



Christian perspectives on life in the military

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Calling all Daniels

It's said that it takes 10,000 hours to become proficient in any skill or knowledge. How well do you know God?

Do you know how to dream?

There are three tenets to dreaming for ourselves with a greater chance of realizing those dreams.

The effects of transition

Those who have laced up boots or buttoned an Armed Forces uniform in service to our nation know all-too-well the difficult and tough terrain of the transitional military life they lead.

Navigating today's military landscape



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Calling all Daniels

Having retired from the Air Force just over six years ago, I am amazed at how drastically our military landscape has changed. When I served, our on-base neighbors had traditional marriages. I didn't know what sexual dysphoria was. No one mentioned that they had a different sexual orientation. I bring up these points not to rail against our current culture, but to highlight how vastly different the military environment is today as opposed to when Lori and I were serving.



**DAVID
WARNER**
Executive
Director

A significant layer of complexity is added to this lopsided landscape of serving in today's military as a Christian. Complicating it even further are the many self-professing Christians whom pastor Craig Groeschel calls "Christian atheists." Although proclaiming a knowledge of and even love for Christ, their lives don't reflect such. And when combined with the perception that openly practicing Christianity is frowned upon, many live out their professional lives unaffected by their faith.

Disturbingly similar to idolatrous Babylon of the Old Testament in the time of the prophet Daniel, it can be easily argued that we are living in 21st century Babylon. Exiled to Babylon after Jerusalem was conquered, despite their captivity Daniel and his trio of friends rose to prominent positions, where "...God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17).

"As God's people in the military struggle with policies running counter to a biblical worldview," wrote (CH)COL Marc Gauthier in the September 2016 COMMAND magazine, "it's helpful to understand and practice the example of Daniel... Remaining prayed-up and under the authority of God, he willingly assumed risk when confronted with the unexpected challenges of living in a godless society. Daniel stood faithfully for his God-centered convictions, yet communicated them in a humble, gentle spirit."

We are in desperate need today of godly male and female Daniels to serve as Christ's ambassadors in our military. I'm drawn to this verse especially, "...the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action" (Daniel 11:32). Over the coming issues I will highlight the three main points of this verse—**know God, stand firm, take action**—starting with the most basic and foundational: Know God.

There are two truths to discover on this foundational issue of knowing God. The first truth is this: The Lord knows us. He created us. He loves and pursues us:

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord,

you know it altogether" (Psalm 139:1-4).

But, how well do you know Him? It's said that it takes 10,000 hours to become proficient in any skill or knowledge. With that in mind, apply this standard to your knowledge of the Lord. Say you're spending fifteen minutes a day in devotions and reading Scripture. At that rate, it would take over 108 years to become proficient. How are you doing with that daunting task?

The second truth is He wants us to know Him. The Lord seeks us, and sent His Son that we may know Him.

"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true" (1 John 5:20).


Knowledge of the Lord makes us competent—of who we are in Christ, and confident of where He has us. This competence enables us to share Him with others. Are you prepared to do that? Does your life bear witness to your faith in Christ?

Pastor Groeschel recalls a time when on the Chicago "L" train, a young man asked him why he believed what he believes. He admits he stumbled, and before he knew it the young man exited the train, saying, "Better luck next time, pastor." As 1 Peter 3:15 implores, "always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."

Knowledge produces competence, and it shows up in both your faith and profession. The integration of faith and profession is a powerful witness. Professional competence will draw others to seek you out to know what you know.

"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men" (Proverbs 22:29).

The world desperately needs to hear about Jesus, and we've been called to share Him. I encourage you to become competent in your knowledge of Him. Draw people through your professional excellence. Be prepared through your life and words to shine His life-saving light.

As with Daniel, knowing Him is the first step. 

White Sulphur Springs

Paul & Dawn Robyn // OCF Field Staff

Blessed by testimonies

We saw a couple share transparently about how the Lord used their time at WSS to help them work through some issues in their relationship. Saw a young family struggling with one son in particular, and another family dealing with the consequences of sin and life choices from one of their adult kids, all being encouraged, counseled and prayed for by others. We heard testimonies from many guests about how they were blessed by their time away from life's distractions and obligations—hearing the voice of God, getting needed rest and refreshment, and be ready for 2017. It's a true joy to be a small part of it all and to witness some of the many things the Lord was doing.



OCF USAFA photo

OCF Maxwell-Gunter

Hous & Tami Waring // OCF Field Staff reps

Blessed to speak at retreat

The men, women and children who joined us at White Sulphur Springs were such a blessing to be with. So many of these individuals and families have persevered through tough days, and they are still enduring for the sake of the gospel. What a joy to be allowed to speak the Word to them, praying that God would minister to their hearts through the time together. One of these families wrote me to report that their fifteen-year-old daughter confessed faith in Christ after the winter retreat. Thanks be to God!

OCF Pensacola

Chet & Michelle Arnold // OCF Field Staff

Thankful for the chance to mentor a young man

We are still in touch with several flight students who now have their wings and are serving at their new duty stations—and thankful that God allows us to continue being a part of their lives. One young man was in the process of making a very important life decision—and serious about doing things God's

OCF USAFA

Zach and Leah get engaged at 12,000 feet! Zach and Leah have been involved with OCF ministry since they entered the Air Force Academy. Over the past year, Rita and I have mentored this young pair individually—Rita with Leah and Zach with me—and as a couple. I had the joy of being on the mountain with a group of key senior OCF cadets, and the special joy of praying with Zach on the lift before witnessing Zach's asking Leah to marry him. She said yes! Rita and I are doing their pre-marriage counseling this semester and I will officiate at their wedding in May.

