *One* who gave them to her, and in this way, she was able to help meet the needs of others. Because of this act of love, she grew in her gifting and was given even more.

When we were alone she talked with me.

She said, “I want to give you a proper perspective of life...

The goal is not to be considered ‘the greatest’ with the gift; the goal is for the gift to be used for the benefit of others. It is a tool to be used to express love. And every *good* gift, big or small, is from God. It is just that—a gift. It is not earned, but given, and comes not from us ourselves, so no one can boast. Please keep that in mind and stay connected to the *Giver of good gifts*.”

I will keep that in mind.

1 Peter 4:10 NIV

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.



Guided

I met a “guided warrior,” and he talked with me about being *guided*.

The King led his life.

“How do you know the way?” I asked.

He replied, “If anyone chooses to pursue the King’s will, they will know the King’s way. If you desire to know *His* will and to do it, He *will* guide you.

When you seek the King, *His Spirit* will guide you and show you His will for your life. In doing this, He will renew your mind. The mind has to be renewed in order to *see* things *His* way, over your own way.

‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.’

In the moments when the King’s will seems unclear or difficult to understand from your point of view, *‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.’*

Many want to know the way, but they refuse to seek the *King’s will*. They want His help only to fulfill their own will. This should never be the life of a *true* believer.

The King desires hearts that are *fully* yielded to Him day by day, so He can *fully* guide them. He wants us to know His will and plan...”

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”

Romans 12:2 NIV | Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV | Psalm 32:8 NIV | Proverbs 20:24 NIV

A person's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand their own way?



Hate

I met a “hated warrior,” and he talked with me about being *hated*.

By worldly standards, his ways were seen as *strange*.

This was because he did not live for the purposes of the world, but for the purposes of God.

I noticed that his very presence offended those of the world because he was a constant reminder of the path they did not choose. Even in their thoughts they felt challenged by his ways. Their ways blinded them from understanding the ways of the righteous and the will of God. Day by day this warrior became more of a stranger to them as they continued to follow the ways of the world.

And they watched his life from afar to see what would become of him.

But they will never understand his ways, and will be led even further from the truth. And sadly, in the end, they will lose the very thing they live to keep.

“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.”

John 15:18-19 NLT | John 3:19-21 NIV

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.



Hearing

I met a “hearing warrior,” and he talked with me about *hearing*.

He spoke of himself as a sheep that was part of a flock.

He could *hear* the voice of his Shepherd and he recognized it, as most sheep are known for.

He said, “The Shepherd is *good*, and He loves His sheep. He laid down His life for them.”

After a brief pause he continued, “Many *cannot* hear him; some, because they do not belong to Him, and the others simply don’t believe the Shepherd can speak to them directly. But this is not true. He loves them, and He wants to speak to them directly, if only they would believe, listen, and pursue *His* will.”

Passionately the warrior added, “He *wants* to speak and *guide* us as any good shepherd would. He will show us the way we are to walk.”

“*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’*”

After listening to the warrior’s plea, my own heart heard a voice say, “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*”

Isaiah 30:21 NIV | John 10:27 NIV | John 16:13 NIV

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not **speak** on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will **tell** you what is yet to come.*



Helpful

I met a “helpful warrior,” and he talked with me about being *helpful*.

He encouraged many.

He was invaluable to his community and to those in need.

He often reminded his people of their new way of life and how they might spur others on toward love and good deeds that stem from faith.

He said to me, “*Our people must learn to use their lives for doing good and helping anyone who has a need. Then they will not have empty lives.*”

This warrior made it clear that we were saved to do good.

Titus 3:14 ERV | 1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 33 NIV

“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive.

No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.



Holy

I met a “holy warrior,” and he talked with me about *holiness*.

He was a warrior of morals, believing in a more excellent way to live.

He witnessed many who wanted to determine their own way of righteousness in order to fit their own lifestyle, but the warrior knew this was not the way of the King.

And because the warrior *desired* to live righteously, the King gave him the strength to do so. He loved the warrior and used him for special purposes because he turned away from wickedness and pursued holiness.

