

Obedient to the Will of God

When I think about people who have served in the military one of the first words that comes to mind is obedience. Soldiers put aside their own personal desires and follow their commanding officers. No questions asked. At the time of their enlistment, they solemnly swear to an oath to “support and defend” a higher power – the Constitution of the United States – against “all enemies, foreign and domestic.” The oath ends with the words, “So help me God.” They serve our country, at great personal sacrifice to themselves, sometimes even with their life. The result of their obedience is that our nation remains free. Our freedom is a gift from them.

Does this scenario sound familiar to the Christian life? As Christians, we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We accept his teachings even when they differ from the worldly way of life. The definition of “constitution” is a body of fundamental principles or established precedents” that govern us. The Bible serves as the constitution for mankind and is the foundation of the Family of God. As humans, it is impossible to live perfectly by its teachings. There are 613 “laws” in the Old Testament. We tried. We failed. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ took away the impossible requirement of meeting each one, replaced by a loving gospel of forgiveness. We are asked to be obedient to Jesus.

I have a friend, Bob Kuhl, who served for 21 years in the United States Air Force. Serving our country runs in the family. His grandfather was in the Navy, and his dad was a 31-year Air Force veteran. There was a time when Bob and his dad were in the Air Force at the same time. For Bob, joining the Air Force brought stability and became a “way of life” for him.



Being a Christian brings stability to us, yet it often runs contrary to our culture. The traits of those who served in the military parallel those of a follower of Jesus Christ: obedience, dedication, loyalty, respect, and the will to do what is right. We honor our Heavenly Father with our obedience and give our best effort to follow His will. The result is Christians are free from the penalty of our sins because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – on the cross and in the empty tomb. We desire citizenship in Heaven with him. As U.S. citizens, we are kept free so that we can worship because of the many veterans' sacrifices.

Civilian life is tough, as is life in the military, but we can be resilient because God is with us. We know that God wins in the end. Bob reminded me: “As bad as things are, it will get better.” He quotes a favorite verse from Joshua as a source of strength: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.* (Joshua 1:9). We know that it will get better as we reach our Heavenly destination. Be obedient to God’s will, and God will go with you. “So help me, God.”

Question: Have you thanked a Veteran today? This Veteran’s Day, express your appreciation for the willingness of over 17.5 million veterans who have served the noble cause of freedom. Jesus’ death and resurrection gained our freedom from sin. The Veterans of this nation won Americans the right to celebrate that freedom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We are grateful to the men and women who protect our freedom, and we are eternally grateful to you for the freedoms won for us by Jesus Christ. Both are gifts. And we thank you for being with us wherever we go. Amen.

Note: Bob Kuhl served our country in Holland, Belgium, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, North Africa, and in the wake of 9/11, in New York City. He continues to serve by being an advocate for Veterans. He learned obedience, dedication, discipline, and to do what was right. Bob said, "Doing what is right is why we are free as Americans." Bob is an elder at Fountain of Life Lutheran Church.