

CALL TO DUTY

VOL. 3, ISSUE 4



THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

1 Cor 16:13



After the Operation Desert Storm ceasefire was announced, my mechanized Infantry company was given a much-needed break from the front lines. We had been at the point of the spear (3rd Armored Division, Spearhead) during the entire operation and had experienced heavy combat.

As we relaxed behind the front lines on the Kuwait-Iraq border, I received a call from the battalion commander to mount up and form a blocking position on the main road from Kuwait City to Umm Qasr, Iraq. There was reported to be a Kuwaiti armored battalion moving north to attack into Iraq. We were to halt their movement, with force if necessary. As the company commander, I positioned my Bradley Fighting Vehicle in the middle of the road and vowed that the Kuwaiti battalion would have to go through me. I would watch and stand fast in accordance with my battalion commander's instructions**.



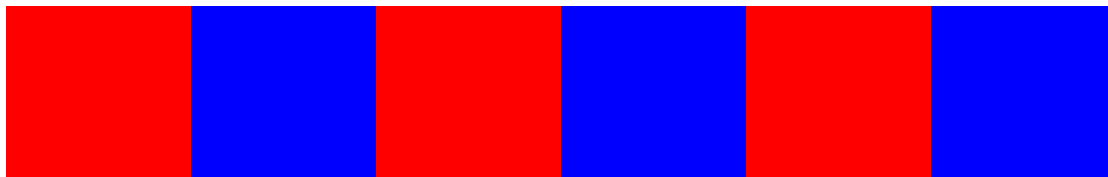
Similarly, Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Cor 16:13 to "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong (NKJV)." Paul wrote to the Corinthian church to address problems there, including division and immorality. He knew that the church there was under assault by Satan and that their very salvation was at stake. Only their steadfastness in Christ would save them.



The church is under the same assault by Satan today. He attempts to divide congregations by various means, including immorality, dissension, lack of discipline and more. We must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and "stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph 6:10-11). We can do this by putting on the whole Armor of God (Eph 6: 13-17). By standing fast with bravery and strength we can defeat Satan's attempts to separate us from God.

** The Kuwaiti battalion never reached my position. They turned around and went back to their assembly area.

~~ Tony Turner



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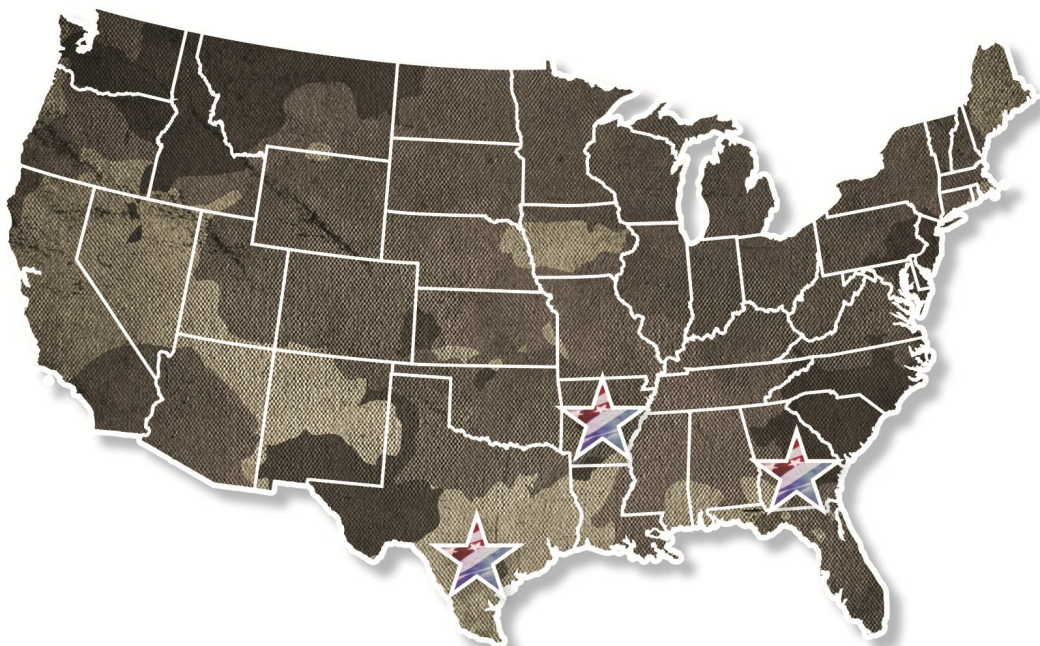
Deborah Rice, lovingly known as Ms. Deb, worked with House to House and Polishing the Pulpit for over 15 years. Her son is in the Army, and she was very patriotic. She loved America, and every year we celebrated Veterans Day and Memorial Day with her. In October 2021 she suffered a brain aneurysm. She fought for her life until February 4, 2022. To honor her, we have set up a donation fund to send out HTH to military bases in her honor. For every dollar given, at least three copies will be sent out around a military base, to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

