

CALL TO DUTY

VOL. 1, ISSUE 7

THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



One of the ways congregations use to attract visitors is to tell them to “come as you are.” You can see this phrase on church signs, websites, and Facebook pages. Since Jesus spent lots of time with sinners in their environment and invited sinners to join him, we should do the same thing.

The problem arises when some of these congregations do not voice the expectation that Jesus has for sinners to change. It seems the attraction is that you can come as you are and stay as you are. Whatever makes you happy is okay. Jesus just wants you to be happy. Change is not needed.

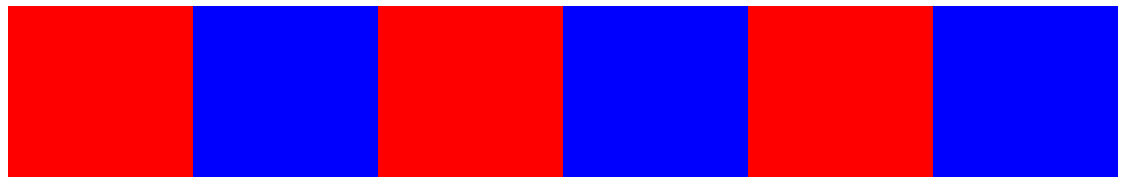
We know this is wrong. Jesus wants sinners to come to Him, but He requires change. When the scribes and Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus (John 8:1-12), she had no choice but to come to Him as she was. She was caught in the act of adultery and brought to Him. Although Jesus told her He did not condemn her, He did say, “Go and sin no more.” Jesus required her to change.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he told Jesus that he kept the commandments (Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 18). The young man was very secure in his belief that he would have eternal life. Jesus knew the young ruler’s heart though and told him to sell all that he had, give to the poor, and follow Him. The man was sorrowful and left without changing.

Romans 12:2 tells us, “Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

So, we should invite people to come as they are. Jesus associated with sinners, and so should we. We must, however, always ensure that while you should come as you are, you should not stay that way. Do not be conformed to the world.

~ Tony Turner



MILITARY OUTREACH & ENCOURAGEMENT

CONFORMITY

Anyone who has ever spent any time in the military has experienced conformity to some degree. To conform is to blend in, to be similar or the same as others, and to take the shape of a form or mold.

From the very onset of military life, conformity in many ways is encouraged and at times expected. This point is made ever so evident in basic training. In basic training, a drastic change occurs over the course of the first week and beyond. Clothes that used to set you apart are replaced by a uniform. Hairstyles that made you unique are now trimmed to the same specifications. By the end of that basic training stint, many different individuals look and act very similar. The point is that conformity happens in many ways in the military.

To be sure, conformity is not always a negative thing. Removing external distractions helps the new recruits act as a unit rather than as individuals. Moreover, conformity helps one to see that even as a military unit you have individual strengths and weaknesses.

The Bible is specific about the negative impact of a certain kind of conformity, conformity to the world. Paul speaks by inspiration about the negative effects of conformity to this world (Romans 12:2). Peter, likewise encourages the follower of God to avoid conformity to our desires (1 Peter 1:14). To conform to the world is to love the world and to love the world is to stand opposed to God the Father (1 John 2:15-17).

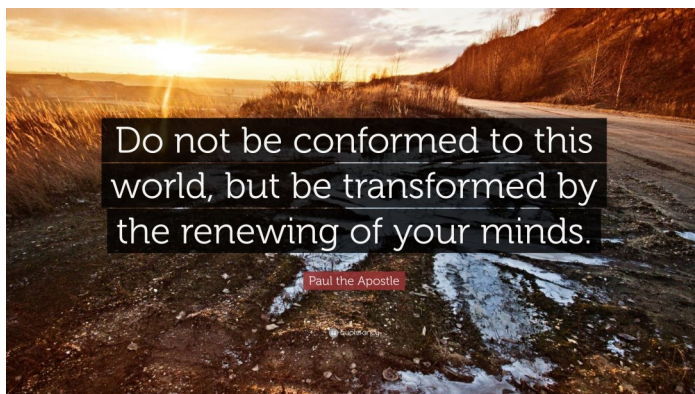
Conformity in and of itself is not sinful. In fact, we should strive to conform to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29). Paul states that the process of conform-

ing to Christ, instead of the world, begins with the transforming of our minds (Romans 12:2). This does not mean that we are no longer individuals with likes, dislikes, and distinct personalities. This could not be further from the truth. God utilized men from various backgrounds as writers of the New Testament. They each kept their personalities intact while simultaneously being inspired by the Spirit of God. We are unique to God, even though we may feel like just another number in many areas of our life.

