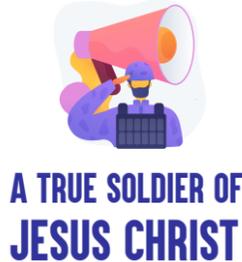




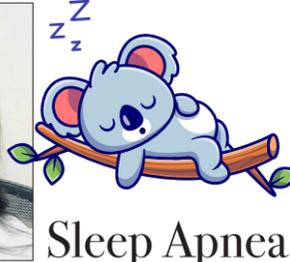
AN ARMY OF PRINCIPLES CAN PENETRATE WHERE AN ARMY OF SOLDIERS CANNOT.

THOMAS PAINE

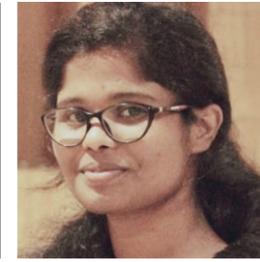
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ILLUMINER

ISSUE 09

VOLUME 01

MARCH 2021

PRIVATE LIFE OF THE PUBLIC (WO)MAN



Pastor David Wilkerson, former pastor of the Times Square church once said, “Your anointing may take you to a place where your character may not sustain you”. Combining that with the old saying, “when wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, everything is lost”, we get a picture so true of the world which defines integrity and morality through the prism of relativism.

Our lives are often neglectful of our private world and the integrity of it, primarily due to the busy life we lead. The busier we are, the more important we seem to ourselves. To be unavailable to ourselves and to others has falsely become the model of a successful life in world of instant gratification.

How true it is when Gordon McDonald says, ‘if my private world is in order, it is because I make a daily choice to monitor



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its state of orderliness. Failure to analyze the bridge of the inner world will cause the accidents of burnout, breakdown, and blowup to go unnoticed until the train has already plunged into deep waters. Proverbs 4:23 says, ‘watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life.’ The heart is the bridge that if guarded, will prevent the accidents from happening.

In world of self-actualization, we see many people who are ‘driven.’ They are

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Democracy in Myanmar in grave peril

Myanmar is in the news from February 1 when a military coup was staged and captured power dismissing the elected government under the democratic leader Suu Kyi, whose party won landslide victory in the election held there recently. Ever since then, the Army has been suppressing peaceful anti-coup

protests reminiscent of the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen square in the spring of 1989. Unconfirmed reports say that hundreds of protesters were shot down by the Tatmadaw, which had been in power in Myanmar since 1962 and had just about tolerated the quasi-democracy that began in 2011 even though the

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MARCH 2021

Our Advisors

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Chief Editor
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Weekly

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Goodnews
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Theme for April - God is (Psalms 14:1 - "The fool says, there is no God")

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...It is a proud privilege to be a soldier – a good soldier... (with discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to comrades and to his superiors, and a self confidence born of demonstrated ability

George S. Patton



FROM THE
editor



THE IDES OF MARCH

The sole intent of the Christian troop should be to capture and culture the **captives to bring good pleasure to the One who enlisted the soldier.**

The phrase "Beware the Ides of March" comes from the warning given to Julius Caesar in William Shakespeare's play of the same name. It was the day when Julius Caesar was betrayed and butchered by conspirators of the Roman senate. Among the various reasons related to his ambitions, which triggered the assassination, there were also personal jealousies and many animosities. The conspiracy by a small group of the elite was not leaked despite its size. Some sources claimed that Caesar's last words were 'Et Tu Bruti', which means "you too Brutus" which was shocking since Caesar viewed Brutus almost as a son and had forgiven him earlier for waging war against him. More than 110 years after this incident, Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, his true son in the faith, of the need to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. When forgiven and exalted to be in the company of the elite, let us not forget the hands that fed and led us up!

Wars are called by leaders and fought by soldiers. Wars are often caused by any country's desire to take control of another country's wealth. The spiritual war we are in is called by our Commander, Lord Jesus

Christ, and is against Satan and his army. In this war, we, the soldiers, fight for the wealth of souls held captive by sin and Satan. A good soldier of Christ lives to please the One who enlisted him. The warfare, which refers to the common activities and characteristics of the types of war, is not earthly and carnal weapons but is spiritual since the battle is primarily spiritual. The Christian troop's sole intent should be to capture and culture the captives to bring good pleasure to the One who has already broken open the way of victory before them.

The Warrior Ethos of the U.S. Military states, "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade." If a soldier in an earthly nation is expected to follow these tenets, how much more is expected of a soldier of the heavenly country! A soldier who does not adhere to these falls into the bucket of "not good" soldiers. The failures in evangelistic (capture) and discipleship (culture) missions may be attributed to us, the soldiers, not following the Scriptural and Spirit-filled ethos that is expected of us! Beware of unfaithfulness to the Master and His Mission!

BROKEN BREAD

Christians ought to be fully conscious of their vocation **and be resolute in fulfilling the sole purpose for which they are called.**

EMPOWERED, ENLISTED, AND ENCOURAGED TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST

Paul's soldierly rhetoric in 2 Timothy 2: 3-4 vividly expresses the solemnity of Christian life and ministry. He encourages his spiritual son Timothy in a manner reminiscent of a military commander's instructions to his new entrants on becoming a good soldier. Besides this military metaphor, he employs other imageries like an athlete and a farmer to converse a complete picture of the life and the work that each Christian must seek to involve. While the athlete imagery conveys the idea of discipline in Christian life, a farmer's analogy denotes diligence and assiduity. The soldier's image reflects the unconditional commitment a Christian need to uphold persistently. This commitment is twofold. First, the obligation to endure hardships. Felix Neff says, "a Christian without affliction is only like a soldier on parade." Hardship is not a choice but an inevitable part of the Christian

life. "Suffer with me" rather sounds a command, not a request from Paul to Timothy. Second, commitment to eliminate entanglements. Christians ought to be fully conscious of their vocation and be resolute in fulfilling the sole purpose for which they are called. Once recruited, soldiers can no more live according to their dispositions; they belong to a commander and must get rid of everything that makes them dilly-dalliers in their passion and purpose.

