

# Professional Perspectives for Senior Officers

by Colonel Dick Kail, USA (Ret.)

OCF Director of Leader Development

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# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION

WE HAVE DEVELOPED THIS BOOKLET for officers who have reached the rank of lieutenant colonel, commander, or higher ranks. As a ministry that works specifically *within* the military, we realize that promotion to these ranks places you in a significant position of seniority within your service. This will place additional responsibilities on you and your family, responsibilities that will increase with continuing promotions.

“Senior Officer” may seem an ambiguous term. We have chosen to define it starting at the rank of lieutenant colonel or commander because of the command opportunities and decision-making positions available to officers of such rank.

We expect your new experiences will be similar to all those who have gone before you. The increased expectations placed upon you will be manifested in more independent decision making and in broader and deeper organizational or command responsibilities. The issues you will identify and address will be increasingly complex and difficult. The environment in which you work will become increasingly ambiguous, and you will have a greater opportunity and responsibility to shape that environment rather than having it defined for you. With this comes the responsibility to address moral-ethical issues and to establish a positive climate, both professionally and spiritually, for those within your sphere of influence.

We want to help equip you for these responsibilities in two distinct but integrated areas of life, professional and spiritual. The material contained in this handbook is designed toward that end. Its value to you will depend upon the quality of reflection and study you invest in it.

### **Why does OCF have a specific interest in senior officers?**

WE BELIEVE OCF IS CALLED BY GOD to claim and occupy territory for Jesus Christ within the military services. OCF equips its members and their families to be excellent disciples of Jesus Christ and also excellent professional military servants. We encourage them to integrate these two areas of their lives by viewing the military society as their specific mission field. We are dedicated to have an ever-increasing influence on the military society as a whole, which we believe will have a positive influence on our nation for God.

Senior officers in the U.S. military are given the responsibility for vision, leadership, and decision making. You will be an example both professionally and spiritually. The quality of your example in each area will be determined by your attitudes and actions. You have the opportunity to bring some special qualities to your command, the local OCF and the expanded Christian community that more junior officers cannot bring. Some of these are as follows:

- A model of the relevance of faith to life at the level of rank to which many junior officers aspire.
- Elimination of the perception by many junior officers that a committed Christian cannot be successful at senior levels.
- Serving as “salt” among senior peers and within deliberations and decisions affecting the command.
- Having an active ministry among senior peers.
- Wisdom of years of experience in the military.

- Experiences in life to be used to encourage and disciple younger members.
- A model of a marriage and family that demonstrates all of these characteristics. Your spouse and family will also bring their own special qualities that will be sought by their peers and by those younger than they are.

Thus OCF finds it appropriate to help senior officers meet the spiritual demands and opportunities of their important positions. Many senior officers, along with their spouses and families, are actively modeling these qualities. Some of their examples are included in this booklet. The content has been designed to help equip and encourage you to:

- Spend private time with God for continuing spiritual growth; place an appropriate emphasis on ministering to and with your family, and to see your work as your ministry.
- See your position from God's perspective and use your position to accomplish biblically-derived goals.
- Develop an attitude that is usable by God, an attitude of serving those for whom you have been given responsibility.
- Have a spiritual vision that includes the unique opportunities and capabilities that your position and rank afford the body of Christ!
- Develop the role of professional and spiritual teacher and encourager that is intentional, not merely passive or convenient.
- Understand the national impact you will have as a senior officer, to make that impact positive both professionally and spiritually, and to *integrate* (not compartmentalize) professional leadership with the spiritual leadership commensurate with your position and spiritual maturity.

In summary, we want to help you strengthen the meshing of your faith with your professional attitudes and actions so that you may reflect the character of God.

YOUR SENIOR POSITION will place increased demands upon you professionally, and upon your family—perhaps at a time when your children may be experiencing critical transition points in life. Setting priorities for your time and attention will often be difficult. Our intent is not to overburden you with organizational demands, but to encourage you to view new circumstances as opportunities for ministry to individuals and families who share the military profession with you. God is sovereign. He knows the intimate details of your situation and has specific growth and ministry purposes for all aspects of it.

You have many choices before you. *Our encouragement to you is to not be controlled by your circumstances but to maintain the focus of your life on the Lord Jesus Christ.* He will enable you to make choices that fulfill His purposes for your life and will give you confidence as you seek your own unique application of His Word in your profession, family and ministry.

## Your response

You will decide how you respond to your position, to God's Word and to the thoughts contained in this handbook. *We urge you first to go to God in prayer.* We offer neither pat answers nor formulas for the way you will live as God's man or woman in your specific situation. God has created us each uniquely. We have different talents, gifts, families and circumstances. We are all at different stages in the process of growing toward spiritual maturity. But God does provide numerous principles and some absolutes on how He expects us to respond.

You have two choices, as follows:

- 1 Will I choose to be obedient to God in living out my faith? A positive response is unquestionably God's will. This is the most important choice. We are convinced, from almost fifty years of ministering to military men and women, that if you consider your career to be more important than faithfulness to God, you will be unfulfilled.
- 2 Will I be actively involved in the OCF as I live out my faith? We are asking you to honestly consider this before God.

