

CALL TO DUTY

VOL. 4, ISSUE 1

THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (NKJV).
2 Timothy 2:15

I read a story about two men who lived in a big city **. They were unaccustomed to life outside of the city and wanted to try deer hunting for the first time. They read books about hunting and bought all new gear, including a big pickup truck, clothes, rifles, etc. They drove out into the country, parked the truck and walked deep into the woods. After sitting in a stand for 30 minutes they saw a very large buck and shot it. They each grabbed a hind leg and started dragging the deer back to their truck, struggling because of the size of the deer. In passing an old farmer, he said, "You know, if you dragged the deer by its front legs, it would be easier because you would be going with the fur instead of against it." They thanked the farmer and each grabbed a front leg and started pulling. After an hour or so, one man said to the other that it was, in fact easier, this way. The other man said," Yeah, but we're getting further and further away from the truck."

The men got it almost right but were still getting further from their truck because they did not completely understand the instructions. We can be that way about the bible, sometimes. We can get it almost right, but because we do not correctly understand it or deliberately alter the meaning, we move further away from God.

Paul instructs Timothy in 2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing (**ESV uses handling**)** the word of truth (NKJV). We must understand and correctly handle the word of God so that we can move nearer to Him, and not further away. We must be diligent in our study of God's word.

~~ Tony Turner

MILITARY OUTREACH & ENCOURAGEMENT



House to House
Heart to Heart

THE DEBORAH RICE MILITARY OUTREACH FUND

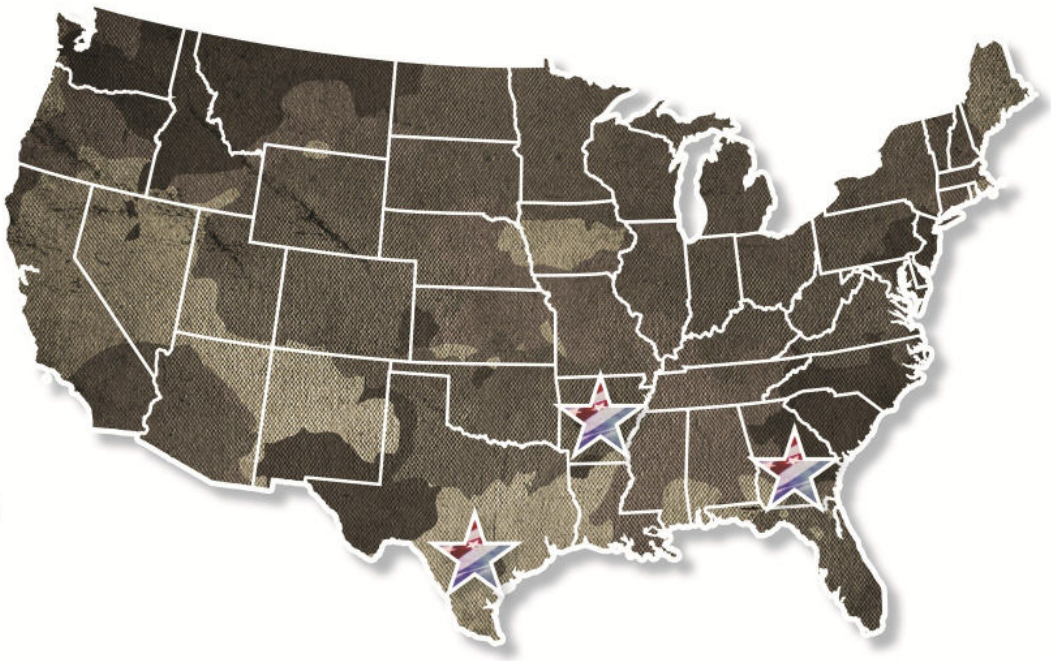
Deborah Rice, lovingly known as Ms. Deb, worked with House to House and Polishing the Pulpit for over 15 years. Her son is in the Army, and she was very patriotic. She loved America, and every year we celebrated Veterans Day and Memorial Day with her. In October 2021 she suffered a brain aneurysm. She 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.



Military Drill and Bible Study

I have been in the military for ten-and-a-half years, having served as a Cavalry Scout, Miliary Intelligence Officer, and currently as a Fire Support Officer. I was baptized five-and-a-half-years ago, toward the end of my first enlisted contract. I am not a chaplain, but I have earned the nickname "Chaplain" in HHC of the Infantry Battalion where I serve. My soldiers know my character, my integrity, and my faith. Though I am not a chaplain, I strive to live out my faith in every instance I can—whether it is with the Battalion Commander, the First Sergeant, or the PFC in my platoon.

