

BATTLEFIELD VERSES



“FIRE FOR EFFECT”

**PUT ON THE HELMET OF SALVATION
...WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.**

JOHN BRUNNER

Battlefield Verses is made available without charge to our men and women on active duty in the Armed Forces, and their families. We are grateful to so many individuals who through their gracious contributions continue to make the distribution of this book possible.

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*Army Headquarters

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Field Manual 6-30, 4-1

(2) Fire for Effect. The forward observer should always strive for first-round FFE (Fire For Effect). The accuracy required to fire for effect depends on the accuracy of the target location and the ammunition being used. When the observer is certain that the target location is accurate and that the first volley should have the desired effect on the target so that little or no adjustment is required, he announces FIRE FOR EFFECT.

**BATTLEFIELD
VERSES**

Dedication to:

Jan Brunner

My wife and best friend for over 40 years.

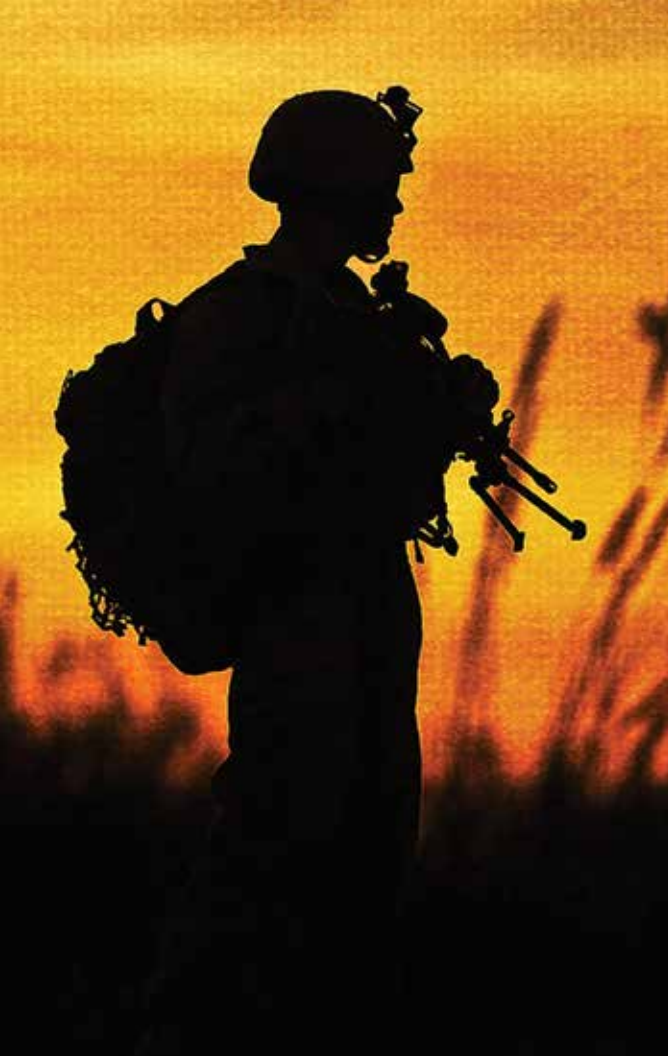


It was your faithful and endless encouragement that brought this story and these words to the pages of this book. We've traveled many roads together—beginning with the United States Marine Corps, to three decades with our family business, to missionary fields in Africa and beyond. As I think about our next chapter together, I'm reminded of the words of the poet Robert Browning:

*Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
nor be afraid!"*

Acknowledgement

For those that have helped me along the way in the preparation of this book, along with your thoughts and prayers, I am most appreciative. A "Marine Corps Salute" goes to my good friends and associates Debby Hagar, Mark and Ann Green, Moses Onwubiko, Karen and Ben Giamalva, Margie Wilson, Lee and Patty Smith, Robert Gammon, Lindsay Newhouse, Richard Hays, Karen Frantzen, Bruce Bumgardner, David and Lisa Cannon, Rachelle Rea, Elaine Brokaw, and most of all, to my dear mother of 92 years, Virginia Gammon Brunner, who continues to "fight the good fight".





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INTRODUCTION

In the battlefield of life...we are all on the front line. We've all taken incoming rounds. The inevitability of suffering is a bullet with our name on it. The roads we travel are pocketed with IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices), detonating with a sense of randomness—everything from combat casualties to cancer, death to divorce, loneliness to loss. These are the wounds of the flesh and the wounds of the heart; both leave scars that last forever.