From this warrior, I was able to see the necessity of pursuing righteousness. His life was an example for many.

2 Timothy 2:19-22 NIV

Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.



Honesty

I met an “honest warrior,” and he talked with me about *honesty*.

He thought genuinely about the way he lived, aiming to live a life of integrity, no matter the cost. He believed it was “*Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich.*”

He learned the *truth* from the Lord. And he knew the truth was essential for the good of all people.

He stated, “*He (The Lord) grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.*”

This warrior helped me realize how valuable *true integrity* really is. Living truthfully may seem costly, but it’s worth it.

Proverbs 28:6 NLT | Proverbs 2:7-10 NLT



Hope

I met a “hopeful warrior,” and he talked with me about *hope*.

He was a warrior of great vision and understanding.

He had a deep love for mankind and he lived to be helpful.

He said to me, “Never put your hope in men, but in the Lord.”

Even when he spoke to men, his hope was not in the men themselves—that they would listen, but his hope was in the Lord, that *He* would touch their hearts, enabling them to hear. His hope and confidence were in the Lord.

This understanding actually increased his devotion to the Lord, and kept his heart in a place of love with his fellow man. I was grateful for the warrior’s wisdom.

Psalms 33:20-22 NLT

We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.



Illuminate

I met an “illuminating warrior,” and she talked with me about *illuminating*.

In her relationships, her true motivation was to help people (eternally). So she was known for her generosity and willingness to look out for the needs of others.

She said to me, “If you look at others and desire to help them, you will have proper perspective. But if you look at others, as to get things from them or to use them for your own gain, your perspective on relationships and life will be tainted.”

I pray for a heart that sees with the right perspective.

Matthew 6:22-23 NIV

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!



Inhabited

I met an “inhabited warrior,” and he talked with me about being *inhabited*.

He had a joy that no one could take away. He was given a gift that was priceless; the Lord lived inside of him.

The Lord embraced him, comforted and taught the warrior. He was never alone, so he was never lonely.

This new helper gave him strength when he was weak, and guidance when he was lost. The comforter gave the warrior a glimpse of heaven in his heart, to assure him of what was awaiting him for eternity.

So no matter what happened in his life, the warrior was always comforted by his relationship with the indwelling Lord.

He said, “Every day I am in awe that the Lord dwells within me. He speaks to me and guides me, and I know Him.”

This warrior reminded me of the intimate relationship I should always delight in.

John 14:15-17, 23-24 NIV

*If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, **for he lives with you and will be in you.***

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”



Intercession

I met an “intercessory warrior,” and he talked with me about *intercession*.

He loved deeply, and he dealt with people patiently.

In his relationships, he saw the *spiritual* needs of others. He believed the “true” solution for their needs came only from above; so in his love, “*he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears,*” interceding for their well-being and growth.

He shared with me that he spent time with the Father each morning. Then he imparted unto others, the spiritual blessings he received from the Father.

His actions and his prayers were aligned because he lived a life in submission to the will of God, laying down his life for the benefit of others; intercession helped him live this way. And his prayers were heard “*because of his reverent submission.*”

This warrior helped me better understand what love does.

Hebrews 5:7 NIV | 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8 NIV

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray...



Learn

I met a “learning warrior,” and he talked with me about *learning*.

He was a man of great understanding.

And he aimed to put into practice the teachings of The Lord.

He encouraged me by saying, “In order to learn and gain understanding, one must actually ‘do’ the things they learn, not just memorize them.”

This truly makes all the difference.

Luke 8:21 NIV

He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”



Listening

I met a “listening warrior,” and she talked with me about the importance of *listen-*
ing.

She was a master in the art of relationships. She was quick to listen and slow to speak.

The warrior thought it was important and beneficial to listen to others as they spoke, not only to show them respect, but also to better understand them; then she would know how to respond.

“To answer before listening—that is folly and shame,” she said.

I saw that she did not want to dominate any conversation; she desired only to be helpful.