While giving these stringent commands, Paul also reminds Timothy of the great resources and rewards he should always focus on in his Christian vocation. Paul's commands are sandwiched between three key E's—Empowered, Enlisted, and Encouraged. Paul makes it clear that these commands are not to be obeyed without considering these pivotal spiritual insights.

SOLDIER IS EMPOWERED

In verse 2, Paul exhorts Timothy to be empowered by the grace that is in Christ. Paul's theology of Christian life and ministry is well balanced between God's grace and human cooperation. It is 100% grace and 100% human cooperation. Although Timothy ought to fulfill his duties, he should not depend on his own strength, but he must relentlessly seek the empowerment that comes from the grace that is in Christ.

SOLDIER IS ENLISTED

In verse 4, Paul reminds Timothy that he has not come to this profession by his choice rather he has been called and enlisted by God. No Christian minister can ever claim that he/she chose to serve Christ; it is a privilege given purely by God's grace. Paul commands Timothy to please Jesus, the chief commander, who has enlisted him for this excellent service.

SOLDIER IS ENCOURAGED

From verses 8 to 13, Paul recounts the factors of encouragement that Timothy must always concentrate on while serving the Lord. He says that although a minister of the word may face the dangers of imprisonment and suffering, the word of God never gets bound. Hardships and the commitment of a Christian minister result in the salvation of many people. And above all, it is worth living a sacrificial Christian life considering the hope of great resurrection and reign in the future.

To summarize, all, who are called to be good soldiers of Christ for enduring hardship and eliminating entanglements, are enlisted by God's divine election, empowered by the grace that is in Christ, and encouraged by the great rewards awaiting on this earth and in the eschaton.



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“A soldier obeying the orders without second thought **and hesitation is the true soldier of a Kingdom”**

A TRUE SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

Every Christian is invariably involved in spiritual warfare. But this warfare 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 (Eph. 6:12). In order to wage war against all these, one should be a soldier of Jesus from being a mere follower of Jesus. There are many hurdles to be cleared for a follower of Jesus to become a soldier of Jesus, and so a coward can never become a soldier. Indeed, a soldier is a real defender and a man of courage who defends his country at any cost. A good soldier will be ready to give up anything for a noble cause. After all, he obeys every order of his King/Master.

Once a person comes to receive Jesus as his Savior and continues to be in good faith, he cannot remain as a mere follower of Jesus but will try to reach the status of a soldier of Jesus Christ - the King of kings and Lord of Lords. It is true that

God wants all to be His soldiers, who are ready to spare their lives for their King. However, it is easier for one to follow Jesus; but to become a soldier, one has to pay the price. Jesus once said to His disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me (Mathew 16:24). Definitely, there is a deep meaning in this verse. Only a true disciple can be promoted to the status of a soldier. A soldier obeying the orders without second thought and hesitation is the true soldier of a Kingdom. The mindset of a true soldier is as solid as a rock and as sharp as a razor. Others will not be able to beguile his mind into believing their theories as his goal is set beforehand. He moves forward to fight against evils, and he is determined and dedicated and will never betray his country or belief. In short, he resolutely remains untottering throughout his life, which is a prominent feature of being a true soldier of Jesus.

The promotion from a follower to a soldier is a meticulous and enormous process. The prerequisites to become a soldier of Jesus are different from that of a soldier in any worldly nation. As our war is against Satan, we have to get special weapons to fight. The recommended weapons for a soldier of Jesus are a belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and word of the Spirit (Eph. 6:10-20). The most important weapon is the breastplate of righteousness, as righteousness defends everything on which the man’s spiritual existence depends. But at the same time, it is to be borne in mind that Satan is a master of deception and that he may try to woo the heart of a person by hook or by crook.



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SELF-DENIAL AND SELF-DISCIPLINE, HOWEVER, WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS THE OUTSTANDING QUALITIES OF A GOOD SOLDIER

WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING

Be A Soldier 24/7!



Being a soldier is not for the faint-hearted. It requires a level of commitment, diligence, and self-sacrifice that is often demonstrated in the most harrowing of circumstances. Napoleon Bonaparte, Genghis Khan, and Alexander the Great were all respected soldiers who earned their spot in history not just because of their laurels or their brilliant military strategies, but also because they knew what it took to be a soldier. They were well aware that to be a soldier meant that they had to lay it all down where it mattered the most - on the battlefield. They knew that it was not a job that could be put off when they felt like it, but rather it was very much a part of their identity and a responsibility. These men never lost sight of their mission and they fought each battle with grit and perseverance, with focus and determination, with discipline and motivation. They never questioned their mission or doubted their calling. Through their leadership and actions, they instilled in their army a loyalty, fear, and respect that ran so deep that their men were willing to follow them to the ends of the earth.

Is this not exactly what our heavenly father expects of us as well? Did Paul not talk of this very same thing when he wrote a letter to Timothy reminding him that his purpose was to suffer hardship during his ministry at Ephesus and be a good soldier of Christ? It was not that Timothy had forgotten what he needed to do, but he was broken and devastated

by the relentless opposition he faced and had lost focus because he became embroiled in civilian matters. Timothy needed to be reminded of another soldier who was willing to pay a steep price for us.