We should remember that our purpose is not found in conformity to this world but in conformity to Christ. Each individual has a transformative process to go through and we must continually look inward in self-examination to see how we might better serve God.

~~ Freddie Klein

Fredrick is an Air Force veteran, formerly serving as an avionic technician on the B1 airframe at Ellsworth AFB before being honorably discharged in 2010. He has gone on to receive his Bachelor of Theology from the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, a Bachelor of Psychology from the University of Colorado at Denver, and his Master of Divinity from Freed-Hardeman University. Fredrick is married to Inge and has two children, Waylon and Wesley. He currently serves as the pulpit minister for the Southside church of Christ in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He also serves as the Dean of Admissions for the Southeast Institute for Biblical Studies in Knoxville, Tennessee, and as Chaplain for the local Trail Life troop.



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House to House
Heart to Heart

THE DEBORAH RICE MILITARY OUTREACH FUND

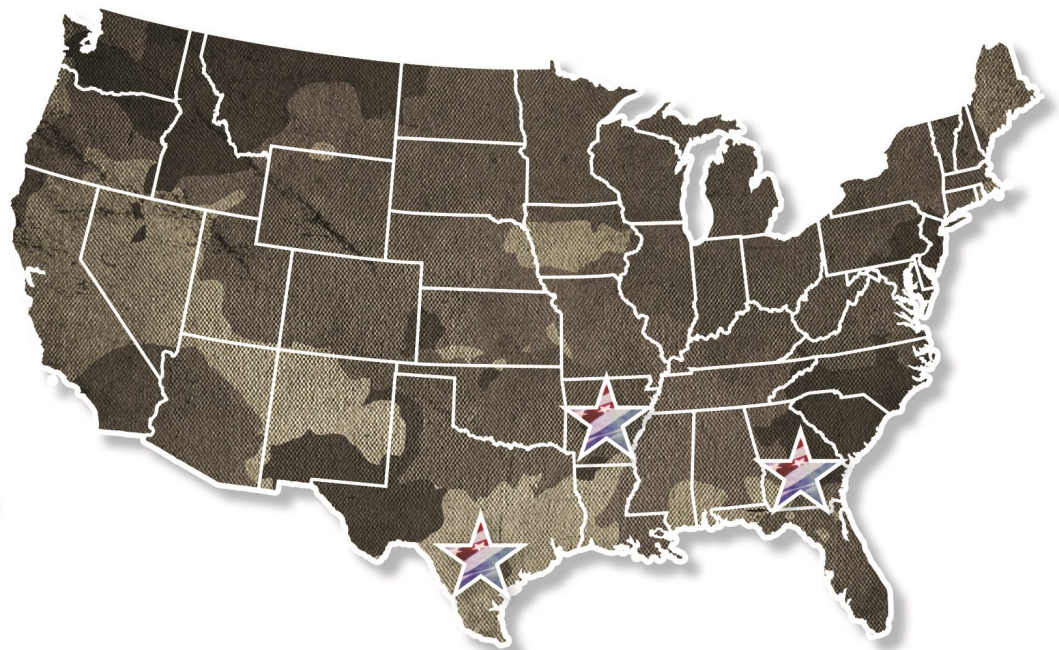
Deborah Rice, lovingly known as Ms. Deb, worked with House to House and Polishing the Pulpit for over 15 years. Her son is in the Army, and she was very patriotic. She loved America, and every year we celebrated Veterans Day and Memorial Day with her. In October 2021 she suffered a brain aneurysm. She fought for her life until February 4, 2022. To honor her, we have set up a donation fund to send out HTH to military bases in her honor. For every dollar given, at least three copies will be sent out around a military base, to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

You can donate here: housetohouse.com/mrs-deb-memorial-fund/.

