

TRANSCRIPTS

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“Why” Video

(On screen quote) “I fear they do not know us. I fear they do not comprehend the full weight of the burden we carry or the price we pay when we return from battle.”
– Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

(On screen) They defend our freedom, but freedom is not free.

(Cpt. Ryan Presnal, US Army) Everything you can imagine we dealt with on a regular basis.

(Wife) I can’t give any more to my country. I’ve given enough. I’m not going to give my marriage too.

(On screen) Over 2,000 military marriages end in divorce each month.

(Robert Nuttall) Can’t tell you how many divorces I had as a company commander; how many marriages lost. Statistics that you read are probably on the low end.

(Amy Nuttall) He was not the same person that he was when he left. He looked completely fine on the outside, but he wasn’t fine on the inside. You know, you came home. You made it home. You’re alive, you’re healthy, you’re... you know... Why aren’t you happy?

(Andi Westfall) I can’t tell you how many times that I should have died. My thought is, “If... if I just let go, then I’m done. That’s it. I’m not gonna be able to put it back together.”

(On screen) On average, 22 veterans per day commit suicide.

(Ryan Presnal) It's so hard, because we're home, but we're not home. I'm still essentially taking casualties and we're here. Y'know, what do we do?

(Male voice-over) Every day we hear stories of tragedy facing our military. But there are also stories of triumph, because faith makes a difference.

(On screen) Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

(Male veteran) I'm a veteran of seventeen years in the army. When I came home from Iraq, I had no idea why I had so many problems. My problems destroyed my marriage, job and life. Your book, *The Combat Trauma Healing Manual*, has changed my life. Thank you for bringing Christ into the healing process.

(Nate Self) The Word of God has come alive for me every day, with even greater importance every day, with new examples. And given me also a path to recovery as well.

(Soldier) The little Bible in my RDK has really helped me. Being able to pull out my Bible and read it, really helped to de-stress me. It's now part of my uniform.

(Wife) My husband was deployed and I heard a lawnmower. It was my neighbor cutting my grass.

(Vietnam veteran) I'm a Vietnam veteran. Drugs, alcohol, divorce, headed for jail. But then a believer introduced me to Christ and took time every week to teach me.

(Female voice-over) Together we can help heroes find hope and grow their faith in Jesus Christ.

(Nate Self) I think it's easy for a person to say, "I'm not ready for that. What could I bring to that fight?" And I think the answer is, that if you're being called to that fight, you just bring whatever you have. Look what's in your hands. Look what's in your basket of tools, and use them, however you're being led.

(On screen) Give the hope of Christ to our heroes... your sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, friends, cousins, neighbors, co-workers, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, grandparents... The military around you.

End of "Why" Video

“What” video

Jeff S [*MAJ Jeff Struecker, Chaplain US Army (RET) Warrior featured in the best seller “Black Hawk Down”, Pastor, National speaker and award winning author*]: Hi. My name is Jeff Struecker. I’m a former Army Ranger portrayed in the movie, “Black Hawk Down.”

Jeff P [*LTC Jeff Presnal, US Army Reserve (RET), President, Armor of God Military Ministry*]: My name is Jeff Presnal, a retired Army officer and co-leader of the military ministry in our area. But most importantly, the father of a two-time combat Army Veteran. Welcome to Cru Military’s E-Kit Seminar.

We’re working together with you to help heroes find hope and grow in their faith in Christ.

Jeff S: When you finish this seminar, you’ll be able to understand what the needs of our military are, what you already have in your hand, and will discover the role God would have you play in this vital work in the kingdom.

Jeff P: You’ll be hearing from a number of other people, and will have opportunities throughout to reflect on and discuss what you are learning.

Jeff S: Let’s pray. God, would You please use Your church to minister to warriors and their families like never before. Would You please transform churches as they get serious about ministry to the military. Amen.

“Call Center”

How can I help you?

I really want to help our returning soldiers. What can I do?

I want to serve. What are the greatest needs?

My son is suffering from combat trauma. How can I help him?

The closest military base is 40 miles away. What can I do?

How can my husband and I reach out to military couples?

Our church wants to minister to the military. How do we get started?

What can we do to reach our vets here in the city?

We’re very concerned about suicides in the Army. How can we help?

My daughter’s in the Navy. I want to help her and others but I don’t know where to start.
Can you help me?

Is there anything I can do to help the problem of PTSD in the military?

End of “Call Center”

Jeff S: Believers all over America are asking how to meet the needs of military people around them. Maybe you've had the same questions.

As you saw in that opening video, the needs and stresses of military life are broad, and the pain and loss are soul-deep. Thousands of troops are returning home with the hidden wounds of war, and thousands of vets of other eras are still suffering. I'm one of those vets. Their families, and mine, also struggle.

When I was a US Army Ranger serving in Somalia, I saw first-hand the difference that Jesus Christ makes when warriors are faced with life and death issues from combat. It was my strong Christian faith that enabled me to fight without fear throughout the battle of Black Hawk Down, because I knew where I was going to spend my eternity.

That same faith has helped my family put me on an airplane, and send me to Iraq and Afghanistan more than a dozen times as a chaplain to Airborne and Special Operations Forces. During my career as a Ranger Sergeant I saw the stress that combat places on warriors young and old. I saw friends who couldn't handle the difficulties and drank themselves to death, or put a gun to their head and killed themselves.

Later, as a chaplain, much of my energy was focused on ministering to families that were under overwhelming stress because of long deployments and separation. Because of the last 12 years of war, the need to minister to men and women in the U.S. military, and their families, is perhaps greater today than perhaps ever in the history of our country.

God is calling His people to reach out to the military with the hope and healing of Jesus Christ. It's not as hard as you may think. Simply **Start where you are, Use what you have, Do what you can in the power of the Holy Spirit leaving the results to God.**

These messages show how much people want to help. You're watching because you want to help. Some of you have a direct connection to the military because of a family member who's served. Some of you have no connection, but you know God has placed a burden on your heart for our troops. Like these callers, you too are asking, "What can we do? How can we get started? What do military members and their families need from us?"

While most military members and their families don't want to be treated differently, they do long to be accepted, appreciated and understood. The special circumstances of military life can severely test their faith and spiritual strength. The challenges of frequent moves, lengthy separations, deployments in harm's way, and dangerous and traumatic experiences compound the usual stresses of everyday life.

This can lead to a need for the kind of fellowship, love, mentoring and caring which only the Body of Christ can give. A church or individual sensitized to

these needs can serve as a bridge to the hope and healing of Christ. We believe God has prepared and positioned the Body of Christ to fill this role in today's society.

