



Spokane County Sheriff Chaplaincy

September 2024

Newsletter

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Because of generous supporters like you we're able to care for our law enforcement family and community.

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- Visit us at our Chaplain Office in the DEM Building



Sheriff Chaplain's Corner

"ENLISTED"

At times, after a long stressful week, I find myself curled up on the couch with a warm blanket, a glass of wine, and fully engrossed in television series where the characters only experience happy endings. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I have been watching far too much of one show in particular; I think the younger generation calls this "binge watching," but for the sake of this devotional, we're going to call it "research."

This show, called JAG, which stands for Judge Advocate General, aired in the mid 90's and features a handsome Navy pilot turned military attorney after a fiery incident involving his plane forces him to switch job roles. He, and his equally striking female partner, go on classified missions to investigate crimes, where they attract highly intense scenarios that realistically no attorneys that I know of have ever experienced in their legal career. And God, please forgive me, but I love watching it!

Which leads me to my next observation. Watching too much TV corrupts your brain, and if you ever tell my mother I just admitted that I will delete this entire devotional and pretend I never wrote it. For the past few weeks, I have been contemplating how I could join the military at my age, I might have addressed my co-worker with an enthusiastic "Sir, Yes Sir," and done a Google search for an all-new OD green and/or navy-blue wardrobe. I think I would look fabulous in either color, but I digress. Hollywood sure can make any military branch look exciting, thrilling, powerful, glamorous, etc., but honestly speaking, joining the military is no joke.

Why do people join the military? What benefit does any military branch have to offer that outweighs the suffering through bootcamp, the breaking down of your identity to be rebuilt into a government machine, to have someone yelling at you 24/7, to go without seeing family for months or years, and to be sent into war zones facing the possibility of permanent disfigurement, capture, or death? Why? Why would anyone sign up for that kind of lifestyle or career?

Well, according to my research, less than 1% of the population are enrolled members of the United States military. A simple internet search indicates that approximately 7% of the total population has or is currently serving. It appears that the answer to that question is: *no one* wants to sign up for that kind of lifestyle or career. After evaluating the risk versus reward, people do not want the tuition reimbursement, low-to-no-cost health care, competitive salary potential, financial bonuses, 30 days' paid leave and 11 paid holidays, ability to travel to foreign countries, discounts on purchases, and specialty loans for homes. Those benefits do not offset the threat to their physical and mental health, the strict military lifestyle, constant relocation, the length of commitment, and there is a strong decline in patriotism towards this country.

So, to the one percent that have elected to follow this path, I am truly proud, grateful, and deeply indebted to those who have made a selfless decision to fight for and protect my freedoms. I can only imagine that the road traveled that ultimately led to the decision to take the Oath of Enlistment was not easily traveled. Personal contemplation, consultation of friends and family, research and meetings with recruiters, fulfilling a family legacy, feeling a personal call to serve, or there were no other options except join the service—all factoring into this life-altering moment. A signature on the dotted line and you are legally and for this earthly lifetime a member of an elite family. You are *enlisted!*

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9 NIV)

Removing my camo-colored glasses for a moment, in exchange for a spirit-filled lens, my heart feels strangely convicted by this military commitment to serve a country, and my personal commitment to serve our God. How is my pledge to serve God any less crucial to the safety and security of our lives? Jesus is my Commander-in-Chief. He set the example:

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 NIV)

This is the most important military branch anyone could ever serve in because the lives saved will be for eternity. Furthermore, as I examined the pros and cons of joining a physical branch of service, God reminded me that His words explicitly tell us in the book of John that:

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 ESV)

I can't sum it up better than this brief excerpt from an article written by the Bible Study Tools staff. (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-trials-and-tribulations/>)

“It is apparent in scripture that Christians will experience trials and tribulations in their life. There is nothing uncommon about suffering for Christians as “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12) therefore “do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for



the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Pet 4:12-14). Basically, as Christians, we should in fact expect and welcome trials and suffering as Christ was persecuted by this world. We are told in John 15:19, ‘If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.’”

Trials? Tribulations? Persecution? Suffering? The world will hate me? Why would anyone want to willingly accept this assignment?

Another quick visit to Google—which on a quick side note, I’m filled with gratitude that we no longer need to look through heavy encyclopedia books for information because we have the internet—and I promptly find that 68% of the population in the United States identify as Christian. Seriously? Two-thirds of the population have taken an oath of enlistment to join the spiritual service. I should be excited about that number. It should fill my heart with joy and gladness, but sadly it doesn’t. If our Nation’s military consisted of 68% of the US population, no country would ever risk threatening to break the boundaries of our great country. Giving that some more thought, if our spiritual army is at 68% of the population, why is this country experiencing so much hate, crime, disease, controversy, brokenness, selfishness, debt, insecurity, etc.?