You can donate here: housetohouse.com/mrs-deb-memorial-fund/.

As donations come in, we will send more HTH copies to additional bases across the continental United States (CONUS for military folks). As we send to new bases, we will add stars representing those areas.

"My parents we converted while serving in the USAF. Because of someone's diligence to spreading the gospel, my family are thankfully Christians. My parents both work for the church and I now work at House to House spreading the gospel."
—Ahren Steis

We are honored to have known Ms. Deb, and we are better for it.



Remember Our Heroes

“Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be *courageous*, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13, RSV).

“Courageous” is one of those words that, unlike the word “discipline,” elicits from us a positive impulse. It recalls images of “heroism,” the quality of being ready and willing to face negative situations involving danger or pain. Being *courageous* is often thought of as facing such situations without fear, but it also involves facing them despite fear. In other words, someone who’s *courageous* might not be fearless, but they face dangerous, difficult, or frightening situations anyway.

We think of Hmong fighters of Laos who demonstrated exceptional bravery by engaging in a clandestine, dangerous, and ultimately desperate struggle during the Vietnam War, acting as a crucial guerrilla force for the U.S. They faced overwhelming odds, fought against the spread of communism, suffering with casualties totaling over 30,000 men, dying at a rate ten times as high as that of American soldiers in Vietnam. They fought the ground war, flew combat missions, rescued downed American flyers, fought behind enemy lines, gathered intelligence on the movements of North Vietnamese troops and more.

“Courageous” is one of those qualities that brings to our mind biblical characters classified as “heroes.” “Be strong and *courageous*,” God tells Joshua, after Moses’ death. Joshua needed strength and encouragement as the new leader of Israel. So, three times God encourages him as he prepares to lead the nation into the Promised Land.

I want you to think with me for a moment about heroes of faith. I don’t want to minimize those individuals who have sacrificed in so many ways – military personnel who have paid the ultimate price, those who have been wounded physically and morally because of combat. And let’s not forget those faithful believers who have sacrificed to make things happen in our world in relation to being the leavening and enlightening influence in so many ways. These are essential to the proclamation and spread of the word of God to nations and peoples.

However, what about those who are actively doing wonderful things, and no one is watching, and no one will ever know? What about medical and law enforcement officials and those who care for elderly parents, spouses, and handicapped children? A treasured Companion in my life shared these thoughts about such people: From such individuals “came a new practice: doing good when no one is watching and when no one will ever know; that hidden generosity revealed something extraordinary – a unique joy... a closeness to God knowing He alone sees, became more than enough. It’s like being a part of God’s silent army.”



In other words, let’s not forget those “Heroes” who quietly go about their daily lives of selfless giving of themselves, with no fanfare, no notice, no brass bands, or accolades. These, too, are the ones that make a difference in the world.

~ Tom Seals

Dr. Tom Seals served in the United States Marine Corps from 1957-1960, with the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, Japan during the Laos-Vietnam era, followed by several years with the U.S. Government in Europe.

Later, as Professor of Biblical Studies, he taught undergraduate Bible courses as well as Biblical ethics and textual studies for twenty-eight years at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN and served as Chaplain to Veterans until his December 2024 retirement. He received the diploma, Master Course in Electronics from Cleveland Institute of Electronics in 1964, his Bachelor of Arts in Biblical languages from Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN in 1971, his Master’s degree from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1976, and his Doctorate in Ministry from Memphis Theological Seminary in 1999. Dr. Seals later completed post-doctoral work in Pentateuchal Studies and Religion, Politics and Social Issues from Vanderbilt University in 2008.