From her, I learned that the art of conversation can be delicate, and listening to the other person is key. I was grateful for her teaching, and I will aim to do this more and more.

Proverbs 18:13 NIV | James 1:19 NIV

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...



Loved

I met a “loved warrior,” and he talked with me about being *loved*.

He grew stronger day by day.

He was encouraged as he fought because he *knew* the love of the Lord, and that he was more than a conqueror.

The Lord assured him saying, *“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”*

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

So the warrior continued to fight without fear, trusting in this love.

I ask that the Lord would help me live from this place of love more and more each day.

Luke 10:19 NIV | Isaiah 41:10 NIV | Matthew 28:20b NIV

... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.



Messenger

I met a “messenger warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *messenger*.

Wherever he traveled, he came in peace and with gentleness.

It was clear to me that his job was to deliver messages. The messages didn’t come from him, but from his Lord, the King. And he always delivered what was given to him, but he explained that there was more to his commission...

He told me, he was to clear the way for the King’s arrival.

“I clear the way and make straight paths for Him. I help prepare the people’s hearts for their King,” he explained.

I asked, “Why is it so important that you clear the way for the King? Won’t people recognize the King when they see Him?”

The messenger answered, “*No*, because the King does not present Himself in the way most people would *expect* or prefer. So if they aren’t looking for Him, they could very well miss Him when He comes.”

He added, “There are also times when I have to remove obstacles that may hinder the King from being received.”

After spending time with the messenger, I noticed qualities that were essential to his effectiveness—patience and endurance.

So I asked him, “How do you continue in this task of being a messenger?”

He replied, “Through much prayer, before I go and after I leave.”

Malachi 3:1 NIV

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,”
says the Lord Almighty.



Motives

I met a “motivated warrior,” and he talked with me about *motives*.

He thought deeply about his own actions and how they would impact others. He explained to me that motives were like seeds. When you plant a seed, it will grow. If your motives are self-seeking, then the fruit, or the end result will be bad. If your motives are for the good of others, the fruit will be good.

It’s easy for people to rationalize their motives to justify their actions, so it’s important to ask yourself, “What am I really motivated by?”

This warrior helped me better understand that, *“All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord.”*

So I ask, “Lord, what is *good* for others? How am I to know? Teach me, so I can see clearly. What am I motivated by? Do I live for self, or do I live for you? Do I seek your will, or do I seek my own?”

Proverbs 16:2 NIV | Proverbs 21:2 NIV

A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart.



Opposition

I met an “opposed warrior,” and he talked with me about *opposition*.

The King gave him a task to complete. And he was encouraged because of the
Word from the King.

But when the warrior carried out the task, he was met with opposition. Soon after, there was even greater opposition, then another wave of opposition that fully discouraged the warrior.

He went back to the King to report the news, but the King was already aware of all that the warrior had to report. So the King encouraged and strengthened the warrior by reminding him of His original promise—the Word that was given from the beginning.

Though there was opposition, the King’s promise never changed. So He continued in His plan, despite the opposition, and He told the warrior to “*continue*” the fight, and “*never*” give up. And the King did succeed, indeed He always will.

“For no word from God will ever fail.”

“For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?”

Luke 1:37 NIV | Isaiah 14:27 NIV | Job 42:2 NIV

I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.



Patience

I met a “patient warrior,” and he talked with me about *patience*.

He battled with anxiety for some time, and he came out victorious. He now moves slowly, a man without haste. He understood the importance of waiting. Time was just as important of an ingredient as the practical actions, in order for things to be fulfilled.

He realized he couldn't rush or slow the events of life; so he befriended time, seeing him as an ally instead of an enemy.

“Don't worry,” he said, “*He has made everything beautiful in its time.*”

He also said, “*Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way!*”

I took these words to heart and practiced patience with self-control; this made me wise in my words and deeds. I could tell this warrior knew peace of heart and mind. And it made me happy to know him, a mirror to my own heart.

Ecclesiastes 3:11a NIV | Proverbs 19:2 NIV

P.S.