This past four-day drill weekend, the chaplain held nightly Bible studies. I did not realize it until the last day of training, so I attended the Bible class that night. We discussed 1 Peter 4. The group consisted of some Calvinists, Baptists, Catholics, and me. During the study, I drew some parallels about elders with 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and I discussed the context of the passage. After the discussion ended, the chaplain opened the Bible study to Q&A.



An E-6 and a 1LT asked about infant baptism and what the chaplain thought of it. Shortly after, a sergeant sitting next to me said, "Baptism is not for the remission of sins," and most of the men nodded their heads in agreement. He quickly followed up with, "Baptism is a work, and works cannot get us to heaven." I promptly responded, "You are correct, Sergeant—baptism is a work. It is a work of God." I then turned to Colossians 2:12 and began to explain the verse and its meaning. I said, "Belief, faith, repentance, and confession all take a lot of work, but baptism is the most passive part of becoming a Christian because you allow another man to baptize you, and God does the work in your heart."

The conversation continued until the point of "Total Depravity" was brought up, regarding the need for infants to be baptized. I said, "According to what we read in Scripture, children are born innocent and have no sin. For example, we will read Ezekiel 28:15 and Ezekiel 18:20." One man said he looks at his three-year-old and sees her innocence, while another said he looks at his three- and five-year-olds and sees their sinful nature. Before I could counter this point and follow it to its logical conclusion, the conversation moved forward as another man spoke.

Lastly, one E-6 looked at me and said, "What about the thief on the cross? He was not baptized." I replied promptly and without hesitation: "The thief on the cross was not under the New Covenant. Jesus was still alive when He said, 'Surely today you will be with me in paradise.' He had not yet died, been buried, and resurrected, nor had He established His church through Peter's sermon in Acts 2. In fact, the thief on the cross was just as much under the Old Testament as Moses was in Exodus 20 when he gave the Ten Commandments. Since he was under the Old Covenant, there was no need for him to be baptized for the remission of sins, because those are conditions of the New Covenant, as we read in Romans 6." The E-6 sat back in his chair and said, "Hmmmmm."

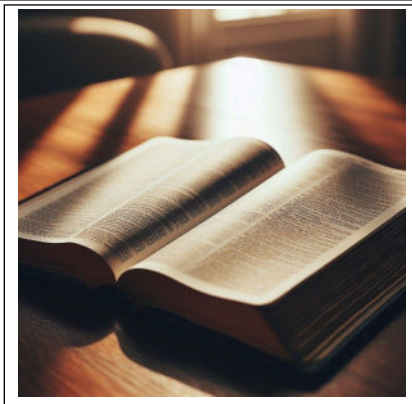
The chaplain then said, "Okay, we will end this study while we are all still friends." Immediately afterward, a platoon sergeant sitting next to me tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Can I please get your phone number? You seem really knowledgeable in the Scriptures, and I want you to teach me. Could we Zoom once a week so you can teach me? Also, can you help me find a church to start attending?" We then sat down for an hour and discussed life, God, sin, and forgiveness.

I was the only person to reference book, chapter, and verse during the Q&A session. Honestly, I did not feel like going to the study, and I did not really feel like going to drill. But God gave me an opportunity to be used, and I' am grateful that I stepped up to the plate to serve my King

~~ Rod Selman

Rod Selman Commissioned from the University of North Georgia, a Senior Military College as a Distinguished Military Student, with a Degree in the Arabic Language. Rod has lived in the Middle East for 2 years a as a civilian on State Department Grants and Scholarships (Fulbright & Boren). He has served in the Army National Guard for ten years, and is currently a 2nd Lieutenant. Currently Rod works for House to House Heart to Heart and serves as a volunteer college minister for the Oak Hill church of Christ in Rome, GA.

Stand Fast in the Faith



"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

I could not help but read verse 14 in conjunction with verse 15. "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers."

The "them" in verse 14 are the faithful men Paul referred to in verse 2. I have no doubt that we are faithful Christians of the word of God. We must be diligent to present ourselves approved to God.

While we serve our respective armed services, we must also be diligent to present ourselves approved by the instructions, regulations, technical orders, manuals, and DOD regulations that we fall under.



We are to be faithful to them to the best of our ability.