The six sections that follow address the topics of priorities, position, attitude, vision, role and integration. Prayerful study and reflection upon them will help you determine godly responses to your new rank and duties. These sections contain scriptural studies applicable to both your professional and spiritual life. They will help you address all the complexity involved in the considerable responsibilities of senior national service, how it impacts on your family, and your ultimate responsibility to your Creator and Savior. Use this handbook with your Bible during your daily quiet time. Make notes about your observations from Scripture and the actions you will take to follow through on the things God shows you. After you complete this handbook, keep it for your own reference or to share with others who face similar decisions.

A separate pamphlet is available that contains a series of articles by senior officers on the themes stated above. Please contact the OCF office if you desire this pamphlet.

## SECTION 2

# THE PRIORITIES OF A SENIOR OFFICER

YOUR PRIORITIES as a senior officer are unchanged from those of a junior officer, or any other person of God. But the complexity and ambiguity of your environment and duties (discussed in the introduction) can quickly skew your priorities out of balance if you do not maintain a godly perspective.

The following study examines biblical priorities. We encourage you to think of them as ever-increasing concentric circles.

### **Your relationship with God**

*MATTHEW 6:33.* Your most important relationship is how you stand as an individual before God. This relationship provides the basis and perspective for all your other relationships. Having accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you know that God's Word provides several very clear commands that you are to *practice* in order to maintain a right relationship with Him.

*PSALM 1.* This is an excellent selection to return to frequently for reading and meditation. As a senior leader, you will be given much advice and counsel. Psalm 1 sets out a very clear contrast between how to be righteous or wicked, and the results of each. The first word of the Psalm is "Blessed," the last word is "perish." The difference between the two is delight in and meditation on God's Word.

As a military Christian, you will be involved in spiritual warfare. You understand combat. A military force has specific needs to perform properly on the battlefield. You also have these needs, which include the following:

*PSALM 119:105.* You need light—the ability to "see."

*1 PETER 1.23-25, 2:2.* You need food—energy to perform.

*EPHESIANS 6:10-17.* You need protection and weapons.

*EPHESIANS 5:19 and 6:18,19.* You need to communicate—up, down, and laterally.

CONTINUE EACH DAY to read God's Word and to commit your circumstances to Him in prayer. If you have never established this practice, you will need it all the more to maintain His perspective on your situation. If you are a new Christian, and you have not had the opportunity to develop your faith and testimony as you progressed in rank, find a Christian peer who will disciple you. Other Christians will have well-intentioned expectations of you, and you may feel pushed to act beyond your level of spiritual maturity.

Find a Christian peer to whom you can be accountable and to whom you can turn for counsel, even if you must do this by longdistance communications.

### **Your relationship with your spouse**

*GENESIS 2:24.* (also quoted by Paul in *Ephesians 5:31*) Upon marriage, God looks at husband and wife as one flesh. This is the next most important relationship after their relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Marriage partners should continually reflect on the dimensions of: 1) leaving, 2) cleaving, and 3) being one flesh. This relationship needs constant attention in the demanding

environment of senior leadership.

*EPHESIANS 5:21-33*. How are we to love our spouses? This Scripture sets forth some of God's primary commands for marital relationships, as follows:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (vs. 21).

Become one flesh (vs. 31).

For husbands—

Love your wives as Christ loved the Church (vs. 25).

Love your wives as you do your own bodies (vs. 28).

Nourish, protect, care for and sanctify your wives “by the washing of the Word” (vss. 26, 27, 29).

For wives—

Adapt yourselves to your husbands (vss. 22-24, (Amplified)).

Respect your husbands (vs. 33).

## **Your relationship with your children**

*PSALM 127:3-5*. Children are a special gift from God. A military professional knows arrows are weapons of war that must be given particular care. We have a special responsibility to care for and train our children.

*3 JOHN 4*. “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth!” John is speaking of spiritual children, but God's Word continually uses family examples that should also be happening spiritually. Children who walk in the truth should bring us greater joy than a promotion, a success, or a mission accomplished.

*1 TIMOTHY 3:4,5*. One of the qualifications for responsibility outside of the family is to have family business—that which God says is important—in proper order.

*JOSHUA 24:15*. Family priorities include more than simply paying attention to and ministering to your spouse or children. Your family exists to serve and to minister as a unit. The purpose and internal functioning of military units serves as an example to help us understand and apply this principle.

## **Your relationship with your ministry and your work**

*EPHESIANS 4:11-16*. If the Church is to be effective in doing what God expects—worshipping Him and reaching out to society—it must be healthy. Its members must be doing what God has gifted them to do where He placed them. When a man or woman fails to do this, then someone else is burdened doing something they are not gifted or placed to do, or something God intended to be done isn't being done.

*COLOSSIANS 3:23, ROMANS 12:11*. Your work has intrinsic value to God. He expects you to *do your best* in your work (not necessarily to *be the best* among your peers). A specific uniqueness of

OCF is that we encourage our members to see their work as their ministry, not a place of competition. The concluding section of this booklet speaks to this.