He has published *Proverbs, Wisdom for All Ages, Sermon on the Mount for Modern Living, The Quest for Spiritual Maturity, A Study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s The Cost of Discipleship, God’s Word for Warriors, The Christian and War, and Moral Injury: A Deeper Insight into the Intricacies of PTSD Among Veterans*.

He has served as pulpit minister in Virginia, Tennessee, and Colorado, and is presently teaching at the Bellevue Church of Christ in Nashville, TN. Tom was actively involved with an educational ministry in Lima, Peru, serving as International President of The International Biblical Institute. Presently Tom serves as Founder and President of God’s Word for Warriors, in Nashville, TN.

Tom and his wife, Barbara (deceased), have three children: Amy, Tom Jr. (deceased), and Melanie, along with three grandchildren

Stand Firm and Be Strong: Courage for the Christian Warrior

The Apostle Paul never served in the military, but he had some understanding of what it means to be a soldier. *"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."* (2 Timothy 2:3-4, NASB95) In his conclusion to his first letter to the Corinthians, he wrote a brief but powerful charge that reads like a field order for every Christian. Like a commander's charge, each phrase carries the weight of a directive designed to inspire vigilance, conviction, courage, and strength.

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."

1 Corinthians 16:13

BE ON YOUR GUARD

Every mission begins with situational awareness. Spiritually, the world is a relentless battlefield. Temptation, discouragement, and moral compromise are real dangers. To "be on your guard" means to cultivate a watchful heart—through prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. Aware of the threats, we prepare our faith and guard our character against the enemy.



STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH

Military training instills discipline and loyalty to a greater cause. Paul urges an even deeper commitment—loyalty to Christ and the truth of the Gospel. Standing firm does not mean rigidity for its own sake; it means refusing to drift from the truth when pressure increases. In a world of shifting values and ungodly influences, a soldier of Christ anchors themselves to God's unchanging promises.

BE COURAGEOUS

John Wayne once said, "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway." Courage is not the absence of fear; it is steadfast obedience and trust in God despite fear. Those who have faced combat know that bravery often reveals itself in doing one's duty, even when the heart is pounding. Christian courage is similar – choosing to speak the truth when it is unpopular, to show mercy when anger calls, and to live with

integrity when temptation rages. This kind of courage can only come from God's presence in our lives.

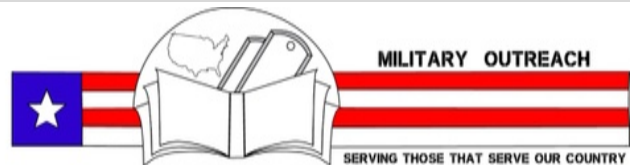
BE STRONG

Strength in the Christian life is not merely physical or emotional intelligence. It involves spiritual strength supplied to us by God. Just like military service demands endurance and reliance on training, Christian service demands reliance on God's strength in our lives. Spiritual disciplines like prayer, worship, and Bible study are not optional – they are the means by which Christians fortify their faith.

In conclusion, for those familiar with military service, Paul's words convey a certain tone. We are called to stay alert, hold onto our faith, face the battle bravely, and trust that God is our strength. After all, it was God who promised He would never leave us or forsake us while we fight the good fight! (Cf. Joshua 1:9; 1 Timothy 6:12)

~~ Mike Green

Mike Green currently serves as the Dean of Students at the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies in Knoxville, TN. He has spent the last two decades serving the church in various capacities to include church planting, preaching and youth ministry. Mike holds a B.B.S degree in Bible and an M.A in New Testament. Prior to entering ministry full-time Mike served five-years as a U.S. Army Ranger with the 75th Ranger Regiment. He and his wife Natalie have been married twenty-four years and have six children. They are members of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville.