Steve & Rita Wade // OCF Field Staff

way. Concerned he had not received clear leading on this decision, he agreed to a time of fasting and prayer, and now "meets" regularly with Chet via phone. God revealed during this period some issues he needed squaring away in his life. He came face to face with how much "self" was still in the way of his relationship with God. Once that was made clear and he obediently repented,

the clarity he had prayed for was his! He plans on asking his girlfriend for her hand in marriage. We love this job!

Ministry News

OCF Council nominations

It's time for OCF members to

Continued on Next Page ►

prayerfully consider nominating someone who:

- Exemplifies biblical, spiritual, and professional leadership,
- Is committed to OCF's purpose and vision,
- Has the capacity to participate throughout the year in prayer, occasional phone calls and email discussions, and
- Is able to devote six days yearly (on leave or permissive TDY) to participate in spring (April) and fall (October) Council meetings.

Those who are elected by our membership will serve on the OCF Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2018. Nominations will begin 1 March and run through 30 April. Elections start on 1 September and run through the entire month. At least three OCF regular members (present/former officers, officer candidates, midshipmen and cadets) must submit an endorsement online for each nominee.

Go to the OCF website for more

information on nominating candidates for the OCF Council. The OCF Council represents and governs the organization, meeting biannually to set and review ministry priorities, establish policies, examine significant issues, and approve the budget.

Visit <http://voting.ocfusa.org> for more details.

Spring Council meeting at White Sulphur Springs

OCF Council's spring meeting is set for 20-23 April at OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center. If you are interested in attending, please contact Heidi Martin at heidi.martin@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

Changes for COMMAND

Starting with this issue of COMMAND, we will begin publishing three seasonal issues annually: a spring issue in March; summer issue in July; and a fall issue in November. The change in frequency is

part of the preparation as OCF moves to a fiscal year change, and also in meeting the fiscal challenges and ministry opportunities that come with the launch of OCF's 2018-2022 Strategic Framework on 1 June.

Upcoming Events

Southeast Region Retreat

17-19 March

Where: Fort Benning, Georgia's Uchee Creek MWR Facility

Speaker: Col Jim Dutton, USAF (Ret.), space shuttle Discovery pilot

Schedule: Speaker and Q&A sessions, recreational activities, Sunday worship

For more information on the availability of chalets, to inquire about RV sites, or for general inquiries about the event, contact OCF associate field staff rep Walt Hoskins: benning@ocfusa.org or 706-570-5788.

BIRTHS

Charity Grace Holmertz, born 25 December 2016, daughter of **Eric and Amber Holmertz**, Warrensburg, MO.

Michelle Miglietta, born 17 December 2016, daughter of **MAJ Mario and Victoria Miglietta, USA**, Miami Beach, FL.

William Isaac Wharton, born 28 December 2016, son of **Lt Col Heath and Rachel Wharton, USAF (Ret.)**, Buena Vista, CO.

TAPS

CAPT Jerry Moritz, CHC, USN (Ret.), 7 December 2016, husband of **Beverly Moritz**, Colorado Springs, CO.

CAPT Douglas McCrimmon, USN (Ret.), 9 November 2016, husband of **Judy McCrimmon**, Evergreen, CO. Doug served in the OCF home office as associate editor of COMMAND magazine and later as director of operations.

CH(LTC) Darryl Sparling, USA (Ret.), 4 December 2016, husband of **Carol Sparling**, Denver, CO.

CAPT Earle Sullivan, USCG (Ret.), 4 November 2016, husband of **CPT Rebecca Sullivan, USA (Ret.)**, Reidsville, NC.

OCF HONOR FUND

The OCF Honor Fund gift is a meaningful way to honor or remember someone special in your life while also supporting the ministry of Officers' Christian Fellowship.

HONOR CDR Bryan and Sherri Burt, USN (Ret.)
By 2ndLt Laura Stromback, USMC

Vietnam War Air Force Officers & Veterans
By Mr. C. Joe Sturz

Alan Leonard
By Mr. Canon Maggi

Benji and Lauren Marquez LTC Tom and Cheri Austin, USA (Ret.)
By CPT A. Edward Major III, USA

CDR Hank Teuton USCG, (Ret.)
By CAPT & Mrs. Larry Olson, USCG (Ret.)

CDR Richard Zahn, USNR (Ret.)
By Ms. Barbara Kronewitter

CDT Andres Alejos, USA
By Ms. Barcia Alejos

CDT Beau Webb, USA
By Mr. Christopher Webb

CDT Meagen Witham, USCG
By Mr. Donald Witham

Col Larry and Bobbie Simpson, USAF (Ret.)
By Lt Col & Mrs. Paul Greenlee, USAF

Col Terry and Artha Stokka, USAF (Ret.)
By Maj Michelle Taylor, USAF & Mr. Steve Taylor

CPT Brian Bishop and CPT Abigail Bishop, USA
By Mr. & Mrs. Jim Broadbent

COL James & Jeannie Hougnon, USA (Ret.)
By SFC Joy Hougnon, USA

Dennis Grace
By Ms. Josephine Harwood

Dr. Martin Carlisle
By Ms. Reagan Mullin
By Mr. Luke Jones

Joseph Angiolillo
By Ms. Deborah Kugler

Joshua Steele
By Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Steele

Joy Dunn
By Ms. Julie Jolley

LCDR Barthol Talaasen, USN (Ret.)
By Ms. Loraye Talaasen

Tyler Gabriel
By Mr. & Mrs. John Gabriel

OCF Chaplains Family Conference 20-23 April

Where: OCF's Spring Canyon Retreat & Conference Center

Speaker: CH(MG) Doug Carver, USA (Ret.), former U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains

Schedule: Worship, teaching sessions, family free time, and a concert by singer/songwriter Danny Byram.

