

Dearly Beloved of God,

You are that, you know - dearly beloved of God. John 3:16 and many other verses in Scripture confirm that fact. So if any of you should hear the voice of Kojak (remember the Tootsie Pop sucking TV cop of yesteryear) asking "Who loves you baby?" you can answer, "God loves me. Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so."



Last week Barb and I had the privilege of attending our grandson Andrew's graduation from Marine Corps Basic Training. We were justifiably proud of Andrew, and we were very impressed with the entire operation. Andrew was listed in the graduation booklet as the Religious Lay Reader of Platoon 1077. He not only passed every physical, intellectual and emotional test the Marine Corps threw at him, but he grew spiritually while helping others to do the same during those 12 weeks. "Ooo-Rah!" The Marine Corps makes no bones about the fact that spiritual development is important in the life of a Marine.

I want to take this opportunity to share with all of you something that I shared with my congregation yesterday. It is a word for word restatement of the U.S. Marine Corps Core Values, substituting the word Christian for Marine and church or Christ for Corps.

Generation after generation of American men and women have given special meaning to the title Christian. These same men and women live by a set of enduring Core Values which forms the bedrock of their character. Core Values give Christians strength and help tune their behavior; they bond the church into a total force that can meet any challenge.



HONOR

Honor guides Christians to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; to never lie, cheat or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity and to respect others. The qualities of maturity, dedication, trust and dependability commit Christians to act responsibly; to be accountable for their actions; to fulfill their obligations; and to hold others accountable for their actions.

COURAGE

Courage is the mental, moral and physical strength ingrained in Christians. It carries them through the challenges of combat and helps them overcome fear. It is the inner strength that enables a Christian to do what is right; to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure.

COMMITMENT

Commitment is the spirit of determination and dedication found in Christians. It leads to the highest order of discipline for individuals and churches. It is the ingredient that enables 24 hour a day dedication to church and to Christ. It inspires the unrelenting determination to achieve a standard of excellence in every endeavor.

I don't believe you or I or the church would suffer were we to adopt these core values as our own. And when I think of the Marine motto: "The Few, the Proud, the Marines" I think of Jesus' words, Matthew 22:14 (NKJV) 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

If you haven't answered His call, I urge you to do so. And for those who have, remain "Semper Fi" (always faithful).

Yours for His Purposes,
Pastor Les
9/25/07