Perhaps we too like Timothy need a gentle reminder about what it takes to be a good soldier in Christ. Let us start by remembering that first and foremost, we need to be doers of the word rather than merely hearers. Then, let us pick up the whole armor of the Lord and with the strength He has equipped us with, focus on our mission and not become entangled in worldly matters that distract us. Let us wholeheartedly suffer for the glory of God. Let us be willing to follow our commander-in-chief with pride and with honor not when we choose to, but rather just as a soldier would - 24/7.



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“Being a soldier of God is not a job that could be put off when we feel like it, but rather it is very much a part of our identity and a responsibility”



A soldier of Christ

No better analogy explains suffering for a sublime cause than that of a committed soldier.

An exploration of war history will unravel numerous stories of soldiers who fought for their nation with utmost commitment, courage, and determination. After the battle, many of them are not acknowledged, mentioned, or even remembered. While a few stories get worldwide attention, most of the daring efforts of soldiers rising far above their abilities, incredible sacrifices made for their nation may never come to light. The life of a Roman soldier during Paul's time was even worse. Keeping this in view, Paul appeals to Timothy, his spiritual protege, "Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 2:3), a call to endure hardship that entails Christian ministry. No better analogy explains suffering for a sublime cause than that of a committed soldier. Paul and his fellow apostles perceived and practiced ministry with a sense of serving in an army.

Christian history is full of numerous martyrs who proved the value and credibility of the Christian faith paid with their lives. During my visits to the hospital, one patient narrated his father's acquaintance with Bishop Leonard Wilson while serving in the military during the second world war. Wilson served as the bishop of Singapore in 1941. Along with his ministry, he was instrumental in improving the war prisoners' welfare and bringing different denominations to worship together. The growing influence of the church was a concern for the Japanese. In 1943 he was imprisoned along with other fifty-seven war prisoners. Japanese military brutally tortured

them, alleging their connection with operation Jaywick led by the Australian troop that sank seven ships. Wilson was singled out and tortured for several days. He was made to kneel. A three-angled bar was placed behind his hunches, hands were tied behind his back and pulled up to a position between his shoulder blades and kept in this position for seven hours daily. The guards stamped him for any attempt to relax from this position. At intervals, the guards would jump on both sides of the bars. Another day they would beat him from ankles to the thighs with knotted ropes. His entire body was bruised, no skin was left on the front of his legs from the thigh downwards. Even during this ordeal, when he was back in the cell, he shared the gospel with his fellow prisoners. One of the Chinese prisoners, Lam Mau Fatt, accepted Christ in prison and was baptized with the water from the commode, the only water available in prison. When those who saw him praying for his cruel persecutors asked how he could pray for them, he replied, "The soldiers' faces were hard and cruel, but by the grace of God I saw those men as they once were as little children playing with their brothers and sisters." Seeing his staunch faith in God despite being tortured, they asked him why God did not save him, and he responded, "He did not save me by freeing me from pain or punishment, but He saved me by giving me the Spirit to bear it." They asked him why he did not curse them, and he stated, "I am a follower of Jesus, who taught us that we were all brethren."

When Singapore was liberated by the British, some of his persecutors came to him to be baptized. In 1947 he returned to Singapore as bishop. Some of those who came for baptism were Japanese prisoners, and one of them was a military policeman who had tortured him four years earlier. Leonard wrote, 'I have seldom seen so great a change in a man. He looked gentle and peaceful and received communion at my hands in prison.' Bishop Wilson was a true soldier of Christ who kept his faith despite the fiery ordeal, not for the British empire but Christ.



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PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE AS GOOD SOLDIERS



“As good soldiers, we ought to please God by living a life of exclusive allegiance to him and yielding to his supreme authority”

As Christians, we live in a world of spiritual warfare. The effects of the war can come in the form of strained relationships, emotional instability, and it can even go to the extent of pursuing the sinful habits we once left. Remember, the primary agent behind all these is the Devil himself. He knows how to pull us down through ungodliness, pride, anger, greed, and the list goes on. That is where we need to prove our allegiance to the Lord. The term allegiance refers to **“Loyalty to a Supreme being.”** So as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, our allegiance should always be to Christ alone.

The Christian life is like a journey in a boat through the sea. Sometimes the sea can be calm, but there will be rough times when we encounter the wind and storms in the form of persecution, trials, and sufferings. So then, what should be our ideal response? James 1:2 says – *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kind, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”* A good soldier would exhibit

perseverance in times of hardship and suffering. Steadfastness should be the foundational mark of our allegiance to Christ. As we see in Romans 5, perseverance produces character, and character, hope. The perseverance produced during trials shapes our character, and the character, in turn, produces hope. Christian hope is eternal and never puts us to shame. Perseverance can be attained by being strong in the grace of our Lord, as grace helps us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2:12)

A good soldier would always be conscious of the possible attacks and be prepared for war any time of the day, whether it’s morning or night. But there are chances that he can be distracted by many factors. Whatever be the situation, the focus of a good soldier is to faithfully represent the authority he yields to and bring honor. In the same way, a Christian should represent Christ in this world and be his faithful steward. We should make sure that we do not get twisted in worldly matters that can shift our focus from Christ. To avoid being

interweaved with worldly pleasures, Christ himself is the most excellent model for us to look unto. He left heaven and came to earth by taking the very nature of a servant. He showed us how not to entangle with sin through his life and bore our sins and sorrows on the cross by giving himself as an atoning sacrifice. The steadfastness we gain by being strong in grace should help us not to be trapped in the affairs of this world but rather help us fix our eyes only on Jesus Christ.