For more information, visit springcanyon.org/chaplains-retreat-2

Resurrection Retreat 14-16 April

Where: OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center

Speaker: Matthew B. Redmond, pastor and author of *The God of the Mundane*

Schedule: Fellowship, worship, Easter morning sunrise service, and a children's program, nursery through high school, during adult sessions

For more information, visit

whitesulphursprings.org/resurrection-retreat

Transition Strategies Workshop 21-23 April

Where: OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center

Program: Caleb Challenge coaches will help transitioning military hear from God and navigate through unanswered questions about the future. Life planning and mapping out future dreams, objectives and financial goals are some of the weekend's activities.

For more information, visit either whitesulphursprings.org/agenda/transition-strategies-conference or calebchallenge.org

Hartley Holmes expansion dedication 29 May

The dedication of the Hartley Holmes Lodge expansion will take place on 29

May at OCF's Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center, Buena Vista, CO. The entire Memorial Day weekend, which includes an optional retreat and concert preceding the dedication, will be a grand celebration in culmination of OCF's Growing & Building capital campaign.

The enlarged dining hall on the upper level and four new classrooms on the lower level will be the seventh time a dedication of new facilities at either Spring Canyon or White Sulphur Springs in Pennsylvania has taken place over that holiday weekend.

The most recent was Spring Canyon's 2014 dedication of the new Fort Shine Lodge, with the original lodge's re-commissioning and renaming as Cornerstone Lodge.

Join us as we celebrate God's work and faithfulness through the campaign!

For more information, contact Heidi Martin at heidi.martin@ocfusa.org or 800-424-1984.

USMA Class of 1978

By COL & Mrs. Kim Kadesch, USA

USMA Class of 2014

By 1LT Breawna Davis, USA

William Hecker III

By COL & Mrs. William Hecker Jr., USA (Ret.)

MEMORIAL

1LT Jonathan Shine, USA

By Mr. & Mrs. Robert Yaap
By Mr. & Mrs. Larry Kleinstein
By MG & Mrs. Michael Nardotti Jr., USA (Ret.)
By Dr. Thomas Venard

Andrew Baer

By COL & Mrs. Robert Baer, USA
By Ms. Sue Schwendiman
By Ms. Robin Hilliard
By Ms. Amaryllis Rice
By Mrs. Helena Gerard
By Mr. Thomas Lemuel Jr.
By Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Lloyd
By LTC & Mrs. Michael Bigelow, USA (Ret.)
By LtCol Clifton Hertel, USAF (Ret.) & Mrs. Joanne Hagadorn

By CDR & Mrs. Aaron Rouland, USN

Betsy Teuton

By LTJG Rachel Christensen, USCG
By LT Andrew Simpson, USCG
By ENS Justin Sherman, USCG
By CAPT & Mrs. Roy Springer Jr., USN (Ret.)
By CAPT & Mrs. Jeffrey Westling, USCG
By LT Patrick Weaver, USCG

Betty Hale

By Col & Mrs. Charles Cox, USAF (Ret.)

Brig Gen William Worthington Jr., USAF (Ret.)

By Presbyterian Church of Central City
By Ms. Debbie Zackery
By Mr. Larry Willis
By Mr. & Mrs. Larry McClure
By Mr. & Mrs. Chris Howell
By Mr. & Mrs. Allen Vincent
By Anonymous

CAPT Douglas McCrimmon, USN (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Michael Edwards

CAPT Earle Sullivan, USCG (Ret.)

By Ms. Diane Weber
By Mr. George Rettie

Capt Elizabeth "Betsy" Kealey, USMC

By Mr. & Mrs. Charles Thompson
By Anonymous

CAPT Harry Miller, CHC, USN (Ret.)

By Mr. & Mrs. Paul Miller

CAPT John Duff Griffith, CHC, USN (Ret.)

By Presbyterian Church of Central City

Capt Mark McDowell, USAF

By Capt Christopher Peterson, USAF

COL Gerald Williams, USA (Ret.)

By Mrs. Lynn Williams

Rev. Robert Tucker

By COL & Mrs. Harold Tucker, USA (Ret.)

Deanna Bakke

By Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Thiel

By Mr. & Mrs. David Wammer

Geraldine Satterfield

By CH(MAJ) Steven Satterfield, ARNG

Louise Hawthorne

By Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Hawthorne

LT Roy Seaman, USN

By Mr. & Mrs. Delbert Elliott

LtCol Marvin Gardner, USMC (Ret.)

By Mr. Joseph Standish

Maj Ronald Johnson, USMC (Ret.)

By Mrs. Earline Johnson

Paul Koenig

By Ms. Lynne Koenig

CAPT Michael Dallam, USN (Ret.)

By CAPT & Mrs. Paul Ims Jr., USN (Ret.)

Ralph Martin

By Ms. Melinda Martin

Lori Sanderlin

By MAJ Dean & Sue Rizzo, USAR



Photo by TSgt Matt Hecht, ANG

The next step on the career ladder, transitioning out of the military, or “someday” goals may be unclear, but God has a great deal to say about our dreams for the future. Clarity comes by believing that God will direct us in our aspirations.

