

TACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

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BOOK I: WAY OF THE SAMURAI

1. The Age of War taught samurai: *“Warfare is not an event but a way of life.”* Scripture teaches the same (Ephesians 6:10-20).ⁱ How have you viewed and approached spiritual warfare? Does your mindset need to change? If so, how?
2. Endless war taught samurai to redeem the time. Wilderness trials taught Israel this lesson. Read Psalm 90:10-12. Number your days: start with 70 years, subtract your age from that, and multiply the difference by 365. How many days do you have left? What good works has God told you to finish before you die (Ephesians 2:10)?
3. Three striking parallels between the samurai and Christian soldier were: *love* as the highest virtue (Matthew 22:37-40)ⁱⁱ; *service*, the highest call (Mark 10:42-45)ⁱⁱⁱ; and *sacrifice*, the highest honor (John 15:12-14).^{iv} The Christian soldier’s struggle here centers around subduing our flesh and following in our Lord’s footsteps. Where do you struggle most and why? Respond to the Lord in prayer.
4. *Junshi* (“following in death”) and the *kaishakunin* (assistant) served as types for the Christian soldier dealing with hidden sins through accountability. Do you walk with someone in this way? If not, pray and seek one out. Is there an ensnaring sin you need to deal with?

BOOK II: LAW OF THE SPARTAN

1. Lycurgus consecrated Spartans for state service and forbade civilian pursuits. Similar commands are found in Matthew 6:19-24, 33, Colossians 3:1-2, 2 Timothy 2:3-4, Hebrews 11:24-25, and 1 John 2:15-17. Read and list some of God’s reasons for these commands.
2. On a scale of 1-10, “1” being “none” and “10” “severe,” place a number beside each item to mark the degree to which these civilian pursuits distract you from a heavenly focus or hinder your Christian mission in some way. Pray and ask God to help you be honest in this exercise.

Debt (Credit Cards, Loans, etc.)		Social Media		Apathy & Laziness	
Lack of Education/ Equipping		Personal Sin & Effects		Health Problems	
Carnal Relationships		Pride & Vanity		Greed & Materialism	
Arts & Entertainment (TV, Sports, etc.)		Anxiety & Fear (Fear of Loss, Failure, etc.)		Other (Whatever you believe is relevant)	

ⁱ 2 Timothy 2:3-4; Revelation 12:9, 13, 17

ⁱⁱ John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

ⁱⁱⁱ Galatians 5:13

^{iv} Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 3:16-18

3. In “The Raising” section, we explored Spartan *âgôge* training and how Paul used this term in his life and Timothy’s training. I also shared how I prepared my daughters for release. Are you preparing your children? Do you need to make adjustments?
4. In the “Hot Gates” section and moving forward, we discussed strategic spiritual battles for believers and the need for a “phalanx.” Are you in such a battle now? Do you have one?

BOOK III: VOW OF THE VIKING

1. In this chapter, we explored Viking violence and plunder. This led to a discussion of Saul’s persecution of the Church and how Christ’s Gospel transformed him and the Vikings. Are there “Vikings” in your life who seem beyond God’s grace? Do you pray for them? Read Luke 18:1-8 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Pray, listen, and talk to God about this.
2. Miracles played a pivotal role in Early Church and Viking evangelism. Do they still hold one in evangelism today? Why or why not? Has *cessationism*, the belief that certain spiritual gifts ceased with the Apostolic Age, impacted modern-day evangelism? Explain.
3. Has God ever called you to follow Him “into the deep,” to a vision requiring great faith and sacrifice? How did you respond? How did the mission end? Is there a new one He’s speaking into you? Is a fear of failure or love of comfort giving you pause? Ponder, pray, and journal.

BOOK IV: CHARGE OF THE KNIGHT

1. As Dark Age Europe fell into chaos, the Church modeled Christ’s compassion in many beautiful ways. Review the section “A Light in the Dark Ages” and list some.
2. A.) In “Charles Martel & the Battle of Tours,” Charles built a warrior class to stop an invasion. Our talk turned to the culture war for the modern West. Jim Black said, “*One of the greatest reasons for the decline of American society...has been the tendency of Christians...to abandon the forum at the first sign of resistance. Evangelicals...have been quick to run and slow to stand by their beliefs....*” Why have so many believers fled the battlefields of government, education, etc.? How has this impacted America? Gauge your own response: have you prayed more, shared the Gospel, become active in local missions, your child’s school, government and politics, used social media to share Christ’s truth, etc.?

B.) Read John 4:1-26; 8:1-11 and Acts 17:1-3, 16-34; 19:8-9. How did Jesus and Paul handle conflict? How should we? (Read Jeremiah 29:7; Daniel 3:16-18; Luke 19:13; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 3:15.)
3. Lawlessness was rampant in the Dark Ages, and warriors played a central role. How did the Church respond? How can she help battle lawlessness in our day? (Review “Psalming the Savage Beast” and “Chivalry’s Secret Power” to refresh.)
4. Has God laid someone on your heart who needs a compassionate soldier to battle for them – a single mom, a sick person, an elderly shut-in, or a family in need?

BOOK V: OATH OF THE GLADIATOR

1. Endurance was the most powerful theme in our study. We noted how the battle often goes “to the one who refuses to quit,” and that endurance itself is a weapon because “when we choose to stand firm, we’re choosing to trust God’s Word.” Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-12 and Ephesians 6:13. Recall a prior battle. How did endurance play a role? Are you in a fight now requiring this virtue?
2. The *bestiaris* (beast-fighting gladiator) helped expose three satanic schemes. Read the verses below. Identify the scheme and God’s answer. (References have been abbreviated.)