Finally, the ultimate aim of our allegiance is to please our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. A soldier’s ultimate goal is to bring victory to his side. As believers, we bring delight to the Lord by being holy in our thoughts, deeds, and actions. Paul exhorts us in Philippians 2:5 to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus by becoming obedient to him. We were alienated from God because of our evil behavior. But in love, God sent his only begotten son to rescue us from darkness, and Christ reconciled us back to God through his death. He came down from heaven not to do his will but rather the will of God who sent him. So as good soldiers, we

ought to please God by living a life of exclusive allegiance to him and yielding to his supreme authority. As soldiers of the cross, let us pledge allegiance to Christ and lift his royal banner high, and do not let it suffer loss.



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Cyril Philip is an IT professional, and writes gospel content for online Christian publications. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife Reeba and two sons. He serves God in the worship department at Bethel India Christian Assembly, Tulsa.

Supernatural Strength

There came a promise to bear another child
God knows that it's never been on my mind
"Then why this pain, why this struggle?" I cried
But on His promise and Word, I relied
He Knows, He Sees

Then came the time of birth with endless pain
Thought of sleepless nights drove me insane
But when embraced, 'twas a bundle of joy that couldn't be contained
For He knows and He sees

Even though the thought of an easy third time ruled my mind
There came struggles more than I inclined
'My thoughts are not yours, nor my plans
Yours', to His words I realigned
For sure He knows and He Sees

When in trouble do not grumble
Praise God instead throughout the struggle
You will see your enemy fail and tremble
For with God, nothing is impossible



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Sometimes we being His children, to HIS WILL never blend
Nor entrust ourselves onto His hands to be mend
His patience and kindness can we ever comprehend?
So surrender to Him to be redefined

Then why O soul are you troubled??
Why O soul are you so disturbed?
For your future is in His hands
In midst of all storm, He gives strength to withstand
So trust in Him for He knows you beforehand

For sure it has been written and foretold
By our only Savior and Lord
That we are His chosen ones, in His image formed
The holy ones set apart, predestined, and preordained

So be it struggle or be it pain
We are created to praise Him without any complaint
"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"
Let this be our anthem in life to remain
FOR indeed HE KNOWS AND HE SEES

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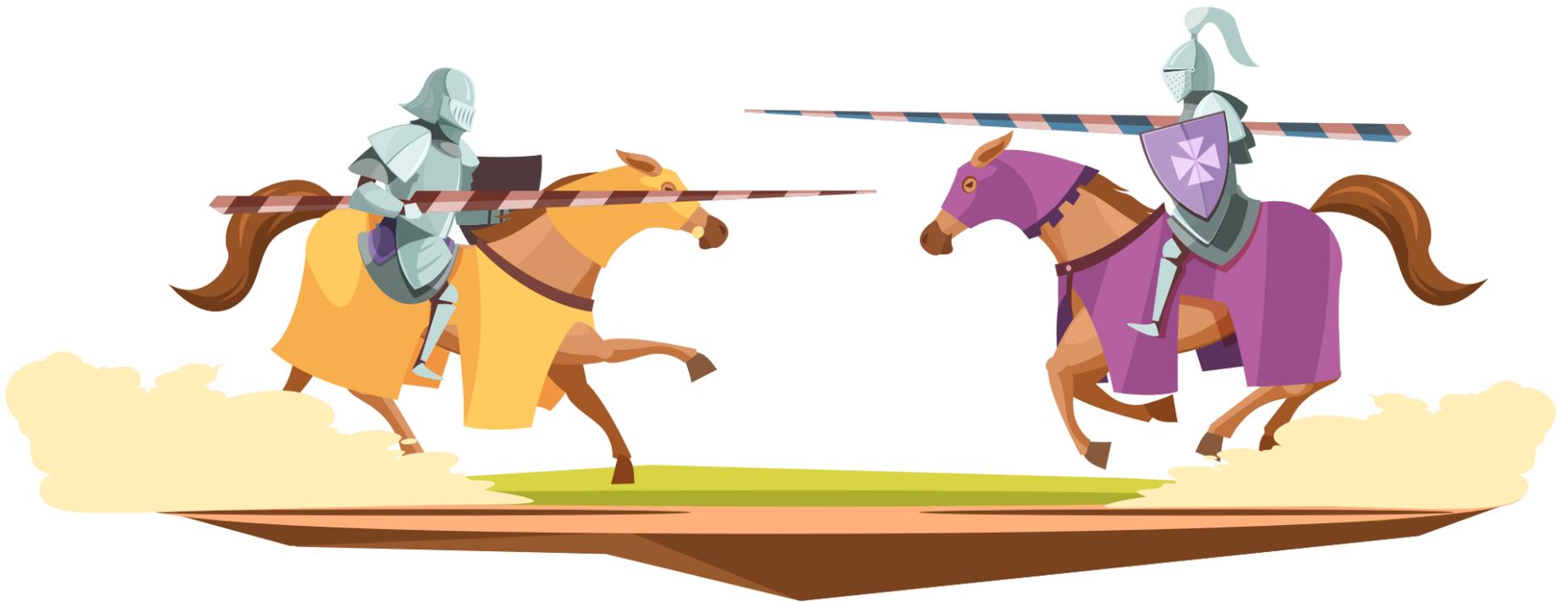
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Nearing Completion



THE GOOD FIGHT

“When the devil targets our fellow soldiers, Christian soldiers are indeed the first to give prayers and assistance”

Human soldiers are well-known, but have you ever seen an insect soldier before? Human soldiers deployed at each nation’s borders are one reason why most humans can live on this earth. In insects, each class has its roles and functions. Soldiers are one such class that protects their nests/colonies. Termites, also known as white ants, wreak havoc on our furniture and household. But do we appreciate how much work they put into constructing their nest and protecting their colony from their enemies?