THESE PRIORITIES will often seem to compete for your time and attention. There will be a time when your work will place extremely stressful and lengthy demands on you. You may have only a limited time to spend with God, family, or religious activities. Consider these three points:

**Your relationship with God is preeminent.** You should never forsake or slight it. It is the most powerful resource that you can take with you into the stress and intensity of senior leadership duties. It enables you to have a ministry even when most of your time and energy is devoted to military responsibilities, such as during a field exercise, a deployment or in combat.

**You will have to spend time away from your family.** That is the nature of the military profession. Show your family, by your concern and your actions when you *are* home, that they are more important than career success or promotion. Then they will have the strength to endure periodic demands that shorten your time with them.

Separations hurt. If you demonstrate that your career is more important than your family, you may expect serious problems. If, however, you show them the love of Jesus Christ and His care for them, these separations can be times of growth and ministry for you, for your spouse, and for your children.

**By itself, your work will leave you unfulfilled,** regardless of how senior you become. Seeing your work as an offering to God and as your ministry field, taking opportunities for ministry as He presents them, will leave you fulfilled regardless of how high you are promoted.

We encourage you to spend private time with God in continued spiritual growth, in placing an appropriate emphasis on ministering to and with your family, and on seeing your military duties and relationships as ministry!

*What is your sense of priorities as a senior officer in your relationship to God?*

- *to your family?*
- *to your ministry?*
- *to your duties?*

## SECTION 3

## SECTION 3

# THE POSITION OF A SENIOR OFFICER

ONE CONCERN for a senior Christian officer is the use or misuse of his or her position for Christian activity. Clearly, every individual must come before God and wrestle with how He intends for you to use the authority of your position as a senior officer.

This question may be described as a road with a ditch on either side. The surface of the road represents the path of God's intentions for you. The ditch on the left represents the abuse of your authority. This could take the extreme, for example, of requiring subordinates to attend a Bible study. A more subtle behavior would be to act in such a way that your subordinates get the impression they must participate in chapel or OCF activities in order to gain your professional approval and a good efficiency (or effectiveness) report. Such a message can be sent without your awareness or intention.

The other ditch, on the right, represents inactivity or silence about your faith. You fall into this ditch when you fail to integrate your faith and your professional duties in a vital and positive way. Satan loves to lead you into this ditch even more than the other. When you fall into the left ditch, at least people start talking about the proper relationship between Christian faith and the military profession. When you fall into the right ditch, nobody talks about the Bible or Christ.

History and experience reveal that there is much discussion about the *left ditch* but very, very few senior officers fall into it. Too many officers stray into the *right ditch*, either through a lack of proper understanding of God's will for them, or through a lack of faith.

You will exert spiritual influence on your superiors, peers and subordinates. Those who hold senior positions in the U. S. Armed Forces will never have a neutral effect on their comrades-in-arms. Will your influence be godly, or will it be tainted by the values of this darkening world?

### **The priorities of two senior officers**

A senior commander who was involved in significant and direct spiritual leadership responded to a question on how he found time for such involvement when others in similar positions said they didn't have time: "You do those things that you want to do."

A senior officer leading a front-line unit in combat who met regularly with others for Bible study and coordinated other spiritual activities across a number of units responded, "It just seemed the thing to do."

What should be your attitudes toward the spiritual dimensions of position, authority and rank? What principles can you identify in God's Word? How can you apply them in your duties? Study and meditate on the following Scripture notes as you answer these questions.

### **Psalm 75**

Who really is in control of all events? If an excellent record results in promotion, who is the primary source of the abilities and gifts that enable a person to attain high rank? Consider the following principles:

- **God is sovereign.** Even though we are relatively free agents with the ability to make decisions, timing and situations are ultimately in His control, designed for His purpose.
- **Promotion and position are from God.** Verses 6 and 7 are popular verses, often quoted at a promotion ceremony. The key question, however, is this: “In addition to giving God the glory for your promotion or position only on one day at the ceremony, how can these things be used effectively for Him every day?”
- **God is the Judge.** Your final and most important efficiency (fitness) report will be rendered by God. How closely will your life reflect the stewardship responsibilities He assigned to you?

## Esther 4:10-14

Although Esther had a special position in the governing structure, her real identity was with the minority, the people of God. Which would she choose, to use the position for her own welfare, or to take the opportunity presented by her position to be an advocate for God? Here are three important principles for senior leaders to consider.

- *God will not be thwarted by a human leader's inactivity.* He will cause His ultimate purpose to be accomplished, regardless of a leader's choice for personal welfare or actively living for Him.
- *A leader can choose to be significant in God's purposes, or to be insignificant regardless of human accomplishments.* What will be your choice? Fifteen years after you are no longer an active duty senior officer, what will be the significance of the things you accomplished in the eyes of the world, and in the sight of God?
- *The combination of rank and position, and the human needs of those you lead, provide great opportunities for you to be used by God.* What specific opportunities are being presented to you? How will you respond to them? Are you willing to be used by the Spirit of God?