We are looking for the fruit of a tree. You can have the seed, rich soil, plenty of water, the rays of the sun, and a gardener to tend the tree. You can have everything you need, but if you don't allow the tree the time it needs to grow, none of the other things matter. That is how important patience is. “*He has made everything beautiful in its time.*” Continue to water the seed, and *in time* it will grow and produce fruit “at the right time.”



Peace

I met a “peaceable warrior,” and he talked with me about *peace*.

Many people had wronged him, but he treated them well in spite of their abuse. He responded with love and blessing as he aimed to live at peace with everyone. Whenever he faced wrongdoing, he overcame it by doing good.

He spoke to those in his community saying, *“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

This warrior amazed me because I could see that his love for all men was sincere. I pray that God helps me to love this way.

Romans 12:19-21 NIV



Perception

I met a “perceiving warrior,” and he talked with me about *perception*.

He had a different perspective of what actually mattered in life.

He noticed that many people took great pride in their material possessions and how others perceived them. They wanted to be known for their worldly successes and achievements.

But the warrior didn’t care about what people had or how well things looked, or about anything that could be seen; he cared about what was in the heart of a person. He knew that the condition of the heart was what truly mattered.

And he taught me this as well.

1 John 2:15-17 NLT

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.



Persistence

I met a “persistent warrior,” and she talked with me about *persistence*.

She was steadfast in her efforts, and she never gave up.

She was in constant pursuit of the purpose she was created for and the task that was given to her.

She reminded me to focus on what was important, to remove distractions, and to be persistent.

But I wondered, “What is important? What is my first priority?”

The warrior answered, “To persistently seek to be in the presence of The Lord, and everything will flow from that place.”

Psalm 84:4-7 NIV

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.



Planting

I met a “planting warrior,” and he talked with me about *planting*. He was kind and patient, but what I admired most was his courage and humility.

He knew he was just a planter. He had no ability to make the seed grow. His job was to help prepare the soil, sow the seed, and occasionally water it. He felt relieved when he realized he had no ability to make it grow.

He told me, “One plants, one waters, but it is God who makes it grow. Rest easy knowing this and do what you are given to do. Do not be anxious for the harvest. When the seed is placed in your heart to plant, sow the seed that was given to you.”

“He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.’”

His wisdom brought me peace and increased my faith. In fact, he helped me see how necessary *faith* was in becoming a planter. The growth may not be evident in the moment, but what’s planted will remain “for the proper time.”

Because of his words, I learned to “patiently trust” the seed that was sown in love, and even more, the *One* who can make the seed grow.

Mark 4:26-28 NIV



Praise

I met a “praising warrior,” and she talked with me about *praise*.

She had a heart of gratitude.

She believed all things in her life, whether they seemed good or bad, came from the Lord. So she thanked Him in every situation, because she knew He was good and all His ways were just.

The warrior encouraged me in my difficult situations by saying, “*Give thanks in **all** circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*”

Then I too slowly started to understand what praise and gratitude accomplished. They guarded my heart and reminded me to focus on what was actually true, no matter the circumstance. The position of my heart is changed in an instant by giving thanks to the One who is true.

“*Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.*”

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV | Philippians 3:1 NLT | Habakkuk 3:17-18 NIV

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.



Prayer

I met a “praying warrior,” and she talked with me about *prayer*.

She was a warrior of peace.

This warrior prayed from her mind and Spirit continually throughout the day. She did this to commune with God, stating, “Just to be able to communicate with God means everything to me.”

Although she prayed to commune with Him, she also prayed for others.

“The root issues to the problems we face are *spiritual*,” she said, “I pray because the *real solutions* are spiritual as well.”

This warrior helped me realize prayer was essential, and also a privilege that should be taken advantage of daily.

1 Peter 3:12a NLT

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers...



Preparation

I met a “prepared warrior,” and he talked with me about *preparation*.

He was a warrior of great strength and wisdom.

He was able to stand strong in the face of adversity because the King taught and prepared him. And he was taught the ways of the King by the King’s “written word.”

