

Special Forces: Day Thirty-five

Intermediate Training: Unit Two

Operational Readiness

Rapid Deployment

Just about anyone who serves in military combat units has had the privilege of participating in a unit operational readiness test of some sort. It might have slightly different names in different branches of service, but the goal is the same - to assess the ability of a unit to meet deployment requirements in the event of war. Some units, such as special operations and rapid deployment forces are required to deploy from home stations more quickly than others. One of my fondest memories involves being alerted in the wee hours of the morning and being on an aircraft within a matter of hours, headed for a distant drop zone and knowing that we would not receive the exact details of the mission until we had reached our destination. Such is life in the world of special operations. Maintaining a posture of constant readiness for immediate deployment was routine.

The same state of readiness should be the order of the day for followers of Christ. We should stand ready to be used of God. I would also dare suggest that while the above example had a short time fuse, God's mission requirements might even have more severe time constraints! Of one thing I am certain. The blood bought Christian living in a fallen world has already been deployed. No infiltration plan is necessary. We are already in the combat zone, but are we ready for whatever mission or task God might assign? Assuming we have declared our availability to our Lord, how can we maintain our readiness? History's greatest evangelist and church planter provided a clue in his counsel to a young preacher.

Key Verse:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:2 (NKJV)

Paul first declares the authority of the inspired word of God and then instructs young Timothy to preach God's word and to be ready to respond whether or not there was an opportunity (in season, out of season); whatever the need of the moment, to rebuke, teach and encourage, with all patience and sound doctrine. Notice that the task wasn't to find a pulpit opportunity and then figure out what to preach. Also note that Paul didn't tell Timothy to have an opinion poll about the word and suggest applying it, but to be ready and just preach it.

I know what you're thinking. Timothy was called to be a preacher. Most of us are just regular people living everyday lives. Are you sure about that? Listen to something the Apostle Peter wrote to Christians dispersed throughout Asia during the 7th century that still applies today.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous

light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV)

I submit to you that Paul's challenge to young Timothy reveals both a *principle for living that cannot fail* and a *challenge to all believers everywhere for all time*. The principle is this: Scripture, God's revealed word to His children, contains everything we need to live and grow individually as Christians, as well as to serves others.

The ultimate example of being ready with God's word has to be Jesus Himself when he was tempted in the wilderness. Three times he was tempted by the devil and three times he replied "It is written....." The very Son of God, when tempted by the devil, quoted scripture! Need I say more? The account of Jesus' wilderness temptation can be found in the fourth chapters of Matthew and Luke.

So What?

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

The same Spirit of God that inspired the Bible and gives it life and power is the same Spirit that indwells every believer! A love for God's word goes hand in hand with genuine faith. When we read the Bible with an open heart and sincere desire to hear from God - guess what happens? **We hear from God!**

Does that mean that when we prayerfully read the Bible we have opened a direct line of communication with our creator? You got it!!!! Over the years I have discovered that when I begin the day reading God's word, in communication with our Lord, I seem to **'be ready'** for just about any challenge that may come my way. I am better prepared on a personal level - I can be a brighter light and saltier salt. I am also far more likely to step through any doors God opens to share His Gospel.

I would be a liar if I told you I have always been faithful to tried and true principals. If I wanted to discuss the various reasons why I have not been always faithful it could be a very short conversation - SIN. If I am in physical circumstances that don't allow for turning on a light and reading I can still commune with God through prayer. Scripture I have read and memorized somehow fills my mind and invades my heart. I just have to have an open heart. Sin can block communication with God better than an eighteen-car pile-up can stop traffic on the freeway. Trust me on that one.

How can we restore communications?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

You might be surprised how quickly our heartfelt confession and God's forgiveness can blow open clogged lines of communication! But then again, maybe you wouldn't be surprised at all because you've 'been there and done that'.

So pause for a moment and perform a 'readiness check'. How good is your communication link? Are you limited to a jammed up 56k analog dial-up connection or do you have a high speed, digital 'always on' broadband hook-up? Are you satisfied or is it time to upgrade?

A few words of encouragement from Psalm 119:

*Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the Lord!*

*Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!*

- Verses 1-2

*Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.*

- Verse 97

*How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

- Verse 103

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.*

- Verse 105