You don't need to go to a military post. You can **start right where you are**. The Church, as God's representative, is located in every community. Believers work in the same offices, live in the same neighborhoods, and sit in the same pews as military people and their families.

Become aware of the military around you. Do you see someone in uniform or wearing a military cap? Is someone in your workplace a veteran? Is there a military family in your neighborhood?

Take the time to get acquainted with them. Ask them about their tattoo or their t-shirt. Acknowledge their service.

Begin to **establish a relationship** with someone who is serving or has served our great nation. Take them out for coffee. Invite them over for dessert. Look for ways to connect with them.

Take five minutes now and reflect or discuss how you can start where you are.

TAKE FIVE:

- What connection do you have with the military?
- What prompted you to participate in this seminar?

Welcome back. As you think about what you think about what you saw in that opening video, the needs may seem foreign to you, or even overwhelming. But they're much like the needs you're already addressing in your churches and communities.

We all need **relationships, care, support and education**. A primary need for all of us is for relationship: relationships with each other, relationships with the world, and most importantly, our relationship with Christ.

As Christ-followers, we understand the three-fold nature of the human being: the relationship between the body, mind and spirit. It's much like this combination lock. This lock requires three numbers to open. The first number illustrates practical help, which addresses the physical needs. The second number: counseling and education meet psychological needs. But it's only when we add the third number, spiritual help, that the lock will open.

We must address their spiritual needs by offering them a relationship with Jesus. We need to **use what we have**: our relationship with the Savior.

In Luke 7, a Roman Centurion heard that Jesus was in town and sent someone to ask Him to heal his dying servant. The Centurion said that Jesus could just say the word and his servant would be healed. For he said, "I, myself, am a man under authority with soldiers under me."

Jesus was amazed, and said to the crowd, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”

A Roman soldier understood and respected authority, a trait shared by our military today. He recognized the ultimate authority in Jesus and he used what he had – his faith – to help his servant.

Many of our military men and women don’t know the love of Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit. Perhaps, they’re like the Centurion’s servant, who needed his master to bring his need to the One who heals, Jesus Christ. You can take Christ at His word and be the bridge our wounded warriors and military families need to connect to Christ. The most important gift you can give them is hope that’s within you – the hope of Jesus Christ.

Gabe Garriga’s Story

Gabe (*SGT Gabriel Garriga, US Army (RET)*): I was an Army brat. My parents were in the Army, both of them; eventually, just my father. He did 22 years in, so I grew up multiple places. Loved the military and knew what it was about, so I joined, myself.

In July of 2003, my Humvee, that I was the gunner for, had collided with another Humvee while we were actually in pursuit of an Iraqi vehicle, that didn’t stop at a checkpoint. So we knew something was up. And my driver, unfortunately, ended up colliding with the rear of the other Humvee, which had fuel cans tied to the back of it. And since I was the gunner in the rear one, I flipped right into the fire and the other gunner was burned as well.

Thirty surgeries later and almost 2 years later, I was medically retired out. I started going to school downtown Chicago, and just using my GI Bill, and doing everything I wanted, being young and retired and free school. Eventually, that led to, a year and a half later, me feeling really empty inside. It’s almost as if my life culminated to that point, where I reached the end of: no need to work, no need for anything. And I realized that everything that I thought I wanted to do wasn’t fulfilling me. And I, then at that point, had no purpose, so I was, kinda, depressed for a while, and that carried on for a few months of not knowing what to do with my life.

My mother had given me a Bible two years before that as a birthday gift, and I just one day woke up and thought to myself, “I’m gonna read my Bible today.” And I knew where it was at and I went upstairs in my apartment and grabbed by Bible and blew the dust off of it. And so I didn’t know where to start, I opened it up and my mother had left a card in there from a place that we’d eaten at. And on the back of it, it had two verses written on it. It was Romans 8:28 and Philippians 1:6, so I said, “I’ll start there.”

And from that moment, by myself in my apartment, just reading the Bible, I started there and it just... I felt myself being transformed. The page... the words

jumped off the page. It felt like my mom was talking to me and God was talking to me at the same time. And I've never had that feeling, ever, reading the Bible before... or anything. So I knew something was happening. And I read the other verse and that verse turned into that chapter, and that chapter into that book, and I just couldn't stop reading. And all of it was just feeding me. And then I called my mom up and "Mom, I've been reading the Bible. This is what's happening. What do I do now?"

From then on, it was like, "This is it!" It's almost like there was a sense of new life, new purpose, and things like that. The clear realization that God is real and has been with me this whole time. Instead of a vague idea that He's been with me, and I know things will get better and, you know, the kind of wishful-thinking-Christianity that I thought it was. You know, it was actually real and tangible.

One of the main, tangible differences that I have, that I realized from life before Christ and after Christ, was my thought process of waking up in the morning and making decisions and ideas because before I never gave a consideration to how it affects other people, how it even affects myself or anything. Like, God has transformed the way I think, the way my mind has been renewed. And that way, I look at the world and I have a different filter to wade through other things. And now, there's a process of, "God, y'know, You own my life. How can I live today?"

End of Gabe Garriga's story

Jeff S: Gabe's story shows how one person, in this case a Christian mother, started with her relationship to her son and used what she had – her faith and a Bible – and made an eternal difference. Beginning or renewing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can make all the difference for military men and women and their families.

Some believers have a difficult time sharing the Gospel in a simple, clear manner that invites a response. If you'd like to know more about sharing your faith, or if this has raised some questions in your own mind, we have information in our library which will help. (www.crumilitary.org/e-kit)

You are exactly the kind of person God intends to use. He wants you to start where you are – in your town, neighborhood, church or workplace – and use what you have – your faith in Christ. He asks you to do what you can. We are here to help and equip you for the task ahead.

The Bible's filled with stories of those who did what they could, giving what they had to God and, in return, the Lord strengthened and duplicated and multiplied those meager resources to accomplish His purposes in miraculous ways.

For example, in the book of Esther, King Xerxes was persuaded by an evil noble, Haman, to annihilate every Jew in the entire Persian Empire. But it just so happened, that the king had married a Jew, a woman named Esther. When the plot was revealed to Esther, her cousin, Mordechai, sent word to her and called on her to use her position to plead with the king to save her people. Esther reminded him that anyone who approached the king, without being summoned, would be put to death.

Undeterred, Mordechai replied, “If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place. But you and your relatives will die. Who knows if, perhaps, you were made queen for such a time as this.” Esther was able to use her position and influence to save the Jewish people.