## Expectations from Christ

*LUKE 12 :48B. From Christ's Discourse on the Faithful Servant.* “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

*MATTHEW 25:14-30. The Parable of the Talents.* Many Christians can relate this parable, but what do it and the teaching in the passage above mean to a senior officer?

- *Earthly things—position, power, material goods—are not intrinsic to us, but entrusted to us by God.* The characters in Christ's parables are servants who were provided capability by their master.
- *The more He gives, the more He will expect—yes even demand.* Promotion is based upon potential, not reward. A military leader knows each promotion means that more will be expected of him by his service and by the nation. The military profession is very demanding. Christ's words indicate that spiritual responsibility is also expected. Yes, *it is demanded by the Lord of Lords.*
- *He will review your performance against His expectations.* Just as a senior officer continues

to receive professional performance reviews that are judged against increasing expectations, so God will evaluate spiritual performance against that which He has entrusted to us. Christ's words in Matthew 25 are descriptive. Anyone sitting on a promotion board would understand them. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (vss. 21, 23). "Wicked, lazy servant" (vs. 26), "worthless servant" (vs. 30).

- *The more He gives, the more He will expect—yes even demand.* Promotion is based upon potential, not reward. A military leader knows each promotion means that more will be expected of him by his service and by the nation. The military profession is very demanding. Christ's words indicate that spiritual responsibility is also expected. Yes, *it is demanded by the Lord of Lords.*

How will you use what God has given you? As you reflect on this question, we urge you to consider those special qualities that you bring to your command and a local OCF that we discussed on pages five and six.

As you consider the next sections in this booklet, which address attitudes and vision, we offer the comments of two flag officers who are serving in significant command positions with national visibility.

- "Your activity as a Christian senior officer may be quietly supporting, privately encouraging, setting the environment, but you must have activity."
- "You are responsible as the spiritual leader of your organization. You must be concerned about the spiritual welfare of all of your people, and as a Christian you would like all of your people to know Jesus Christ. Sow within the bounds of the first amendment (which I interpret as keeping government out of religion and not vice versa) you must lay the ground work to keep your unit spiritually fit.
- "You must set the proper Christian example in all of your professional and spiritual activities. You should participate in specific spiritual activities as God leads you under your circumstances. (I am not adverse to attending or having OCF Bible study in our home.) Perhaps just as important is establishing the institutional spiritual environment in your unit that will allow spiritual workers to be successful in leading others to Christ using the principles espoused by OCF.
- "As a senior leader you cannot do all the work yourself, either professionally or spiritually, but you must provide the resources to make your subordinates successful. More simply put, your people need to know from your actions that it is right to love God, trust in His plan, and obey His commandments."

A final comment on your position. Regardless of your own level of spiritual maturity, it will be vital for you to cultivate fellowship with and be accountable to another Christian officer(s) who will:

- understand from his or her own professional experiences the pressures, demands and opportunities of your position.

- be frequently available for mutual fellowship and accountability.

We encourage you to see your promotion and position from God's perspective and to use your position to accomplish biblical goals.

*Do you agree that your promotion and position are from God?*

*How can you actively use your current position and rank to glorify God?*

*What does He expect from you?*

## SECTION 4

### THE ATTITUDE OF A SENIOR OFFICER

A BRIEF look at Peter helps us understand the requirements for a godly attitude, particularly in positions of significant responsibility. Peter had many of the qualities we expect in a military leader. He quickly became a leader among the disciples and often dominated the scene. He was direct, active and decisive. He often was the first to respond to Christ, not only for himself but also on behalf of the other disciples. He carried a sword, using it to cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest who was threatening Jesus. He continued in the forefront after the resurrection. "In those days Peter stood up among the believers" (Acts 1:15)—and then led the group in selecting a replacement for Judas. Peter was a natural leader.

For all of Peter's innate leadership abilities, Christ had to teach him significant lessons about godly attitudes. He took fleshly, impetuous Peter, and taught him how to be more effective within the personality, ability and opportunity God had given him. The Gospels contain many examples of these teachings, and you may find it valuable to do your own study of Peter's life. Here are some of the lessons he had to learn to be a leader in God's kingdom.

#### **An accurate view of authority and service**

*JOHN 13:3-4.* Before Jesus washed the disciples' feet, He was fully aware of His authority and position in the kingdom. John takes pains to remind us that Jesus viewed His exalted position accurately. The magnificence of His act of service comes from the fact that He did not seek His own glory, but entrusted that to the Father. Instead, He used His authority and power to serve others.

#### **Submission to Christ's authority**

*JOHN 13:8-9.* One way Christ taught His followers to be servants was by washing the feet of His disciples. At first, Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet. Christ responded that, without submission, Peter would have no part of His work. Peter submitted.

#### **Humility**

*LUKE 5:6-8.* Submission to Christ involves humility. Even when it came to his profession, Peter learned that Jesus was in control. In response, he fell down in humility before Christ.

*JOHN 21:15-17.* Peter’s ultimate lesson in humility occurred when Christ appeared after the crucifixion. After denying Christ three times, Peter was asked by Christ three times if he loved Him. Peter’s hurt was deep as he remembered the denial. But his humiliation led to a great ministry as he continued to lead the disciples.

