

Special Forces: Day Two

Basic Training: Unit One

Mission Preparation 101

Mission Focus

In my years serving in military, it seemed like we spent most of our time training. We were either honing our skills or conducting training missions patterned after actual missions that we might be called upon to perform. Just about everything we did revolved around one specific mission or another. Real missions dictated how we trained, what skills we developed and sharpened. We focused on even the smallest detail. When we actually deployed, we were given operations orders, the first important line of which was the mission statement.

Key Verse:

"...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8, (NIV)

It is equally important for the Christian to understand the mission. The key verse has often been used to state the mission of the Christian in this present life. I would submit however, that it has been **often misunderstood** to mean that as Christians, we are merely to **'do' things** like attend church regularly, talk about God and Jesus, pass out literature, donate money to worthy causes, all the while reminding everyone around us that we are Christians in a variety of ways like leaving Bibles laying around and placing cute bumper stickers on our cars, etc. This verse is really not as much about 'doing' as it is about 'being'. Let's take a closer look.

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples just before the Holy Spirit descended to empower the church on the day of Pentecost. Jesus didn't tell them to go and do anything, but said that they would **be** His witnesses once they received the Holy Spirit. You could say that both 'being' and 'doing' are represented here. 'Being' in the phrase "you will be" and 'doing' in the word "witness." However, let's focus for a minute on the word 'be'.

One dictionary states that 'be' means 'to have an objective existence: have reality or actuality; to have a specified qualification or characterization; and describes 'being' as having the same connotation as 'symbolize'. Symbolize is further defined as 'to have identity with'. I would submit that to be a witness more closely means who we are and whom we represent. To those around us who know us as Christians by our own confessions, we symbolize or represent Christ. We either present a true picture, a false picture, or a distorted picture.

So What!

Our mission as Christians is NOT just to 'do' things but to 'be' the best possible representative of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to a fallen world. A well-known phrase in Army circles - 'Be all you can be!' - sums it up nicely. And yes, there are a many things to 'do' that present a witness to those around us. My own experience had taught me that when I focus on 'being', the 'doing' takes care of itself. But don't trust me; trust the Holy Spirit who gives to us both the desire and power to act. Listen to how the Apostle Paul encouraged one of the early churches.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Philippians 2:13, (NIV)

When you feel tired, weak or discouraged from trying to 'do' in your own strength, let go of yourself, refocus on the mission, let God empower you to 'be', and witness in His strength, not yours! I guarantee that you will really enjoy the 'doing' empowered by His Spirit and resting in His grace.