



July – September 2015
NEWSLETTER

SO HELP ME GOD

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U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. DONALD R. ALLEN

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

New Threats...Same Enemy

by Ch (LTC) Eric Erkinen,
US Army (Retired)



MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERS at the highest levels of government review and craft our National Defense Strategy every year. When they do that, one key element is recognizing all the things that threaten our security. These fall into four categories of challenges:

Traditional challenges are posed by states employing recognized military capabilities and forces in well understood forms of military competition and conflict.

Irregular challenges come from those employing “unconventional”

methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger opponents.

Catastrophic challenges involve the acquisition, possession and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or methods producing WMD-like effects.

Disruptive challenges may come from adversaries who develop and use breakthrough technologies to negate current U.S. advantages in key operational domains.

Similarly, all Christians face threats to their spiritual life from all corners as they seek to live a life pleasing to

God and faithful to Christ. There are **traditional** threats to faith that we encounter almost daily. They come in the forms of temptations and distractions. We understand their evil nature and know they will destroy our relationships with others and with God.

There are also, I believe, **irregular** threats to faith...ones that are unconventional and which employ more deception. Someone from another Christian faith group confronts you and declares, “The point of religion is that we love one



Above: The first Nuclear Security Summit was held in Washington in 2010. The results of the summit were set down in the Washington Work Plan.

Checking Your Balance

by Ch (LTC) Eric Erkkinen,
US Army (Retired)

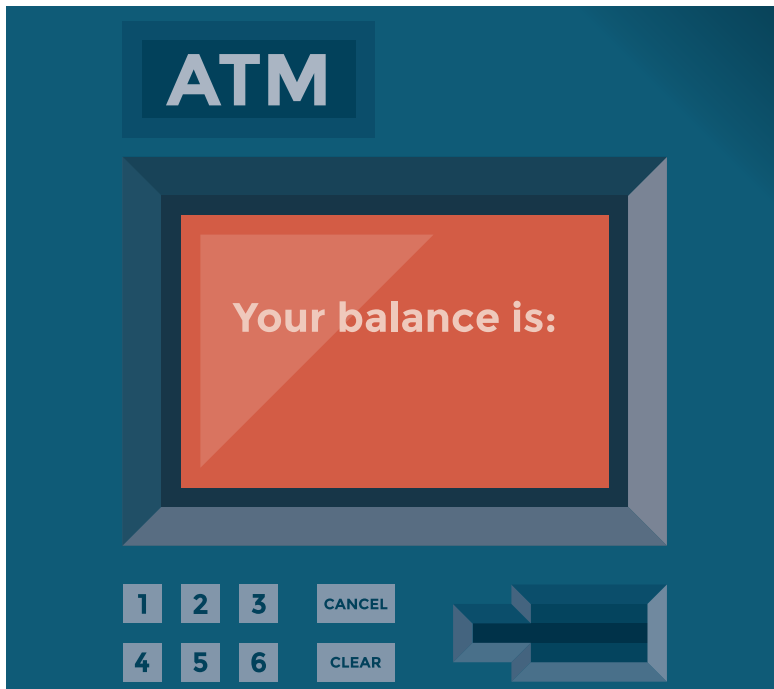


If you are married,
take some time with
your spouse to discuss
your accounts.

What is in your bank account? No, not the dollars and cents, personal financial assets. I mean your **emotional** bank account. We all have emotions and emotional reserves. When we are feeling empty, taken for granted, or unappreciated we reach into our reserves to give us a new

sense of being loved and appreciated and fulfilled. Who fills up the reserves in our emotional account? Obviously, those reserves come from those who love and support us most. Family, friends, co-workers are critical. There are many helpful resources to help us understand our needs and how we can provide for the

needs of others important to us. I came across a helpful website called *Marriage Builders* recently. Here are some of the subaccounts in our emotional bank mentioned by Willard F. Harley, the author of "His Needs, Her Needs" on the *Marriage Builders* site. Consider how your accounts are doing as well as the accounts of those you love.