You, too, can leverage your influence or position to bring salvation to troops and their families. Use what you have and do what you can.

In the New Testament, in John chapter 6, we have a story of Jesus and a young boy...

Excerpt from The JESUSFilm

Voiceover: ... traveled of His amazing miracles. And more and more people began to follow Jesus.

Peter: Master, send the people away so then they can go to the villages and farms around here, and find food and lodging. There's nothing in this place.

Jesus: You, yourselves, give them something to eat.

Woman: But all we have are five loaves and two fish.

Jesus (taking the baskets and raising them to heaven): Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

(When Jesus lowers the baskets they are full of bread and fish.)

Woman: It's a miracle!

Voiceover: We all ate until we were full and when we gathered what was left over, we filled twelve baskets! An amazing miracle that reminded us of the blessings Jesus brings, and that we are to follow Him.

End of Excerpt from The JESUSFilm

Jeff S: You know the story. Jesus blessed a young boy's lunch and five thousand people were fed and there were twelve basket-full of leftovers. God says, “Just bring Me what you have, and I'll do the rest.”

What do you have to bring (**Start where you are**)? You have your faith; share it. (**Do what you can**) You have your passion to serve; do it. (**Use what you have**) You have your existing church ministries; use them.

Jesus can transform what you have and what you can do to accomplish work far beyond anything we can imagine. When we step out in faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we show others how faith makes a difference in our own lives.

We all believe that there's only one answer for the problems that warriors and their families are going through. That answer is found in personal faith with Jesus Christ. With simple faith, the Holy Spirit of the living God can transform any soldier's hurting heart, any Marine's marriage, any sailor's family in crisis, or any airman's personal demons.

God is calling you to make a difference, where you are, with what you have, by doing what you can. He's asking nothing more of you, but He's also asking nothing less.

We're gonna take a five minute break so that you can reflect and discuss how faith has made a difference in your life.

TAKE FIVE

- How has faith made a difference in your life?

End of "What" video

“Cause” video

71% of Americans say they have no understanding of military life.

There are 3.6 million service members in the U.S. military with an average age of 28.

Half of deployed troops are National Guard & Reserve. Most do not live near a base.

The current operational tempo has exposed troops to combat for upward of 200 days at a time, far longer than WWII or Vietnam.

86% received incoming fire.

79% know somebody seriously injured or killed.

63% saw dead bodies or remains.

The toll is high. For example: 149,300 American troops were deployed to war zones around the world in 2010.

- a. 463 troops were killed defending our freedom.
- b. 468 troops committed suicide.
- c. 9,162 military personnel were diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

1 in 5 veterans are diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms. Less than 40% seek help, and of those who do, half seek help from the church.

Since being discharged, 48% say that their family relationships have been strained. 56% are married, however 38% more military marriages end in divorce than when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began. That's 2,276 military marriages ending in divorce each month.

There are almost one million military children and 44% of military personnel state that their relationship with their children has suffered.

Veterans make up 11% of the adult U.S. population, however approximately 33% of the U.S. homeless population is veterans. That's more than 300,000 homeless veterans on any given night.

27% of Army soldiers returning from combat deployment met criteria for alcohol abuse. Few are referred to alcohol treatment. And on average, 22 veterans commit suicide everyday.

Every combat trauma sufferer affects up to 10 other people.

Yet, 96% of Post-9/11 veterans are proud of their service.

But, 50% of the American public say the wars have made little difference in their lives.

End of “Cause” video

“How, Part One” video

Jeff S [*MAJ Jeff Struecker, Chaplain US Army (RET) Warrior featured in the best seller “Black Hawk Down”, Pastor, National speaker and award winning author*]:
Jeff, many people say that the war has made no difference in their lives. How would you respond to somebody who makes that statement?

Jeff P [*LTC Jeff Presnal, US Army Reserve (RET), President, Armor of God Military Ministry*]: Well, believe me, the war’s made a huge difference in our lives and the lives of thousands of others like us, and it continues to do so.

As we began to anticipate Ryan’s return from Iraq, my wife could sense some struggle or wrestling in him. Frankly, I dismissed it initially as just an overly sensitive mom doing what mom’s are supposed to do. I knew he was strong physically and emotionally and well-trained, and assumed that would be enough. But after we saw him at the redeployment ceremony, and were with him a few hours, I could tell this was gonna take some time. What I didn’t fully understand was the battle within him from his experiences. But God knew and He had a plan.

You see, several months before, my wife had attended a Military Ministry Bridges to Healing seminar, where she learned about the struggles of redeployment and reintegration, and met a number of people involved in the effort, including a young couple, who had just arrived in the Fort Hood area. Adam and Laura Brown had no military experience, and no connection to the Army or Fort Hood, but God had called them, and they acted and they were ready. My wife told them that Ryan was redeploying soon and kept their card for future reference, just in case.

Several weeks after Ryan got home, our phone rang one morning and it was him, struggling through tears on the other end as he tried to tell me that he had just gotten a call that two of the soldiers, that he had brought home safely from Iraq, had taken their own lives. He couldn’t understand it or make any sense of it and was asking us why it had happened. Ryan knew that this was a situation where he needed some help to process, so he asked if we knew anyone. My wife had Adam and Laura’s phone number, so he called them.

Adam made the rest of the day available to Ryan, and that began a year-and-a-half-long journey of friendship and support between them. Adam and Laura were willing to make that journey with Ryan and they did, even though they knew nothing about the military and had no military experience. They poured into him and continue to work tirelessly today doing the same thing and are making a difference in many military lives around them.

Jeff S: You can make a difference just like the Brown’s did. You don’t need specific training. You just have to make yourself available to people. Provide a listening

ear or a helping hand. Still wondering how to get started? Here's what others are asking...

