

Fit For Duty Devotional--Week 4: Recruiting

Sunday, October 4, 2009

Romans 10:14-15 *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"* NKJV

What would happen if the United States Army stopped recruiting? Over a period of time older soldiers would retire, there would be, however unfortunate, attrition due to enemy action during wartime, and the Army would begin to weaken for lack of essential personnel. The church is composed of people, just as an army is composed of people. God has chosen to do His work on earth through His soldiers--those of us who are committed Christians.

Matthew 28:19-20 *(Jesus commanded:) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* NKJV

The Army assigns men to be Recruiters who have proven themselves through all of their training and service. These are usually senior Sergeants with a number of years of experience. They receive special training in the process of recruiting, and are taught how to overcome objections, explain what the recruit's service would be all about and generally bring them to the place where they are ready to "sign on the dotted line."

Christians all have a similar call to be "recruiters"--to explain the truth of the Scriptures to unbelievers, to overcome any questions and doubts, so that God can bring them to a place where they are ready to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. And like military recruiters, it takes some "training" and some experience to come to a place where a Christian feels comfortable sharing his story with others.

Take time this week to consider your own story, and to think about how you would talk to someone who is not a believer in such a way that he or she might become eager to learn more.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, give me a recruiter's heart and show me the best way for me to share my own experience and the wisdom of Scripture with those for whom You have given me a heart of evangelism and the opportunity to share. Amen.*

Monday, October 5, 2009

Acts 22:3-5 *"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished."* NKJV

Acts 22:3-21 contains the personal testimony, the "story" if you will, of the Apostle Paul. It is an account of what he was before he met Jesus Christ, and of the change that took place in his life as a result. Each of us has such a story. Some are dramatic like Paul's, and some are simply the account of average people who realized and repented of their sin and came to God's grace through Christ. We all have a story!

Reader's Digest tells the story of a Navy recruiting officer who was trying to find "common ground" with a potential recruit. "Have you ever played the video game, "Navy Seals?" he asked. "Yes," said the recruit. "Do you know the part where they are trying to cross the bridge across a deep gorge?" he went on. "Yes," said the recruit, expecting to hear an exciting personal story from the recruiter of his adventures during a daring Seal raid. "Great," said the recruiter, "But how do you get past that bridge?"

Contrary to what you might think, people are not always impressed with stories of derring-do and adventure, with great criminal sins, police and

prison. Most of the folks you will meet in life are not former drug-dealers or murderers, but regular people like you and I once were. The sin we all need to confess is not necessarily large and dramatic, but is the attitude of the heart and mind that puts self and self-gratification ahead of God. Somebody spoke to each of us about Christ--try to remember what impressed us most about that person. Was it his words, his life, or maybe both?

Prayer: *Lord, show me how to be a witness for you not only with words and a "story," but with the way I live my life and the way I love others. Let me be a living evidence of the truth of the old song that "They will know we are Christians by our love." Amen.*

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Proverbs 15:23 *Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time! NLT*

There are two equal and opposite issues with people giving their testimony. On the one hand, there are many people who are painfully shy about approaching someone about the Gospel message. Many people are very nervous about giving their testimony. On the other hand, there are some who ramble on so long and in so much excruciating detail that they lose their potential recruit before they ever get to the placher where they would offer him or her a chance to pray and receive Christ. Like a good recruiter, we need to keep our story brief and to the point, giving enough detail to arouse interest and to establish a personal rapport, but not going on and on and frightening them away.

It might be interesting for the recruiter to talk about the rigors of Basic Training and the requirements for maintaining uniform buttons to a recruit, but overemphasis on grueling training or how to polish brass will not be what catches his interest. Instead, the recruiter might talk about the many options for specialization, and which of them the recruit might like to consider. Likewise we need to catch the attention of the unbeliever and show him the benefits of the Christ-life. If we start right off telling him about the brutal Spiritual Warfare we will encounter, it might frighten him off before her ever gets to know the Christ who has already won that war.

Through prayer and study of the Bible, God will prepare each of us to tell his story with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wise advice of believers who have gone before. Words in which a hurting person can find comfort and hope generally are our best way to bring others to a place where they want to hear more.

Isaiah 50:4 *"The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary." NKJV*

Colossians 3:16-17 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom... NKJV*

Prayer: *Lord, give me a heart to love and care for other people, believers and unbelievers alike, and let my life so shine with that love that I will have the chance to share with others the great gift You have offerred to us all. Amen.*

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*

Romans 3:23 *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 10:9 *...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

The Navy Recruiter has a Recruiter's Manual that contains all the necessary information to help him guide potential recruits through the process. It provides information on how to approach people with different

backgrounds and life experiences. It gives him a framework on which to develop his own style of talking to potential recruits.

The Bible contains many passages that will help you explain the reasons why you believe as you do, and why you believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer for any of us to the age-old problem of sin. The verses above are part of what is sometimes called "The Roman Road"--an outline of the unsaved moral condition of all men, and the provision that God has made for all of us to live by grace and escape the "wages of sin," God's wrath. Most churches have brief tracts available that contain this or similar Bible-based outlines for receiving Christ as Savior. Don't be ashamed of sharing such a tract with others after you've told your own story.