With that in mind, I find it hard to believe that 68% of us are registered as active-duty members. The world would look like a very different place if we were all carrying out our duty assignments. It feels as though there are more recruits waiting in reserve status or who were reluctantly drafted. This is going to sound stern, but it’s true; soldiers don’t typically receive any benefits if they don’t fulfill the obligations of their contract.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:22-25 NIV)

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” (Matthew 7:24-27 NLT)

Are we, as individuals, fulfilling the commitment of the spiritual enlistment contract we agreed to when we said “enlist me” to Jesus’ army? (Insert your personal reflection moment here)

“What does the Lord your God require of you? To fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and his decrees that I command you today for your good.” Deuteronomy 10:12-13

That is the truest action of loyalty there is. Go to work tomorrow and ask your boss to die for you and see what kind of response you get to that purchase order. Be sure to record the response because the rest of us readers would like to see how that turns out. What I am trying to point out is that we need to strongly consider our personal allegiance to God and whether we are all in, constantly training for battle, or facing dishonorable discharge.



“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21 NIV)

Only you and God know what your training routine looks like. If you have authentic faith in Christ, carry the heart of a servant, and if your intentions are honorable and genuine, our Father in Heaven, is looking for every opportunity to decorate the uniforms of His warriors with service ribbons.

However, if we flip back to discussing the US military again, an enrolled service person who is underperforming would undergo disciplinary action up to and including discharge. I’m not saying that God will kick us out of the kingdom, but we might reap some unpleasant consequences for our actions if we choose to go AWOL.

So today, I’m taking some time to reflect on my personal decision to declare my love of Christ and the choice I made to live a life of service to our King. Do I feel like I’m being all that I can be? Am I living up to the SEAL team motto: “The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in combat.”? Are my sights zeroed in on God’s voice, guidance, and direction. 2 Timothy 2:4 says:

“No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. (2 Timothy 2:4 ESV)”

My answer: “The only easy day was yesterday” (which is another SEAL team motto). I’ll always be training, and I’ll always be preparing. I must also ask myself if am I recruiting, instructing, and leading others to be *Semper Fidelis* (Always Faithful)? People may find themselves being led into a relationship with Jesus but have no idea where to get onto the bus for bootcamp. We carry a responsibility to the recently recruited soldiers who need guidance and direction.

We aren’t going into battle anymore; we are headed for all-out war! Our orders are in, and we are shipping out. We need to be focused, disciplined, prepared, ready, and if we are embracing the challenge of bootcamp, there’s good news soldier; the battle belongs to the Lord and has already been won because you faithfully enlisted!

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4 NIV)

- Chaplain Jaylynn Lawrence

Support the Chaplaincy with Payroll Deductions

Are you a Spokane County employee? Did you know you can support the chaplaincy and our mission to support our Deputies and community members automatically with payroll deductions? Learn more and sign-up online:

<https://scsochaplains.org/payroll-deduction/>





The 2024 Peer Support Resource Fair is Coming UP

Coming up on October 14, 2024, is the 2nd Annual Peer Support Resource Fair brought to you by Keep N Safe and the Spokane County Sheriff Chaplains. We will have a variety of high-level speakers talking about first responder wellness, self-care, burnout prevention, suicide prevention, and more. The event is free and open to anyone who would like to attend. There will also be a wonderful free lunch donated by Chick-fil-A and Dickey's Barbecue Pit. Don't miss out. Register today:

[Register](#) | [Introduction from Sheriff Nowels](#)



Our 2024 Auction Was a Huge Success

Thank you to everyone who supported our 2024 Summer Auction. We raised more than \$2750, which will go directly to supporting our chaplains and deputies.

We would like to say a special thank you to all of the local businesses who so kindly donated to and supported our auction! It wouldn't be possible without your support.

Talk to a Chaplain

Whether you're an officer, county employee, community member, or just need someone to talk to, our chaplain team is here for you.

- 24x7 Support Spiritual
- Guidance & Referrals
- Pastoral Counseling
- Conversation
- Crisis Intervention
- Weddings & Funerals

Supporter of the Month



James Markloff

Thank you James for your amazing support of our auction!

James was the top winner in the 2024 Summer Auction taking home more items than any other bidder!