*LUKE 5:4-5.* Surely a fisherman knew more about fishing than a carpenter! They had been at it all night. Now it was the wrong time of the day. But again Peter submitted—and brought in a great catch.

## Faith

*LUKE 22:31-32.* Jesus knew Peter would have a temporary failure of faith. He also knew Peter would be restored through faith and would have a significant leadership role after His death. “But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

## Love

*JOHN 13:34-35 AND 1 PETER 5:1-5.* Christ taught that the leader’s conflict between mission accomplishment and the welfare of people is resolved by love and service. Peter learned well and taught others these lessons of godly leadership.

## **Recognition of and submission to institutional authority of the provision of God**

*MATTHEW 17:24-27 AND 1 PETER 3:13—25, 4:12-19.* A leader with many powerful attributes may tend to think he or she is always right. Even when one is in the right, Christ taught Peter to abide by the rules of the institution “so that we may not offend them.” The cross of Christ is offense enough to people immersed in sin, without us also bringing offense to them. Christ also taught that God will provide for us in such circumstances.

Peter learned well and taught submission to instituted authority and trust in God in his first letter.

We encourage you to continue developing an attitude that is usable by God, an attitude of serving those for whom you have been given responsibility!

*Are you operating only on your natural abilities?*

*Is your use of command, rank, or position influenced by the attributes Peter learned from Christ?*

*Do you have a vision for serving your people as well as using them to accomplish your mission?*

## SECTION 5

# THE VISION OF A SENIOR OFFICER

VISION IS a significant characteristic of the behavior of great leaders. The ability to look beyond the details of today to the important things of the future, and to communicate those ideas in an inspirational manner, is a necessary element of successful leadership. This will be true for both your professional and spiritual leadership. We encourage you to spend time in the following passages and reflect on your leadership role in imparting vision.

### The Vision of Caleb and Joshua

*NUMBERS 13:1-14:24.* Caleb and Joshua had a different vision of Canaan than did the other ten spies. The basis for their vision included these very important factors:

- **They were aware of the overall mission of the nation**—to occupy the land God had given it.
- **They were aware of the capability of the nation and of God.** They trusted Him to fulfill His promise to give the land to Israel.
- **They were men of integrity and faith.** They did not test the wind of popular opinion and then go with the group. The vote was ten to two against them. Yet in the face of considerable opposition they boldly stood for what they believed.
- **They were dedicated to service—to a purpose beyond themselves.** Even though their vision was rejected, they continued to serve in important positions of leadership for forty years, and eventually they saw the fulfillment of the vision they had so clearly foreseen forty years earlier.

*JOSHUA.* Study chapters 1, 23 and 24:1-15. *CALEB.* See Joshua 14: 6-15

### Proverbs

*PROVERBS 11:14a.* “Where there is no guidance, the people fall” (NASB). “For a lack of guidance a nation falls” (NIV).

*PROVERBS 29:18A.* “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” (NASB). “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint” (NIV).

The truths of these two passages have significant implications for leaders in their professional and spiritual responsibilities. There are several important principles you can glean from them—

- *Counsel, guidance and vision are leadership responsibilities.* They flow from the top down. They must come from a recognized position of authority, or they may be rejected. In our mission field, the military, that is the purpose of the rank structure. Spiritually, we recognize that God and His Word provide an authoritative vision for our lives.
- *The benefit of counsel, guidance, vision, is for the body, not the individual leader.* The beneficiary is to be the people, the nation, not the individual who has been given a position of high responsibility.
- *The result of counsel, guidance and vision, is a healthy people, a healthy nation, capable of fulfilling what God intends.* If the missions of the people and of the nation are to be accomplished, visionary leadership directed by God is necessary.

## Modern examples of the vision of senior officers

At the closing session of an OCF international conference some years ago, a U.S. Marine Corps officer expressed what God had laid on his heart: *“This week, I have developed a vision for claiming the Marine Corps for Jesus Christ.”* He knew he could not accomplish that by himself, but he spent much of his energy toward that end by using the senior positions and the spiritual gifts God provided to him.

In November 1991, two Russian military officers attended an American OCF / CMF conference in Germany. They had been Christians for only a few years. They stated: *“We believe that Jesus Christ can change our nation. Pray with us that it will happen.”*

An Army officer serving as an infantry brigade executive officer wrote from Saudi Arabia about the ways God was working in his division. He recalled his initial prayers when he had received orders to the division in the states: *“I had asked God for 20 studies, and believed He could make 30, so I could send words of encouragement. I never thought the Lord would do it this way, as we have now discovered a new meaning for ‘divide and multiply’.”*

God may not give you a vision for your entire military service, or even for your entire unit, but if you pray and ask, He *will* give you vision for a specific task He wants you to do. Then pray that your vision will grow as you continue to mature in your faith and walk with Him. Be a person of faith, although you cannot see all of the details.

We encourage you to ask God for a spiritual vision that includes the unique opportunities and capabilities that your position and rank afford the Body of Christ in your military unit and community!