Often I face these challenges: *Am I ready for the next attack? How can I be prepared? What can I do to survive?* While none of us will get through life without wounds to show for it, this I know: it is about courage, and enough of it to make it to another day.

I have come to learn through my own experiences that the source of courage is faith; beginning with a personal belief in a creator who has a plan and a purpose for my life and continuing beyond the grave.

Confidence in God is the source of courage in battling the challenges of life. Victory will be achieved when we “fire for effect” with “artillery rounds” on target. Those combat effective munitions are my battlefield verses.



JANUARY 23 OUT 77
820 MILES
TO USA

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress
and my deliverer...*

Psalms 18:2



MY STORY

“Were you ever shot at Dad?” I asked upon learning that my father had served with the U.S. Navy in World War II. I was just a young boy, and I guess that is “the” question sons ask their dads who have served their country in the Armed Forces.

I was just too young to understand the Burma-China combat theater, “Flying the Hump” over the treacherous Himalayan Mountains and the role of a young naval officer in supplying the troops with “beans, bullets, and bandages.” However, I clearly remember, as though it were yesterday—yet it was 50 years ago—when he told me about the strafing

attack by the Japanese Zero's fighter planes. I was wide-eyed when Dad said he dove under the closest truck and hit the deck as bullets had zapped the ground around the convoy. I continued to prod, "What was it like to be under attack?"

He said, "Son I was sending up prayers while spitting out dirt."

Over the years, we've all heard the expression: "There are no atheists in foxholes." This is also true in the bigger picture of life. There are those times, in all of our lives, when either literally or figuratively, we are under fire, taking incoming rounds that explode around us. Those are the hopeless and helpless moments when we just know that we can't make it alone—we need God, as no one else can save us.

Many years later, after learning about my father's service in the Navy, I was motivated to serve my country as well. Maybe there was a normal sense of competitiveness that a son has with his dad, but I wanted to take it up a notch. I investigated

the U.S. Marines, who at that time, “were looking for a few good men.” Back then, they had a slogan on a poster with a mean-looking Marine D.I. (Drill Instructor), face-to-face, nose-to-nose, with a scared young recruit. The poster blasted out the words, “WE DON’T PROMISE YOU A ROSE GARDEN!” And of course, the Marines had impressive uniforms!

I’ll never forget when I was “introduced” to the toughest D.I., “America’s Finest,” just back from Vietnam; I was pounding out push-ups in the first few minutes. Staff Sergeant McWorter (a name I’ll never forget!) wasted no time in turning a cluster of civilians into a lean, mean, fighting machine! We had a 55% attrition rate in that Platoon Leaders Class. The best I can determine, only about 8% went on to accept their commissions.

Everyone who has served in the military has stories about boot camp. And it doesn’t matter what branch of the armed forces you joined—they were all tough—tougher than anything any of us faced back on the block, cruising around on

Friday nights. The important principle is that the defense of our country requires a team of dedicated young Americans to join the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. Every member of American Armed Forces has a singularly focused mission in their oath of office to support and defend our U.S. Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

America can be proud of those who serve. We also recall the painful reality that "All gave some and some gave all" for their country.

A few years ago, I was a guest speaker at a community center in a small rural town in Missouri. I hardly knew anyone, but I did recognize a USMC hat on a guy who was standing on the other side of the crowd. Of course, I went right to him and introduced myself. He told me his name was Dale, and I found out that he was a Vietnam vet. I thanked him for his service. At that moment, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small business-type card. He handed it to me, saying, "I'd like to show you a picture of my son."

I held a photo of a young Marine standing proudly in his uniform beside an American flag. I quickly responded, "Sir, you must be really proud of your son." A second later, I read the small print: L.Cpl. Leon B. Deraps, KIA (Killed In Action). Iraq, May 6th, 2006, followed by a quote: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God & country." What do you say to a proud father of a fallen hero at a moment like that? And we all have memories of fallen heroes, with dads, mothers, spouses, grandparents, children, and friends—those left behind, all with deep holes in their hearts, carved by grief that will never fully heal. To this day, I still carry that card of L.Cpl. Deraps, USMC. A grateful nation should never forget.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13)

We should also do all we can for those that have been wounded in combat; those who have returned home without arms, legs, their eyesight, and a host of other injuries. Their wounds are

a daily reminder to their family, friends, and all Americans, that their scars are a living badge of honor of their horrific sacrifice for our freedom. These warriors deserve the best medical care in America, and a grateful nation should cover every expense as Priority Number One!

It is a disgrace that David "Moose" McArthur, USMC, along with hundreds of thousands of other veterans are not our national priority. I got to know Moose just after he had returned home wounded and disabled with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Back in 2010, his armored vehicle went over a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. He suffered a bad brain injury. Moose could no longer serve in the Marines and was medically retired. He was trying to do some part-time work at the family bakery. Occasionally, his injury would flare up and cause serious complications. I asked about the status of his treatments and medical care. He said that he was doing everything possible with the VA but that he was getting the run-around and placed on a waiting list that was six-months long.

He spoke to me about how concerned and frightened he was for his wife and two young children as his combat injury would cause a temporary relapse.

Nothing should prevent him, and all other warriors, from getting the best medical care America has to offer. Moose (and all wounded warriors like him) should be able to walk into the best hospital he can find for immediate treatment of his injuries. When the admissions clerk asks him, "How are you going to pay for this?" he should simply reach into his pocket, pull out his Purple Heart medal, and slide it gently across the counter. I'm sure we all believe and agree that Moose has already paid his dues with his own blood. A grateful nation should stand by him and all of our wounded warriors!

Finally, we can never forget our POWs suffering under extreme conditions, some unto death, alone in captivity. Can there be any greater test of a person's character, courage, and faith?

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to meet Captain Red McDaniel, USN, and his dear wife Dorothy. Red was a POW for seven years in the Hanoi Hilton. We spent an entire afternoon in a little café in Alexandria, Virginia. Never have I met a more gracious and humble couple in my life, both still in relatively good health at the young age of 82, both American heroes.

I had previously read their story in two compelling books: Red's book, *Scars and Stripes*, and Dorothy's book, *After the Hero's Welcome, A POW Wife's Story of the Battle Against a New Enemy*. I asked Red how I could even begin to fathom some of the extreme challenges he had faced during his time as a POW.

Red went on to recall the seven years of horrible beatings that had lasted for weeks on end and all of the torture he had endured in the most hopeless of situations. He said he had learned some personal lessons as well as some lessons for his country that he loves so dearly.

He told me, "I learned to appreciate freedom, and I learned to appreciate my children and my wife, and all of those things that you sometimes take too much for granted. Sometimes it takes having these torn away from you in order to know their value." Red went on to say, "I learned that a man can take away everything you possess—your clothes, your food, your health, even your freedom—but he can't destroy your will to survive and he can't destroy your will to believe. He can't destroy your faith."

Then, Red paused for a moment, and with inner strength and resolution, continued, "I learned another very important truth: courage is not the absence of fear. I was scared to death in that torture room. Courage is not the absence of fear; courage is simply the presence of faith." I will never forget that. Red and Dorothy have traveled roads that angels fear to tread, to the gates of hell and back, and returned with one of the most profound and heroic truths: "Courage is the presence of faith." Red and Dorothy's faith in God and His Word sustained them through their adversities.

So, how does a young man or woman, who just joined the military, prepare for all of this? Fortunately, the American military forces are the best-equipped, the best-trained, and the best-led in the world. And unlike the Vietnam Era, there isn't an American citizen who doesn't want the very best for those who have volunteered and put themselves in harm's way.

However, there is a gap in the line, a breach that cannot be filled by more equipment, more training, or more leadership. These young warriors all ask of themselves, *How will I react under fire? When the enemy is shooting to kill me and my buddies, will I be able to have the courage to prevail? If I am a POW will I be able to survive the torture and pain?* As a young Marine, I struggled with questions of what I could do to prepare for that moment, if that were to be my fate.

When I was a young boy, my parents took me to church on Sundays. Even throughout high school, I attended church and participated in

youth group activities. I kept the tradition during my college years. But now, as a Marine, my body and mind were trained and prepared for what Marines are supposed to do: kill the enemy. What about my soul? It was a critical challenge at this time in my life to assess the inventory of my internal resources: my faith. Upon inspection, I concluded that I needed to know a lot more about God's SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). As a "ground-pounder", let me put it into words those Marines in the air wing can understand: Why fly solo when you can have God as your co-pilot?

