

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE ADDITIONAL PIECES OF THE ROMAN MILITARY GEAR

1. Each Roman soldier carried one or two palisade pieces with them when they were away from the protective fortress where they normally lived. These pieces were heavy and could potentially be just a hassle to pack around. However, when used with those carried by other soldiers a temporary field fortress could be built to protect all of them. Where have you experienced teamwork as a mutually protective process? What part of it was/is a hassle? What were the outcomes in terms of relationships?
2. If you had been someone forced to pack the fully loaded Roman military *Furka* (see Matthew 16:24) for a mile by a surly soldier, what do you think your response would be? What would you do and say to the soldier? What do you think his response would have been if you offered to go the second mile packing the stuff? When have you chosen to go the “second mile”? When have you been drafted to go the second mile? What were the results in each situation? What did you learn?
3. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, Paul talks about tearing down strongholds of error. The Roman *dolabra* was effective at building and just as effective at tearing things down. What strongholds of error need to be cleared away in your community? Your home? Your work place? Your life? What “tools” are needed to do that job? What is your plan to replace those errors with something better?
4. The canteen: a necessary piece of equipment. What is the longest you have ever gone without water? What was it like for you? What were the circumstances? The outcome? Where and how do you draw spiritual “water” for your thirsty soul? Who helps you? Who can you help get a drink of spiritual water? How can you do that? Look up some passages about what Jesus said concerning water.
5. The *contubernium* grouping of eight soldiers who lived, fought, ate, and sometimes faced death together would form a very tight bond. Have you ever experienced bonding like that? Where was it? What were the circumstances? How did you help each other? With whom, and how, do you keep in touch with some of those people?
6. Think about the wax filled *tabla*. While it might seem fragile, it was quite sturdy and protective of what was written on it. One difference with the *tabla* and a modern PDA or computer is that once the information was erased, it was 100%, absolutely gone. That is not necessarily true with a computer. To clear the *tabla*, one merely had to expose the wax to the sun or a burning brand to melt it. What do you want to remove from your life by exposing it to the Son or to the flame of the Spirit? How and when will that happen? If you have done that, recall and share the experience.
7. The Romans had no matches to start a fire. They had flint and a metal striker to spark a fire. What is that does that for you spiritually? What elements come together to “light your fire” for God and His cause? Relate a time when you were at first cold, then warmed by His presence. What started the flame in you? Who might be spiritually cold and need your warmth right now? How will you strike the fire?
8. Most of the equipment was carried on the *furca*. It became the base on which other things rested and found support. What foundational beliefs and values form the basis of who you are and what you do? Explain how that works for you. How can you pass those on to others?

9. If you were in the crowd when Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross (think *furka* and everything on it) and follow me” (Matthew 16:24, NIV), would you see that as a positive message or a negative message? Explain your response.
10. From the original fork shape, the Roman carry-pole eventually took the shape of a cross. Elaborate on the meanings of that for you. How does the cross Jesus carried relate to the Roman *furka*?
11. What kinds of spiritual-combat materials have helped you? What do you need to add to your experience to help you be better prepared? How can you get that additional equipment? Who do you need to help you? When and how will you “round out your pack?”
12. Roman soldiers did more engineering and building than fighting. What do you need to build in your own life? In your community? In your church and family? Where you work? What is your plan? Who can help?



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