As donations come in, we will send more HTH copies to additional bases across the continental United States (CONUS for military folks). As we send to new bases, we will add stars representing those areas.

"My parents we converted while serving in the USAF. Because of someone's diligence to spreading the gospel, my family are thankfully Christians. My parents both work for the church and I now work at House to House spreading the gospel."
—Ahren Steis

We are honored to have known Ms. Deb, and we are better for it.



DEDICATING OURSELVES IN MILITARY-LIKE SERVICE TO GOD & COUNTRY

Back in the late 1960's and early 1970's of the 20th Century, I felt compelled to respond to two calls to duty of a military-like service to God and country (USA) in that order (Phil. 2:20-21). While the first call in faithful and obedient service (as a Christian soldier) to Christ is always a spiritual and eternal one, the second call is always a physical and temporal one at its very best. Regardless of my failures and victories in one or the other or both calls, one of the most important things over all is the Bible "instructs" all Christians how to offer up dedicated military-like service to God (first) and country (second). Dedicated service to God and Christ always takes first priority.

Comparably, the apostle Paul instructed the Gentile and Jewish Christians in the church at Rome (around late A.D. 50's) how to achieve that dedicated service as spiritual soldiers in Christ's army while stationed on earth. He wrote to them stating, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (NASB Bible) Accordingly, when reading this verse, it becomes evident Paul wrote what he did for all soldiers of God .

First, when Paul wrote to the Roman Christians to not be conformed to this world, he meant the following: they were not to make this old world their fashion plate (in any way, shape, or form) during the age or time frame in which they lived on earth. Instead, as like soldiers of the cross of Christ, they were to conform themselves to the image of Christ in all areas of their lives while they were stationed upon this battlefield of earth (fighting their evil enemies of Satan, sin, and death). If they died faithful to Jesus, they were then given a PCS (permanent change of station) to Paradise.

Second, when he wrote the Roman Christians not to be conformed to the world, Paul also wrote they could only accomplish such a transformation (transition into another form...like Christ) by the renewing of their minds (a renovation from the lower physical and temporal worldly mindset into the higher spiritual and eternal heavenly mindset via the scriptures). Put another way, it was known that differences of opinion on many scripture topics existed between the Gentile and Jewish Christians. The major topic was who the gospel plan of salvation was for (Rom. 1:16-17).

Third and foremost, it was that difference of opinion (the Jewish Christians thought it was for them while the Gentile Christians thought it was now equally for them) Paul was trying to settle between them once and for all. Therefore, Paul (through his writing of Romans) was trying to tell all of them (Gentile and Jewish Christians) that only through their non-conformance to the world and the renewing of their mindsets could they prove to themselves what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. That is, the Bible's gospel plan of salvation is for all...!

All faithful and obedient Christian soldiers are those who dedicate themselves in service to God and country. In closing, during all of my military-like faithful and obedient time in dedicated service to God and country, I know I am destined to obtain a PCS to heaven, not hell (1 John 5:13).
~~ Tom Wright



Tom Wright served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War Era. Following his military discharge, Tom graduated college and worked in Design Engineering for over two decades. In his middle forties, he left secular work and entered fulltime ministry. He holds degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Master of Biblical Studies, and Doctor of Ministry. Tom has spent about the past twenty-five years serving God as an evangelist, preacher, and teacher. He and his wife Carla live in the Colorado Springs area and worship with the Calhan church of Christ.

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“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Romans 10:14

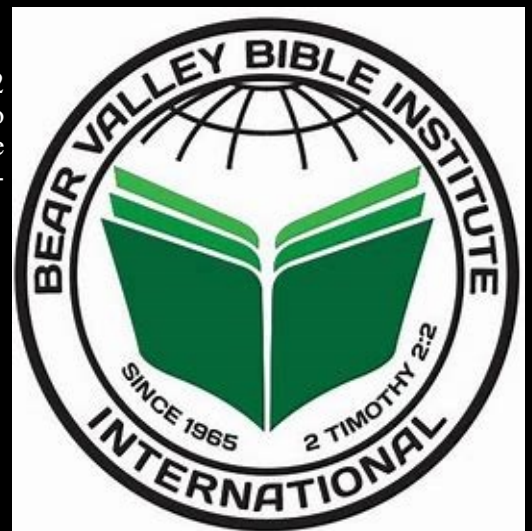
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COUNSELOR'S CORNER

WHAT'YA GONNA DO?