The warrior knew that the King’s word was priceless, and that he would be lost and swayed by the forces of this world without it, so he was grateful to learn from it.

This warrior helped me understand the value of the scriptures; they are Spirit and life. And I too, need them if I am to be prepared, to do the work of the King. Truly there is no other way.

“Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil.”

Psalms 119:133 NLT | 2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT

You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.



Purpose

I met a “purposeful warrior,” and he talked with me about *purpose*.

He was chosen to be in the service of the King. After he was brought into the Kingdom of Light, he wondered about his purpose.

So he asked the King, “Now that you’ve brought me into your service, what am I to do? What is your plan for my life?”

The King did have a plan for the warrior’s life. He has a will for all of His soldiers. But *His* plan must be pursued, and the warrior must be *fully* surrendered to it. The King will help, and all will be found in His word.

I realized the greatest thing one could do is to find the will of the King for their life and do it; this is my prayer for all men. Yes, to live out the *purpose* for which they were created.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV | Colossians 1:9-14 NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption (through His blood), the forgiveness of sins.



Reading

I met a “reading warrior,” and he talked with me about *reading*.

He seemed very disciplined in the way he lived.

Each day he realized there were more and more distractions coming into the world that kept us from doing the basic things we needed to do. One of the most important things was reading the word of God.

In order to combat this, he made it a priority each day to spend time reading. No matter what was happening around him, no matter how he *felt*, he made this a priority *each* day.

He said, “The word of God is precious. And spending time reading the word of God and *living what you read*, are the most important things you can do.”

I too have come to see that this is true.

Psalm 119:15-16 NIV

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.



Reconciliation

I met a “reconciling warrior,” and he talked with me about *reconciliation*.

He lived in constant fellowship with the Lord.

He quickly realized he could not continue in right fellowship with the Lord if he had not made things right in his relationships with men.

“You should never want your fellowship to be broken,” he explained, “*so if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*”

“And in the very same way, our *prayers* offered to the Lord are not pleasing until we have reconciled our differences with one another.”

This warrior helped me see how important relationships are amongst the family of believers and how important reconciliation is to God.

For when we were against God, He reconciled us to Himself through faith in His Son.

Matthew 5:23-24 NLT



Release

I met a “releasing warrior,” and he talked with me about *releasing*. He was considerate in the way of using his possessions, willing to share with those around him.

I noticed he didn’t own many things that he couldn’t let go of. In life, he came to understand that nothing truly belonged to him. He was just a manager of the things he possessed, so he managed them well.

I overheard him saying, *“If you buy something, it should not matter to you that you own it. You should use the things of the world without letting them become important to you. This is how you should live, because this world, the way it is now, will soon be gone.”*

He taught me that blessings were to be shared with others; they are tools to show love.

1 Corinthians 7:30b-31 ERV



Renewal

I met a “renewed warrior,” and he talked with me about being *renewed*.

He was kind and truthful.

He said to me, “Many think of themselves as *good* people, but no one is truly good alone.”

“He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.”

So he stressed to me that there was a need for all mankind. A need for a new Spirit to “govern” our hearts and lead us in the right way—to be changed, to be born (again) from above.

“Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’ ”

And he made it clear to me that those who are without this new Spirit, don’t truly belong to God.

“But for us who have received His grace,” the warrior said, *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...”*

John 2:25 NIV | John 3:3 NIV | Titus 3:5 NIV | Mark 10:18 NIV

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.”



Repent

I met a “repentant warrior,” and he talked with me about *repentance*.

He shined brightly.

As we talked, he told me about his past and the many wrongs he committed against God, himself, and others. He said he was torn up inside, and not a good person to be around. *“My feet were swift to shed blood; ruin and misery marked my ways, and the way of peace I did not know” (altered phrasing).*

But he now seemed different, and I wondered how he was changed.

He confessed that he realized he was wrong, and God showed him mercy for his crimes.

He said, *“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.”*

This warrior was living proof of a soul that had been forgiven. And I believed him because his words were proven by his new way of life.

Romans 3:15-17 NIV | Proverbs 28:13 NLT | Psalms 32:3-5 NLT

When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.