In some instances, soldier termites are similar to worker termites. While both types have identical body shapes and colors, soldiers



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can be distinguished by their protruding jaws and wider heads to attack the enemy. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Ephesians 6:11). As a Christian soldier, the world recognizes us by the God-given armor we have donned. One soldier termite’s warning pheromone will alert soldiers of an assault and send them to the attack site. When the devil targets our fellow soldiers, Christian soldiers are indeed the first to give prayers and assistance.

“Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (II Timothy 2: 3). As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, our hardness or the enemies are the devil, the world, and the flesh. To be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, we must possess discipline, fearlessness, consistency, faithfulness, courage, and skill. If the termite nest is disturbed, the soldier termites will rush to “plug” any broken walls, tunnels, or areas where the nest has become vulnerable. This reflects their discipline, skill, and consistency in defending their colonies. An excellent Christian soldier is skilled to fight the good fight with courage and fearlessness, remaining faithful to God with consistency throughout the journey.

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Sleep Apnea

“When you lie down, you will not be afraid, when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.” (Proverbs 3:24)

Sleep is an essential part of human life. Most people need at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Often, we take sleep for granted, not knowing the severe health consequences of poor sleep or inadequate sleep hygiene. Most of us don't even know some of the most common serious cardiac arrhythmias or heart conditions, memory loss, or fatal brain conditions resulting from long-time untreated sleep problems. The Bible emphasizes the importance of good sleep through various scriptures. It is even interesting that scriptures even differentiate levels of sleep. At Troas, Eutychus, in a late-night church service, was borne down with “deep sleep” and fell from an upstairs window to the ground (Acts 20:9).

Sleep medicine is a specialized area that focuses on a variety of sleep disorders. Based on the American Academy of sleep medicine (AASM) data, there are approximately 80 different sleep disorders. One of the most common sleep disorders among these is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). Obstructive sleep apnea

is a chronic lethal sleep disorder that may require lifelong care. It is estimated that nearly 3 million adults in the U.S. have obstructive sleep apnea (2017), which is a sleep-related breathing disorder characterized by repetitive episodes of complete or partial upper airway obstruction occurring during sleep. Most of the time, it is caused by the tongue, which is a muscle falling backward obstructing the airway; other factors for airway obstruction could be enlarged tonsils, relaxed soft palate, uvula, etc. Some common symptoms seen with OSA can be snoring, insomnia (difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep), witnessed apneas, morning headaches, memory problems, frequent urination during the night (nocturia), choking, gasping for air during sleep, shortness of breath, excessive daytime sleepiness (hypersomnia), unrefreshed sleep. Even though not a definitive symptom, snoring is seen in most of the patients with OSA.

Snoring happens when you can't move air freely through your nose and throat during sleep. This makes the surrounding tissues vibrate,

creating a snoring sound. This could result from a physiologically narrowed airway making it hard for the air to pass through during breathing cycles. Unfortunately, there is no cure for sleep apnea, but we can halt the disease's progression by early diagnosis and treatment. If there is suspected sleep apnea, it is recommended to have a consult evaluation with a sleep specialist who may order sleep studies to confirm the diagnosis. There are several treatment options for OSA. The gold standard treatment is using a device called CPAP during sleep. Untreated sleep apnea can lead to fatal medical conditions including sudden cardiac death.

Practicing good sleep hygiene is very vital for sleep. Avoid late nights, late mornings, and naps during the day. Avoid using electronic gadgets that emit blue light immediately before bedtime. Sleep in a dark and quiet room; avoid stimulants such as caffeine, alcohol, etc. Use the bed only for sleep, have daily exercise, keep away the clock, and getting into a bedtime regimen are some of the good sleep hygiene tricks to follow. In Psalm 4:8, David can

sleep amid life's trials because of his confidence that the Lord alone made him “dwell in safety.” Of course, there are times when sleeplessness is appropriate given the weightiness of our circumstances; meditating the word of God and spending time in His presence can help us overcome the worries and keep our hearts in perfect peace.



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DOWN THERE I LIE

Down there I lie, weak and dirty,
Down here He came, strong and mighty.

He said, keep the light in you lit,
And said, I will fill you with my spirit.

Up there, He said is the reward for the fight,
Up there, I looked and saw the Kingdom bright.

He said, disentangle yourself from the world and be a
warrior for the kingdom,
He said, you cover yourself with faithfulness and truth as
you are the Solider for the Kingdom.

He then hugged me and whispered, you are mine and
everything is forgiven,
He continued, remember "ONWARD CHRISTIAN
SOLIDER" is the slogan.



AKSA SAJI
Kottayam, India

Aksa Saji is a graduate in Agricultural studies from Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu. She is married to Mr. Robin Joseph, and they live in Kottayam with their daughter Riyona.

FROM THE HISTORY

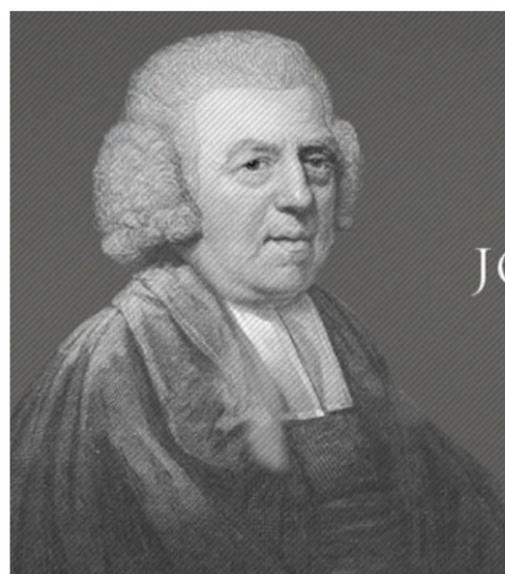
JOHN NEWTON CONVERTED BY AMAZING GRACE

To be at sea in a storm on an ocean liner can be thrilling. To face a storm in a sailing vessel that is not seaworthy can be terrifying. The boat in which John Newton sailed was in disrepair and its sails and rigging worn. A hard man who had often mocked God, John was considered impious even by his godless mates.