In Romans chapter 12, verse one, the Apostle Paul throws down the gauntlet – in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice. Whoa, wait a minute Paul, that's some strong words. I don't have a problem sacrificing some things, like giving up a few bad habits; maybe changing the way I think about some things or even give more time or effort to my local church. But what is this living sacrifice that you are talking about? Isn't the whole process of sacrifice about killing something or giving something up? Living sounds like something on-going and well . . . alive. Yes it is, but that isn't the whole picture here.

So, just what is a living sacrifice? Sounds like an oxymoron but Paul doesn't leave us hanging here; we don't have to read between the lines on this one. Verse two tells us plainly: And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom 12:2).

We all like to think that we take the path less travelled, that we are adventurous, like to take a little risk, change things up a bit and to go where no man has gone before (shout out to the trekkies in the audience). In other words, we don't fall in with the crowds, we chart our own path. But, more than likely, we are not quite all that. Conformity is a comfortable place to be; we don't like to stand out or be so different than the environment around us. We like to know what's around the corner and not be surprised. But, Paul is calling us to be different. As one translator puts it "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold," which is what the Greek term for "conform"—*syschēmatizō*—means: "to form according to a pattern or mold." The same term is found in only one other place in the New Testament, which is 1 Peter 1:14: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance." In other words, break the mold, stop following the pattern—of this world. That's important to remember. God was the first potter, forming Adam from the dust of the earth. Job, in his anguish called out to God: Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? (Job 10: 8,9). We are not to be world-conformists, but to be God-unique as He created us to be

If we are not to conform to this world, if we are to reflect God's unique shape given to you and I, then how?

Paul moves right into it--renewing your mind is going to equal transformation. Think about "re-new" for a moment. Doesn't it mean at one time, something was new and that we need to get back to it again? Renew means to resume after an interruption; to make like new; restore to freshness; regenerate; just the "re" means going back to the original place or state. So, this is the "how" it's done, but with "what" is it done? Let's look at the rest of the verse: "that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Renewing your mind is to align your mind with the truth of God's Word by learning to recognize the lies of the enemy, replace them with the truth of God's Word and then reinforce that truth every time the enemy comes with those same lies. In 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV), God's Word teaches us that "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ..." Taking a thought captive is warrior language – it literally means to capture or conquer that thought and compare it to God's Word. Does this thought agree with God's promises or not? If not, then I reject its influence in my life – and replace it with one of God's promises from His Word. Thoughts inform our emotions, which in turn, inform behaviors which affects our physical and spiritual states. In other words, thoughts are foundational and transformative!

Renewing your mind is not just a spiritual process, but a physiological one as well. When you intentionally change the way you think to align with God's Word, it literally creates new connections and pathways in your brain to make that process easier and more preferred over time (think habit!) Through the process of neuroplasticity, your brain can literally be reconfigured to align with the truth of God's Word and this is part of the re-new that Paul is talking about. Remember Proverbs 23:7 (KJV) "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." So, what'ya gonna do?

~~Darren Crowden

BE
TRANSFORMED
BY THE
RENEWING
OF YOUR
MIND.
ROMANS 12:2

Darren Crowden retired from the U.S Air Force and works for the Defense Logistics Agency at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. He has a Masters Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Amridge University, and uses his education and vast experience to minister within, and outside, the church. Darren has previously served as an elder of the Lord's church in Pennsylvania for many years. He and his wife, Jennifer, are active members of the Chase Park Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama. You can reach Darren at cnerrad@yahoo.com