When it comes to 2 Timothy 2:15, we are serving the Lord and Him alone. When we as Christians rightly divide or handle God's word, we do it with honor and respect to God. When we do that, everyone we work with or for will benefit from it. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

I've had the privilege of working for godly men. They were true and honest to God and the Bible while upholding the AF Instructions with the same attitude and resolve.

I was in a conversation with a Flight Engineer of a C-130 and he told me that it is hard for him to follow the Bible. My response was "The Bible is the manual for Christian living. Just like the AFMAN 11-2C-130 is the Bible (lack of a better term) for a Flight Engineer and his C-130 aircraft. It might not have been the best example, but he understood what I was talking about. He understood how he needed to read, study and follow the manual. If not, the 130 would not operate properly and could lead to devastating consequences. We must read and study (rightly divide or handle) the manual of Christian living without adding to it or taking away from it. The repercussions will be eternal. Let us always rightly divide, or handle, the word of God according to God, by trusting in Him, and not by how we think or feel.

~~Greg James

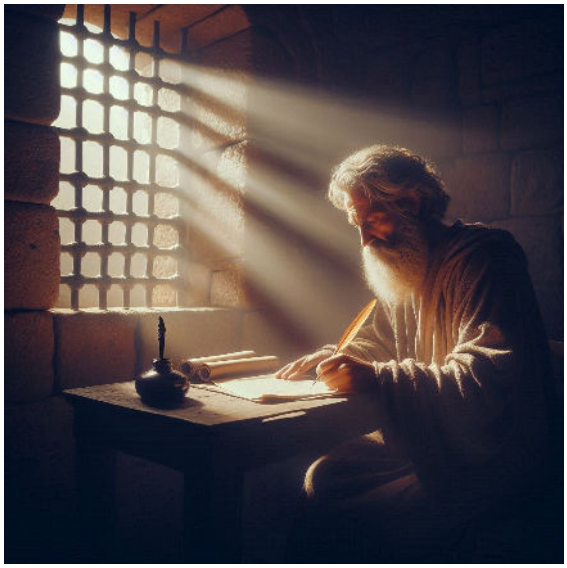
Greg James grew up in the Air Force and lived in Utah, Louisiana, and South Dakota before entering the active-duty Air Force in 1991. He transferred to the Reserves as an Air Reserve Technician in 2001. Greg was in air operations with heavy and fighter aircraft deploying to Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan 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.

Which One Will I Be

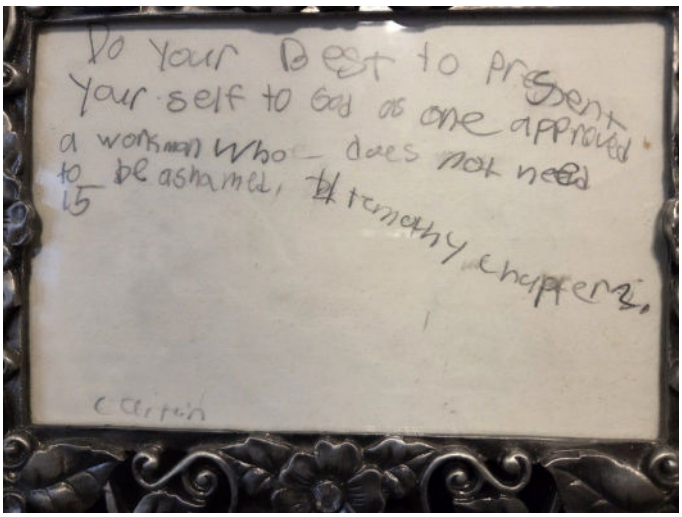
In 1962, Gen. Douglas McArthur delivered what I believe to be one of the most stirring and impactful speeches in military history to the Corps of Cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point. It wasn't about strategy, power, or leadership as one might expect from one of America's most notable generals. It was about the ideals of West Point's motto, "Duty, Honor, Country." He had just received the Thayer Award, presented at West Point to an American who best exemplified that motto. In the waning years of his life, he was at his rhetorical best.

McArthur encouraged the cadets to remain true to their mission. He reminded them of their responsibility and even linked it to faith by reminding them that at the heart of true religion was self-sacrifice.

