



Searching for a Winner: Axioms of Warfare: Mass or Combat Power: Stephen Pressfield's *Gates of Fire*; *Phobologia*: Greek Science of Fear

7. Recognizing that we are all in the same battle, we are to express our personal love for God as unconditional love toward our fellow believers.
 8. This attitude is also to be extended to those who have chosen to ally themselves with the forces of the Evil One. We must not allow their assaults against us to solicit sins, such as anger, hatred, or revenge motivation, but rather to summon the responsible attitudes of duty, honor, integrity, and justice in defense of righteous standards.
 9. The advantages gained by means of our spiritual offensive may be utilized in our defense against Lucifer. The major ordinance in our arsenal of weaponry is the artillery of the Word of God circulating in our streams of consciousness and available for deployment at any moment we encounter the attacks of demon influence.
3. Mass:
- 1) Mass in military terminology refers to combat power. It includes the number of troops, weapons, tactics, fighting ability, discipline, morale, and leadership of the force to be deployed.
 - 2) We know the approximate number of Abram's Delta Force to be around 1,200 men separated into four units of around 300 each.
 - 3) His weaponry we have learned would have included spears, swords, and bows and arrows. Their tactics are very advanced in view of the night assault and the separation of forces. Abram has trained them well and they are apparently well-disciplined in view of the fact they are about to aggressively attack an army of 100,000.
 - 4) These things require high morale on the part of the troops and superb leadership on the part of Abram and his lieutenants, Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner.
 - 5) All these assets come together as mass or combat power. But this power is potential if there is not a collection of mental attitudes that puts the mass in motion and maintains unit integrity.
 - 6) I want to define these mental attitudes from an English vocabulary, illustrate from Greek military history, and make the application to the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged.
 - 7) From English dictionaries I will define four words that express the driving force behind combat mass:
 1. Courage: Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty. Implies a firmness of mind and will in the face of danger or extreme difficulty.
 2. Mettle: Vigor and strength of spirit or temperament; staying quality. Suggests an ingrained capacity for meeting strain or difficulty with fortitude and resilience.



3. Spirit: Suggests a quality of temperament enabling one to hold one's own or keep up one's morale when opposed or threatened.
4. Resolution: Stresses firm determination to achieve one's ends.
- 8) This mental attitude described by these four definitions can be summed up as follows: the staying power to persevere under pressure without losing one's morale until the objective sought for is gained.
- 9) This is an inner resource that when united with the same mental attitudes of others of the same mind produces the cumulative power of a unit working in concert.
- 10) This and other magnificent applications of the development of combat power based on unit discipline is covered with great eloquence in the writings of Stephen Pressfield. We will next observe a few excerpts from one of his books on ancient warfare. This one is an historical novel that describes the personalities involved in the famous Battle of Thermopylae.
- 11) Thermopylae is a narrow four and one-half-mile-long pass on the east coast of central Greece. Its name, meaning "hot gates," is derived from its hot sulfur springs. In 480 B.C., during the second Persian invasion of Greece, a small Greek force under Spartan king Leonidas held the pass for three days before being overwhelmed by the large Persian army led by Xerxes \zerk' sēz\ I. This battle became celebrated in history and literature as an example of heroic resistance against great odds.
12. This application was not lost on those who reported on the Siege of the Alamo. One in particular is found in:

Roberts, Randy and James S. Olson. *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory.* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 172:

The defenders of the Alamo had passed into immortality, at least among freedom-loving Texans. Wrote Thomas J. Chambers, "Your names shall be inscribed in the proudest and the brightest pages of history with those of Leonidas and others who have offered themselves as sacrifices upon the altar of their country.

Chambers thought, wrote, and spoke the language of the romantic age. Like Byron, Shelly, or thousands of other classically educated Englishmen and Americans, he interpreted the events of the day in the light of history. No allusion seemed more apt than Thermopylae, the 480 B.C. battle where Leonidas's Spartans and his Greek allies sacrificed their lives to stall the march of Xerxes' Persians. All but one Spartan was killed, but their deaths gave their countrymen time to organize. Eventually at the battles of Salamis \sa' la-mis\ (480 B.C.) and Plataea \pla-tē' ə\ (479 B.C.), the Greeks drove the Persians out of Greece, presumably striking a blow for civilization and against barbarism and for liberty against autocracy.

In the aftermath of the Alamo, journalists repeatedly mentioned the story of Thermopylae, insisting that now Texas had heroes made of the same mettle as the ancient Greeks.

- 13- The defenders at the Alamo numbered 182 against Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna's Mexican army of over 5,000. The Greek allies at Thermopylae, who totaled just 300 souls, were assigned the duty of holding the pass against what were known as Xerxes' 10,000 Immortals.



14. The military asceticism required to become a *hoplite* [ὀπλίτης, heavy-armed foot soldier, man-of-arms, who carried a pike and a large shield (L&S, 1239).], a soldier in the Greek armies, is legendary. And the training began with the objective of developing the mental attitude of a winner. The emotional sin of fear was the first demon that had to be conquered. Pressfield explains the system the Greek's used to identify fear in the soul of an *agoge* [ἀγωγή], a cadet, and how it was dealt with:

Pressfield, Stephen. *Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae*. (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 78:

The Spartans have a discipline they call *phobologia*, the science of fear. *Phobologic* discipline is comprised of twenty-eight exercises, each focusing upon a separate nexus [or, connection] of the nervous system. The five primaries are the knees and hamstrings, lungs and heart, loins and bowels, the lower back, and the girdle of the shoulders, particularly the trapezius \tra-pē' zē-us\ muscles [the large flat triangular muscles at each side of the back], which yoke the shoulder to the neck.

A secondary nexus, for which the Lakedaemonians [Λακεδαιμόνιος, Lacedaemonians \la' ke-dē-mon' i-ans\] have twelve more exercises, is the face, specifically the muscles of the jaw, the neck and the four ocular constrictors around the eye sockets. These nexuses are termed by the Spartans *phobosunaktes*, fear accumulators.

Fear spawns in the body, *phobologic* science teaches, and must be combated there. For once the flesh is seized, a *phobokuklos*, or loop of fear, may commence, feeding upon itself, mounting into a "runaway" of terror. Put the body into a state of *aphobia* [ἀφοβία, having no fear (L&S, 291).], fearlessness, the Spartans believe, and the mind will follow.

15. The flushing of fear begins with what we refer to idiomatically today as "Spartan training" but it was quite literal to those who endured it.
16. We will first observe the grueling discipline imposed on a fourteen-year old *agoge*, who is guilty of a breach of discipline regarding his *aspis* [ἀσπίς, or ὄπλον, *hoplon*], or shield. As I recite, you will be reminded of our earlier discussions about how self-discipline is essential to develop the mental attitude of a winner.
- 17- Those in good health and of average intelligence can be taught the tactics of combat. But they are not often motivated to pursue these skills without discipline imposed by superiors who demand strict obedience to authority, policy, and training regimens.