- Given your current position and rank, how can you provide godly vision in your professional responsibilities?
- How can you provide godly vision to the OCF at your location?

## SECTION 6

# THE ROLE OF A SENIOR OFFICER

TWO OF the most powerful roles of a leader are serving as a mentor, or teacher, and as an encourager. A military senior leader often fulfills this role within the profession. It is equally important and productive in spiritual warfare. Paul was deliberately chosen and equipped by God to be a teacher, encourager and exhorter. Like Peter, Paul's natural attributes served him in a powerful way. Before Damascus, Paul was *driven* to action. After Damascus, Paul was *called to* action. A look at the first two chapters of Paul's second letter to Timothy reveals several distinct principles of how Paul saw the role of a leader, both secular and spiritual.

### **Paul's principles from 2 Timothy 1**

#### **Leadership occurs in the context of relationships**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:1-2.* The key relationships here are God as Father, Christ as Lord, Paul's relationship with Christ, and Paul's teaching, mentoring relationship with his dear "son," Timothy.

*2 TIMOTHY 1:3.* These relationships are strengthened by a constant remembrance in prayer.

*2 TIMOTHY 1:4* They are marked by deep feelings—love for one another that is expressed in joy and in tears.

*2 TIMOTHY 1:5.* They are strengthened by personal knowledge and understanding of each other's faith.

#### **A special spirit of boldness, and a recognition of God's power, love and discipline , are required for leadership.**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:7.* Boldness, power, and discipline are military words. How easy is it to be timid, weak or uncontrolled in the spiritual dimensions of your professional leadership?

#### **The leader cannot call a follower to go beyond where he himself has been**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:8.* A key phrase here is "join with me." A leader will not be effective in calling someone to a level of service or sacrifice beyond that at which he is serving. This is true also in a spiritual sense.

#### **Leadership requires sacrifice**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:8,12.* Paul identifies suffering as a real possibility for a Christian leader. This could be the choice to deny yourself by giving up time or by setting priorities that keep you from leisure pursuits that you enjoy. It may come from others in the form of jealousy, ridicule, or an attack from Satan. A leader and his family are exposed. Some Christians have been called by God to give up life itself in the service of His kingdom.

#### **Entrust your leadership and life to Christ**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:12.* God is your shield and strength. He is able to guard you, your family and those you lead until the battle is done. Those who live in this way will hear His greetings, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21).

## **Guard what God has entrusted to you--your leadership, rank, and position**

*2 TIMOTHY 1:14.* Those who study and practice the art of war understand the concept of securing the resources available to a commander. We guard important capabilities to protect them, to counter a threat to them, or to prevent their misuse. We do not waste resources guarding something that is unimportant or that is not threatened. Paul's admonition to Timothy to guard that which God has entrusted to him means that his call is important. It can be threatened; it can be misused. Seniority and leadership can become corrupt if they are not guarded well.

## **Paul's principles from 2 Timothy 2**

### **Leadership requires strength**

*2 TIMOTHY 2:1.* It requires not the mere strength of our own might, but strength in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. If we examine the first chapter of Joshua and look at the special leadership instructions God gave to that military commander, we find the admonition to "be strong and courageous" three separate times (vss. 6,7,9). Then the people add this same expectation of Joshua as their leader (vs. 18). God knows humans need special strength and courage to be leaders for Him.

### **Select and teach reliable men and expect them to be productive**

*2 TIMOTHY 2:2.* There are four generations of leaders in this verse: first Paul, who taught Timothy (leader generation two), who is to select and teach reliable and capable men (leader generation three), who will in turn teach others (leader generation four). In the military we understand this concept well. Some of the services call it "training the trainer."

You should be involved in reproducing new spiritual generations. As a senior leader, you must be selective in choosing those whom you mentor, both professionally and spiritually. If some of the persons you choose don't respond by becoming more faithful and capable, you should move on to others.

### **Leadership requires endurance**

*2 TIMOTHY 2:3.* A soldier understands soldiering. It is a hard life at times, requiring sacrifice, hardship and perseverance. Who should understand soldiering for Christ Jesus better than someone like you, who serves in the military profession?

### **Be unentangled**

*2 TIMOTHY 2:4.* What is it that entangles a leader, in either the professional military or in spiritual life? It is that which turns your focus away from the principal task of leading and distracts you with extraneous things. (A military deception plan seeks to accomplish this in the minds of the enemy commanders.) The world will set before you many other priorities. Some of them are good things in and of themselves. If they do not help you accomplish God's purposes for you, however, they can lead you and those who follow you away from your true goal. Soon a confusion of commitments takes place, and a crisis arrives. You must set and sustain clear and concrete priorities, both professional and spiritual.

### **Compete according to the rules**

*2 TIMOTHY 2:5.* You may strongly disagree with the written or unwritten rules of the groups to which you have made commitments. When this occurs, you should attempt within the institution to change

those rules. If you cannot do so, you may face the decision of whether to remove yourself from leadership, or perhaps even from the institution.

In responding to such situations, you will be judged in two ways, on the basis of the facts and on the basis of perceptions. Even though a perception may be wrong, it appears as truth in the mind of the perceiver, until it is changed. A senior military officer clearly understands the professional implications of this principle.

