

# Military metaphors save lives

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

Focusing on the lives of men over the past month, specifically “point men,” has been exciting. These are guys who are experienced enough in spiritual warfare that they can help guide others through the many dangers on the battlefield. Being a “point man” requires a whole lot of heart because he will see action as he is strategically engaged in the fight to save lives, marriages and families. We have borrowed the term “battle group” from our own U.S. Navy to describe a diverse group of men, with varied talents, skills and gifts, who mutually support and strengthen one another to ensure the survival of all.

During the Cold War with the former Soviet Union, the Russians’ primary strategy was to hide just below the surface of the water with attack submarines. With no aircraft carriers of their own, their main role would be to cause disruption in the sea-lanes that we were vowed to protect. Meanwhile, they were poised in “wait status” until some sort of outbreak of hostilities and an excuse to fire and sink our carriers. We were protecting thousands of miles of sea-lanes between the United States and Europe and safety could be violated hundreds of different ways. A bit of chaos at an unexpected moment could be disastrous.

This is true for marriages and families as well. You may have taken many sacrificial steps and precautionary measures to ensure a safe home and viable income, a solid education plan, experiences, spiritual growth opportunities at home and at church, and yet, your family may be in grave danger today and you are not even aware of it. Sometimes, all that is necessary is that a wrench be thrown into the gears of your well-oiled machine, to see everything come crashing down quite quickly. We must be aware and on guard!

Just as the Soviets would trail our battle groups lurking just beyond sight, poised to strike at the heart, the Bible says our spiritual enemy does the same. The goal is to kill and destroy and his sights are locked onto you. Satan wants to break up your marriage and cause you to lose the respect of your children. He desires to entice you with beautiful lies that seduce your lusts and cause you to make foolish mistakes. Today, too many live as though completely unaware of the dangers that are lurking just below the surface. As a result, the casualty reports are tragically skyrocketing.

I received another report yesterday of a leader who bit the dust. He was a doer and not a couch potato Christian; the kind of person I can respect. He was genuinely doing real and consequential things toward solving global problems. He started a ministry that feeds some of the most destitute children found anywhere on the planet. He personally negotiated regional peace in places of the world most wouldn’t dare

to tread, working with presidents and guerilla warlords alike. He and his team brought hope to thousands, maybe millions. Recently, a letter of apology had to be written explaining what happened in his personal life and marriage. There was an enemy attack submarine poised and ready to strike. In a weak moment, he was hit and sunk. He was the powerful aircraft carrier that is now at the bottom of the ocean and devastation looms.

I am not being creative with my military metaphors. God himself uses them. I have borrowed this theme from the Scriptures. The Bible teaches of the spiritual battle that rages for the very souls of men and the armor of God that must be employed (Ephesians 6). Some might read this and consider the drama a bit over the top, but I know otherwise. I work with a lot of people in this valley and know the stories behind the scenes. Stuff I can’t share with you. I have seen lives crumble to powder and the cycle of pain renew. It’s hard to watch, especially when the answers are available to all of us equally. If I can sum it up all in one word, it would have to be the one “name” that holds the key to unlock every door of hope for your life: Jesus.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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## **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:45am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

## **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

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