As infantry platoon commanders, we were taught how to deliver the "5-Paragraph Order," to ensure every aspect of the engagement with the enemy was systematically covered. We also drilled into our "brain-housing group" the six steps for the "Call for Fire." This was vital if we needed close-in air support, artillery or mortar support. In other words, we were prepared for command and control and to call in supporting arms in the middle of an attack. I also observed that none of the guys

in parachute training opened their instruction manuals upon exiting the airplane. They all knew the book, cover-to-cover, before taking that first step at 10,000 feet. No matter what your MOS (Military Operational Specialty), you learned it and rehearsed it over and over again.

The bottom line is that I was trained to call in artillery, but what I really needed was a recall system for calling in support from God. I decided that I needed to assemble vital instructions from God's training manual—His promises and His words of encouragement from the Bible. And I needed to be familiar with God's "fire support" before the proverbial "fertilizer" hit the fan. So I got out the old King James Bible that I had bought in high school and started drilling down the chapters, searching for those vital verses that would sustain me until Hell froze over. Wherever I was deployed as a Marine, from the North Atlantic to the Mediterranean, and beyond, my Bible came with me. When I came across a verse that I believed I could use as part of my "weapons package,"

I would make a note of it on the front inside cover of my Bible. My “Ready Reaction Plan” was to be able to flip to the inside front cover to get a final recall—to be prepared for whatever was ahead. Those vital communications became known as my BATTLEFIELD VERSES.

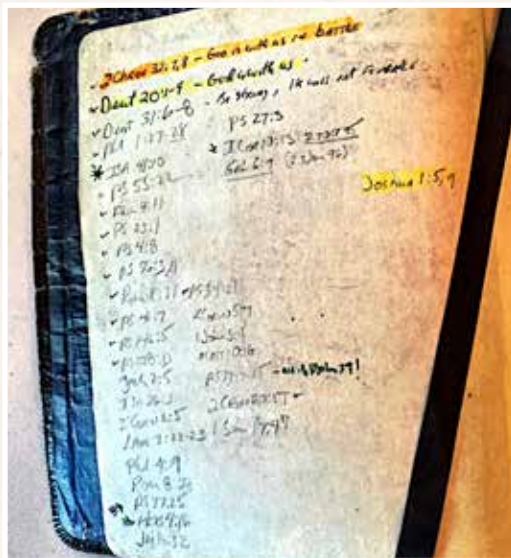


Photo of the inside cover of my BIBLE.

Those verses sustained me in “every clime and place” during my entire service as a Marine.

I was never shot at like my dad. It wasn't my time. Just as I was completing my basic training, the last chopper of Marines lifted off the embassy roof in Saigon. Vietnam was over, and America had a memorial to build for the 58,151 lives that were lost. It troubled me that I wasn't called to do the job I was trained to do.

More than a decade later (1990), Desert Shield/Desert Storm appeared to be my opportunity to put my training into action. Seizing the opportunity to be called back into active duty, I attacked every obstacle, and attempted to break down every door that was in my way to volunteer again.

I'd like to think that it wasn't my old age of 38 at the time that kept me out of the fight, but that the war lasted only 100 hours.

A year later, I received a personal letter from General Shortal, USMC. He took the time and effort to acknowledge my, "Stepping forward to be counted" by volunteering for duty." He concluded his letter in summarizing America's victory by stating, "We have been successful and you have been a part of it."

It was only then that I realized that I gave it my all to serve as a "First to Fight" U.S. Marine.

After my tour of duty, I quickly learned that life's battles were just beginning. Over the next four decades, the reality of all of life's exigencies and seemingly insurmountable challenges engaged me and my family under steady fire. We faced tragedies, deaths, debilitating illnesses, armed robbery, character assassinations, betrayal, deception, and financial losses, which are not unlike many of your own experiences. And we, like you, rushed forward to provide support, encouragement, and prayers to many others who were under fire as well.

Those battlefield verses were a barrage of artillery rounds that essentially cleared the path and led the way through each and every crisis.

Life is a battlefield, and we can only be sustained by God's right hand. I've learned that it takes courage to get through life's trials and tragedies. I've learned in the crucible of life's exigencies that there is a direct correlation between faith and courage. As the old hymn says, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear."