"Man on the Street" How Video 1

- Colin: Being a little afraid of the fact that I wouldn't know what to do, or where to go, or who to talk to, uh, to get this started.
- Michelle: I've never been in the military. And I don't know anybody in the military. Can I really help?
- Lee: I don't know very many military people per se. I'm sure I know them around me, but they never talk about it, so I don't know if they're military or not.
- Larry: If I want to connect with vets, I don't know how to do that. Where would I go? How would I connect with them?
- Kathy: You see the veterans come home. You see them welcomed at the airport and then you don't hear anything else.
- Daniel: I want to help but I feel like I'm incapable.
- Margie: So I'm wondering, is there a way already paved for me that I can follow and get started?
- Dennis: It's all of us. We're all here in the United States. This is our country. If we could all help it would be worth it.
-

End of "Man on the Street" How Video 1

- Jeff P: We've gathered a group of military people: active duty, retired, veterans, wives, wounded warriors, and parents of warriors who have personal experience with these issues. Let's hear what they have to say.
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"Living Room Discussion" How video 1

- Andi [*Andi Westfall, Former SSG & Combat Flight Medic, Oregon Army National Guard*]: There is nothing... there is no one out there strong enough to be able to handle my experience or at least my telling of my experience. I was blown away though. There were so many people that came out, that wanted to help. It was like that first little glimmer of hope. There are people that do care that aren't in the military; have no connection to the military, at all.
- Mari [*Mari Peña, Wife of Wounded Warrior*]: We went up for prayer at church one afternoon, after service, and met a couple that prayed over us, and we were just hanging by a thread. Our marriage was having a really, really difficult time. And as we turned to leave, they called us back and just felt our pain and said, "We want to walk down this journey with you."
- Matt [*LTC Matthew VanderFeltz, US Army (RET)*]: My church embraced the military. And so, when I felt the embracing of, from me deploying, or my life group, you

know, who I studied with every weekend... they embraced us and just lifted us up. I mean, day in, day out. My experience with that is: I felt equipped to go in. Whenever I came home, I felt equipped to come home.

Sandra [*Sandra Presnal, Vice President, Armor of God Military Ministry, Mother of Combat Veteran and Purple Heart Recipient*]: And then when Ryan deployed, a couple of things: Our pastor was very faithful in always asking what was going on with Ryan, where he was, and praying for us on the spot. And so, for the next... the next year, he just, whenever he saw us, that was what he did. And it meant the world to us to know that he cared and to pray for us. And then, having a couple of friends that just were willing to walk... walk the whole time with us. And if we got calls and they were hard, then (chokes up), I'm sorry... then friends would just be willing to bear that burden with me and with us. And we had some real lows during that time and, so, they were able to just be there for us. And we were so, so thankful for that.

Scott [*CPT Scott Clark, US Army (RET)*]: A friend of mine who, uh... our... our kids were friends in grade school... we went to the same church... and, he came to me and was asking me about PTSD, because his son was having some negative experiences with that. And he knew that I had some experience with PTSD...

Karen [*Karen Clark, Wife of Wounded Warrior*]: Even the day after Scott crashed, my good friend, and she was the chaplain's wife, she drove an hour and a half just to come stay with me.

Gabe [*SGT Gabriel Garriga, US Army (RET)*]: And my mother had given me a Bible two years before that as a birthday gift, and I just one day woke up and thought to myself, "I'm going to read my Bible today." I knew where it was at, and I went upstairs in my apartment and grabbed my Bible and blew the dust off of it...

Josh [*SGT Josh Renschler, US Army (RET)*]: We weren't really hooked up with a church specifically and I wasn't really interested in it, but we were invited to come for an Easter service.

Mary [*Mary E. Bailey, RN FHCC, Former US Navy Hospital Corpsman & Parent of Wounded Warrior*]: Yes, we definitely had support from our church, people in the community, work, family definitely were very supportive and helping us with the healing. People, you know, that you didn't even expect, that they were there, praying for you and your son, giving you that spiritual guidance and uplifting that you need. Like I say, they weren't just military. They were also our community, neighbors that we had never met, how they all came together...

Larry [*HMCM (SS-DS) Larry G. Bailey, US Navy (RET) & Parent of Wounded Warrior*]: And also it brought our church together more closely as... as Christians.

End of "Living Room Discussion" How video 1

Jeff Presnal, wrap-up, video 1

Jeff P: The vast majority of comments we receive are: “I want to do something, but how do I get started?” If you live near a military community, there are unique opportunities for you. You can, for example, see the military around you, because they’re usually in uniform. But others of you may be thinking, “We don’t have any military installations in the area. Where do I go?”

Did you know that over 52% of those who served in the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are National Guardsmen and Reservists? These men and women generally don’t live on or near military bases but in cities and towns all across America. When they’re deployed, their families live in your neighborhoods. For months at a time, they’re functioning like a single-parent family.

You are surrounded by Vietnam veterans, World War II and Korean War veterans and veterans of other conflicts. You may not live in a military area, but you don’t have to go far to find military people you can serve.

You may even find them on street corners. Veterans make up 11% of our total population, but more than 30% of the homeless population and that percentage increases dramatically with age.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you see the opportunities to serve the military around you. Let’s take five. Pause the video, and take five minutes to reflect on and discuss the questions and concerns that brought you to this seminar. Then brainstorm about your local area and the possible connections you can make to military personnel or veterans.

TAKE FIVE:

- What questions did you have coming into this seminar?
- What fears or concerns do you have about having a ministry to the military in your area?
- Brainstorm on some places or events in your community where you can meet military personnel or veterans and their families.

Your discussion may have raised more questions that we answered. If so, that’s okay. If, by the end of the seminar, you still have these concerns or questions, we encourage you to check out the information located on our website.

[www.crumilitary.org/e-kit]

If you’re with a group, set a time to meet together to explore these ideas further.

End of “How, Part One” video

“How, Part Two” video

Jeff P: Many of the questions we’ve received reveal a fear or concern that perhaps you don’t know enough to relate to these men and women. Are asking these sorts of questions?

“Man on the Street” How Video 2

- Lee: So, I don’t know very much about military people. And I would like to. And I would like to help, if I can.
- Colin: What would make me question whether I could do a ministry like this would be fear and ignorance. Fear that I might say something wrong or do something wrong and would cause more harm than good. And then just not knowing what to do. And wanting to help, feeling powerless...
- Lili: I guess I just don’t actually know what their needs are.
- Larry: Since I haven’t been in the military, I’m not sure I can appreciate and understand the issues and the struggles that they go through. So, what help could I be?
- Margie: I know some of what they have gone through as a couple, as a family, and I feel very ill-equipped to come alongside. I think that’s what keeps me from stepping out.
- Lili: And also the fact that I am a different race, if that’s going to trigger some unpleasant memories for them.
- David: Why does there appear to be so many more soldiers coming back from this war with PTSD?
- Michelle: How can I keep from offending somebody by saying the wrong thing?
- Larry: Why is that some vets, hear, like, fireworks and sirens, they get upset and sometimes even angry?
- Tommy: And it’s hard for me to imagine the things that they have to deal with or the problems that they might have.
- Lee: I would like to help them if I know what their needs were. And I don’t.
-

End of “Man on the Street” How Video 2

Jeff P: Fear of the unknown will stop most of us from taking a step forward. Let’s see what our group of military experts has to say.