One night he was wakened by a violent wave crashing against the vessel. Hurrying above, he found that timbers had been ripped away. All were in terrible danger as the ship plunged through a furious storm. Men pumped desperately. Too exhausted to pump any longer, he was lashed to the wheel to try and steer the ship. It was bitterly cold, the more so since the men had few clothes left. In this desperate moment John turned his eyes back over his life. Raised to the age of seven by a Christian mother, he had sought the Lord with fasts and prayers, but failing to find God he had become embittered. Despite this, the Lord preserved him through many dangers.

In his heart he believed Christianity to be true. This brought him no consolation. "I concluded my sins were too great to be forgiven. I waited with fear and impatience to receive my doom." But soon he heard the glad news that the ship was freed of water. "I began to pray... to think of that Jesus that I had so often derided; I recollected his death: a death for sins not his own, but, as I remembered, for the sake of those who should put their trust in him." On this day, March 21, 1747 a day he ever after observed, John realized he needed a Savior to intercede for him with God.

Though the storm raged on for days, John spent every free moment in the Scripture and praying for guidance. Hungry, cold, exhausted, the men kept the ship afloat. Only one died of exhaustion but the Captain muttered that John ought to be thrown overboard like Jonah; his wickedness was the cause of all their misery, he claimed. Finally, they reached Ireland.



JOHN NEWTON
1725-1807

By then John was convinced the Lord had reached down and delivered his soul. The story of the Prodigal Son seemed to exactly fit his case. He never turned back from that day of salvation, although, not realizing slavery was a sin, he worked six years as a slaver. He showed kindness to the slaves he transported, held worship services for his men and wrote hymns for

them. Later he saw that slavery was wrong and became an abolitionist and a minister. Reflecting on his hard life, he wrote one of the world's most loved hymns: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."

Source: www.christianity.com



NEVER BELITTLE YOUR UNSEEN BATTLE!



Did you know that all followers of Christ, young and old are enlisted by God as the 'Good soldiers of Christ' to fight a 'Good fight of Faith' (2 Timothy 2:3, 4)? It's a high calling and the battle is real! Young Soldiers in the Christ's Army could be an easy prey if they are unaware and unprepared for the real spiritual battles because the enemy's strategies are very deceitful that seem to be very attractive at the first sight. So here are some vital aspects that a 'Good soldier of Christ' ought to know.

THE COMMANDER

Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme commander of the Army. He is all-powerful and has defeated Satan through His death and resurrection.

The Enemy: Remember, it's never the people. Our fight is against the three enemies of the soul - Satan, tempting us to rebel against God; the world, forcing us to abandon God for temporal pleasures; and the flesh, our sinful hearts producing lusts and longings that lead us away from God.

THE CAUSE FOR THE FIGHT

To guard our faith in Christ, eternal life and for everything that the word of God stands for.

The Soldier's mission: To follow and obey his Commander Jesus Christ, be courageous and do the

duties with heart and earnestness, gladly endure tests and trials. (2 Timothy 2:3, 4), enlist souls into Christ's Army (Hebrews 2:10) and have a heart of submission (1 Peter 5:5).

THE BATTLEFIELD

Satan may attack us in various places but remember, the battle is the Lords. 1 John 4:4 encourages us with great truth that Jesus who lives in a believer is greater than the enemy. Thus, the victory is won with Christ in us and Christ for us!

THE WEAPONS

Like the armor the soldier has in the battle, God gives us a protective covering to protect us from the schemes of the enemy and win these battles (Ephesians 6:13-17).

- **Helmet of salvation:** To guard our thoughts, remembering Jesus has saved and cleansed us from all our sins.
- **Breastplate of righteousness:** To overcome the accusations whenever we sin, remembering God has covered us with Christ's righteousness.
- **Girdle/ Belt of Truth:** To get rid of Satan's false teaching and to believe that God's word is the truth.
- **Shoes of the Gospel of Peace:** To share the good news about

“ Young Soldiers in the Christ's Army could be an easy prey if they are unaware and unprepared for the real spiritual battles because the enemy's strategies are very deceitful”

Jesus and to realize that man can be totally at peace with God.

- **Shield of faith:** To rely on His promises and to have faith that God will do what He says.
- **Sword of Spirit:** To realize that the Holy Spirit enables a believer to understand the word of God, obey it and use it in the battle.

THE REWARD

The victor's crown of righteousness. (2 Timothy 4:8)

Keep fighting the 'Good fight of Faith' right from your young age, so that you will grow strong in faith and become shining stars in the faith community to bear witness to the love of God.



ELIZABETH MATHEW
Muscat, Oman

Elizabeth Mathew is a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian. As a former Vice Principal, she had a close association with educators, parents, and children. She has been involved in Sunday School ministry as well as in leading secular schools in UAE for over two decades. Elizabeth currently resides in Muscat, Oman, with her husband, Mr. Abraham Mathew, and two children, Abel and Lovina.

