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## Gladiator is a great movie

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I liked Gladiator the first time I saw it. Even though I didn't watch it again for years, I gained insights into the main characters through conversations with other men. Also, I was challenged to watch the movie again by John Eldredge's references to Gladiator in his various books. When I watched the movie last year with my son, I thought the movie was great. Despite its few weaknesses, the movie succeeds at a deep personal level. I see my worst qualities in Commodus. Through my Father's adoption and through the Holy Spirit's inner work, I am learning Maximus-confidence when facing satanic tyrants in hostile arenas.

Long ago demons wounded me so that my given name is shameful to me. With mocking tones and sneers, devils ask me my name. They think they will intimidate me into submission. God has used Gladiator to remind me that I can take off my helmet, face those bullies, and say, "By birth, my name is Rick Miller. By my Father's adoption, I am God's Gladiator. Father to the children you have tried to destroy, husband to the woman you have tried to murder. I am the man God has raised up to defeat you in battle today."

As you can tell one of my favorite scenes from Gladiator is this one:

"Commodus: Rise. Rise.

Commodus: Your fame is well deserved, Spaniard. I don't think there's ever been a gladiator to match you. As for this young man, he insists you are Hector reborn. Or was it Hercules? Why doesn't the hero reveal himself and tell us all your real name? You do have a name.

Maximus: My name is Gladiator.

Commodus: How dare you show your back to me! Slave, you will remove your helmet and tell me your name.

Maximus: My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius, commander of the Armies of the North, General of the Felix Legions, loyal servant to the true emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Father to a murdered son, husband to a murdered wife. And I will have my vengeance, in this life or the next.

" (from imdb web site).

One of my favorite movie quotes is this one: "Maximus: What we do in life echoes in eternity" (quote from imdb web site). I say, "Amen, Maximus."

As Andrew H. Trotter, Jr. says in the Ransom Fellowship Review of Gladiator, "Gladiator contains heroism and leadership, the clear opposition of good vs. evil, and tender, faithful love of family... the historical background... is there to provide the context in which the lone individual triumphs by standing for something he believes is right against overwhelming odds and constant temptation. It is this bravery, this willingness to suffer for good, that gives" the movie its appeal. Trotter points out Gladiator's failings. "Perhaps the greatest fault results from the depth with which revenge is portrayed." He also says that the movie is "simply too long" and presents "some situations and themes too simplistically." However, after considering Gladiator's flaws, Andrew Trotter concludes: "But what strength of character displayed by Maximus (Russell Crowe in Gladiator)... If you see Gladiator, enjoy its many virtuous attitudes, its pictures of true and right friendship, of bravery and of resistance to temptation. Rejoice that it shows actions have consequences, and that the accomplishment of great things only comes with self-sacrifice and suffering. Maximus is a thinker, a general who knows his men and outflanks his enemy by using his wits as well as his strength. Religiously, he is a pagan; small statues aid him in his prayers to the gods. But even here there is a bonus for twentieth century Christians for at least Maximus believes in life after death, and much of his life is lived in light of the reality of the afterlife. This is hardly a common Hollywood theme." Trotter points out that Maximus' focus is always on his family. I agree that I need to fight for my family – and not against my family. "The concept of 'country' is important" to Maximus, "but in the end" he really fights for the sake of his wife and child. Maximus is my hero. I commit myself to taking the battle to devils in the same way Maximus takes the battle to Commodus.

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