“Living Room Discussion” How video 2

Did You Know? You have a lot in common with the military community.

Jeff P: One of the things that comes up frequently, that we hear, is that people who are civilians don't think that they can relate to us as a military community. And so, the question is: What can you tell them that you have in common with them?

Josh: There's differences like there is with any culture. Military is as foreign a culture as any other. But we're still people. We're individuals. We have the same needs: love, care, compassion. When we endure hardships we need somebody who's there to just understand and to show Christ's unconditional love.

Karen: We have some additional stresses on us, that they don't. But otherwise else would be exactly the same as what they are. As being a military wife, I'm so proud to have the opportunity to serve my country in my own way. I didn't sign the dotted line, but I've endured everything that he has his whole career. And, it's just... you know, the pride keeps you going. One thing that Scott's always said is, "I'm fighting for you. I'm fighting for our neighbors. I'm fighting for all the people in our country." And I think it's important for everybody to know that our military's not there just to get a college scholarship or just a regular paycheck. That they're there fighting for us and for our freedoms. And it makes me very proud that I can stand by him and take care of everything at home, so that he can go do what he needs to do.

Jeff P: Sometimes as military people, we want to try to stay connected with civilians, because that's what we were before, it's what we are going to be after, so, you know, we want that connection.

Josh: Don't fear something just because you don't understand it. The military culture's different. We speak our own language, at times. We have our own cultural rites-of-passage. We have our own... everything... languages and ways of living life and even the bases can sometimes feel like a foreign city. But don't be afraid of that. Don't be intimidated by the fact that you don't necessarily understand it. Just recognize that there are some things that you may not understand, but be willing to learn.

Did You Know? Service members and their families face unique challenges.

Jeff P: What were the two or three toughest things that you... that you dealt with?

Mari: On his redeployment, I think, it took a little while, but we started realizing that he wasn't adjusting well. And so that adjustment... we had to adjust along with him, with little quirks like: He had to have the doors closed in the house. All doors. Bathroom doors, closet doors. Everything had to be closed. And so adjusting in that way to what he needed to feel comfortable. And we had to adjust with realizing that he had PTSD and TBI and getting the medical attention he needed.

- Hernando: It took a long time for me to realize that I wasn't in combat. It took... my sense of security was very important. The trust issue; who I could trust. So, having trust again was very, very important.
- Jeff P: Larry and Mary, I'd like to start with you all. You are the parents of a triple-amputee son. And I'd like to just ask you: What are some of the challenges that you face, being the parents of a wounded warrior?
- Mary: How was he going to... was he going to be able to cope with the injuries that he has, knowing that this has happened? He's not going to be able to do things like, you know, that he was able to do in the past. We know that Marines are very proud. Right now he's in the hospital still, but when he gets out of that setting, you know, I think there'd be more challenges for him adjusting because he won't have all that immediate support.
- Larry: Approaching him from the aspect that he can still live his life the way he did, pretty much, in the past, but with some modifications. That was the biggest struggle for me. Then the second thing was just that making sure that... reassuring him that he have a positive attitude toward life in general. That he could still live life and do a lot of different things. And that he was there for a purpose, he still had a purpose... God had a purpose for him and that he was going to serve that purpose.
- Jeff P: I'm really inspired when I hear the stories of young people just like your son who are bouncing back. Their resiliency is astounding. I know for us in particular too, we could probably relate well with the three of you, because we're on this end of a deployment and you learn day to day or sometimes hour to hour dependence on God's provision because you don't know what's happened to Hernando on any given day, or your son on any given day. And there's day after day after day, you dread a phone call, or a car pulling up front and you learn to be, um... you learn to be joyful that nobody... that you know the worst is going to come if a car pulls up front and it hasn't today.
- Mari: Or the doorbell rings.
- Jeff P: Yeah. And so that walk of faith, that dependence day by day for God's provision and to trust that He's sovereign and come to grips with that, was an amazing journey for us as well, so...

Did You Know? There are added challenges for National Guard and Reserve members.

- Jeff P: Andi, you were a National Guardsman. Can you tell us just some of the differences between deployments with Active Duty compared to National Guard deployments?
- Andi: Our deployments tend to be twice as long, just because we have to be certified by the active Army that we're... we're up to snuff on our jobs and what we're going to be doing. So, in my case, I was at work one day, I got the phone call

that afternoon, and I wasn't back at work until... it was over a year. And that was my civilian job. That was my livelihood. Active Duty... that is their job. That's what they do. So when they get the word that they're getting deployed, they're just getting things together to get ready to go. Whereas, we're trying to figure out what are we going to do with our house, and do we have to pack everything up and put it in storage? And often times we have two weeks or less to do all of this stuff. Make sure you have someone you trust to run your finances while you're gone, watch your kids, or your dog, or... So there's a lot more of your life that gets put on hold or gets complicated very quickly.

After deployment, we're basically... our unit is together and we go and we do our job, we come back and then we're dropped back in our hometown. My unit was an hour north of where I lived and there was no one else in my unit that lived in my town. So there was no support. There was nobody that I could go to and say, "Man, this really sucks. I can't sleep. I can't... I can't eat. I'm... I'm arguing with everybody." There isn't that cohesive unit, um... family. You know, Active Duty... they're together, they're deployed, they're together, they come home, they're together. They have that instant, automatic community to lean on. And National Guard is... okay, you do your pre-training, you get deployed, you're together, you get sent home and it's like, everyone goes back to their... to their life. And some people come back to... divorce papers. Some people come back to empty bank accounts because the person they put in charge of their finances, took all their money. People come back to no jobs.

Karen: Well, with that situation, he did not have a full-time job any longer. The company that he was working for basically told him, when he came back, he got to go to another state.

Andi: I was fortunate. I worked at the hospital and I had my job waiting for me. But a lot of these kids, they... they're... they work at a gas station or a mini-mart or construction. They get deployed, they come back and there's no job. I would say, as a National Guardsman coming back from a deployment is much more difficult. I felt very lost.

Karen: When you have a full-time job and then you go active duty with the... the National Guard, sometimes the income fluctuates and it's different. We knew he was going to be gone for up to 23 months. And, so that meant that I was a full-time working parent. I was a single mom and dad. And I felt that most of my job was to make sure everything was taken care of at home so he could go focus on his job, and make sure that he... when he was flying, he didn't have to worry about if the bills are getting paid and if the kids are taken care of and if the house is falling apart, and all those little things that might wander into somebody's mind. So I felt that it was, it was a big importance for me to take on all the responsibilities that we both shared in the past.