Scheme #1: The Lying Serpent (2 Co. 11:3-4)

God’s Answer (Jos. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3; Jn. 8:31-32; Eph. 6:14): _____

Scheme #2: The Prowling Lion (1 Pe. 5:6-9)

God’s Answer (Hab. 2:1; Mk. 14:37-38; Php. 4:6-7; 1 Pe. 4:7): _____

Scheme #3: The Accusing Dragon (Re. 12:9-11)

God’s Answers (Pr. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:9; 5:6; Re. 12:11): _____ & _____

3. The *andabaté* (blind gladiator) and *editor* (game-giver and overseer) helped reveal the battle to trust in God’s sovereignty and love. Read Genesis 45:4-8, Job 1:21-22; 13:15, and Romans 8:28-39. Reflect and journal on the importance of seeing our battles through these lenses. Then, pray and ask our Grand Editor to help you trust Him like the gladiator from Uz.

BOOK VI: MARK OF THE LEGIONARY, PT. I

1. Plague, war, veteran fatalities, and more destroyed legionary foundations. Soon, sacred bonds, ideals, and elite training vanished. Vegetius said, “The name of the legion remains...in our armies, but its strength and substance are gone.” Do you agree that “as false teaching invades Christendom, cuddly stories replace sound exegesis, and spiritual disciplines are widely neglected, an analysis for much of Christ’s army could be: ‘The Name of Jesus remains in our armies, but His strength and substance are gone?’” Why or why not?
2. In “The Mark & the Oath,” we discussed the false doctrine called “cheap grace,” which discards the Gospel tenet of repentance. Read the following verses. Then, discuss whether you believe this to be a serious issue in the Church. Offer reasons to support your position. (Matthew 3:8)^v
3. In the second half of “The Mark & the Oath,” we saw the value of grasping the security of our salvation, which Satan constantly attacks. As noted, God offers us many assurances in original language, metaphor, and more. Place a check mark after reviewing each one below.

^v Acts 26:20; Titus 1:16; 2:11-14; Jude 3-4

- **Faith & Grace.** Salvation is *only* by God's grace and received *only* by faith in Jesus and His work. Skim a few verses and note Scripture's clear teaching.^{vi}
- **Saved.** "Saved" (Gk., *sózō*) in verses like Ephesians 2:5 and 8 means to heal, preserve, deliver out of danger and into safety. It's set in the perfect tense, meaning a complete action with ongoing effect. In other words, "*we were, are, and will be saved!*" Jesus uses the same tense to describe his redemption in John 19:30, saying, "*It is finished.*"
- **Sealed.** Sealing in the ancient world was typically done by a king's signet ring. It authenticated an item and ensured royal protection. God uses this to symbolize the believer's security in Christ.^{vii}
- **Guarded.** In Acts 23:12-35 the Jews plan to assassinate Paul, but a Roman tribune calls for a battalion to escort him safely to the governor. Peter uses this custom to affirm that we who've trusted in Jesus will arrive safely one day to God: 1 Peter 1:3-5.
- **Kept.** Also in this passage, Peter contrasts an earthly inheritance, which decays and will perish, with the believer's heavenly inheritance (hence, salvation and future) in Christ, which is supernaturally kept. Compare with Matthew 6:19-21.
- **Engraved.** Foreshadowing the Cross, God compares His relationship with His chosen with that of a mother nursing her child (Isaiah 49:15-16). He asks if a woman can forget her suckling babe, admits it can happen because of evil human nature, but promises He cannot because we're "engraved" (Heb., *chaqqaq* – "to cut") on His palms. Thus, God asserts the only way we could be lost is if Christ's nail scars could be removed!
- **Adopted.** Paul uses adoption five times to describe Christian security.^{viii} Jews had no such custom but could disown and ostracize children. Under Roman law, biological children could be disowned. Adopted ones could not because they were chosen by parents then assigned rights by the state, including a new identity, expulsion of any debts, bonds, etc., and a right to the estate.

4. The key to Roman conquest was found in practicing *disciplina* ("discipline") and rejecting *neglegentia* ("negligence"). Vegetius said, "A handful of men, inured to war, proceed to certain victory, while on the contrary numerous armies of raw and undisciplined troops are but multitudes of men dragged to slaughter." What kind of role does spiritual discipline play in spiritual warfare? Discuss and defend your position.

^{vi} Genesis 15:6; Acts 13:39; 15:10-11; Romans 5:1-2, 9; 10:9-10; 11:6; Galatians 2:20-21; Ephesians 2:5, 8-9; Titus 3:4-7

^{vii} Esther 3:12; 8:10; Daniel 6:8, 12, 15; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

^{viii} Romans 8:15-16, 23-24; 9:3-4; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:4-6

BOOK VII: MARK OF THE LEGIONARY, PT. II

1. In the opening, we said: “The Bible’s spiritual disciplines are ancient paths to walk with God and equip believers for spiritual combat (Jeremiah 6:16; Ephesians 6:10-20).” We also noted how the disciplines have become confusing and undoable to some because of overcomplexity. So, we pared down the field to four *core disciplines*: meditation, prayer, worship, and fellowship. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Why or why not?
2. In the meditation section, we discussed three applications to refresh and bolster your walk: daily reading, Scripture reflection (with music), and a rhema arsenal. What areas for personal growth did you identify, and what are your plans here?
3. In the prayer section, we pondered scriptural prayer, agreeing prayer, prayer and fasting, and prayer journaling. Identify growth places here and lay out a plan.
4. Now, do the same for worship and the applications of corporate worship, the hymns, personal playlists, or other ideas you may have. How will you build yourself up in this area?
5. Finally, in the fellowship section we explored applications with the local church, small groups, and special ministry and equipping. What adjustments do you need to make to find healing, grow, and press further into your God-given purpose?