Three tenets to dreaming for ourselves

By Colonel Bill Spencer, United States Air Force, Retired

Do you still dream? Many of you have been successful because you had dreamt about serving your country, or flying, or exploring a distant port-of-call. But are you dreaming about what’s next for you and your family after military service? How do you dream about the next step, whether transitioning to a company or a nonprofit organization that’s involved in a cause that really moves you?

Don’t Miss It
Check out page 5 for more details on the Transition Strategies Workshop at OCF’s White Sulphur Springs Conference Center, 21-23 April.

Truth is, our dreams belong to God, and our dreams should be given over to Him. He has a great deal to say about our dreams, wants to be involved in them, and use them for His good purposes—and our benefit. Dreaming with reality is like putting God’s plans for us on “speed dial.” I’ve seen it in my own life.

As a young man dreaming about going into space, I once travelled to see the Apollo astronauts launch off to the moon. I placed myself atop that booming, cylindrical arrow as it rose skyward on a tongue of flame. Soon, I received word that I competed favorably for admission to the Air Force Academy. And in a few years, I would be flying my own plane on the end of a tongue of flame. God did all of that because He knows my dreams, too.

If you don’t dream, is anyone teaching your children how to dream? More likely than not, they’re being told what to dream rather than how to dream. Their peers are telling them they should dream about looking like that person in the teen magazine. Their college professor is telling them they have to dream for other life goals and put away their “draconian religious beliefs.” I would assert that the dreams others may have for your children could be one reason why so many leave their faith behind when they leave home.

And yet, if they were taught how to dream for themselves, they would find this very freeing and, in realizing their dreams, solidify their faith. They might be alerted to, and keep at arm’s length, the dreams others may have

for them. I have seen how our own dreams are realized more often and more quickly than those others may have for us. Don't you think that's what your children really want? Isn't that what you want?

When I speak with adults about teaching their children how to dream, many tell me they want to learn as well. I've taught about how to dream for years. I now speak at seminars and luncheons to leaders about dreaming with reality. I teach that there are three tenets to dreaming for ourselves with a greater chance of realizing those dreams.

The first tenet is to agree that absolute truths exist and truth will be the language of our dreams. If we are going to dream in another language, or someone else's language, then we run the risk of pursuing dreams that others have told us to pursue. What's worse, self-deception can more easily occur if we're being less than truthful with ourselves about what God wants for us. When we ask God to help us with our dreams, we must believe what we hear from Him and not substitute our own agendas or seemingly easier ways of realizing them. If we truly want to see our dreams become real, we must articulate that reality using God's language of truth.

The second tenet is to agree that faith is the landscape upon which we paint—or visualize—our dreams. We all have faith in something. But if we truly want what God wants for us as we dream, we'll pursue those dreams with the faith God gives us, staying plugged in to Him along the way. Faith will map out the journey for us. In this way, we will “stay in our lane” as we run the race to achieve the dreams God has for us.

The third tenet is to conclude that we are content with where God wants us to start dreaming. Think of it this way. God doesn't care where we start, but He has placed us where we are with certain experiences and abilities and we are to use those life lessons and skills to dream into the future with Him. Being content with God and His presence in, provision for, and providence over your life may be difficult for some who live in poverty or come from a broken home. But I cannot believe that God wants us to dream out of a spirit of discontentment.

You may not be personally happy with how you've prepared for life's looming transitions. But if you want to realize your future dreams, launch them on the foundation of God's sufficiency for you and your family's future. After all, He loves you more than you love yourself. He has placed you where He wants you and He knows exactly what He's doing.

With those three tenets in place, you can start visualizing your dreams. You do this already. When you take your children to visit colleges, is that just to talk to the admissions offices about scholarships, or is it to help your children see themselves at that institution and visualize their future there?

Ask your children about their dreams, and make an effort to help them establish that foundation of dreaming in their lives. Dream alongside them and visualize your dreams with them. Then, stand back and be amazed at

The PCS Wall of Dreams

By Dr. Dave Sanders

How does your family keep track of the PCS moves? Do you have a wall map with pushpins marking geographical spots connected by colored string, or a chain of wooden homes with installations/cities painted on them hanging one underneath the other? Whatever strategy you employ during transitions as a military family, it always brings on some degree of stress. While parents have the inside scoop on the where and why of an upcoming move, teens often feel entirely out of control as their world seems utterly upended.

Heightened emotional sensitivities during the adolescent years coupled with a corresponding parental amnesia (or suppression) of their own teenaged years makes for a magnificent mismatch during a family transition. I contend that parents can both empathize with teens during this transition phase and actually set a vision for kids to learn to dream about the next place by revealing Jesus' charge for our lives.

Talk about transition, Jesus' ascension into heaven while sending His followers into the world to live out what it means to be His people is a huge one. In the Great Commission, Jesus states, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

What if parents sat with their teen and read through this marvelous challenge (go everywhere; make disciples) coupled with potent equipping (all authority; with us) that Jesus declares over his followers? What if you dreamed together as a family about all the possibilities this empowering assignment poses? What if your teen actually got excited about God's potential for them at your next location?

Jesus' clarion call creates ministries, movements and nations through dreams of the kingdom embedded in human hearts. In preparation for your next PCS move, consider making a wall of dreams with contributions from every family member.

About Dave

Dave is a Christian Ministries professor at Judson University, special projects assistant for Military Community Youth Ministries, and senior author/editor for the American Bible Society's military teen website RezLife: <http://rezlife.americanbible.org>.

how God works for both of you.

