

PSALMIC WARFARE IN THE SOLDIER CODE

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Christian soldiers across history have turned to *Psalms* not only as a hymnbook of praise but handbook on spiritual warfare. When we study them, it's easy to see why. Dr. Katherine Smith has noted:

Throughout the Psalms, God is invoked in the twin roles of protector of the chosen people and destroyer of their enemies. Many passages...hearken back to the wars of the Israelites...and describe God's power and the struggles of his people in explicitly martial terms. He is the "God of armies,"ⁱ "mighty in battle,"ⁱⁱ a just judge.... The God of the Psalms is unmistakably a warrior; armed with a sword, shield, and bow, and riding in a chariot surrounded by an innumerable host, he teaches the faithful to fight and emboldens them to march fearlessly into battle against their enemies.ⁱⁱⁱ The chosen people can expect divine support on the field of battle, but only those who put their faith in God...may hope for victory in war.^{iv}

As demonstrated in *The Soldier Code*, psalmic prayer is an ancient art of war—wielded by prophets, apostles, and Jesus Himself in Scripture, and employed by kings and monks in the Middle Ages. Why not deploy it in yours by praying a psalm each day? Most months have 30 days. There are 150 psalms. That's five months of prayer for you, your family, and ministry.

If you need guidance, consult my martial index below. (Don't obsess over my category titles.) Not all psalms are listed. This is just to get you started. Print a copy and place it in your Bible. Memorize a psalm. Make it this season's warfare prayer. My favorites are in bold type.

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- **BATTLE PRAYERS**
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ⁱ See Ps. 24:10; 46:7, 11; 48:8; 59:5; 69:6; 80:4, 7, 19; 84:3, 8, 12; 89:8.

ⁱⁱ See Ps. 24:8.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Ps. 7:12-13; 17:13; 35:1-3; 44:4-7; 68:17; 104:3; 144:1-2.

^{iv} Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011) 24-25.

