

Today young military men and women are in training to go to war. The work that they are doing in Iraq is something that they have been training to do for months, and in some cases, years. They are the best trained Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines on this planet. Others may compare to them but never surpass them. This is not to take away from those valiant warriors from other countries who have assisted us in conflicts, but overall the United States still provides the finest combat training found anywhere.

The U.S. soldier goes into battle with the finest equipment ever devised by man for his protection and for his projection of power. GPS, Kevlar, MOAB, Abrams, Tomahawk, F/A-18, B-1, Stealth Fighter, and Apache are just a few of the terms used to describe the equipment used to protect and project the soldier in combat. Without question the modern American military is the best-prepared and equipped fighting machine in the world.

However, I'm concerned that the most vital part of preparation is being neglected by our military. It is believed that the men and women in our military reflect the population of our country. If that is true, and it appears to be so, then the modern soldier is not prepared to die. There has never been a time in our nation's history when we were ever so Biblically illiterate. We have more religion and less Bible knowledge than ever in our history.

But how does one prepare to die? One of my favorite films of all time is 'Sergeant York.' In this film, Alvin seeks to resolve his understanding of the Bible with the demands of his country to go out and kill the oppressor. Prior to deploying overseas his Commanding Officer has a discussion with Alvin concerning

this seeming conflict in personal values. Alvin is given leave to go home and spend time with his God to try to resolve the problem. After going home and spending time on the mountain alone with God and the Bible, Alvin comes back fully prepared to serve God and his country by going into battle and die if necessary. His performance on the battlefield earned him the Medal of Honor and the praise of his country. How did he get prepared? By getting alone with the God of the Bible.

I believe that in order to prepare men and women to die they must be prepared with the precepts of God's Holy word. Unfortunately, today there is a dearth of knowledge of the Bible. This is similar to what had happened to God's people Israel several thousand years ago.

Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

Our young men and women are preparing for war today without knowledge of the **"law (word) of God."** I served almost 23 years in the United States Navy, and during the last 12 of those years, endeavored to teach sailors the eternal word of God. Many received that word and thus became absolutely prepared to die. Most did not. Many people do not realize that death does not end all. Death is nothing more than a portal – a gateway if you will, to another world. The only book in the universe that prepares man to pass through that portal is the everlasting word of God.

One of the awful realities of war is that people die. American men and women may be killed, and they have killed many. As we received the daily reports from the battlefield we were

reminded of that sobering fact. Death is something that most people try to put out of their minds. So when we received these images and reports from the arena of battle, we were reminded vividly of the awful fact that death happens even to those physically prepared young men and women.

One of the most haunting images from this war that I have seen was of a gloating and grinning Iraqi standing over the body of one of our young men. Although the face of the dead soldier was not visible, that fact that he had a recent 'high and tight' haircut was apparent. My heart was broken and tears fell as I considered the dreams and aspirations that were cut short by the executioner's bullet after capture. When that young man sat in his barber's chair and endured the shears of the barber, he never envisioned that this would be the last haircut he would ever receive. His belt was lying loose on the ground. When he last tightened up that belt, he could not possibly realize that he would never loosen that belt again in this world. Was he prepared to meet God? I sincerely hope so, but the awful truth is that many of our young people know nothing of God and His word. And without knowledge of the Bible, you cannot be prepared to die. What does God say about death?

First, the word of God declares that God is real. In spite of the appalling ignorance and mindless stupidity of those who would deny the reality of God, God is real.

Hebrews 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Secondly, the word of God declares death is a reality because of sin. Shortly after God created man He gave Adam specific instructions about obedience.

Genesis 2:17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* God established the law that disobedience to His word (sin) brings death. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, died spiritually and began to die physically. Since Adam was the first man and the federal head of humanity, death's curse passed to all of us.

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

As the centuries rolled on man continued his disobedience of God's word and death continued to rule. However, in the "fullness of time" God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to pay the penalty once and forever for man's sin.

Romans 5:6-8 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

God proved His claims, His reality, His truth and that His Son was capable and willing to pay the penalty for our sins by the **resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

Romans 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

Romans 6:9 *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him..*

1 Corinthians 6:14 *And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

Jesus Christ proved His claims of Deity and power to save by **His Resurrection.** Now, all who repent and trust Him as Saviour will be born again. This is how God prepares man to die. If a person is born again, when they die they go to heaven to be with Jesus Christ forever. Death is no longer to be feared – it is the portal to eternal happiness with Jesus Christ the Lord. Without Jesus Christ man has no hope. Without Jesus Christ man is headed to a devil's hell full of torment and anguish. But with Jesus Christ as Saviour soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen can be assured of eternal happiness with God.

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

John 3: 16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

By the way, it is only through Jesus that you can be saved

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Have you been born again? Only by coming into a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ can you be prepared to die!

Trust Christ today before it is too late.

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WHEN YOU ENTER COMBAT



WILL YOU BE PREPARED FOR THE BATTLE?