If you are presently serving on the front lines in the military...

If you are a Gold Star mother with a son resting under a granite cross...

If you are a grandmother raising your grandchildren all on your own...

If you are a widower raising your daughters without their mother...

If you are a single mom holding two jobs to keep food on the table while hoping to get an extension on the rent...

If you are a police officer who just wants to arrive home alive to see your family at the end of every shift...

If you are a factory-line mechanic who seldom has time at home, working overtime, anytime and every time, for your child's college education...

If you are a farmer, and your crops have failed again and the foreclosure begins next week...

If your child received a scholarship to college, but was never able to attend, because of a life cut short by cancer...

If you lost your job at the convenience store because some thugs burned down the place...

If it has been 10 months since your spouse has been deployed into harm's way, and the first time you will see him is next week, hard-wired to bedside machines at Walter Reed Military Hospital...

If you find yourself slugging it out, up against the wall, blinded by tears of sorrow and grief...

Then what do you do? Where can you turn?

This is what I've learned: If you can feel a pulse, if you are still alive, if you are a member of the still-breathing category of the human race—finding yourself in a foxhole, under attack, you, like me, need some battlefield verses that will give you the courage to fight another day and overcome all that you are up against. In the darkest of nights, God's encouraging words will be that sustaining guiding star, lighting your path until the darkness sounds retreat on the horizon of a new day.



*All Battlefield Verses are inspired
by God...so that every soldier of
God may be thoroughly equipped
for every combat mission.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

(modified)



BATTLEFIELD VERSES

2 Chronicles 32:7-8

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

Deuteronomy 20:1-4

When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army.

He shall say: "Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

Deuteronomy 31:6-8

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. Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them..."

Philippians 1:27-28

Whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

Isaiah 41:10

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.

Psalms 55:22

Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

Philippians 4:11

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Psalms 23:1

The Lord is my shepherd, I will lack nothing.

Psalm 4:8

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 56:3 & 11

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?

Romans 8:31

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Psalm 46:7

The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 146:5

Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose confidence is in the Lord their God.

Psalm 108:13

With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

Zechariah 2:5

“And I myself will be a protective wall of fire around it,” declares the Lord, “and I will be the glory within.”

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is focused on you, because he trusts you.

I Corinthians 2:5

...That your faith might not depend upon human wisdom, but in the power of God.

Lamentations 3:21-23

This I recall to my mind, and therefore have confidence: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God...

Psalm 37:25

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart! I have already overcome the world.

Psalm 27:3

Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, in spite of this, I shall be confident.

Psalm 34:21

The evil ones will self-destruct; and those that hate the righteous will be condemned.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we live by faith, not by sight.

1 John 5:4

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith.

Psalm 37:7-15 (All of Psalm 37!)

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when evil people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret, it only leads to evil. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those whose confidence is in the Lord will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the humble will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity. The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for He knows their day is coming. The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright. But their swords will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken.

Matthew 10:16

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.

2 Chronicles 20:17

You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you...Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.

1 Samuel 17:47

All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands.

I Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way of escape so that you will be able to endure it.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Joshua 1:5

No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Isaiah 40:31

But those, whose confidence is in the Lord, will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Jeremiah 29:11

"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."

Over the years, I have continued to encounter more battlefield verses from the Bible, as God's grace and mercy is never ending. I'm sure that you too will discover some of your own inspiring and encouraging verses that speak directly to you. At the back of this book there is a space reserved just for you. A place where you can add your own battlefield verses.



*I will never leave you; never
will I forsake you.*

Joshua 1:5



ETERNITY

In reading this book, you may have been thinking that these battlefield verses only work for those who believe in God. Maybe you're thinking, "I could use some help; and if there is a God, would He please make Himself known to me." Maybe you are a person who is genuinely looking for answers.

I'd like to share with you, right now, this one thing I know. It stands on the summit of everything else that has encompassed my entire life. This is crucial. Now is not the time to drop our packs or do a sea-bag drag out the back hatch. So please hang in here with me, as we're about to head out

on a recon (reconnaissance) mission—a matter of life and death. We need to get this right.