It was also very difficult because we didn't have a base. So we had 450 troops go all over the state. So we had people that were within, like an hour and a half,

two hour drive. So we didn't have much support that we could go to. We couldn't go to a base. We couldn't get help with child-care. We didn't have a lot of support that they do active-duty.

Jeff P: I get the sense that people underestimate how difficult it is to be geographically dispersed like that.

Karen: It's extremely difficult. Even the day after Scott crashed, my good friend, and she was the chaplain's wife... she drove an hour and a half just to come stay with me.

Did You Know? The entire family is affected by military service.

Mari: It definitely brought me to a different relationship, where I had to depend on Christ to bring me through day by day, sometimes hour by hour, to be able to keep our family together.

Matt: Trying to have total loyalty to your family, you know, as a husband. Then, but you have a bigger responsibility in this time... at that time is to the soldiers. And that pulling away created a stretch that was really a challenge for me as a dad. And, you know, like every parent, saying Good-bye was probably the number one thing that just existed as a real challenge.

Sandra: And that was very, very hard to know that, as a mom, that your son has to see those things and do those things. And to... and just to know that the Lord is going to work in that... in his life and bring about good.

Jeff P: What are some of the challenges that you face being the parents of a wounded warrior?

Larry: I think the... the main thing is the physical adjustment to the mechanics of him maneuvering. Common things of walking in a door, walking up stairs, opening a refrigerator. Those sorts of things. Those are challenges... immediate challenges, right away.

Mary: As a mom, just, you know, adjusting to our son being different. Trying to, you know, not be over-zealous, I guess, with... with caring for him, but still trying to be a mom. I know sometimes I myself want to get in and do things for him, and we have to realize that he's still, y'know, capable of doing things for himself. And those things that he have challenges with, we have to give him opportunity to work those out for himself.

Jeff P: That's great.

Mary: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Gabe: I was an Army brat. My parents were in the Army, both of them, eventually just my father. He did 22 years in, so I grew up multiple places...

Jeff P: It is a family deal, whether it's parents, siblings, spouses, whatever it is, it is the family... it's the entire family gets affected by military service. And the second thing is that it is service. That's really what it's about... it's about serving.

Did You Know? There is hope for those who suffer from Combat Trauma and PTSD.

Josh: You know, it doesn't matter, if you're a cook, a supply clerk, if you're Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force. It doesn't matter who you are, what you do... If you've experienced a trauma, you're in a battle for the rest of your life. You have a war that is going to rage against you.

Scott: Finding the new normal. Trying to take the person I was before, the person I was in combat, and then the person I am now, and meshing everything together to come up with who I am and where I could be the husband that my wife needed, the father that my kids need and the neighbor that my friends need... the friend that my friends need. Because the experiences that... that I've had make it difficult for me to look at common everyday activities and have the same perspective as others do with them. A friend of mine was saying, his wife came to him and said that the remodel to their kitchen was a tragedy. And that it was horrific and terrible. It was the worst thing in the world. And he's a Vietnam veteran and he's going, "Well, nobody died. I've got a roof over the head. I'm not sleeping in a rice paddy. No, this is... we've gotta put things in perspective." And that's what it comes down to, is perspectives. And unfortunately, people who have gone through some of the experiences like Josh and I have, the perspective's a little bit different than people that haven't.

Jeff P: Yeah. That's good.

Karen: It was difficult with him coming back because he was a different person. He was used to combat and he was used to killing and it... he wasn't the person that left. And then he came back injured as well, which put another caveat onto the whole thing. So, it wasn't the person I married, so it took me time to learn to adjust and understand and appreciate who he is now and make sure that we were going to be able to continue on...

Josh: I got injured halfway through my first deployment to Iraq. And I wanted to just... anything I could to go back. That was my job and that was my family that I left over there. You know, I lived with these guys. I trained with these guys. They became my family. And so to be separated from your family and told you can't be with them, when you know they're in a difficult place... It's a horrible thing to have to... to have to be told. And I just wanted to fight the doctors, just anything I could to go back. And so it was very difficult for me to realize that that part of my life is over. And I'm gonna have to come to terms with that.

Jeff P: How long would you say that you wrestled with that?

Josh: Every day.

Jeff P: Still?

Josh: Still.

Hernando: I was a believer before I went to Iraq. But while in Iraq, I had a situation. Well, I lost three soldiers. So my thing was: I promised the families that I was going to bring them back. So how could I be playing God? So my belief was challenged. I felt like I let them down. But it was still strong. The coming back... part of my healing process was mind, body and soul. I had my body intact. My mind was getting there through rehabilitation, but my soul needed to be energized. And that my belief in the Lord was that way of getting energized and getting me back online.

Mari: The turning point, I think. It was the turning point to the healing was coming. And it was coming after a long journey, but once we got together with the mentors that adopted us and took us in and started feeding us spiritually, I think that was a huge turning point for the healing for both of us.

Hernando: It was.

Did You Know? There are things you don't want to say to those in the military.

Jeff P: Everyone who will be watching this video is gonna be watching it because they have a heart to serve the military. That's the reason they get into the video to begin with. There have been occasions when people have said something or done something, trying to be helpful, but it's been maybe insensitive or offensive. Do you have any examples of something like that?

Mari: Oftentimes when we try to explain to someone some challenges, difficulties we may face on a day-to-day basis in dealing, in relationship with our spouses... oftentimes we hear someone respond with, "Oh yeah, my husband does that, too" or something to that effect... that they have experienced the same issues. And it's... it takes away from the validity of the difficulty of our situation, because, although that may be true that they are experiencing some of the same reactions, they're rooted in a different... they come from a different place. Their anger isn't the same as a spouse with PTSD's anger. Their forgetfulness isn't the... it's not coming from the same place. Their lack of intimacy isn't coming from the same place. And the resolution to the problems can't be the same, either. So it becomes a real difficult conversation with someone who... who says that they're dealing with the same thing or have experienced the same thing. Because when you're dealing with someone with PTSD and TBI, it is *not* the same thing, even though it may look like it on the outside.

Andi: One of the most frustrating things from the very beginning was, um, stupid people. And I mean that in... that's how I viewed them, but it was more out of ignorance, not in a negative way. But coming home to dumb questions, offensive questions... The community I live in, the military is not... highly thought of. And being in the National Guard, I'd be in uniform, and I'd have

people come up to me and tell me what I did over there and how bad it was and how dare I... and I just wanted to punch 'em. "Baby-killer." They didn't even take the time to find out who I was and what I did over there. And to call a medic a baby-killer is *the* most offensive thing anyone could say and I had, really, no recourse. So that... that was really, really frustrating. You know, "Did you kill anyone?" "Is your mom glad you're home?"

Larry: From aspect of my son, as a wounded warrior, he would like for them to know that he's approachable; that individuals who wonder about his injury. And that if they're seriously curious, they can ask him a question and he will explain to them his injury; how that happened. And he would be glad to explain to them how he was injured; how he was hurt serving his country.

Did You Know? Faith makes an eternal difference in the lives of those in the military community.

Jeff P: How do you think your faith journey's been influenced by your military experience? Josh, would you start with that one?

Josh: I was able to look back at all these experiences and have this steadfast, strong, firm belief that there is a God and He cares about even dumb grunts.

Andi: Whether you're a believer or... or not, when you come home you are spiritually devastated. Your world has just been rocked to the core. And trying to climb... find a way to climb out of that and... and... it's hard. That was very, very difficult. I have a better idea of what I believe and why I believe it and believe it so strongly.

Sandra: We can live a pretty Christian life when there's no struggles and no hard things, and when we get to a place where we can't have any effect on a situation, and there's total and complete dependence upon the Lord and trusting Him and growing in that journey of trust in Him and that He will... He will do good things for us. And so that was probably the most important thing, is to know that when He told me to start with a little mustard seed of faith and that He would take it from there and grow, and be able really do anything with that, was one of the biggest... the biggest personal strengthening of faith that occurred.

Larry: Well, I think that my faith has been magnified. It's been strengthened because in the situation initially, you have a choice. You can turn your face away from... from God or you can turn and look God directly in the eye, and extend your hand and He'll extend His hand. And that's exactly what I did as an individual and we did as a family.

Josh: When you've experienced even the most ugly things that this world has to offer, and the darkest, most desperate hopelessness that comes from life without Him, it strengthens you later on when you *are* on the faith journey, because you... It helps you to better understand that... that there has to be a God that got through these crazy, difficult parts that only God could have pulled me through. And

God had to send that person at that right moment that I needed the most. I know that I have God equipping me for battle. I have the Word of God that gives me the strength and the arrows to fire back. I have my equipment and my tools and I'm ready and prepared to take on this thing for the rest of my life.

Karen: It was very difficult to give everything to God to keep him safe. I wanted to control that. I wanted to have some kind of reign or control over the situation, and I knew I couldn't. And once I stopped struggling with that I had such a peace.

Scott: As Karen indicated, we went to church and I thought I had a really good relationship with God. Um. Then I deployed and found out what a really good relationship with God could be like, because, we've talked about trials and things that we've had to go through. Deployment was only part of it. It was coming back and having to deal with all of the post-deployment trials. And, um, that really taught me to let go of the driver's seat. Let Jesus sit in the driver's seat. Sit in the back. Don't be a back-seat driver and thank Him and praise Him for everything He's getting me through.

Josh: You know, God has brought me through such a multitude of issues. I mean, I've had a traumatic brain injury. I've had PTSD; survivor's guilt; physical, chronic pain. I've endured so many hardships and God has given me the tools that I've needed and the people that I needed to be there to support me, to pull me through. And now I have this opportunity to relate to these soldiers, no matter where they're at, meet them where they're at, and give them the words of encouragement that they need; give them the support that they need. And let them know that there's hope. I'm not a trained professional. I don't have a degree. I have just the experience of knowing that God loves me and that His people have shown me love. And it's through those acts of kindness and through that love that has shown me the light in the dark places, that gives me the hope for tomorrow. And I wanna give that to other people. And it's helped other people. And it helps me too.

End of "Living Room Discussion" How video 2

Jeff Presnal, wrap-up, video 2

Jeff P: Don't expect to start to start a ministry and have them come to you. After hearing of many of their struggles in the last segment, can you see how difficult it might be for them to come to your church for an event that you hosted, before even knowing you?

A better idea might be to find out where they are and go to them to start relationships first. Volunteer at the VA Hospital or local Vet Center. Find a Reserve unit and ask to help. Meet a chaplain and volunteer to help him. Volunteer to help with local patriotic events and tributes.

Basically, you have to do things to meet them, get to know them and develop trust, before you've earned the right to be a part of their lives.

Some people are concerned that they don't understand military life. Military struggles are often very similar to the ones you face. They may be facing difficulties with their marriage, finances, health, children; all things that you may have faced and experienced. Although military life is unique, you have a lot of common ground. Start there, and seek to learn about the rest. If you'll show them and their families genuine concern and that you really care, they'll respond.

There're some things you should know.

Be a Learner. If you don't know ask, respectfully. If you ask, stick around to hear the answer. Educate yourself. Many resources are available on our website (www.crumilitary.org/e-kit) and there're links to other great resources of information.

Be Adaptable. Military people and their families have little control over their schedules. You'll need to work around their schedule, not yours. Veterans – especially, recently-returned-from-combat veterans, will like have habits, language and preferences that conflict with your own. Give them a little space, and adapt. This is a new culture to you. Don't let the externals stand in the way of the internal needs.

Be a Listener. Listen actively, compassionately and without judgment. It's hard enough for a veteran to talk about what is going on inside. If you don't stick around to hear the answer you won't get a second chance. Be prepared, because sometimes when you ask, you'll hear things that may be shocking to you. Be prepared so that you won't be shocked. Don't jump to conclusions, or doubt what they're saying, or give instant answers, or quote Christian clichés. Generally, this is a quick way to turn them off.

Just Show Up. Be genuine and care. Your efforts will be recognized and appreciated. But hang in there. A ministry like this can take time to get started. Be patient.

Let's take five. Pause the video and reflect on or discuss your own experiences or your own fears about interacting with a veteran, particularly one who has recently returned from combat.

TAKE FIVE:

- What experiences have you had where a veteran reacted unexpectedly to something you said or did?
- Why do you think just "showing up" is so important to a veteran?
- What does it mean to really listen?
And to listen without judgment?

End of “How. Part Two” Video

“How, Part Three” Video

Jeff P: Now that you know that military ministry opportunities abound and you understand there’s nothing to fear that some honest listening skills can’t address, perhaps you’re asking similar questions to these folks.

“Man on the street,” video 3

Lili: How can I help and what would be the best support for them?