Similarly, from prison in Rome and near the end of his life, Paul wrote to encourage Timothy. He used military metaphors, reminding Timothy that he was a soldier. He reminded him that he would have to sacrifice. His admonition to Timothy was to handle his responsibility seriously. Paul told him to treat the word of God with care and to tell it like it is. He spurred him to study so he would know what God intended. He charged him to apply himself. Approaching his end, Paul said to teach the word accurately and not to shy away from what it says. His message is still clear: be conscientious, teach truthfully, and be a faithful servant.



When in the second grade, my oldest granddaughter was given 2 Tim 2:15 to memorize. Completing that, she was given a task to write it out on a notecard and give it to someone special. I was that person. In her unsteady,



irregular but best effort, she wrote it out and gave it to me. It touched me. I framed that card and have displayed it on my desk for nearly 30 years.

As I read her gift to me, it reminds me of the responsibility Paul gave Timothy and of the trust he placed in him. That responsibility is passed to all Christians as spiritual heirs of the message from Paul. I often ask myself whether I am doing what Paul told Timothy to do. Am I making the effort to be fully obedient, or am I just doing the minimum?

Which soldier do I want alongside me? Do I want the one who does what he has to do to get by or the one who really applies himself and does his best? It's simple, isn't it? Which one will *I* then be for my fellow soldiers of Christ? All of us have that choice to make.

`` 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

The Measure of Diligence

What is diligence? A good soldier knows a thing or two about it. One soldier's diligence is described in the short story titled "The Measure of the Watch."

> The soldier rose before the trumpet sounded. He always did. While others relied on alarms or shouted orders, he trusted habit—earned through years of repetition, discipline pressed into muscle and bone. His name was rarely spoken beyond roll call. Not because he lacked courage, but because diligence is quiet. It does not demand witnesses.
>
> Each morning, he folded his blanket with precise corners, cleaned his rifle until the metal reflected his own tired eyes, and checked his boots for weaknesses before they could betray him. When assigned to guard duty, he did not lean on his weapon or count the minutes. He watched. He listened. He remembered. Others mocked him for it. "Nothing ever happens on your watch," they joked. He only nodded. That was the point.
>
> One night, long after the campfires dimmed and laughter faded into sleep, the soldier noticed what others missed—a pause where insects should have sung, a shadow moving against the wind. He did not shout. He did not panic. He signaled, repositioned, and waited until certainty replaced suspicion. When the attack came, it failed before it began.
>
> The next morning, praise spread through the camp like wildfire. Officers spoke of bravery, and medals were discussed. The soldier stood at attention, face calm, as if nothing unusual had occurred. To him, it hadn't. He had simply done what he always did—prepare when no one was watching, stay alert when others rested, and choose faithfulness over recognition. When asked later how he knew the danger was coming, he answered plainly: "I was paying attention."

The apostle Paul was familiar with both good and bad soldiers, having encountered them through his interactions with Roman and Jewish soldiers. He even used the example of a diligent soldier to encourage his disciple Timothy: "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). A few verses later, Paul urges Timothy to be "diligent" in handling the word of God (Cf. 2 Timothy 2:15). The term translated as "diligent" in some versions signifies "…to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious." The Christian's primary battle is spiritual, not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12), but against spiritual forces, wielding the Word of God as their weapon.

A Christian must remain diligent because their spiritual health depends on it. Just as Paul told Timothy to be diligent, we also need to put in similar effort. Charles Spurgeon humorously remarked, "By perseverance the snail reached the ark," highlighting that perseverance is crucial. But what exactly does diligence mean here? In this context, it pertains to the focus and effort we dedicate to our Christian calling. Although God has provided us with what we need, we must be diligent to achieve success. May God bless us in our spiritual battles, and may we be diligent as good soldiers of Christ.

~~ 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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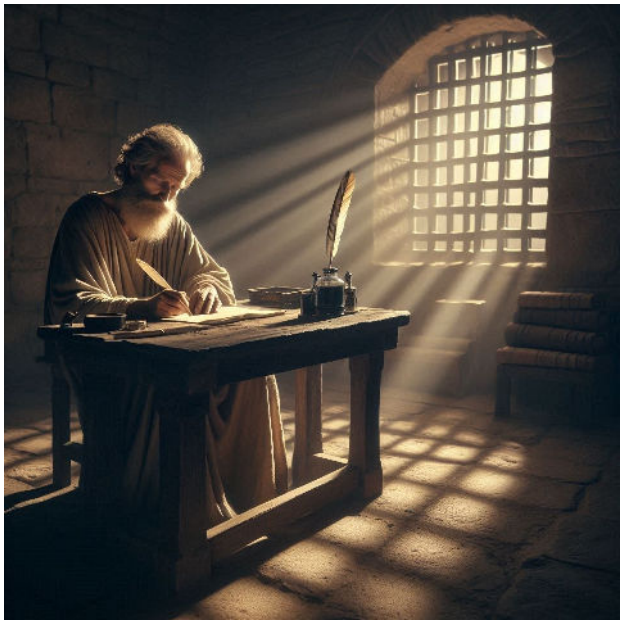
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thinksouls1@gmail.com