My family knows best that when I stop dreaming, I will have stopped breathing. Like me, when you embrace His reality for your life, you'll never stop dreaming. ✍️

About Bill

Bill is currently teaching for Colorado Christian University where he was named 2014 Outstanding Faculty of the Year. He loves OCF's retreat centers, often speaking at Summer Celebration or as a transition coach with the Caleb Challenge team.



A1C Destinee Sweeney, USAF, photo

Strong communication, trust in God's best for us, are key to confronting the effects of the transitional military life upon relationships, especially in marriage and family life.

The effects of transition in the military

By OCF Communications

Those who have laced up boots or buttoned an Armed Forces uniform in service to our nation know all-too-well the difficult and tough terrain of the transitional military life they lead. High ops tempo, frequent deployment and reintegration issues, and both the visible and invisible scars of military conflict are just a few of the many issues that can stagger individuals and couples in their lives and relationships, especially in marriage and family life.

For the OCF field staff rep couples ministering at key military training areas or centers of mass, they see—and themselves know—how the continual transitions of the military world, coupled with underlying issues such as mixed life experiences or unaddressed problems, affect those they mentor. COMMAND asked three OCF Field Staff couples for their insights on this question:

How do military transitions affect relationships, especially in marriage and family life?

Larry and Bobbie Simpson: Both positively and neg-

atively—it depends on the perspective others take with any transition. But not all transitions are timely. Some come too frequently and can leave long-lasting effects for couples, who may be struggling to gain or restore their footing. Personally, the awareness that God orchestrated or allowed the move or change strengthened our hope for more fruitful relating in our next location.

Chet and Michelle Arnold: There are different types of transitions, and different types of effects, and ways to mitigate them into positives. Though not a military transition, an important context for steeling relationships against challenges, especially in marriage and family, is

to be “in” Christ and living in obedience to Him (Romans 1:5). Sometimes people marry a non-Christian or are not Christians when they marry. Perhaps they were in Christ, but not living in Spirit-filled obedience. Marriages centered in Christ can increase in resilience several orders of magnitude.

Hous and Tami Waring: All transitions in life are brought about by God for our good. They take us outside our comfort zones, our skills and resources, and keep us grounded in remembering God will take us through transitions we don’t know we need. They force greater communication in marriage, take us out of the quiet atrophy of a daily normal, and reveal that we are people with besetting sins who must daily preach the gospel to ourselves. Our obvious transitions included: singleness to marriage to parenthood, and job changes, such as Tami’s toughest “shock” from active duty captain to wife and mother.

Simpsons: Promotion-related transition, with or without relocation, often stresses already strained marital relations. The intention of placing a higher priority on the spouse, spending more time with the kids, or more faithful church attendance as a family suddenly slips priority-wise—career again demanding the best, family and faith settling for leftovers. A spouse may feel unappreciated for their demanding job, while the other may be losing hope that the marriage or family will ever come first for their active duty spouse.

Arnolds: Depending on the service culture, promotions can have a dramatic transition affect. All of a sudden your friends are no longer your peers! PCSing is another significant transition, and the effects vary by personality type and life experience. Well-handled PCS stressors within the marriage have a concomitant positive affect on the children. Parents must prayerfully, carefully bring their kids along on what can be an exciting family adventure.

Simpsons: An optimistic, expectant attitude can provide relational boosts. Traveling between assignments—spending quality time together on the road, with car games and mini vacations in hotels—can serve as a life-line to help loved ones reconnect and get back on track.

Warings: We wanted our kids to know the same truth about change that we hold fast to—that it is God’s good providence for them to experience change, to endure long days of packing and unpacking, to learn how to say farewell to dear friends, and to love new kids who aren’t exactly like them.

Simpsons: To thrive in relationships, choose to face transition with gratitude and a positive outlook. Trust that God is working something good on your behalf. Before and following each transition, pray with your spouse, using *Pray, Discover, Obey*. Ask God to help you know His heart and for courage to obey His will for your life.

Arnolds: Communication requires intentionality, and this is particularly true during times of separation or assignments to duty stations with long work hours or in se-

Other types of transitions

► **New spouse, new lifestyle:** The transition to the military lifestyle for a new spouse is unique among professions. It takes time to acculturate to the eccentricities, expectations and unique stressors, especially those of deployment.

► **Promotions:** Friendships among peers change. The most dramatic changes: at E-4, E-7, O-4, O-6, O-7 and O-9.

► **Assignments:** Changes, especially for families, can be intense with moves from the comradery of a cohesive unit, that’s of your primary warfighting specialty, to an independent duty or HQ (the Pentagon) tour assignment.

Other effects from transitions

► **Physical affection:** During periods of separation, the affirmation of physical touch is missing.

► **Isolation:** Geographic distances or inter-/ intra-service differences can both alienate others in their relationships, especially with military families.

► **Single parenting:** Depending on the ages of the children, this can be quite stressful, with adolescents presenting strong challenges.

► **Finances:** Careful planning is necessary: for home-front spouses uncomfortable with managing finances, and for the deployed spouse’s unintentional, untimely spending/ overspending that could place the home in dire straits.

Mitigating the effects of transition

► Spending time in God’s Word

► Prayer

► Chapel/church, especially during difficult assignments

► Biblical fellowship, especially during difficult assignments

► Messages of affirmation, don’t forget handwritten notes!