Prayer: *Lord, help me to find the right way for me to share my story of personal salvation and the changes in my life, and show me the best way to explain the process by which they can understand their need and accept Christ as Savior. Amen.*

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Leviticus 11:45 *For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. NKJV*

A friend was recently telling me about how he made his decision to join the United States Marine Corps. He had decided to join the military and was downtown on "recruiter's row" trying to decide, but what really made his decision was not the promises of specialist training, or educational opportunities available after serving for a period of time or even being "one of the few, the proud, the Marines." No, he decided to become a Marine because of the sharp dress uniform the recruiter was wearing. "That's what I want to look like!" he said, and he followed that marine Gunnery Sergeant into the recruiting center and signed up on the spot.

As Christians we must want to look like Christ. He was the only man who ever lived who managed to live a holy life, separated to the service of God, and though as fully human as we are, free from sin. He wore the uniform of holiness!

Colossians 3:9-11 *You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. TM*

As we read and study the Scriptures and allow God's Holy Spirit to work in and through our lives, we will progressively become more and more like Christ. We will look at ourselves and see those blue trousers with the red stripes, sharply creased, and we will see the polished brim of that helmet of salvation. Holiness is not simply about knowing what is right, but is about doing it.

James 1:22-23 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror... NKJV*

Prayer: *Lord Jesus give me a heart to wear that new "uniform" of righteousness, to know and do whatever it takes to honor you by my life and my words. Let others see You in me and want to change into their own uniform of holiness. May my life be the cause of the "recruitment" of many into Your Corps. Amen.*

Friday, October 9, 2009

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV*

When we got off the bus at Lackland Air Force Base one hot and dusty day in the Summer of 1962, still wearing our civilian clothes and our civilian attitudes--we were indeed a sight to see... We were a motley crew only marginally prepared for the changes that were about to take place: fat and thin and everywhere in-between, sharply dressed or in old blue jeans, hair crew-cut or "DA" (for those old enough to remember that duck-

tail look), from Guilford, Connecticut, New York City and Appleton Wisconsin. We were "conformed" to nothing, a patchwork of individuals.

We were quickly stripped of our "civvies" and issued uniforms. Our hair was cut uniformly--the basic military buzz was a shock for those who had until that moment wore it long and styled. I remember the barber asking one long haired recruit "How would you like it?" and hearing him reply, "Just take a little off the sides. The look on his face when he buzzed it off right down the middle was not unlike all our reactions to that first day of Basic Training. To become Airmen we needed a radical transformation!

And there were a cadre of large, loud and demanding Training Instructors--in the Air Force they were called "TI's" (the Marines had Drill Instructors, or "DI's")--ready to make sure that we entered into the new life. With enthusiasms!

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV*

Just as the TI's stripped away the vestiges of our old life and habits, when we come to Jesus Christ as new recruits we still have the habits and attitudes of our old life. Bad habits (the church word is "sin) take a while to erase, and new habits must be practiced regularly for about 6-8 weeks before they become ingrained. The Bible will tell us the things we need to do--we need to apply ourselves to doing them, and doing them repeatedly until they become the patterns by which we live our lives.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus show me the areas of my life in which I need to develop new habits, and if need be bring a spiritual "TI" into my life to help me live this new life I have freely chosen, yet sometimes find hard to deal with. Instill in me the spirit of discipline I need to make right actions into lifetime habits of righteousness. Amen.*

Saturday, October 10, 2009

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *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. NKJV*

Whether Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine recruits, when they finish Basic Training they have been transformed from civilians into soldiers, men ready to go on to advanced training, to serve their country in peace or war with the discipline and habits of obedience. But simply being recruited and going through basic training is not the end of it. Now they are "Fit for Duty" but their duties are yet to be defined for them. Somewhere there will be a big bulletin board that will give them as list of their new duty assignments and advanced training postings.

In whatever area they specialize they will be given handbooks on "how to do it" that will show them in detail what is expected of them as specialists, whether that is in the infantry or in intelligence, or electronics and communications, or logistics, or whatever. For every job there is a handbook of "how to do it" and for every piece of equipment there is a "manufacturer's handbook" that explains in detail how to use it and how to repair it.

The Bible is God's Manufacturer's Handbook for us! If we will study it and learn it we will come to excel in the duties God has assigned us to. Scripture has several training functions to perform. Our Scripture for today tells us that the Bible is "profitable" for:

- Doctrine (teaching the truth of God's plans and standards)
- Reproof (like our old TI's, showing us where we have failed to meet the standards)
- Correction (and showing us very specifically how to get back on track)
- Instruction in Righteousness (what we need to do to become "like Christ")

Prayer: *Lord Jesus I have come through Basic Training and You see me as Fit For Duty. Now therefore show me where you would have me to serve, whether as a "TI" to disciple others, or a missionary, or to go on to learn more and deeper in your Word to be a teacher or pastor. Show me what my ministry will be, and what I need to learn and know to do it. Amen.*