### **Give credit where it is due**

- *2 TIMOTHY 2:6.* You may have worked for a senior, possibly a professing Christian, whose ego was so dominant that all organizational accomplishments were expressed as his or her personal achievements. It is so easy in senior positions to assume the credit due to others, professionally and spiritually. Credit and respect should be rendered properly.

### **Reflect on God's word**

- *2 TIMOTHY 2:7.* Paul overlays all of his leadership teaching to Timothy by telling him to return repeatedly to these instructions, asking for insight from God. Senior military officers should operate on the basis of principle, not by a fixed formula. So it is with God's instruction. Application of principles, given the pressures, complexities and responsibilities of senior leadership, requires prayerful reflection and petition for godly insight.

### **Leaders exist to serve others**

- *2 TIMOTHY 2:10.* The purpose of senior military leadership is to accomplish assigned missions by making subordinates successful, without seeking self-aggrandizement. The purpose of spiritual leadership is for "the sake of the elect, that they may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." The true value of professional and spiritual leadership will be judged by its effects upon the body being led.

### **Be instructive and constructive, not destructive**

- *2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26.* Let's focus on three points Paul impresses on Timothy as he trains him to become a senior teacher and mentor:
  - Quarreling and foolish arguments are counterproductive. Tearing down another person does nothing to build your credibility.
  - Instruction and construction require more diligence and skill than destruction.
  - God's truth is the rule and guide for that which is to be taught and for how we are to relate to others.

We encourage you to cultivate the role of professional and spiritual teacher and encourager that is intentional, not merely passive or convenient.

*Might a Christian senior officer who is passive, private, and silent about his or her faith be perceived by juniors as being uninterested in spiritual things?*

*What choice have you made about being a spiritual as well as a professional mentor?*

*How, when and with whom will you cultivate a mentoring relationship?*

## SECTION 7

# INTEGRATING PROFESSIONAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

OUR ENCOURAGEMENT to you is to continually live as a whole person before God. Don't separate your profession from your faith. Integrity is a cherished characteristic of military officers.

The definition of integrity is “*the quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; wholeness.*” We believe God calls His people to oneness—integrating their faith, family life and profession. Daniel lived a unified life. He spent a lifetime in government service of such high quality that even his detractors recognized it as excellent. His faith in God was an integral part of the way he executed his duties.

### **The principles that guided Daniel**

Daniel was an experienced senior official who, although a foreigner, was selected by the king to become his first deputy. He would have supervisory authority over all in the land except the king himself. Those who competed for the king's favors were jealous and set out to find ways to discredit him. But they were unable to do so. (DANIEL 6:1-5). *Why?*

He had distinguished himself by his service. He possessed “an extraordinary spirit” (DANIEL 6:3, NASB), or “exceptional qualities” (NIV). His detractors could find no grounds for charges against him in the conduct of governmental affairs, because:

- **“He was not corrupt.”** He did nothing for his own gain.
- **“He was trustworthy.”** He was absolutely reliable.
- **“He was not negligent.”** He knew what was expected; he prepared himself to conscientiously perform his duties. (DANIEL 6:4).

The only hope for his enemies was to find a charge that, in their words, “has something to do with the law of his God (DANIEL 6:5).” Clearly Daniel was an outstanding professional leader who was a man of God, and everyone knew it. *Now that is professional excellence!*

How did Daniel make his way through three separate administrations, each of which was unfriendly to his faith, and achieve this reputation? What were the principles that guided his integration of government service (profession) and faith? What decisions did he make, what did he experience, and what did he observe?

### **DANIEL 1**

- *Vs. 8.* Daniel made a decision early in life not to be defiled.
- *Vss. 12-14.* Sometimes a creative alternative is available that does not involve the compromise of God's Word.
- *Vss. 17-20.* God will bless, in practical ways, those who follow Him.

### **DANIEL 2**

- *Vs. 14.* When confronted with a challenge from authority, react with reason and tact.
- *Vss. 17-23.* Have a support and prayer group from within your profession, and look to God for

wisdom. Worship Him for who He is, and glorify Him in all areas of your life.

- *Vss. 27-30 & 46-49.* Do your work with humility, and give the credit to God.

### **DANIEL 3**

The experiences here are those of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were friends of Daniel who prayed with him (Daniel 1:17-23). As Daniel closely observed these experiences of his three friends, he might have learned that a leader should:

- *Vs. 8.* Expect scrutiny.
- *Vss. 9-12.* Expect opposition to your faith.
- *Vss. 13-15.* Expect temptation of your faith.
- *Vss. 16-18.* Expect an opportunity to demonstrate the authenticity for your faith.
- *Vss. 19-27.* Expect justification by your faith.

### **DANIEL 4**

- *Vss. 2-37.* Continued, respectful, honorable, diligent service to an ungodly superior, while not compromising important biblical commandments, can lead a superior to God. Consider the following elements of King Nebuchadnezzar's testimony:
- Glory to God
- Previous condition
- How God dealt with him in humble terms
- New condition
- Glory to God

### **DANIEL 5**

- *Vss. 22-23.* Assignment to a high position does not equate to greatness in God's eyes, nor does it allow license in performing the duties of such a position.
- *Vs. 27.* Leaders will be weighed against their responsibilities.