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PRIVATE LIFE OF THE PUBLIC (WO)MAN

gratified only by accomplishments and are preoccupied by them. They are also in the uncontrolled pursuit of expansion and in that journey, they have a limited regard for integrity. They are fiercely competitive and have a volcanic force of anger and are abnormally busy. It is in the midst of these people that we are faced with the challenge of ordering our private life by listening to the call of Christ. Impatience, indulgence, Pride, Anger, and Jealousy were just a few examples of the disorganized private life of Saul which ended up in total disarray. Christ's call was to be a servant and to form the purposes of life around God's purposes for us. Saul couldn't identify that whereas David could.

When Jesus chose the disciples, his message to them was, "follow me, watch me". After a few days or months of following and watching, he started to make them do certain tasks step by step. One perfect example was when Jesus asked the disciples to seat the multitude in rows right before feeding the five thousand. The step involved there was, "I do, You Help". This may have gone on for some time before, he moved the disciples to the next step. One example that comes quickly to my mind is when Jesus chose 70 people and sent them out in two's. They were to go out, do the work entrusted with them and report back to him. Jesus will then compliment or correct them based on the work and the report. The step here is, "You do, I help". As Jesus is about to ascend, he moves the disciples to the last and final step when he gives them the commandment for the follow up of the work he was doing. With the promise and impartation of the Holy Spirit, he asks them to go and do the work. The step here is, "You do, I watch". In all these steps, we see the disciples being placed under the watch of a leader who corrects them or gives them guidance as needed. As we 'order' our private world, we must have the humility to at first be 'discipled' and 'mentored'.

In a generation that is growing up in a microwave, instant gratification era, 'ordering' the private life is the need of the hour. Just like Paul for Timothy, there must be people in the lives of each person growing up to be

able to look up to for comfort, care, reproof, advise, and direction.

In order to order our private world, we must be people who understand, and practice stewardship. We must be people of integrity, or in other words, our inside and outside must be the same. We must have a stable purpose in our lives, and an unwavering commitment. This can be primarily achieved with a daily determination to see every minute of our lives on earth as God's gift and worthy of careful investment.

A regular check of possible wavering from the focus is absolutely essential. Do a self-check if our self-esteem is on the down swing, if we have a series of forgotten appointments, if we are investing our energies in unproductive tasks, if we are getting increasingly concerned about the quality of our work, and if we have lost intimacy with God. If the answer to any of this is yes, we must start budgeting time accordingly to get our act together. Focus on the major aspects and prioritize them accordingly. Seal the time leaks and allocate the productive hours in light of our capabilities, limits, and priorities. Unmanaged time, flows toward our weaknesses and comes under the influence of dominant people in our world. It also surrenders to the demands of ALL emergencies and gets invested in things that gain public attention. The ways in which we can recapture time effectively are by knowing our rhythms of maximum effectiveness, having thoughtful criteria for choosing how to use our time, and managing and commanding it best by budgeting it far in advance.

We live in a world of 'mental flabbiness'. When our minds become 'flabby' or 'dull', we often fall prey to a non-Christian scheme of things, led by people who have not neglected their 'thinking powers'. Let us ask ourselves the question, do we seek to use all we learn in service to others, as Christ did? In order to achieve that goal, our minds must be disciplined to think Christianly. Our minds in other words be taught to observe and appreciate the message God has written that all created beings reflect the glory of God. Our minds must

be trained to pursue information, ideas, and insights for the purpose of serving people of the world. We grow by becoming listeners, by good reading, and through disciplined study.

Listening to God is an art that we have lost in the world of mental flabbiness. In our efforts to order our private life, keeping a journal is one step in listening to God. Slowly but steadily, we absorb the words of Christ into our attitudes and actions. There are many things we hear in solitude and silence which we can internalize and enter into our journals. We hence will be able to pursue the discipline of seeing events and people through the eyes of Christ so that our prayers reflect our desire to be in right alignment with His purposes and promises for them.

Having a Biblical worldview of things and events is important to lead a successful Christian life. At the same time, seeing ourselves and others through heaven's eyes is important to order our private world. If so, worship and intercession will become natural acts in our lives. They will be a time of admission of our weakness and our utmost dependence on God and His strength. We also become aware of the fact that delay is not always denial and we become patient and resilient to wait for God's timing. If our prayer is ordered in such a way that they contain adoration to God for what He is, confession of our weakness, and our dependence on Him and have the ultimate goal of fulfilling the goal of intercession, our private lives will be ordered in such a way that they reflect on the outside as a healthy Christian in Body, Soul, and Spirit.

Having the right Motivation, Right Use of Time, Getting the heavenly Wisdom and Knowledge, and garnering Spiritual Strength from above, leaves us with a need that we should never forget – REST. It is pressing for Sabbath peace into the rush and routine of our daily life in order to find the rest that God prescribed for himself and for all of humanity.

If our private world is in 'order',

it will be because we have made a deliberate decision to begin the 'Ordering' process.

In a world of instant gratification, and lack of accountability for behaviors, let us be the change agents who order our private life so that our public life will be spotless. Let us yield ourselves in the hands of the Master who guides us and also set up 'accountability partners' who will keep an eye on our 'private life' which may need correction from time to time so that we are able to say at the end with boldness, "I have fought a good fight, finished my course, and kept my faith"



**I ONLY
REGRET THAT
I HAVE BUT
ONE LIFE TO
GIVE FOR MY
COUNTRY.**

CAPT. NATHAN HALE

Continued from Page 01

Democracy in Myanmar in grave peril

parliamentary elections and other reforms had been initiated by the military itself under global pressure.