Would you let the motor transport maintenance chief fix your toothache with a pair of Vice-Grip pliers? Would you let an eye surgeon operate on you with one of those 20-blade Boy Scout knives? Would you want a foxhole buddy who, after pulling the pin on a grenade, forgets to throw it? Absolutely not, therefore, we need the right answer from the right source because our destiny in eternity depends upon it. Many of us remember the lyrics from Kenny Chesney's number one country hit: *Everyone wants to go to heaven...but nobody wants to go now!* The problem is, we're not in charge of the stopwatch—no one knows when our time is up! So, here is the big question:

“IF YOU WERE TO DIE TONIGHT, WOULD YOU GO TO HEAVEN?”

Some may say, “I think so,” or “I hope so.” Some may answer, “I’m counting on St. Peter to check out my good deeds and balance them with the

bad ones, and if I'm lucky, the scales will tilt in my favor." Some may tell you that you just have to keep trying your best, that it takes a lot of work and a lot of practice; just keep slugging it out, every day, and hope for the best. Some may even say, "I was baptized, I go to church now and then, and I've been known to toss an extra ten bucks into the offering plate—that ought to get me just inside the door."

What does a merciful and loving God have to say about this?

Let's start with the **bad news**. Paul, the apostle of Jesus says, in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And the Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful of all things and is desperately wicked. Who can possibly comprehend how bad it is?"

The issue is that an absolutely perfect God demands absolute perfection. We all fall short of absolute perfection. You can never have a career batting average of 1000 if you ever struck out once.

Good enough never equals perfect. No one on his or her own merit could ever have access to go to Heaven. In the courtroom of Heaven, God's justice demands payment for sin. St. Paul clearly says in the first part of Romans 6:23, "The payment for (our) sin is death..." Unless there is someone who can take our place, in payment for our sins, we have no hope of heaven. Bottom line: God's righteousness demands a perfect righteous substitute that can pay the penalty for our sins. Since no one in the human race is perfect, there is no human substitute available that can take our place in payment for our sins. Our destiny is a one-way ticket to Hell—a voyage on the Titanic. None of us has a chance. The apostle Paul made it undeniably clear, "The payment for sin is death..."

However, here is the **good news**. Paul goes on to say "...*but* the free gift from God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." The word "but" is the dividing line between death and life! That is great news! So, what's it going to take to get on the saving side of "but?"

To begin with, Jesus Christ, in His absolute perfection, had you personally on His mind when he went to the cross. Every sin that you have ever committed—past, present, and future—was poured out on him and judged right there while he was hanging on the cross. You see, Jesus Christ was the one and only perfect substitute for each of us. This means that, wherever you are right now, you can have eternal life simply by believing in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said the following: "Whoever believes in me will not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:15). "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me." (John 14:6).

You see, it doesn't matter who you are, what you are, what you did, or what you didn't do; it is not about you. It is not about your good deeds or lack of good deeds. It is not about trying your best and slugging it out every day. It is not about the horrible things you may have done. It is not about you. It is all about Jesus Christ and what he did for you.

God's love is so great that it is not dependent upon who or what you are. God's love is dependent upon who He is. And that is why His love for you is always there. It never fails. He accepts you just the way you are. There is nothing in the universe more inclusive than God's love for every member of the human race. God is a merciful and gracious God. He provided a way of salvation for everyone. He provided a way of salvation for you. Won't you put your trust in Him?

Jesus Christ himself said the following:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only son." (John 3:18)

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them." (John 3:36)

“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:40)

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me has eternal life.” (John 6:47)

The apostle Paul makes it very clear that salvation, eternal life with God, is never about our own efforts, never about our good works, never about our good deeds. It’s zero percent our effort and 100% God—He did it ALL for us. Salvation is God’s free gift. “For it is by grace you are saved by faith. And this (salvation) is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not the result of our own works, so no one can boast (take any credit).” (Ephesians 2:8,9)

So as we discussed before, it is not a matter of St. Peter bringing out the scales...It is not a matter of trying to be better...It is not an issue of being so bad that there is no hope...It is not a matter of being baptized or giving money at church. God, in his matchless love, has provided a clear and precise way of salvation for all.

God wants all to be saved. Peter tells us, "...that the Lord is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish..." (2 Peter 3:9)

Jesus Christ said it so clearly, "Very truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." (John 6:47)

As it was 2,000 years ago when the jailer in Philippi asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul responded with the very same answer that exists today, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16: 30-31). God's love is unchanging. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His offer of salvation and eternal life is available right now...no conditions, no exceptions.