Resist

I met a “resisting warrior,” and he talked with me about *resisting*.

He was given the ability to live a pure life, and he cherished it.

There were some sins in his life that he had cast off, and he was delivered from them. He was grateful for the power of the Lord.

But there were some sins that he had to fight and “resist” in order to move in complete freedom.

He said, “In order to walk in this freedom we must keep in step with what the *voice* of the Holy Spirit says and not the desires of the flesh.”

“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

I was extremely grateful for the words of this warrior because he helped me better understand the fight that was taking place within me; and even better, how to overcome it. Only by the Spirit is this possible. And I thank the Lord in advance for every victory.

Galatians 5:17, 25 NIV | Hebrews 12:4 NIV

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.



Salvation

I met a “saved warrior,” and he talked with me about *salvation*.

He was filled with joy because he had eyes to see the Lord. He knew this was a gift, so he lived the rest of his life sharing this joy with others.

And he helped me understand how blessed I was...

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.”

Luke 10:22-23 NIV | Matthew 16:16-17 NIV

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”



Seeing

I met a “seeing warrior,” and she talked with me about sight.

She had such vision, true perspective. She saw beauty in all things, and her vision was renewed day by day.

She taught me about the eyes of true friendship, revealing true love sees people for who they will be. Love sees who they were created to be, who they truly are. They see with the eyes of faith, from a new heart—and their words follow suit.

Then she looked at me and smiled. And at that moment I wondered what she saw.

Sensing my curiosity, she asked, “When you look at a man, what do you see?”

“I see a man,” I said.

“What if you saw not the flesh, but the soul?”

Not age, but a child?

Not their current state, but their potential?

What if you had not skepticism, but faith?

Then you will experience a love worth laying your life down for. Your vision will expand beyond your years. You will be a city on a hill.

However, love that clings too tightly to another and coddles them is not true. Love that hinders the growth of another by not allowing them to experience trials and pain is not love. Love that lives in fear, terrified of a terrible outcome, is not love; nor will it recognize real love when it comes. Pay attention to this.”

I remembered her words well, and I was grateful for her because now, I too have eyes that see. I realized this sight was given when I understood God's love for me.

I pray for this sight more and more.



Selfless

I met a “selfless warrior,” and he talked with me about being *selfless*.

He lived a life led by the Holy Spirit.

On his journey, he followed the Lord in obedience—even to the point of death. And this pleased the Lord, because this meant the end of the warrior, and that God could live in him fully. He had to die to himself, or “deny himself” each day, so he could fully live for God. Dying to self, or becoming selfless is the *only* way to live for God.

God desired to give him a better life, so He sentenced the warrior to die to the *person* he was never meant to be, in order for him to become who God created him to be.

The warrior said, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

From him, I realized it was impossible to be a warrior, without understanding the importance of the “cross” (a deliberate, willful, total surrender).

“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

Galatians 2:20 NIV | 2 Corinthians 5:15 NIV | Luke 9:23-25 NIV

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”



Servant

I met a “servant warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *servant*.

He was a *true* disciple among many who were *false*.

He informed me that his entire life’s job was to serve and to do the will of the King; that is what a servant does, he gives up his whole life and being to do the will of another.

In becoming a servant, he realized the King’s *wants and desires* for him were better than his own, and they were also for the well-being of others. So he gave up the plans he had for his own life and completely trusted and devoted himself to the King’s will.

Though he faced many difficulties, he was strengthened to serve as he remembered these words...

“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

And I witnessed a clear distinction between this warrior and the false ones. The false warriors did many good deeds in the name of the King, but they never knew Him or His true will, nor did they live for Him.

John 12:24-26 NIV | Matthew 7:21-23 NIV

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name per-

form many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ ”



Simplicity

I met a “simple warrior,” and he talked with me about *simplicity*.

He was an obedient disciple of the Wise Master.

His Master instructed him step by step. Though the disciple wanted to know much, the Master only gave him “simple” instructions in order to accomplish the desired task. Once he was “obedient” with the first thing, he was given the next.

