

Special Forces: Day Twenty-two

Intermediate Training: Unit One

Force Planning 101

Doctrines and Principles

In the military, much is said about doctrine and principles, in just about any format imaginable! Adequate training and preparation for war fighting is critical. Because of this the United States Army, in 1973, created the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Their intent was to consolidate Army combat development activities and formulate doctrine to be used throughout the Army. These war fighting principles, defined within this body of doctrine, form the building blocks for training soldiers and are key to success on the battlefield. Setting aside or forgetting sound principles often has disastrous results.

Experience has taught me that the same is true in the life of a Christian. Walk into any Christian book store and you can find entire sections devoted to principles for Christian living, for just about any age group, topic, profession, or walk in life. A glance at the bookshelves in my home would reveal, to the casual observer, that I have purchased my share.

With all that help, why does my Christian walk seem to me to be so wishy-washy at times? Why do I seem, to myself at least, to be so inconsistent? What have I forgotten, or what am I missing? I don't know all the answers, but I do know that a large part of the solution revolves around what some have said is the first word of the Gospel - REPENT.

Key Verse:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Matthew 3:1,2 (NKJV)

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)*

So they (the disciples) went out and preached that people should repent. Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

The above verses record some of the initial words of John the Baptist, Jesus and even the newly commissioned disciples. There seems to be a certain critical emphasis on the term 'repent'. I cannot immediately recall seeing a recently penned book on the subject, nor can I remember repentance being a subject of a church sermon or Christian media discussion. But then again, I may not have been looking in the right places.

Nevertheless, I respectfully submit that that the principle of repentance is crucial to the doctrine of true salvation and deserves some consideration. The original Greek word for 'repent' is defined by Strong's exhaustive concordance as follows:

1. to change one's mind, i.e. to repent
2. to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins

Personally, I prefer the second of the two meanings because it seems to be more complete. Within it lies the real key to my being able to actually repent of my sin - a hatred of sin - otherwise defined as agreement with God concerning sin. Repentance requires that I admit that I

am wrong, something my flesh doesn't like very much. Being in agreement with God, on the other hand, is something his Spirit in me loves, and therefore, my new nature in Christ loves!

So What!

Hating sin can be difficult in a world where we are constantly being bombarded with material in many ways. It comes in forms that not only fail to call sin 'sin', but actually idolize and celebrate as beautiful much of what God abhors and calls unclean. Furthermore, we still have our old fleshly nature existing alongside our new nature in Christ. What can I do? How can I bring about true repentance in my own life? I can begin with another principle from scripture.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV)

I can begin by feeding my new nature and starving my old nature. I can learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and let my new nature grow in strength and stature. It works! What does this have to do with repentance and hatred for sin? By feeding the Spirit and starving the flesh, a hatred for sin, and thus true repentance, will supernaturally develop in the heart of any believer.

Friend, my challenge and encouragement to you is to feed the new nature and starve the old nature! When you have a choice of 'food', make the right choice! The results are guaranteed!

At the same time, we can be comforted that when we become casualties of sin, we are not condemned, but.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

True repentance leads to confession and confession leads to forgiveness and cleansing. What an awesome promise!