"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved." (Romans 10:13).

"To call upon" Christ means that you are putting your full trust and belief in Christ to save you from eternal destruction.

This is not a casual comment like saying you “believe in” Friday Night Football, chicken noodle soup, and duct tape. This is about making the most important decision of your life—right now.

What you are saying to God the Father is, “I’M ALL IN,” fully trusting in Jesus Christ as the Son of God that He can, and will, come to my aid—to immediately rescue me—to save me!

Maybe this experience will help illustrate. Many years ago, I was stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. My good buddy, another 2nd Lt., and I decided to head to Onslow Beach one Saturday afternoon for a little R&R. My friend could not swim. Months before, I had observed him fail the Marine Corps swimming test at the base pool. On the other hand, I was certified as a Red Cross lifeguard and on the college swim team.

After a long week of training, we were ready to cool off in the ocean. He stayed in the shallow water and I went for a long swim. Within 10 minutes, an undertow had pulled him into water above his head. I was 20 yards away when I heard him yell, "HELP, SAVE ME!" He was thrashing and floundering. Within seconds, with all my might, I began pulling him back to shore. He then decided to spend the rest of the afternoon on the shore with a cold beverage.

When you "call out" to God, you are fully trusting in Christ, that He can, and will, rescue you.

So right now, you have an important decision to make...a decision that will impact you for all eternity. You can either believe in Christ, place your faith in Him, or you can reject Him. The decision is yours. You can tell God the Father, silently, in your own thoughts, in your own words, that you believe in His Son, and that will be the moment of eternal life for you. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."



I'd like to close with a prayer:

Thankyou, Father, for the opportunity to communicate your saving word. I am grateful that you sent your son to die on the cross as a substitute for all of us. We are grateful that His resurrection is victory over sin and death. It is my prayer that all who read these words may come to you in faith, receiving the free gift of eternal life by simply believing in Christ alone.

Now, after believing in Christ, trusting in Him, may each of us grow in grace, study your word, and arm ourselves with battlefield verses so that, like Paul, we can have the confidence to say:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness (rewards), which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—not only to me, but also to all (who have continued to fight the good fight)..."

2 Timothy 4:7, 8

In Jesus' name, Amen.



...Not all will sleep in their graves, but will be transformed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sounding of the last trumpet...those dead will be raised imperishable...

I Corinthians 15:51, 52



EPILOGUE

It was a bitterly cold January morning when my family and a few friends followed the funeral procession to my father's gravesite. Earlier, we had a memorial service where we followed Dad's desire to read from his favorite book in the Bible: James. For as long as I could remember, my father would encourage me to follow the admonition of James when he said, "Faith (one's beliefs) if not accompanied by action, is dead (useless)" (James 2:17).

My father was definitely one of those who believed "A lot less talk and a lot more action"

was the only way to live out the first, greatest commandment: "...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

We were most appreciative to be greeted at the graveside by a Navy officer with an American flag that he graciously presented to my mother. And the Marine Corps League had three of their members firing a rifle salute, and then the piercing wail of a lone trumpeter sounding Taps. The pastor said a few words, and then everyone hurried to escape from the biting winter winds.

Alone, I approached the grave. I came forward with an edge of defiance and a gritty determination. For you see, I had two more rounds to fire off—two more battlefield verses. As most were grieving death as a loss, I focused beyond the tears with the discernment to recognize and identify that there is a victory. And I fired my first round:

1 Corinthians 15:55 & 57

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? But thanks be to God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

.....

As a believer in Jesus Christ, my father lives on. Death did not take him down. Christ lifted him up to a place where, "He (Jesus Christ) will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain, for the old order of things are gone forever." (Revelation 21:4)

I then recalled another battlefield verse, where God's power will keep us with Him and never let us out of His grip. With a strong but determined voice, with the strength I could muster in the midst of this bittersweet victory, I stood over that grave ready to "fire for effect," my last round, declaring:

Romans 8:37-39

In all these things, we are triumphantly victorious through Him that loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depths, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I stood tall and still for a brief moment, then slowly raised my right hand and gave my dad a final Marine Corps salute, whispering, "I love you Dad—I'll see you again!"