“Do the simple thing that is given to you,” he said, “and don’t neglect it. Then you will be given the next; you can get to the *next* step, only after taking the *first*.”

I’m grateful for the reminder.

John 2:5, 7-8 NIV

His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so...



Small

I met a “small warrior,” and he talked with me about the *small* things.

He was often overlooked because of his size. And he carried out many things that others viewed as small and unimportant, but to him they were very important.

He told me that he believed God dwelled in the “small” things. So he carried out small deeds when no one was looking. Though these deeds were small to most people, they were noticed by some and they impacted those people eternally.

I was grateful for this warrior. He helped me see that the small things accomplished in love, were actually the big things.



Speaking

I met a “speaking warrior,” and he talked with me about *speaking*.

His words were life to my heart. It was evident that he lived the messages he shared.

He explained, “Many teachers speak, using the *right* words, and often say what is good, but those words don’t ‘live’ in them, and they don’t live in the words. God’s words must *live* in you and you in them. It’s imperative to *live* what you say.”

He said, *“Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”*

Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.”

This warrior showed me that it’s not good to speak from what you’ve read alone, but from what you’ve lived in combination with what’s written. I must “live” in His words as well, and they must “live” in me. His life must become my life...

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

John 7:17-18 NIV | John 15:7 NIV | Matthew 7:28-29 MSG

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause. They had never heard teaching like this. It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers! This was the best teaching they had ever heard.



Spirit

I met a “spiritual warrior,” and he talked with me about the *Spirit*.

He lived as a passionate messenger for God.

God shared with him many things about His plans and will for all men. His desire was to communicate with the warrior directly, so He placed His Spirit within the warrior.

The warrior explained to me, “You need the Spirit of God to understand the things of God. The person without the Spirit cannot understand the things of God and will actually consider them foolish. But the one who has the Spirit, understands spiritual things, because the Spirit *shines a light* and makes the hidden things visible. He makes the things of God *known* to people.”

1 Corinthians 2:9-12, 14 NIV

However, as it is written:

*“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” —
the things God has prepared for those who love him—*

these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.



Suffering

I met a “suffering warrior,” and she talked with me about *suffering*.

She was full of compassion.

Her *suffering* actually contributed to her *compassion* for others. When she could relate to their pain, she wanted to help them.

Many thought her pain was a punishment from God, but she knew her distress was for *their* benefit.

She told me, “Though your suffering is painful, take joy in it and be grateful, because you will be comforted. And after you’ve suffered in these ways, you’ll know exactly how to comfort those who suffer in the same way. Once more, if you are distressed, it is for the salvation and comfort of others.”

This warrior brought me peace in the midst of suffering, and helped me understand, “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*”

Matthew 5:4 NIV | 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NIV

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.



Teacher

I met a “teaching warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *teacher*.

He was full of faith and love.

He shared a thought with me, one that he carried in his heart each day. He said, “One of the biggest mistakes a teacher can make is forgetting they will always be a student.”

So with this mindset, the teacher didn’t hold his position above the students. He didn’t rule with authority, but he became a servant to them; viewing them as greater than himself, he lifted each one up to reveal their own unique potential.

He saw their value, and they learned together.

He believed his students genuinely wanted to succeed, whether it was evident or not. This perspective was crucial in reaching every heart. As a teacher, he learned much, and as a student, love was his greatest lesson.

I hope to share this same lesson of love.



Trust

I met a “trusting warrior,” and he talked with me about *trust*.

In lowliness he realized his own thinking was flawed, so he leaned not on his own understanding, but put his trust in the One who created everything.

In his search for wisdom, he took all of his questions to the top of the mountain and returned with instructions. Most times, only “after” the instructions were applied and practiced did he receive his answers.

He was a *willing* child at heart. He knew his faith would be developed only through trust, so he listened and followed with certainty.

Those close to him did not understand his steps, but he continued in them nonetheless. His deeds were for the greater good of the future. He invested his life toward things that endured. He led diligently. And he inspired me to do the same.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.



