

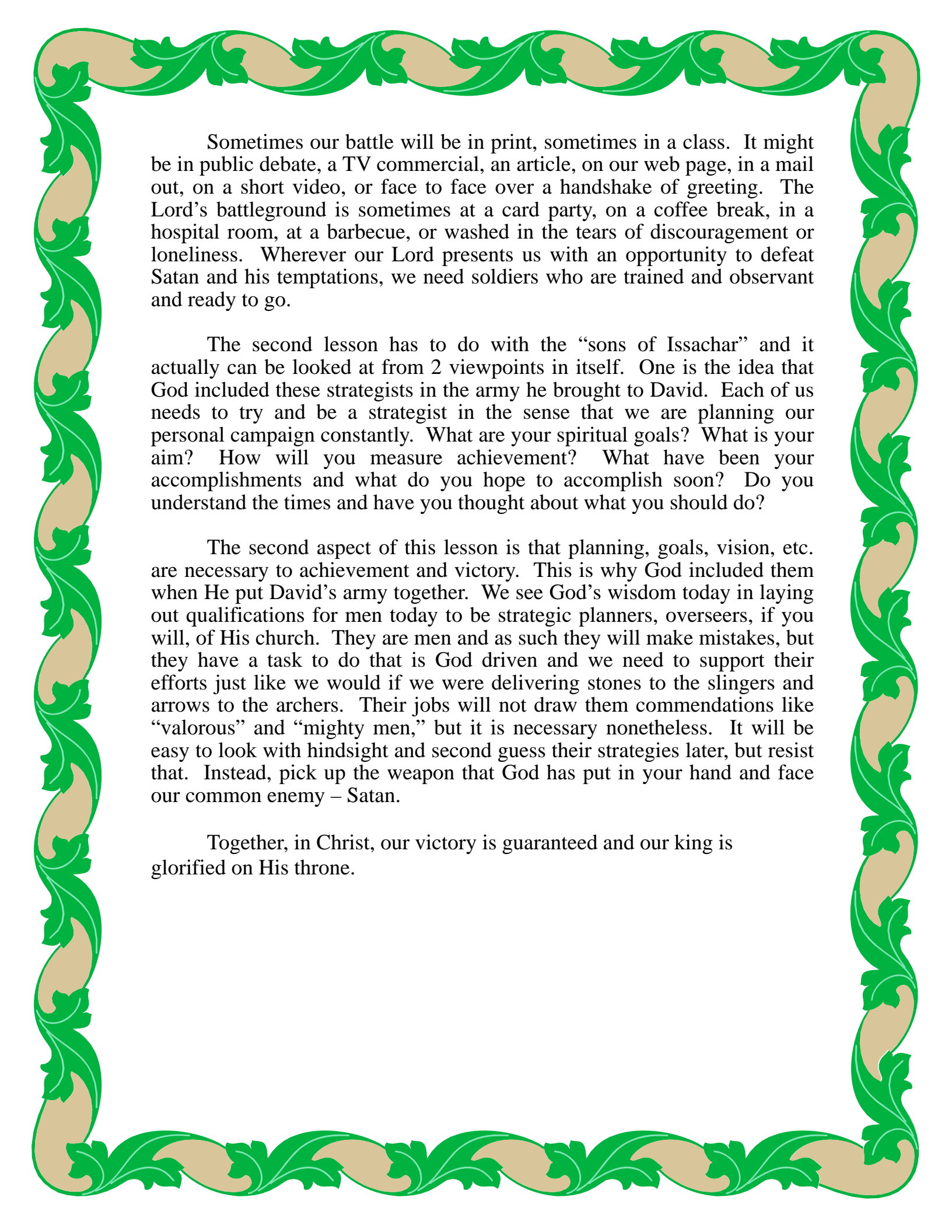
“Be All That You Can Be” By Carl McMurray

When David was still a warrior, before he became king of Israel, days were hard for him because of the constant efforts of King Saul to destroy him. I'm sure one thing that encouraged him however was the number of good men who came to join his army, some of them even from Saul's own house and kinsmen. 1 Chronicles 12 records some of those who came to him at Ziklag and at Hebron “to turn the kingdom of Saul to him,” i.e. to help him take over as king as the Lord had declared. It is an interesting study in warfare dynamics.

There were experienced soldiers who could draw up in battle formation. These understood the necessity of discipline and order in order to achieve victory. There were men who could shoot a bow or sling stones with either the right hand or left. A valuable asset in the case of an arm or shoulder wound. These men would stand near the rear and loose their missiles to thin out the ranks of the enemy. There were men who were physically quick and ferocious and are named as men of valor who bore the shield and spear. They are described as mighty men and their job was the close-in, hand-to-hand, look-em-in-the-eye style of fighting that belonged to the front line. There were captains in David's army who were captains not by reason of an officer's appointment but by their fighting ability. The least of them was the equal of 100 men and the greatest was said to equal 1,000. These are men who crossed the Jordan in flood stage and cleared out the valleys of Israel's enemies. There were mighty men, men of valor, trained men, and famous men who came to fight for David and the Lord's side.

There was also a different type that came. 1 Chron. 12:32 says, “...of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do...” So then, not only soldiers came to David, but strategists also. Men who understood the times and could advise David on other areas besides sharp spears and strong bows. Two lessons might be drawn from this God blessed array for God's army, the church, today.

The first is that obviously all types of soldiers are needed in the Lord's army. Front line men and men who guard the flanks are all needed. Men who grasp the importance of order and discipline and men whose “faces are like lions” and are “swift as gazelles.” We also need men who are specialists (in bow, sling, spear and shield) and those who can handle “all kinds of weapons.”



Sometimes our battle will be in print, sometimes in a class. It might be in public debate, a TV commercial, an article, on our web page, in a mail out, on a short video, or face to face over a handshake of greeting. The Lord's battleground is sometimes at a card party, on a coffee break, in a hospital room, at a barbecue, or washed in the tears of discouragement or loneliness. Wherever our Lord presents us with an opportunity to defeat Satan and his temptations, we need soldiers who are trained and observant and ready to go.

The second lesson has to do with the "sons of Issachar" and it actually can be looked at from 2 viewpoints in itself. One is the idea that God included these strategists in the army he brought to David. Each of us needs to try and be a strategist in the sense that we are planning our personal campaign constantly. What are your spiritual goals? What is your aim? How will you measure achievement? What have been your accomplishments and what do you hope to accomplish soon? Do you understand the times and have you thought about what you should do?

The second aspect of this lesson is that planning, goals, vision, etc. are necessary to achievement and victory. This is why God included them when He put David's army together. We see God's wisdom today in laying out qualifications for men today to be strategic planners, overseers, if you will, of His church. They are men and as such they will make mistakes, but they have a task to do that is God driven and we need to support their efforts just like we would if we were delivering stones to the slingers and arrows to the archers. Their jobs will not draw them commendations like "valorous" and "mighty men," but it is necessary nonetheless. It will be easy to look with hindsight and second guess their strategies later, but resist that. Instead, pick up the weapon that God has put in your hand and face our common enemy – Satan.

Together, in Christ, our victory is guaranteed and our king is glorified on His throne.