► Intentional, effective communication with others

► Detailed financial planning

questered spaces. Recognizing potential negatives and purposely working them into positives will make for stronger communication in relationships, even in the midst of difficult periods. Couples that pray, memorize Scripture verses, and read a devotional together—all effective with today’s technologies—are important ways to keep a Christ-centered marriage. It’s important to include children in communication that affirms them.

Warings: For our marriage to thrive, we needed to learn (and are still learning) to enter a rest (Hebrews 3:7-4:13) that is found in right relationship with God the creator and sustainer of all things, and knowing peace with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. It’s by faith—not by better planning efforts, nor by accumulating more resources to face the days ahead. ✕

The Simpsons, Warings, and Arnolds serve OCF as Field Staff couple reps. The Simpsons minister in Puget Sound, Washington, and also head up OCF’s Family Outreach ministry. The Warings and Arnolds minister at Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida, respectively.



SGT Karen Sampson, USAR, photo

Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET) candidates tackle the challenge of an obstacle on the confidence course during Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

From Fort Knox to the Foot of the Cross

By Second Lieutenant Taylor Goddard, Missouri National Guard

I arrived mid-June for summer training for Army cadets at the Cadet Leader Course (CLC) at Fort Knox, Kentucky, that would last until the second week in August. Like the Army does, I was “volun-told” to be a Military Science III (MSIII) squad leader at Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET) for the underclassmen before reporting for my own CLC dates. I was mad, to say the least, because my entire summer was shot.

Looking back, though, I thank God I was at Fort Knox for those roughly fifty days because that’s what it took to get me to realize something in my life had to change. Having grown up with a mother who was an alcoholic and drug addict, I started making my own poor decisions in college. I dated a married man for several months, was victimized by a con-artist, and had done and seen other things I am not proud of. But somehow I hadn’t completely lost my faith in God.

In the first week at CLC, I decided to go to the Wednes-

day evening Protestant church service. While in the chapel I heard an announcement about a Bible study immediately following the service. That I stayed for it was a huge step for me because at that point I had never experienced a Christian community outside of church pews. Although I didn’t have a deep relationship with Jesus I still considered myself a believer. My faith modeled that of the average American “Christian” who goes to church Easter/Christmas/whenever convenient, prays before a meal, and talks to God when depressed or in need—only

OCF-Valor's ongoing 'remarkable ministry' to ROTC cadets

In partnership with Cru Valor, one of OCF's primary outreach programs to ROTC students takes place at the annual summer training programs for Air Force and Army ROTC cadets at Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama, and Fort Knox, Kentucky, respectively. OCF field staff reps Hous and Tami Waring lead the efforts at Maxwell-Gunter.

At Fort Knox, OCF local leaders Bob and Lola Deckard, and a team of over forty volunteers, assist at chapel services and host Bible studies following the worship services at the invitation of the Cadet Command chaplain. In 2016 alone, more than 970 cadets attended the Bible studies, with some thirty-seven cadets making known first-time decisions to trust in Jesus Christ.

"The fruit of the ministry has been remarkable," said field operations director Tom Schmidt, who assists and coordinates all OCF field operations, including ROTC ministries, for the OCF home office. "Bob facilitated the link-up of forty cadets with OCF POCs for the cadets' follow-on, one-month training at field locations. A total of 628 cadets expressed interest in further contact with OCF. Each will receive a letter and encouragement from us.

"The Deckards and Warings are powerful servants who welcome, encourage, and cast a vision for future leaders who will serve across the globe in the military," said Tom.

to turn around and blame Him for personal shortcomings.

But it wasn't until that first Bible study that I began to take my spiritual life seriously, faced with very real questions: where are you in your spiritual maturity? Do you simply know facts about Jesus or do you know Him personally? Do you even know what that looks and feels like? BOOM. It hit me hard. I had no idea what true joy and peace felt like because I was leading a self-centered life, concerned with my own happiness.

Those questions just killed me. I started tearing up when a girl next to me spoke out, saying she wasn't the woman she wanted to be. Right there in that moment, Lola Deckard, who was leading our study, prayed with this cadet to rededicate her life to Christ and give Him control. "Me too," I blurted out. "I want that too!" And our group prayed. From that point on, and all throughout my Fort Knox summer, I kept having "God moments." He would reveal himself to me all the time, especially in the field.

When I was tired, fatigued or simply aggravated by that "one guy" in the platoon, I would cry out in prayer. I read the Bible and other Christian literature daily. I was given the Rick Warren *Purpose Driven Life* forty-day devotional from a chaplain when I had forty days left at camp (do the math on that God-thing!)—that book lived in my ACU pants pocket and went everywhere with me.

Jesus' power to save shouldn't be kept secret, so after summer training at Fort Knox and back at the University of Missouri-Columbia, I started a Valor Bible study. As the weeks and months passed, we grew in number and ended our year with nearly fifteen committed cadets. I felt so honored, with the Holy Spirit's aid, to minister to these young hearts and minds hungry for Jesus.

I sometimes wonder why I am in the Army, why I chose this path—if I am meant to be in this profession. That's when God quickly reminds me He's placed me here in this Army environment on purpose—and He has a plan. I enjoy conversing with other Army officers, soldiers, and those I come in contact with in the civilian world, so I started a Sunday evening small group on post at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, for my fellow classmates.

I feel that the Lord has called me to share my story because I know what life looks like without Him in it—and it's one not worthy of living. Although not every day is sunshine and rainbows—the Bible doesn't promise us a life of ease without suffering—with Him in my life, I am content and have joy beyond measure. It's the promise of a beautiful future with God—in eternity where there will be no more death—that keeps me motivated to serve our country while serving Him.