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Do Not Abandon Your Post

I recently read a poem entitled “Defense of the Alamo”, a semi-historical account of the night before and the morning of the final battle. While the exact details will never be known, we do know that there were only about 200 Texans and volunteers under William Travis versus a Mexican force numbering in the thousands. The poem makes the plight of the small force clear. The mismatch overwhelmingly favored the Mexicans, yet the Texas Army decided to stand fast in defense of their position and convictions. After a siege of 13 days, they were given an ultimatum: surrender or die. Knowing that failing



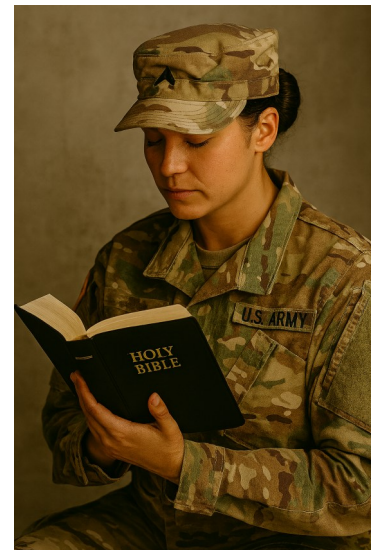
to surrender meant that in the next day everyone would die in the battle or be executed, the defenders were resolute, and they prepared for battle. They subscribed to Col Travis’ resolve for “victory or death”.

Paul wrote, “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong” (I Cor 16:13 NKJV), because there were adversaries all around them. Any military member understands the implication of “stand fast”: do not leave your position or post until told otherwise. For what reason would Paul be so emphatic to the Christians in Corinth? Simply put, the church there faced numerous challenges and had faults which Paul worked diligently to correct. Under Paul’s tutelage the Corinthians, had made great progress, but Paul knew that the problems he addressed would always be lurking on the fringes. Divisions, immorality, self-centeredness, not loving one another, the meaning of the Lord’s Supper and other issues were what Paul worked to correct. Therefore, when Paul said to “stand fast”, he meant

don’t leave the truth, don’t leave your faith, don’t give in, don’t fold. Be brave. Be strong.

Paul closed the previous chapter by instructing the Corinthians to “...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” (15:58) He uses that same, unmistakable language in 16:13. Jude 3 says to contend *earnestly* for the faith.

As soldiers of Christ, we face challenges against which we must adopt the same instruction: don’t give up or give in. Remain faithful. There are truths that we cannot ignore or compromise. We must be faithful to God and cannot cave to what is popular, trendy, fashionable or merely expedient in order to get along or be accepted. For Christians it is either victory in Jesus or eternal death. Standing fast in the faith is not always easy, but the resulting victory is unsurpassed by anything we can imagine. Most of us will face an “Alamo” encounter where we must stand fast. ~ Conrad Slate



Conrad Slate enlisted in the Army Reserve while in college and later transferred to the Air National Guard. He went to Officer Training School and completed 31 years of service retiring as a colonel. He served a variety of positions starting as a Military Policeman. He served in the Security Police, in Public Affairs, in NBC warfare training, and a variety of staff positions, retiring as Deputy Chief of Staff for Support Services. He is a member of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville, TN where he is active in jail ministry

Stand Fast in the Faith

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13 NKJV)

This verse plays a part in our lives on earth; the physical and the spiritual. As military members, this verse stands out in our day-to-day lives. We took an oath to defend and protect this nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. As Christians, we use the weapons of our warfare (2 Corinthians 10:4) and the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) to battle against Satan and his hold over the world.

We have all prepared for combat as military members. Some of us have actual combat experience while all of us train for combat. Whether war games or actual combat, it weighs heavy on our minds and our hearts. As long as we are in Christ, the weight of combat is not as heavy as it seems. That’s because we have been fighting against Satan ever since we became Christians; learning how to use and operate the armor of God, making sure that every piece fits properly and that our shield of faith grows each day. As Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (NKJV).



Every day in our Christian lives we must watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong not just for ourselves but for those around us. We must seek the lost souls searching for the truth of God’s word and teach them how they can have the same salvation that we have, through Jesus Christ.

It is not always an easy Christian life where everything is wonderful and perfect. But just like in combat, we have to march with one foot in front of the other, always moving forward. As we move forward, we grab those around us and take them with us. Just like the narrow path that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 7:13, 14. It may be narrow, but we can always walk side by side. Walking with and helping each other out as we continue this Christian life in the Military.

My wife always says, “you can take the man out of the military, but you cannot take the military out of the man.” She is an Air Force Veteran, as well. We know this goes both ways. As Christians we should never leave God, or we will forfeit all our benefits that we have as children of God. So, no matter where we are, we are always Christians, whether in uniform or out of uniform, we are Christians 24/7.

