

AM I A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS? Worksheet

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Verse 1

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His Name?

Verse 2

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Verse 3

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Verse 4

Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord.
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Verse 5

Thy saints in all this glorious war
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh.

Verse 6

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thy armies shine
In robes of victory through skies,
The glory shall be Thine.

Vocabulary

In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

Verse 1: blush

Verse 2: flowery, ease

Verse 3: foes, stem, vile

Verse 4: reign, toil, endure

Verse 5: saints, conquer, triumph, nigh

Verse 6: illustrious, Thine

Word Pictures Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: soldier of the cross, blush to speak His name

Verse 2: carried to the skies, flowery beds of ease, win the prize, bloody seas

Verse 3: foes to face, stem the flood

Verse 4: increase my courage, Thy Word

Verse 5: glorious war, shall conquer

Verse 6: armies shine, robes of victory

Mechanics Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker?

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

Verse 1: What is the author questioning in the first verse? (*Note: Another term for this is soul-searching.*)

Verse 2: Explain and discuss “flowery beds of ease.” Do we complain about our work whether or not is the work of conquering math or other academic subjects, chores, etc.? Historically, talk about others that “fought to win the prize.” (e.g., Bible personages, Patrick Henry, George Mason, Alfred the Great, etc.) What were those “bloody seas”?

Verse 3: What is the author questioning in this verse? Have you ever asked yourself these types of questions?

Verse 4: What is the author asking in the second line? How does the author say he will put up with “toil”?

Verse 5: The term “saints” means a Christian. To what “war” is the author referring? What is seen from far off? What brings it near?

Verse 6: What does the author mean by “illustrious day”? Did you notice the term “Thy”? What does it mean? What will shine? Did you notice the term “Thine”? What does it mean?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

What Does the Bible Say?

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the six verses.

Discuss the message of this poem in light of 1 Corinthians 16:13, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

Caleb (Num 13:30), Joshua (Josh 1:1-11), Jonathan (1 Sam 14:1,6-14), and Daniel (Dan 6:1-28) all seem to take courage seriously. Courage is doing what is right even though one is afraid. Give other Bible examples of courage. Site historical examples, past and present, of those demonstrating courage.

Relate the message of this poem to education with respect to 2 Corinthians 10:5, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Do the same for other areas of human activity (e.g., civics, finances, the arts, dance, sports, etc.). Are all these areas equally important to a soldier of the cross?

The Author/Poet

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The name of the author for this poem or lyric is Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He was born 17 July 1674, in Southampton, England, and died 25 November 1748, in Stoke Newington, England. He is buried at Bunhill Fields Cemetery, London, England. Watt's had an interesting father who was imprisoned two times for his religious views. Mr. Watts studied Greek and Latin but declined an offer for a standard university education preferring to attend the Nonconformist Academy at Stoke Newington in 1690. When Mr. Watts was 20-22 he stayed at home and wrote the majority of the hymns for *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* that were published in 1707-1709. For six years he was the tutor Mr. John Hartopp's son. Mr. Watts was ordained in 1702.

"Give 'em Watts, boys, give 'em Watts!"

Interestingly, Isaac Watts is intimately connected with the American War of Independence. In an attack upon Springfield when the patriots' wadding gave out, Rev. James Caldwell (of Huguenot descent) ran into a Presbyterian church returning with his arms and pockets crammed full with *Watts' Psalms and Hymns* saying, "Now, boys, give them Watts!" The British offered large rewards for the capture of Rev. Caldwell, but to no avail. Therefore, the British burned his church, shot his wife while she was in the midst of their nine children, dragged her body into the street, and burned his home and out buildings.

Geography

Locate Southampton, England, and Lond on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Stoke Newington (England) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast England's weather with your own for one week.

Make an English meal for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be six different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, “interview” various individuals this poem could illustrate (e.g., family members, Oliver Cromwell, George Mason, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents’ permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author’s view of the impact of *Am I a Soldier of the Cross?*

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Isaac Watts and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.