My 2015 experience in Kentucky brought me to the foot of the cross, saving my soul in a way words cannot explain. What Jesus did on the cross is remarkable. He died for you, for me—so ugly and imperfect in our sins. Yet, no matter how far we stray from Him, Jesus loves us. He's only a prayer away.

I love sharing Jesus because my story shows how powerful and sovereign the Lord truly is. ✝️

About Taylor

Taylor, who aspires to serve in law enforcement in the military and civilian capacities, is attending the Military Intelligence Basic Officer Leader Course (MIBOLC) at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. After her April graduation, she transitions to Fort Hood, Texas, for training, and then on her first deployment this summer with her Missouri National Guard unit.



Gwynn Vaughn photo



Maxwell-Gunter OCF photo



Pensacola OCF photo

Carlisle Barracks—Pennsylvania

TOP: Uniting for Fellowship, one of OCF's eight Spiritual Pillars, usually starts with small group Bible studies. But add the warmth and amenities radiating from OCF's White Sulphur Springs Conference Center, mix in a large group of all ages—and it's a game-changing retreat. The Carlisle Barracks Protestant Chapel Community enjoyed a weekend retreat together this past fall, a get-away of fun and fellowship to recharge the batteries for serving Christ.

Maxwell-Gunter OCF—Alabama

ABOVE LEFT: Cadets, officers and chaplains attending various training courses at Maxwell-Gunter AFB gathered together to study Acts 10—the account of Roman military leader Corne-

lius and how God worked to first bring the gospel to the Gentiles through the centurion. The goal of the Bible study: helping one another toward graduation, living "unashamed lives laid down for those they serve."

Pensacola OCF 5K—Florida

ABOVE RIGHT: It was a "great day for a 5K—if you like your runs cold and windy!" Along with the runners, two babies and an eight-year-old gutted it out and crossed the finish line with smiles, except one baby who fell asleep. Some post-race fellowship took place over lunch.



Spring Canyon photo



Kim Hawthorne photo



Spring Canyon photo

Hartley Holmes expansion—Colorado

TOP: Despite being slowed down by five feet of snow between Christmas and late January, great progress continued with the Hartley Holmes dining room/classroom expansion project at OCF's Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center. This early February photo, through the "Hummingbird window" looking out toward the Hook on Mt. Princeton, shows the enlarged dining facility.

Sheppard AFB OCF Reunion—Colorado

ABOVE LEFT: Attendees of the Sheppard AFB OCF Bible study gathered for a reunion at Col Dale Holland's retirement ceremony. The couples pictured here met for Bible study and fellowship

during the 1989-92 timeframe. Col Holland, shown with his wife, Debi, (right) retired at USAFA as the Vice Commandant of Cadets. He serves on the Spring Canyon Advisory Council.

USAFA Work Party—Colorado

ABOVE RIGHT: Former NASA engineer Merlin Merritt (center) spoke to USAFA cadets on leadership during the USAFA Work Party last fall at OCF's Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center. He was one of the engineers tasked to save Apollo 13, which was damaged in space after an explosion and an oxygen tank rupture. Merlin and his engineer peers came up with a unique design using plastic bags, cardboard and duct tape to save the three astronauts aboard the crippled spacecraft.



OCF USAFA photo

Helping cadets stay true to their faith

By OCF Communications Department

Opportunities for iron-sharpening-iron relationships that build foundational faith to stand on in these radical times. That is the goal of fellowship that permeates throughout OCF's multi-faceted ministry to the military.

Taking place at key military education or center of mass locations. Through year-round conference center activities, local Bible studies or mentoring. All made possible in partnership—sharing time, talents and treasure to reach others with Christ's love, grace and mercy.

If you've ever wondered what Officers' Christian Fellowship does, here's one snapshot from the album showing God's kingdom work through OCF.

OCF at the United States Air Force Academy

Who: Lt Col Steve and Rita Wade, USAF (Ret.), OCF Field Staff reps

How long there: Since 2003

Special background: Rita and Steve served on College Campus Staff with CRU before entering the military. Steve served twenty-two years in the Air Force where

God used him and Rita "to bring God's Gospel and Word to many people at every assignment." Rita has a Master's degree in Professional Counseling, which she uses every day at USAFA. Post AF, Steve completed seminary, earned a Master's degree in Christian Ministry, and is a licensed pastor.

What's your key motivation to reach the cadets?

It is an honor to come alongside so many cadets helping them know God better and develop godly perspectives for all of life. We labor in His mighty power as we pray, disciple, serve, encourage, and spur on to love and good deeds those whom God has placed in our sphere of influence.

...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; Ephesians 4:12

...to present everyone complete in Christ. Colossians 1:28

Why is OCF's ministry to USAFA cadets so important?

We provide a supportive environment to

help cadets know God better and stay true to their faith during turbulent college years

Cadets who know God and hold a high view of God will trust Him to totally take care of them, will do His will without fear, and will live their lives for His glory as spiritual leaders and military leaders.

How we facilitate OCF ministry:

- Monday night large group meetings—worship and small groups
- Wednesday evening ladies' and men's groups
- Saturday night fellowship and Bible study at the Wades' home
- Eight volunteer military couples (ministry team) who lead, teach, disciple, love and feed cadets
- One-on-one discipleship throughout the week
- Three retreats each year at OCF's Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center
- Parents Weekend open house—meet parents, let them know about OCF ministry
- Pre-marriage counseling
- Spiritual commissioning

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Lieutenant Jon Uyboco
 UNITED STATES NAVY CHAPLAIN

Came to OCF: During my second year at the Naval Academy, after persistent invites from my roommate. Thanks, Josh Crouse!