Let us always watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, and be strong.

Love -Greg

Greg James grew up in the Air Force and lived in Utah, Louisiana, and South Dakota before entering the active-duty Air Force in 1991. He transferred to the Reserves as an Air Reserve Technician in 2001. Greg was in air operations with heavy and fighter aircraft deploying to Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan among other deployments and TDY’s. He met and married his wife Tammy while she was active-duty Air Force, and she got out when their son was born. Greg retired from the Air Force Reserves in 2017 after 26 years of total service and graduated from Brown Trail School of preaching in 2016. Greg served as the associate minister for the Greenmount Rd congregation in Belleville, IL and served as the pulpit minister for the Briar congregation in Briar, Texas before relocating to Jackson, Tennessee. They are members of the Crosswinds church of Christ.

The Five Salvational Exhortations of the Apostle Paul

Physically serving in the armed forces of the United States (like the Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, various state National Guards, etc.) is comparable to spiritually serving in the armed forces of God. While faithful service to the United States in the physical sense is needed for purposes of temporal survival, even greater faithful service to God in the spiritual sense is needed for purposes of eternal salvation for those Christians longing for it.



Satan, sin, and death are the most powerful enemies God and His faithful people have constantly and continuously fought against. What they ultimately bring to all accountable humanity who pass unfaithful to God from this physical and temporal realm into the spiritual and eternal realm is everlasting torment in hell. As a warning, Paul wrote to the sinful and divided church of God in Christ in the ancient city of Corinth in the region of Achaia.

In 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, Paul wrote, “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like (*Christian*) men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love (NASU).” It seems that from these verses, if the Corinthian Christians would do what Paul told them to do, they would overcome their sinful beliefs and divisions brought on them by Satan. Nevertheless, committing sinful divisions is one thing, but overcoming them is another. Still, Paul gives them the godly instructions needed to achieve victory in Jesus (1 Cor. 15:56-57).

Paul’s god-inspired instructions are as follows. First, they must always “be on the alert” in knowing who their real enemies are which is Satan and his followers. Second, as soldiers of Christ, they must “stand firm in the faith” of what Christ says and does and not give into whatever Satan says and does in trying to make them sin otherwise. Third, the

Corinthian Christians (both men and women) must “act like men” with the courage and strength of Christ to withstand the sinful attacks and lies Satan constantly launches at them.

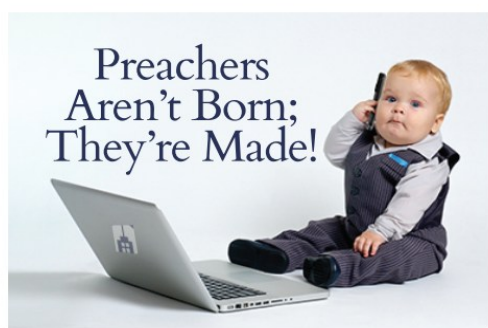


Fourth, the Corinthian Christians must act as soldiers of the cross and “be strong” or stout and courageous enough to resist and withstand the sinful attacks of Satan by not giving ground to him. Fifth and last, the Corinthian Christians were to resist Satan’s attacks (of all kinds...troubles, divisions, jealousies, etc.) via deeds of love for God, Christ, and their Christian brothers and sisters in Christ as they were all soldiers of Christ (1Cor. 9:7; Phil. 2:25-26; 1Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7-8; Phil. 2; etc.). All Christians should desire an eternity in heaven and by standing firm in the faith they can achieve that goal.

~~ Tom Wright

Tom Wright served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War Era. Following his military discharge, Tom graduated college and worked in Design Engineering for over two decades. In his middle forties, he left secular work and entered fulltime ministry. He holds degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Master of Biblical Studies, and Doctor of Ministry. Tom has spent about the past twenty-five years serving God as an evangelist, preacher, and teacher. He and his wife Carla live in the Colorado Springs area and worship with the Calhan church of Christ.