Uncomfortable

I met an “uncomfortable warrior,” and he talked with me about being *uncomfortable*.

He was a warrior with a devoted heart.

His life was one of constant discomfort, beautifully causing him to seek the face of the Lord; so he was grateful for the pain.

He said to me, “Don’t be afraid to be taken out of your comfort zone, to be pushed in areas where you feel timid. It will prove to be a good thing in the end, helping you to grow and help many.

In the pain is where we oftentimes find the Lord. It is where His voice speaks loudest and where His comfort is the deepest. In the wilderness is where He dwells—the desert, a place of refreshing.”

The warrior also shared that after a while, being “uncomfortable” became normal and pleasing, and being surrounded by comfort actually made him uncomfortable. He never wanted to live a life of ease.

I learned that being placed in uncomfortable situations actually helped the warrior grow. He encouraged me to take a chance, even when I’m afraid because being uncomfortable can help push me in the direction I need to be.

Isaiah 43:2 NIV

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.



Unity

I met a “uniting warrior,” and he talked with me about *unity*.

He loved deeply, from a grieving heart. He saw disunity among his people, so he lived to show the way of unity.

He encouraged, but he also warned many.

He encouraged his people to be in unity with each other, having the same mind and heart. He encouraged them to live as the Lord lived, humbling himself, for the sake of others.

And he warned them about the causes of disunity.

He shined a light on each heart, highlighting their desires and motives and spoke to the root of their decisions.

“Let nothing be done out of selfish ambition,” he said.

“*Selfish* ambition and *pride* separate.

Our Lord had everything, but he did not seek to live for *Himself*.

Let your lives be motivated by the same love Christ showed us.

And in your relationships, your actions may not be quite the same, but the desire to seek *God’s will* and *guidance* should be.

The moment we depart from this is when division happens.”

Philippians 2:3-4 NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.



Wanderer

I met a “wandering warrior,” and he talked with me about being a *wanderer*.

Around and around he traveled, around the same mountain he would go.

I think we all know this warrior because he exists in all of us. “I’ve been here before,” he says.

And his heart asked, “Do you still not understand?”

Around and around again, until you learn this lesson. “Do you still not understand?” Inquired the voice of reason.

In *humility*, he stopped and asked the guide for help. The warrior realized it was wise to live by the guide’s instructions, for the guide was familiar with the land.

Soon after, the warrior’s eyes were opened, and the directions became clear.

From him, I learned to always do the same.

Deuteronomy 2:2-3 NIV

Then the Lord said to me, “You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north.”



Wisdom

I met a “wise warrior,” and he talked with me about *wisdom*.

He was full of mercy, a true peacemaker.

He valued others as more important than himself. He was patient in his dealings, allowing room for the fault of others. He was forgiving in his relationships, charitable with his blessings, and he showed tenderness of heart in his affection toward others.

I saw him humbly planting seeds of good deeds in the field. He was dedicated to this work, believing each seed would one day become a tree of life. His wisdom was simple and pure; I knew it was from above.

Wisdom is proved right by her deeds—revealing true wisdom is proven by what it produces.

I inquired about his motivations, and he said to me, “*As water reflects the face, so one’s life reflects the heart.*” And I wondered, what kind of *life* created a heart like his?

From this warrior, I learned that *true wisdom* was a precious gift that only God could give, and that it is given to those who are obedient. I too pray for wisdom.

She is most valuable.

“*The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.*”

Proverbs 27:19 NIV | Proverbs 4:7 NIV | Proverbs 9:10 NIV

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.



These are the attempts of an artist and follower of Jesus Christ, to paint portraits, not so much with paint, but with words. Each warrior embodies a guiding moment I had with the Lord, and gave me a glimpse of who He is and what He looks like. I will conclude with the greatest portrait of all. I pray that it is clear. Through all of my faults and many flaws, this is how You respond to me; this is who You are to me...

Portrait of Love

“Love is patient, love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,

it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 NIV

This is Your face, the face of love. Give us eyes to see.