Why OCF: The relationships and faithful teaching of God's Word helped steady me during some rocky Naval Academy years. I met my wife at a Hawaii OCF study. We grew a lot during those formative years of our marriage, developed some amazing friendships. I'm grateful to many OCF leaders/mentors along the way: Tom Thompson, Spence Kawamoto, Cartus Thornton.

Tunes you're listening to: Jack Johnson—even if his songs sound the same.

What's on your bucket list: I still owe Suzanna a trip to Italy—for a cooking tour. She's a great cook; I like to pretend I know what I'm doing.

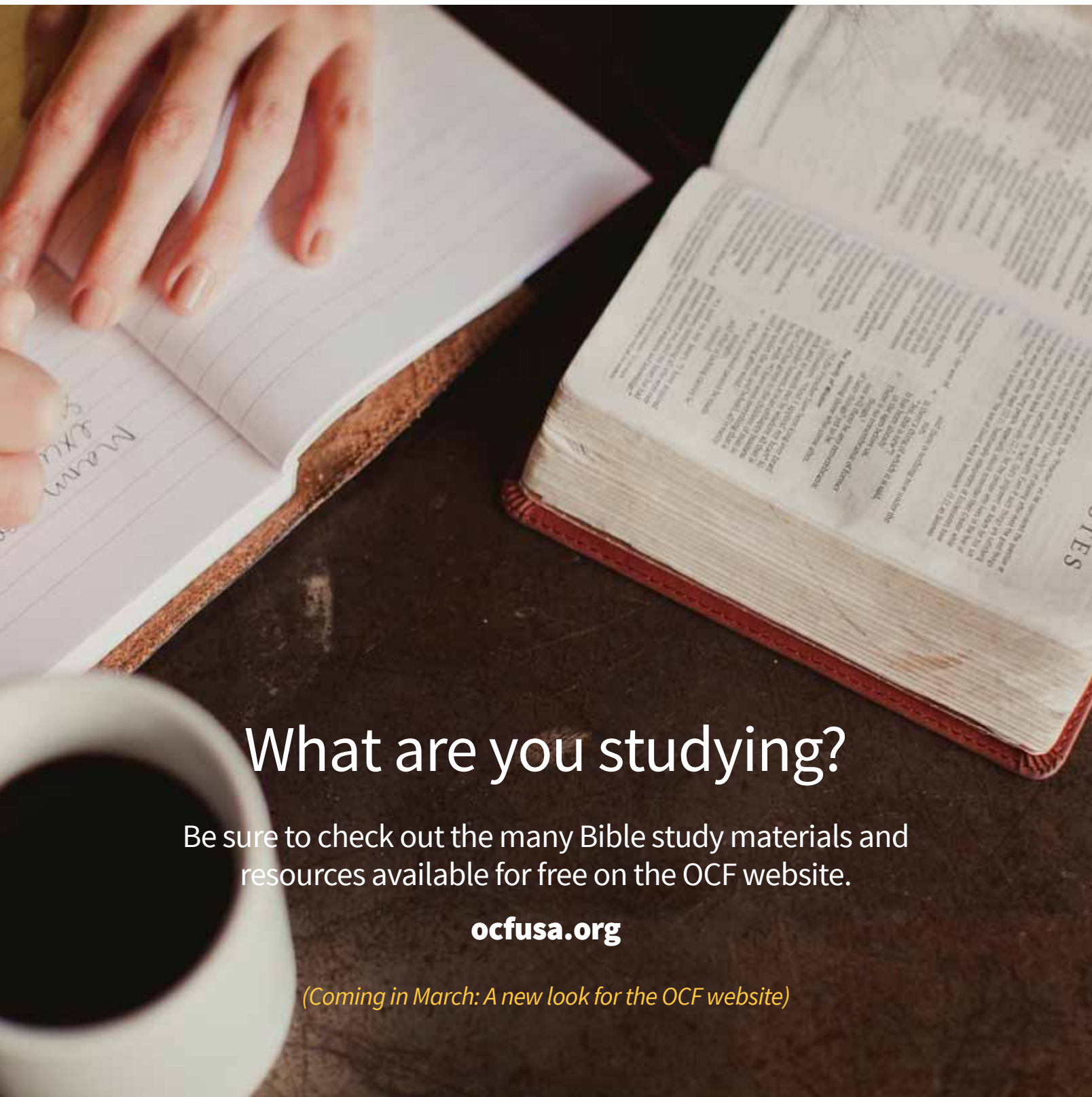
Why a military life: I started thinking about becoming a chaplain during my last year in the Navy (a submarine officer from 1999-2007), finally becoming

a chaplain in 2014. God used a series of events to prepare, refine, and humble me for ministry. I love the opportunity to serve alongside and walk with Marines and sailors through the military life's highs and lows.

Why your transition to the chaplaincy: I feel that God planted the idea to come back as a chaplain to help the lost find Him. One prevailing thought from my last year active duty was that the Taliban was the "evil" enemy and we were the "good" guys. There's a lot of truth in that statement; but my heart was burdened that so many of our "good guys" did not know Christ, saddened to think of their eternal fate without Him.

Best advice given you: Take your job seriously, but never take yourself seriously.

Life Bible verse: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us" (1 John 4:10).



What are you studying?

Be sure to check out the many Bible study materials and resources available for free on the OCF website.

ocfusa.org

(Coming in March: A new look for the OCF website)