- Affection
- Sexual Fulfillment
- Conversation
- Recreational Companionship
- Honesty and Openness
- Physical Attractiveness
- Financial Support
- Domestic Support
- Family Commitment
- Admiration

Five Surprising Ways You May Be Destroying Your Marriage

by Ron Edmondson

How does a once-good marriage slip away?

I get asked that question when it becomes public that a marriage everyone thought was rock solid falls apart.

As the song goes — it's a slow fade. A good marriage doesn't deteriorate overnight. It diminishes gradually.

There are probably lots of reasons. There are usually a few common causes in my experience.

Here are 5 ways a once good marriage slips away — or falls apart:

Other interests come between them. It could be a relationship — even other good relationships — or a hobby, or work, but something gets a



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another. Doctrines are not all that important and do nothing but divide us. As long as Christ is in my heart, that's all that matters." Wow! What do you do with that one? You know some of it is true, but now you struggle and question whether you are out of synch with what the church is.

Then we have the **catastrophic** threat, one that can steer us on a course away from God. Satan will use every weapon in his arsenal to destroy faith. One of his greatest weapons is apathy. When we stop nurturing and feeding our faith on God's Word, when we no longer hunger for the forgiveness offered in the Lord's Supper, when we no longer care for the spiritual welfare of those who do not know Christ, when we do not recognize the gravity of sin, we endanger the very faith God has given us.

Finally, our faith may face the **disruptive** threat. We have all faced these and they seem to come

at the most inopportune times. When things seem to be going well, suddenly a crisis hits. It may be an unexpected death of a loved one, a financial crisis, a personal failure, a non-select for promotion, a family tragedy. We question God's intent and our own faith. All the threats are real and can pose real challenges to our faith.

It is critical that we realize God does not abandon us and never will. The Psalmist writes, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and he will act Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him" (Ps. 37: 3-5, 7a, 39-40 ESV).

PRAYER

Lord and Savior, we trust that
You have secured our salvation
through Your suffering, death and
resurrection. Guard us from the evil
one that nothing will harm our faith,
nor draw us away from You. Feed us
with Your Word of Life. Sustain us
regularly through Your Holy Supper.
Guide our faith by Your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

HE IS THEIR STRONGHOLD IN
THE TIME OF TROUBLE!



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS IGNACIO D. PEREZ

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higher priority than the marriage. Distractions will destroy a good marriage.

Unresolved conflict. Conflict left unattended sometimes sits like it never existed. But, oh, it did. And it does. Someone is holding on to it. Trust me. And the longer it sits, the deeper the wedge it causes.

The couple stops dreaming together. When a couple is dating, they have lots of dreams together. They discuss their future. They dream about where they will live and travel. They dream about family and adventure. It's an energy that fuels the relationship. When it stops, the fuel it brought stops.

Boredom. I've long said this is one of the leading causes of marriages unraveling. Couples quit dating — quit laughing — quit having fun together. They get caught in the routines and busyness of life. Boredom sets in and the closeness they once shared begins to drift. The enemy loves this, and suddenly one or both spouses seek excitement elsewhere. Dangerous.

Living separate agendas. It's OK to have separate identities. Even encouraged. It's OK to have separate interests. It keeps things interesting. But it's not OK to have separate agendas. The agenda should be two very different people blending those differences into one. When that's not happening, the strength of the marriage will slowly — or quickly — fade.

I'm praying for your marriage — as I continue to pray for mine. Stand firm.

Taken from *CROSSWALK.COM*, March 2015

HAVE A LAUGH



One Soldier's Story

— During Week 1 in Army Basic Training, we had a soldier ask for an omelet in chow line. Such requests were not encouraged because there wasn't time to make custom omelets for every soldier. Nonetheless, the cook started making the omelet when a drill sergeant asked what was going on. The basic training soldier replied, "Go around, drill sergeant, I'm waitin' on an omelet." Needless to say, this was the wrong thing to say during Week 1 in basic training. Our platoon motto was henceforth, "Go around, drill sergeant, I'm waitin' on an omelet," and the basic training soldier became known as **PVT Omelet**.

Then there was the one about the drill instructor who made a private sweep all the sunshine off the sidewalks. It took the poor guy all day.



How they make the military CAC Cards



LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces