

DEVOTIONAL

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“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” 1 John 3:16

Recently I've been binge watching a series called “Seal Team”. After a few episodes, I'm hooked. A team of extremely diverse personalities and backgrounds regularly take bullets for each other, literally and figuratively to form a deep bond. It helps them carry out astonishing challenges, put their lives on the line every episode to survive not only the tasks they are given, but the turmoil of life at home. Divorce, sickness, aging, failure, career change, betrayal, their pasts, even spiritual doubts threaten their bond. In fact, the only thing keeping these guys going is their sacrificial bond.

It occurred to me how rare a bond like this is. For me, college football and seminary classmates come to mind. Two things made those unforgettable and life changing experiences – an amazing diversity of personalities and backgrounds, and developing a sacrificial bond. Having experienced it myself, I long for it again.

This is exactly the kind of bond Jesus wants with us. “Seal Team” is a violent show and some are uncomfortable with that, but the truth is we live in a physically and spiritually violent world. God's enemies want nothing more than to break what God loves most – you. The challenges we face

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on our journey are daunting. Some of it we bring on ourselves, some of it is life being completely unfair. You want to know what keeps me going? Jesus keeps taking bullets for me, past and present. That is what the cross is about. Jesus taking my punishment on himself, taking my failures on himself, taking my hurt and anger on himself, and giving me hope and healing. It is a sacrificial love that does not just cover me, but all the amazing diversity of brothers and sisters around me. It is an example that keeps me longing for more.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to stay focused on your sacrifice for me and others. Keep me from only seeing myself as the center of the world. Amen

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