

Strength and Honor!

Dr. Greg Bourgond

Many **Heart of a Warrior** men who are in groups, attended an advance or retreat, or are alumni often greet one another with the refrain "Strength and Honor." When I saw the movie *Gladiator* I was struck by the way in which these words, when uttered, served to provide an acknowledgment of a brotherhood forged on the battle lines. These men lived, fought, and died together. Throughout the movie Maximus verbally greeted his men with strength and honor.

I met with 9 men over a period of 2 and 1/2 years. Six months before our journey came to a close I requested they see the movie *Gladiator*. I wanted them to see how a man lives a value-centered life. Maximus lived for four values; Rome, his family, strength, and honor. I addressed my men as follows once they had seen the movie.

"I am sick and tired of mediocre Christianity that never has truly believed and never has truly received. You would think I would be encouraged about the continual reports we hear of many people coming to a saving knowledge of Christ. If so many are coming to the Lord why aren't we having a greater impact on our culture." I then said, "If you and I lived our lives with the same ferocity, intentionality, focus, and purpose as this pagan Roman general but for the cause of Christ what could we accomplish for the kingdom?" I then had them look up every verse in the Bible on strength and honor.

These values have become meaningful values in the lives of many men associated with **Heart of a Warrior**. I have given my oldest grandson these values. We greet one another with strength and honor. Two of my values are strength and honor.

If strength and honor are to be appropriated by men, if they are a means to identify fellow warriors on the battle line, if they are to be respected by others then they must be informed, shaped, and conditioned by the Bible. What does strength and honor look like from God's point of view? I have listed the more significant passages below.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Chronicles 29:12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

1 Samuel 2:30 "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.'

1 Peter 1:7 These have come so that your faith_of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire_may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Deuteronomy 11:8 Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

Habakkuk 3:19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.

Isaiah 40:30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope 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.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who hope 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.

Isaiah 40:29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 21:21 He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.

Proverbs 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

Proverbs 24:5 A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength;

Psalms 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Psalms 105:4 Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalms 84:5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

Psalms 62:7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

Psalms 18:32 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

Romans 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Remember **strength without mercy is oppression. Mercy without strength is weakness.** God calls us to be men of strength and mercy, men who bring honor to the Lord by the way they live their lives in bold relief. Look at the passages above to see how strength and honor is to mark the life of a fully devoted follower of Christ.