Paul's Guide to Diligent Work

2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who [does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Bible historians generally point to A.D. 66-67 as the time in which the apostle Paul most likely wrote 2 Timothy as his last epistle shortly before he was put to death by the Roman Empire. This epistle was apparently written by Paul to his faithful Christian disciple Timothy as Paul languished alone in his barren (Roman) prison cell. His chief crime appeared to be that of his preaching Jesus Christ as the "King of kings" and the "Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:11-16) instead of the Roman Ceas-



er of the time (Nero). The second crime of the time worthy of death was that of preaching Christianity over all other (man-made) religions of the time including what had come to be branded as Judaism.

However, since Paul was an apostolic Christian specifically appointed by Jesus to faithfully preach the gospel of Christ to both Gentiles and Jews until death, he was instructed to teach others (like Timothy) to do the same (Acts 9-28). Paul's writing of the biblical epistles (Rom.-Philem.) shows how God had him accomplish this all-important ministry. First and second Timothy symbolize how Paul got his God-given ministry completely and finally and fully achieved with Timothy. In 2 Tim. 2.15, Paul words prepared Timothy to help him fulfil his ministry. It was then Timothy's obligation to carry his ministry out.

In 2 Tim 2:15 there were five things Timothy needed to do to fulfil his ministry.

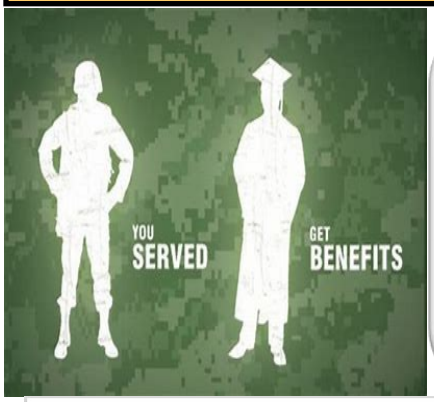
1. *Be diligent*…victorious in a forward manner type of study of God's word.
2. *To present yourself approved to God*…acceptable to God in the study/presentation of His word.
3. *As a workman*…from approved toiler of the word to approved teacher of God's word.
4. *Who does not need to be ashamed*…personally and publicly unashamed worker and teacher of God's word.
5. *Accurately handling the word of truth*…straight cutting or correct expounding or dissecting of God's word.

In closing and conclusion, my thought is that one serving in one of the military services of the United States has it much easier than one serving in the army of God. While the former has its physical and temporal rewards, the second one has its spiritual and eternal rewards.

~~ Tom Wright

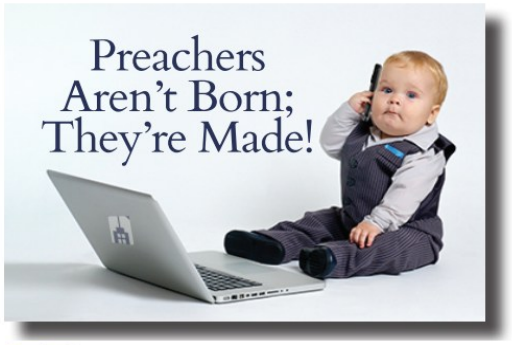
Tom Wright served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War Era. Following his military discharge, Tom graduated college and worked in Design Engineering for over two decades. In his middle forties, he left secular work and entered fulltime ministry. He holds degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Master 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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"The Christian Soldier's Creed
(adapted from "The Soldier's Creed")

I am a CHRISTIAN Soldier.
I am a SPIRITUAL Warrior and a member of GOD'S team.
I serve the people of every nation and live the LORD'S values.
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I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.
I will never leave a fallen BROTHER or SISTER.
I am disciplined, SPIRITUALLY and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my SPIRITUAL tasks and drills.
I always maintain my SPIRITUAL weapons, my SPIRITUAL equipment and my SOUL.
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

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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 IMMERSED ***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
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