

Heart of the Matter

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Have you ever heard anyone talk about the Core Values of the Navy and Marine Corps? If you have been around for any length of time, chances are you have heard of them. You may even know what they are. But do you know where they came from? The answer may surprise you.

Several years ago, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, under direction from the Secretary of the Navy, commissioned a team to study the organizational behavior of the sea services and make some recommendations. In time, a report was made and it was determined that we needed a greater emphasis on our core values.

The Chief of Naval Education and Training was tasked with coming up with a curriculum that would address this. The first thing that had to be done was to actually identify our core values. A committee identified them as Courage, Honor and Commitment. Later, someone noticed that the chaplain who served on the committee conveniently listed them in that order so that the initials spelled out the initials for the Chaplain Corps. They were finally listed in the order in which we find them now: Honor, Courage and Commitment.

The interesting thing about this whole thing is that we began doing training about these core values throughout the sea services. I think the Marine Corps has been very successful in instilling these values, but I don't think it was because of the training. Instead, it is because of the transformation.

When someone enters boot camp, they are not considered "Marines." They earn this title later on. In fact, the entire USMC Basic Training experience is designed to be more of a transformation than just training. The individual is basically torn down and rebuilt the way the Marine Corps needs them to be. Part of this transformation is something that occurs within the person. They actually adopt the philosophy of the Marine Corps and embrace its Core Values as their own. Later, they have the Eagle, Globe and Anchor placed in their hand and they have now earned the title, "United States Marine."

Our relationship with God is just like this. We can learn about God. We can even be involved in religious practice. But that doesn't mean that we have really been transformed. Instead, we decide to embrace a relationship with God because we see how it has impacted others and we have decided that we want to have this same relationship with Him. When we enter into a new relationship with God, He actually transforms us. He changes our heart and gives us a new set of values.

Our actions will always show what is in our heart. Our true core values will come out over time. We can modify our behavior for a while, but eventually, what is on the inside will be evident. If you want to exemplify Courage, Honor and Commitment, it first begins with a transformation. Let God transform you. You will like the result.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in church on Sunday.