



## Pressfield's Inner & Outer Harmony from *Gates of Fire* Clarifies Paul's "Esprit de Corps" in Rom 3b-5; Virtue Love Drives out Fear, 1 Jn 4:18; Playing Your Note

**Pressfield, Steven. *Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae*. (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 80:**

(Xeonos and Alexandros [Ἀλέξανδρος] talked for hours in secret on the pursuit of *esōterikē harmonia*, that state of self-composure which the exercises of the *phobologia* [φοβολογία, the science of fear] are designed to produce. As the string of the *kithēra* [κιθάρα, "lyre"] vibrates purely, emitting only that note of the musical scale which is its alone, so must the individual warrior shed all which is superfluous in his spirit, until he himself vibrates at that sole pitch which his individual *daimōn* [δαίμων, "god"] dictates. The achievement of this ideal, in Lakedaemōn [Λακεδαιμόν, the ancient name for Sparta], carries beyond courage on the battlefield; it is considered the supreme embodiment of virtue, *andrea* [ἀνδρεία], of a citizen and a man.

Beyond *esōterikē harmonia* lies *exōterikē harmonia*, that state of union with one's fellows which parallels the musical harmony of the multistringed instrument or of the chorus of voices itself. In battle *exōterikē harmonia* guides the phalanx to move and strike as one man, and of a single mind and will. In passion it unites husband to wife, lover to lover, in wordless perfect union. In politics *exōterikē harmonia* produces a city of concord and unity, in which each individual, securing his own noblest expression of character, donates this to each other, as obedient to the laws of the commonwealth as the strings of the *kithēra* to the immutable mathematics of music.

10. Pressfield's depiction of ancient Greek esprit de corps provides us an excellent illustration of how virtue love enables believers to achieve soul rapport with God, fellow believers, and their right person:
  - 1) Good soldiers for Christ must make it their objective to pursue the ideal of virtue love which is the primary mental attitude for the sophisticated spiritual life. It produces a "state of self-composure" that is defined in three categories: spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy, and spiritual maturity.
  - 2) The Apostle John writes about the sophistication of virtue love in:
 

**1 John 4:18 - Fear does not exist in virtue love but the one who fears punishment has not been perfected in virtue love which drives out fear.**
  - 3) There is an altruistic, human-viewpoint "ethic" that is defined as "love" by immature believers. It is motivated by fear of punishment and thus they are restrained from doing certain things. This is a pseudo, self-imposed humility.
  - 4) Eventually, believers must attain within their souls virtuous, divine-viewpoint love for God, others, and their right person that is self-motivated. This is the function of genuine humility—the inner resource of Bible doctrine that is their operational frame of reference for thought, decision, and action.
  - 5) Those who possess virtue love are not motivated to love others because they fear punishment if they don't, instead they love others because it is a reflection of who they are.
  - 6) As the believer advances he must permit the Word of God to inform him about who he is in the plan of God. This requires self-analysis. It requires allowing his own personality, under the instruction of the Holy Spirit, to be guided by biblical revelation which will reveal his place and purpose in the divine plan.
  - 7) The believer must first consider himself to be an individual who is being fashioned to function with other individuals who, with soul rapport, can efficiently serve God.



- 8) Each believer must view himself as a string of the *kith* and learn to “tune” himself so that he plays his note perfectly. As he allows the Holy Spirit to “get him in tune” he will “emit his note” which God designed him to play within the divine symphony.
- 9) To obtain the humility, objectivity, and maturity to play his note he must acquire virtue love. Once he learns to play his note with efficiency then he will realize that he is “in tune” with other believers who have made the similar advance.
- 10) When enough believers in a local church achieve inner harmony—*esoteric* harmony—then there will also emerge outer harmony—*exoteric* harmony—within the congregation. When each believer functions under the assignments God has designed for him it results in soul rapport within the group.
- 11) This soul rapport “parallels the musical harmony of the multistringed instrument or of the chorus of voices itself.”
- 12) Thus we can paraphrase the last sentence of Pressfield’s remarks “In Christianity, *exoteric* harmony produces a congregation of concord and unity, in which each individual, securing his own noble expression of character, donates this to each other, as obedient to the immutable principles of doctrine as the strings of the *kith* to the immutable mathematics of music.”
- 13) This same *exoteric* harmony is expressed in marriage through rapport of souls where virtue love enables man and wife to enjoy a relationship that reflects the harmony that is to exist between Jesus Christ and His church.
- 14) We can also see an application to the client nation, a national entity that has special qualifications as noted in:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Freedom through Military Victory*. 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003), 99:**

**Client nation.** A national entity in which a certain number of spiritually mature believers have formed a pivot sufficient to sustain the nation and through which God furthers His plan for mankind. Under divine blessing God specifically protects this representative nation so believers can fulfill the divine mandates of evangelism, communication and custodianship of Bible doctrine, and sending missionaries abroad.