THE ARMOR OF GOD

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:10-14

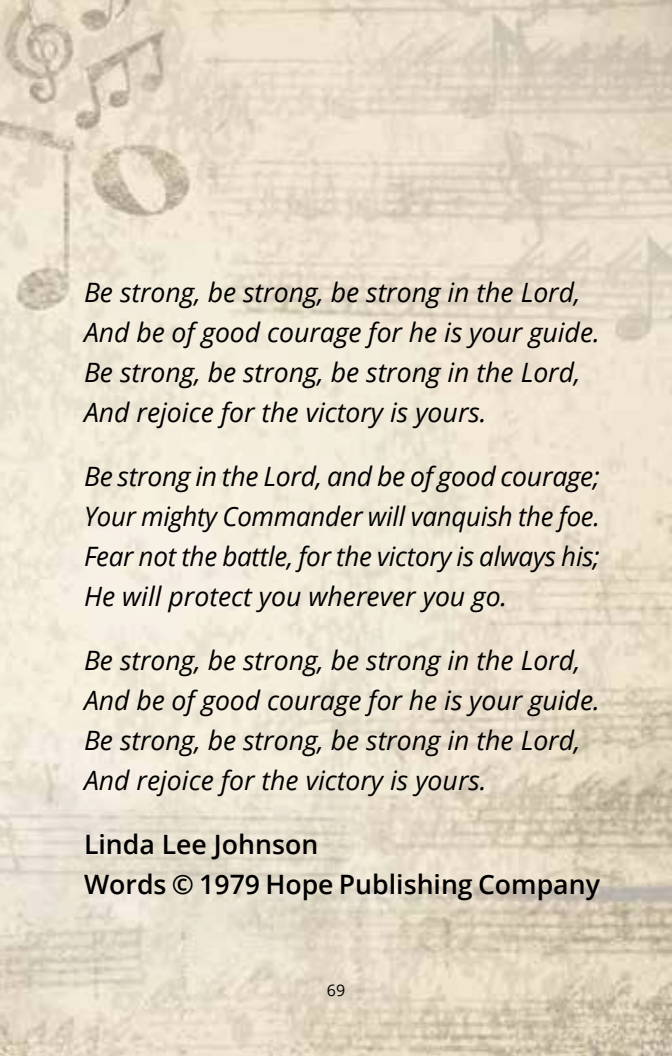


BE STRONG IN THE LORD

*Be strong in the Lord, and be of good courage;
Your mighty Defender is always the same.
Mount up with wings, as the eagle ascending;
Victory is sure when you call on his name.*

*Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And be of good courage for he is your guide.
Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And rejoice for the victory is yours.*

*So put on the armor the Lord has provided,
And place your defense in his unfailing care.
Trust him, for he will be with you in battle,
Lighting your path to avoid every snare.*



*Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And be of good courage for he is your guide.
Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And rejoice for the victory is yours.*

*Be strong in the Lord, and be of good courage;
Your mighty Commander will vanquish the foe.
Fear not the battle, for the victory is always his;
He will protect you wherever you go.*

*Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And be of good courage for he is your guide.
Be strong, be strong, be strong in the Lord,
And rejoice for the victory is yours.*

Linda Lee Johnson

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my battlefield verses

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If Battlefield Verses has been an encouragement to you, I'd like to hear your story. You could be an encouragement to many others if we could post your letters and emails on our Battlefield Verses website. Please visit battlefieldverses.com.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Online Bible study and teaching:

Pine Valley Bible Church

ourpvbc.org

Books on Biblical topics, God's grace, comfort in suffering—among others:

Grace Evangelistic Ministries

gemworldwide.org

Finding answers to difficult questions in a modern world. A "go-to" source of Christian apologetics:

Ravi Zacharias International

rzim.org

Streaming radio of vocal and instrumental music:

abidingradio.com



JOHN BRUNNER

After service as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps, John engaged in business as an entrepreneur and manufacturer for over three decades. He is also actively committed and involved in worldwide Christian missions and relief organizations.

John has been married to his wife, Jan, for 38 years. They have three children and nine grandchildren.

Although few of us are called to be chaplains in the military, John believes we are all called to help and encourage each other in the battlefields of life. When we're under attack from adversities and challenges, we need words of inspiration, **BATTLEFIELD VERSES**, to keep us moving forward, "fighting the good fight" to "finish the race set out before us".

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