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Romans 10:14

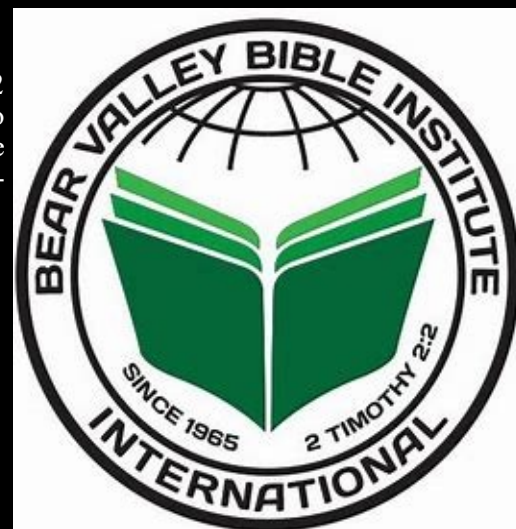
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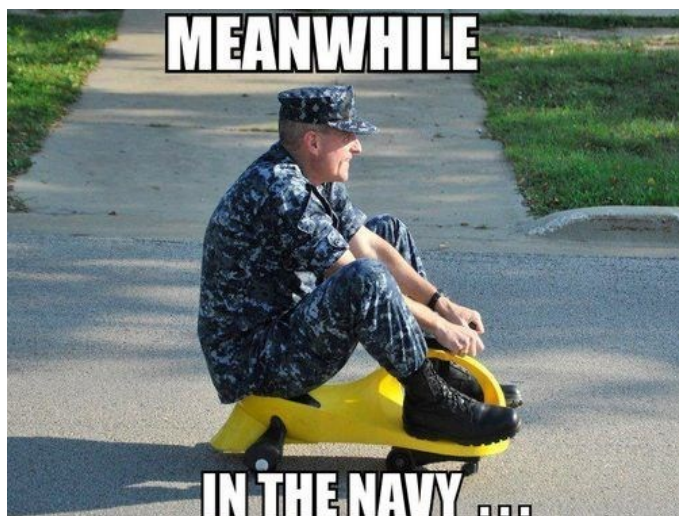
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"The Christian Soldier's Creed" (adapted from "The Soldier's Creed")

I am a **CHRISTIAN** Soldier.
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 I serve the people of every nation and live the **LORD'S** values.
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 I will never quit.
 I will never leave a fallen **BROTHER** or **SISTER**.
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 I am knowledgeable and I am proficient in the **SCRIPTURES**.
 I stand ready to deploy, engage, and **LOVE** the enemies of **GOD** in close combat.
 I am a guardian of **SPIRITUAL** freedom and the **LORD'S** way of life.
 I am a **CHRISTIAN** Soldier.

**GOD'S
 ARMY
 STRONG!**



GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN FOR YOU

HEAR the word of God: Romans 10:9-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 2:7; 22:18-19

BELIEVE in Jesus as Savior of world: John 3:16; 14:6; 14:23

REPENT of your sins: Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21,22; 3:3, 19

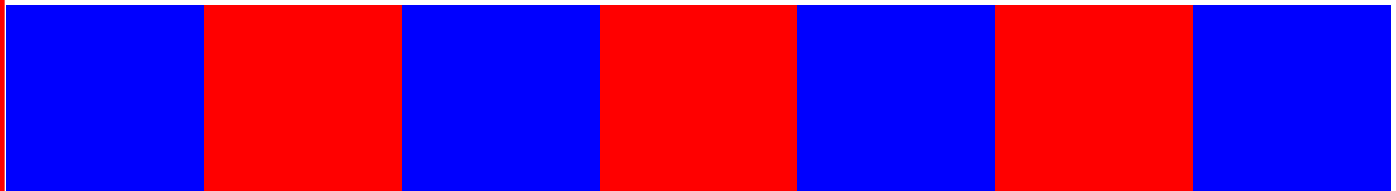
CONFESS Jesus before others: Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-11

BE IMMERSSED into Christ for forgiveness of your sins: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22

CONTINUE to live faithful to God until you die or Christ comes again: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 2:10

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AFFIX STAMP



CALL TO DUTY
(BASE 2 BASE, HEART 2 HEART)

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House To House, Heart To Heart
East Ridge, Tennessee

Ed Linebaugh
U.S. Army, Retired
Founding Editor
more@minister.com

Tony Turner
U.S. Army, Retired
Associate Editor
turner-tony@comcast.net



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CONTACT US: contact@housetohouse.com