

Vol 6, Day 32: Boot Camp or Special Forces Training

Most of the men's conferences or retreats have a flavor of military basic training or some other approach to the Christian life which focuses on disciplines of the body and mind which are supposed to lead men to spiritual maturity. This is raised as the Christian standard of behavior, motivated by sheer determination and personal effort. This mentality leads to false expectations of results which are touted as certain to occur if the disciplines are religiously practiced on a daily basis.

All of this heroic intensity sounds like it should actually produce 'godly' men whose wives and children respond positively to the man's rigorous and consistent practices. These practices have been hailed over the millennia by clerics, rabbis, pastors and priests as the primary means to achieve the ends of being obedient to God which is God's primary purpose.

Unfortunately, this intentional and intense focus on self-discipline largely leaves men stranded on an island that is remote from reality and devoid of meaningful relationships. Even in the presence of a host of other men engaging in the same pursuits, the end of this game largely produces isolation and desperation. Behavior management cannot and will not ever satisfy the basic need of every soul to belong to someone else who truly cares about them. And to this end, Jesus never promoted behavior management. He actually declared emphatically that a new birth (of the spirit) was the only means of pleasing God. And it is only the Holy Spirit of God that is fused with the man's spirit that can produce the Jesus' variety of love and relationship.

God IS love and only desires that we also love both God and all of God's children! Special Forces Training as God offers it is to make a person into a God-level lover, not a fighter!

DEEPER Every Day -- John Henry Alan