But now it seems that democracy can never return to Myanmar as the military junta has butchered and buried democracy deep under the military regime. Further, democratic leader Suu Kyi was detained indefinitely for her violation of a law that is being used to prosecute people who violate coronavirus restrictions. This violation carries a maximum punishment of three years in prison. But perhaps more worryingly, due to changes to the penal code instituted by the junta a couple of weeks ago, it could allow her to be detained indefinitely without permission. Thus, the military regime in Myanmar donning the garb of a butcher is mercilessly exterminating/sending protesters/leaders to jail on flimsy grounds as the regime has only one aim- to retain power at any rate at the expenses of fallen democracy.

Shocking many in the international community who were hopeful that Myanmar had been taking steps toward democracy, the junta has only ratcheted up the pressure on protesters resisting the takeover including violently breaking up some demonstrations and ordering internet access blocked. It is pertinent to note that security forces deployed throughout the country point guns at demonstrators and attack them with slingshots and sticks. Police also fire rubber bullets into the crowds and many are already injured. On Wednesday, March 3rd alone, the security forces killed as many as 38 people and the death toll is the highest since the February 1 takeover.

It may be recalled that the military junta seized power following a general election in which Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party won by a landslide. However, the armed forces had backed the opposition,

who were demanding a rerun of the vote. But the election commission clearly said there was no evidence to support their claims. Discarding and disregarding the election commission's finding, military commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing, who has immense political influence, captured power dismissing the elected government and putting Ms. Suu Kyi under house arrest. Further, she has been charged with possessing illegally imported walkie-talkie. Many other NLD leaders have also been detained or put in jail. Thus, democracy in Myanmar one more time is suppressed and suppression will not mean democratic movement is dead forever. Hopefully, it will spring back to life again when the winter of suppression is over. If winter comes, can spring be far behind?



TK NANDANAN
Freelance writer

TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. While studying for MA (English), he took up the job of a copywriter. Thereafter, he got an appointment as sub-editor in one of the leading publishing companies in India. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi. Athulya Grace and Sam Thejus are their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.



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SOME WANT PERMANENT DAYLIGHT-SAVING TIME IN USA.

In the wee hours of Sunday morning, a yearly phenomenon took place in America, the “spring forward” of most clocks. The daylight-saving time is intended to give more hours of daylight in the evening when all are home and to use it for family and fun. In the U.S, only a third of the year is spent in standard time now. There is an increasingly popular push to make daylight-saving time the permanent time across the United States, which will involve shifting the time zone ahead by one hour. A study conducted in 2008 has shown that this shift reduces electricity usage by about 0.5 percent each day. There is increased public safety, as data suggests, since robbery rates drop significantly every spring when the clocks are adjusted.

World News



PAROSMIA IS THE AFTERMATH OF COVID-19

Parosmia is a condition that distorts the sense of smell in a person, and an increasing number of patients are said to be suffering from this strange condition after recovering from COVID-19. This condition can cause the loss of intensity of smell, and more frequently, it can cause one to experience a stinky scent. This overpowering scent can happen around smells that are generally pleasant or maybe around no smell at all. As more people are recovering from COVID-19, researchers’ next step is the lingering symptoms caused by the virus. Although these symptoms are not life-threatening, they are definitely life-changing and possibly a lifelong battle.



GOOGLE TO FACE LAWSUIT FOR TRACKING USERS

A judge ruled that Google has to face a class-action lawsuit for secretly collecting data from users when in “Incognito” mode. The case that seeks at least \$5 billion was filed by three users last June, alleging that Google persistently tracks its users even if they take necessary steps to protect their private information. Although Google sought to have the case thrown out, U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh in California ruled that the company did not notify users that Google is engaged in alleged data collection while the user is in private browsing mode. Google spokesperson said that they would defend themselves vigorously against the lawsuit. Earlier this year, Google informed that it is phasing out third-party tracking cookies and will not be replacing them with something as invasive. However, such a move will affect the company’s advertising business.



ITALY HEADS BACK TO LOCKDOWN

Italy is witnessing a spike in COVID-19 cases, prompting a lockdown for Easter. Although 170,000 doses of vaccine are being administered each day, only 3 percent of the country is vaccinated so far since delays hit the campaign. Cases are rising to be more than 25,000 a day for the past many weeks. Although in lockdown starting Monday, March 15, people can visit family and friends over the Easter holiday. The whole country will be locked down on Easter weekend for the second year in a row. More than 100,000 Italians have died from coronavirus complications. Officials are warning against highly contagious variants.

Inventor of cassette tape is dead



Lou Ottens, the cassette tape inventor, died on March 6 at 94 in his hometown of Duizel in the Netherlands. Condolences poured in from different parts of the world as eulogists shared their thoughts of cassette’s impact in taking music across the globe. Ottens was head of the department of product development at Philips when his team developed the cassette tape in the 1960s. The novel product quickly took off and became a worldwide hit to create and access mass media. This new tool enabled many to make, share, and listen to their choices of music. Later, Otten’s team also helped develop the CD, which dethroned the cassette tape.

Perseverance recorded the 1st sound

NASA’s Perseverance rover began using its SuperCam instrument on Mars. This instrument is equipped with a microphone and has picked up the gentle sound of the Martian wind and the laser’s snaps when it hits a rock target. The SuperCam fires a laser at targets generating a cloud of vaporized rock. The microphone on SuperCam is functioning well and has a very high-quality signal that can be used for scientific studies. These audios will reveal each rock target’s hardness and is a detail that cannot be determined from composition alone. The car-sized Perseverance landed on Jezero Crater’s



floor on February 18, and is part of NASA’s \$2.7 billion Mars 2020 mission. Jezero Crater is considered to be a site of a possible ancient lake.