American Military Evangelizing Nations

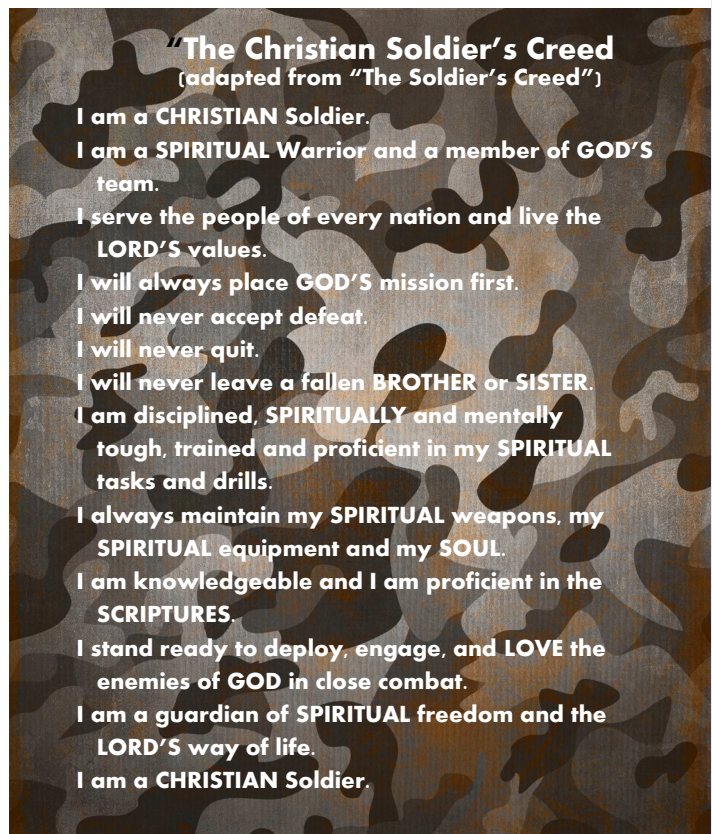
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GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN FOR YOU

HEAR *the word of God:* Romans 10:9-14; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 2:7; 22:18-19

BELIEVE *in Jesus as Savior of world:* John 3:16; 14:6; 14:23

REPENT *of your sins:* Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21,22; 3:3, 19

CONFESS *Jesus before others:* Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-11

BE IMMERSED *into Christ for forgiveness of your sins:* Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22

AS YOU WERE...

"... three words spoken quickly by non-commissioned and commissioned officers who choose to drop rank and get to business, is meant to put troops 'at ease.'"



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CALL OF DUTY SPIRITUAL WARFARE



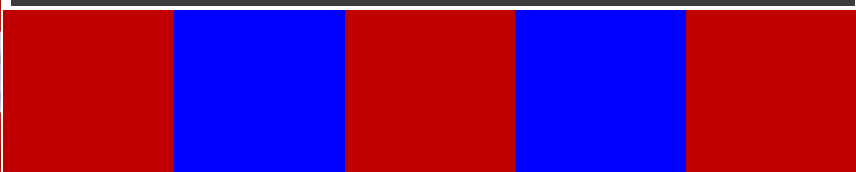
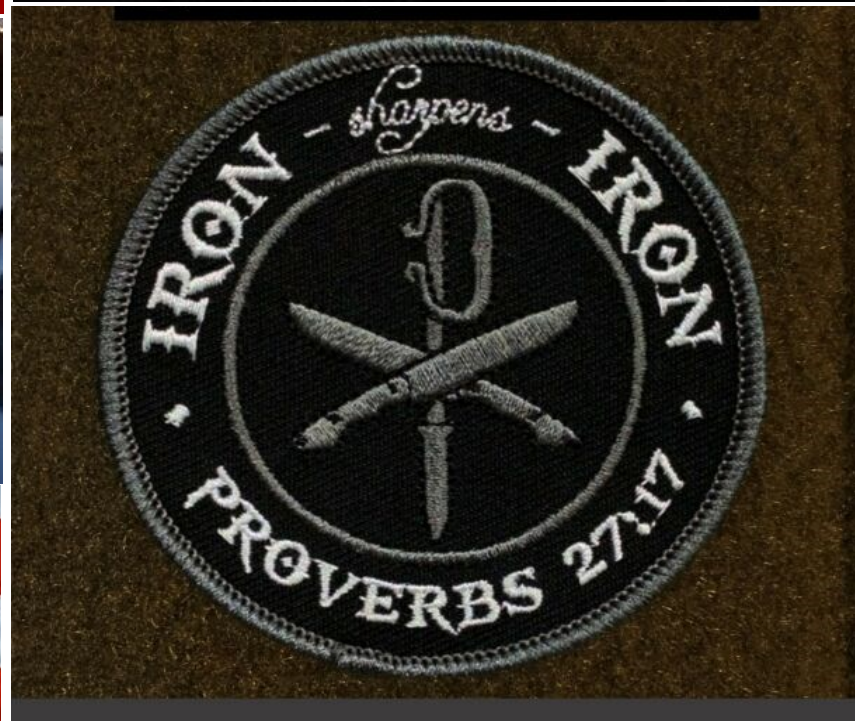
Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...