### **DANIEL 6**

- *Vss. 1-3.* Godly leaders can serve, repeatedly, for ungodly superiors. Distinguished service and excellence will be recognized.
- *Vs. 4.* They should, however, be prepared for jealousy and antagonism from ungodly men.
- *Vss. 4-5.* Conduct must be such that no grounds or charges for corruption or negligence can be found.
- *Vss. 6-10.* Even though at times a creative alternative is appropriate (DANIEL 1:12-14), sometimes it is not. Both circumstance and principle are important. Even though Daniel did not obey the unlawful order, he did nothing new. He continued doing what he had always done. He

was not rebellious; he was faithful.

- *Vss. 14-15.* It is important to know the source and quality of the advice you get. The impact may be great from an ill-considered order.
- *Vss. 21-22.* Be respectful of proper authority, even when the system has been used to bring harm or false accusations, or to put you at a disadvantage.
- *Vs. 24.* Deal with falsehood directly and quickly.

We encourage you not to compartmentalize, but to integrate excellent, professional leadership with spiritual leadership commensurate with your position and your spiritual maturity!

We also encourage you to understand the national impact that you will have as a senior officer—and to make that impact positive both professionally and spiritually!

*Have you made the necessary decision not to be defiled—so that God may fully use you in the position in which He has placed you?*

*Upon being reviewed by God (and your peers) for increased responsibility, will you be seen as a leader who has maintained integrity—one who is not negligent, but trustworthy?*

## **A final admonition**

There is a grievous tendency among some of those who hold great authority in both the military and the pastoral callings. It is the tendency to isolate one's self from both God and man, to assume knowledge of people and of the situation that is not commensurate with either God's will or man's needs. In all you do as a senior leader, we exhort you to recognize and act on the basis of complete dependency upon the Spirit of God for wisdom, understanding and godly humility. As you teach, lead and mentor your subordinates, remember that they may have much to teach you also, both professionally and spiritually.

## Appendix:

# Three Styles of Senior Spiritual Leadership

### **DIRECT LEADERSHIP**

This entails being the lead and front man at an installation and actively coordinating the activities of the OCF. If the ministry is multi-faceted, this type of leadership will be shared with other members, some of whom are junior officers, and it will involve discipleship of other leaders.

This is applied where direct senior leadership is appropriate and required—when there is a need for a senior leader—when there is no other OCF leadership available that is capable either by experience or rank to cause a fully effective ministry.

### **PEER MINISTRY**

This is a ministry to other senior officers who share the same professional leadership responsibilities and burdens that you do. It is clear from those who have made themselves available to this sort of ministry that the heavy responsibilities of senior leadership provide many opportunities for sharing practical application of God's Word, for encouragement, evangelism, and discipleship.

This is always a requirement and should be applied whenever the opportunity is available. Direct Leadership should not be totally forsaken for this type of ministry, however. If there is a lack or shortage of other experienced OCF leadership available, this style should be used in conjunction with leadership of the overall ministry while developing junior leaders to take on the coordination role. A senior military leader should be able to handle a peer ministry and develop unior leaders for coordinating an installation-wide ministry.

### **MINISTRY OF VISIBILITY**

If you are not the direct leader, find ways to be visible and share your ministry with junior officers. Meet regularly for prayer and discussion with those who are the direct leaders. Use your presence for encouragement and example, and provide advice and mentoring. Support your chaplains.

There are some positions and assignments where it is not possible or appropriate for Direct Leadership—perhaps extensive TDY or a very senior position that requires a full day and evening schedule. However, there should never be complete withdrawal from ministry. This type of ministry can be of great encouragement to younger officers who are asking critical questions about integrating their faith and their profession.

# OCF OBJECTIVES

The OCF is a body of believing officers from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces whose commitment to Jesus Christ includes both concern for and expression within the military society.\* While this commitment is directed toward all elements of the military society, its emphasis is to the officer corps.

The objectives of the OCF are:

1. To build up individual members to spiritual maturity in their walk with God, their family and their associates.
2. To be an instrument through which individual members are helped to lead men and women in the military society to:
  - Commit their lives to Jesus Christ
  - Grow to spiritual maturity in Him
  - Use their individual spiritual gifts toward these same ends in the lives of others.

To this end, the Fellowship seeks to stimulate and encourage members in Spirit-led prayer, Bible study and Christian witness. It also helps to organize local Bible study groups, area conferences, and other activities which further the purposes stated above. Its work is supported by the regular gifts of its members. OCF encourages its members to participate in the chapel programs of the armed forces.

Regular membership is open to present or former officers or warrant officers, or anyone training for a commission. (This includes members of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Commissioned Corps and the Public Health Service Corps.) Associate membership is available for all others interested in becoming active in the OCF.

\* *The term military society includes all ranks, family members and civilians who are a part of, or associated with, a military activity.*

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