Ephesians 6:13

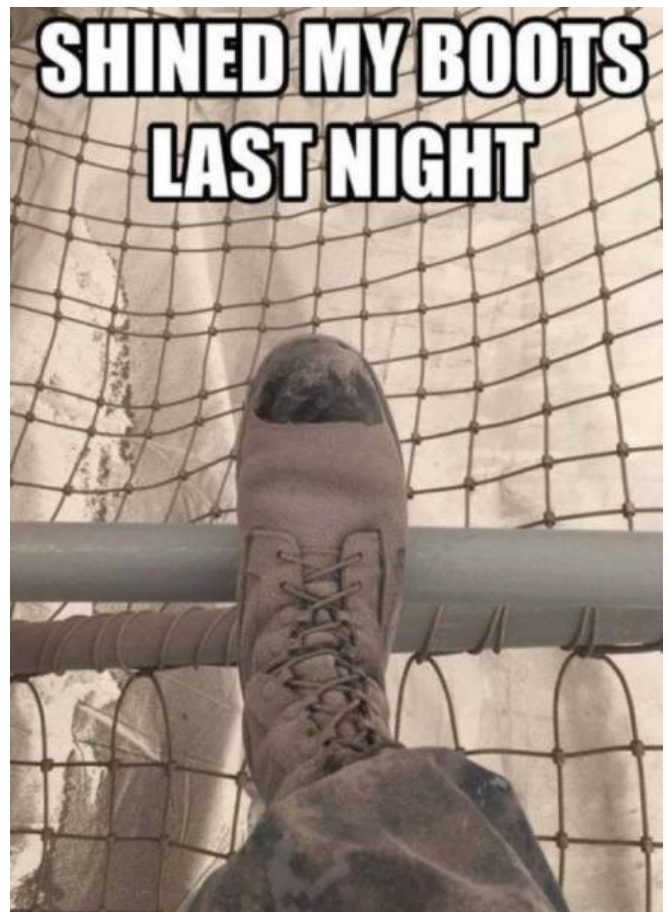
Pray
Through
Stressful
Difficulties
(James 1:2-8)



**HAND-TO-HAND
COMBAT**

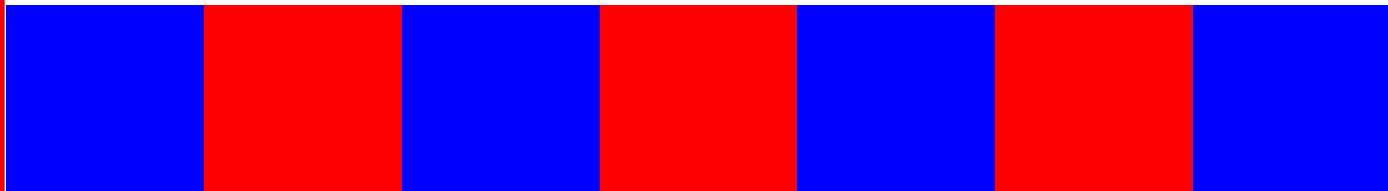


THE LIGHTER SIDE



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(BASE 2 BASE, HEART 2 HEART)

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Heart to Heart

House To House, Heart To Heart is a monthly American magazine. **HTH** is a customizable, 8 page, color, Christian magazine that works exclusively with Churches of Christ. The publication is printed every month for a total of 12 issues a year and is directly mailed into homes. Each issue contains gospel lessons, and biblical stories. **HTH** is printed in English, French, and Spanish with other special translations such as Korean.

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