Colin: What would make it more comfortable for people to come? What kind of setting it needs to be in? How long does it take for somebody to, kind of be willing to walk over the threshold and come to a group like that?

Daniel: What can my friends and I do when none of us have been in the military? We don’t have experience of anything like that?

Michelle: I’m a mom with three kids. What can I do?

David: You know, as a believer, I know... I know that love is the answer. But I struggle with, “How can I make it practical and real and relevant to help these vets coming back?”

Margie: How much time will this take? Which, of course, would be an unknown. Probably as much time as I have to give. But I suppose that’s a hesitation, too.

Tommy: The only thing I could offer is a listening ear and maybe friendship. Because I’m not really sure what else to offer ‘em.

End of “Man on the Street” video 3

Jeff P: So let’s take a look at what people did for our group of military experts.

“Living Room Discussion” video 3

Jeff P: Give us an example of how someone from your church or your community came around you and helped you as members of the military community.

Matt: Our church equipped, you know, us and my family. I don’t know if I was equipped. They knew what was coming. But I didn’t know, because I was just coming in, saying, “I’m home and I’m ready to take over again.” And I realized, “ooh, this ain’t working as well as I thought.” And it was because of my life-group, because of my pastors, because of those two guys who helped me walk in my faith. If we have a soldier deploying, and the spouse and the family’s left behind, I tell them that, “We are here for your wife and your children. And we will help them go through this experience that they’re going through. Go forth and do your mission.” And I had that same thing. And so whenever my wife would have to hang something on the wall and she would tell me, “Hey, our neighbor just came over and hung these pictures on the wall.” Something very

simple. I knew they were taken care of, because they had my back. Other families just had their back. Just an act of kindness, of stepping forward and saying, “Hey, we want to take care of you, because you’re right next to us, and we want to make sure...” I mean, our lawn was cut every week, because a retired chaplain knew what we were experiencing. And so, he didn’t ask for anything, but he cut our huge yard every week. And I look back today and said, “That is incredible,” because I don’t know if I would have cut our yard for that, y’know, for that long period of time.

Sandra: Being able to share with my own community, my own friends, about, um, just my own anxiety about Ryan deploying and just getting to a place where I could talk about it, be comfortable with even him going.

Mari: After struggling for several years with a lot of the really dark places of PTSD, we went up for prayer at church one afternoon, after service, and met a couple that prayed over us. And they proceeded to take our information down and called us the next day, right away. And we began about a six month journey with them, where they mentored us, talked with us, took us under their wing, and just really loved on us and allowed us to start the spiritual healing part of our walk that was missing. So that was... that was incredible.

Jeff P: Did they have any experience at doing that before that?

Mari: No. No experience whatsoever with...

Jeff P: Were they military people?

Mari: They were not military people. They were just...

Jeff P: They were just willing.

Mari: They were just willing to pray with us, listen, care for us, love on us, read the Bible to us, and just be there when we... when we needed them.

Josh: We were invited to come for a Easter service and the church we attended had a military liaison specifically, and he made a point to introduce himself. Shortly after our meeting, he wanted to have lunch together. He took me out to lunch. And then I incurred more difficulties. I lost my soldiers who were deployed and I was not there. And, uh, I had to attend the funeral services and I had to, um, begin to endure a completely new battle. And, he just, kinda, was there. He walked alongside of me. He showed up for the funeral services that were local at the base. And, this military liaison, he just, uh, him and his wife welcomed my family into his house for just meals, and just... in practical loving ways just showed that there was somebody there who cared, and supported through very difficult times. And it was just that simple expression that made me want to be connected to a church, a body of believers, and that was pivotal in the recovery process.

Karen: Afterwards, when his PTSD was pretty flying high and it was making life very difficult for me, I had a good friend come and start... we started meeting every

week, and praying together and really helped a lot, just to spend the time with her and just be able to be away from the house and the situation. So, it was a true blessing.

Larry: Individuals from my adult group, men's group did one-on-one peer counseling and that helps you because you talk about any and everything, and lay everything on the table, so to speak. And, you know, it's a... it's a free fire zone, if you will. And so, you're able to exchange ideas and say, you know, "Am I on base here? Am I off base here? Am I going in the right direction?" And you get good, concise and honest feedback. And that helps you. That helps me, because that's what I need. That gives me a basis to go forward.

Sandra: The... the amazing and wonderful thing is that Ryan had someone to talk with and, um, just spend like a year and a half just working through his story and the things that he saw and the things that he was experiencing. And he had a safe place. So, for me, that was so... so wonderful to know that I wasn't the one that had to do that, or I wasn't able to and I wasn't equipped to do that for my son. I would be praying for him, and having my own understanding what was going on, but there was already someone that was walking him through this... this whole process of what he had seen. And, so, one person that is willing to spend time with a veteran can make the biggest difference in their lives. I want to do that same thing.

Jeff P: Yeah, that was a huge blessing. Um, Andi, in talking with you, your experience was a little bit different, it sounded like, than the one that we had. Can you describe your experience for us?

Andi: My parents' church sort of adopted me and I would get letters saying that "We're praying for you. Be safe." Then I came home and started having issues of simple things: not being able to sleep, nightmares, not feeling safe. I assumed that going to the church would be the best place to go. And... unfortunately... it was almost like they'd see me coming and they'd shut the door, close the blinds and turn off the light. That's how I felt. I mean, I was really having a crisis of... of spirituality.

Jeff P: But as you started with Rahnella, for example, you were talking about that part of the journey being the... sort of the change for you.

Andi: Rahnella's consistent and persistent, uh, presence in my life... I was able to start seeing that there are people that do care, that aren't in the military, have no connection to the military, at all. She just wanted to hear my story. And she was genuine about it. But she wasn't afraid of me and she just kept coming. She kept showing up and that was... that was key.

Jeff P: So for you, her faithfulness in... in journeying with you... that was the practical thing that made a difference for you.

Andi: Yeah. God has put the right people in my... in my life at the right time. I'm involved in, um, a group called "Rally Point," which, uh, we're going through "The Combat Trauma Healing Manual." And that is my... that's where I recharge and that's where I can have the tough conversations with people that get it. Anyway, I can say, "I'm really stru... struggling" without getting the platitudes and the pat answers. I get to finish my statement and have someone go, "Ah, yeah, I get that!" And... it's... it's a comfort. And not just that an individual can understand but... you know, because of our shared experience or similar experience in a combat situation, but... our experience in... in redefining ourselves as a Christian, as a believer... not being afraid to ask the hard questions and struggle through the answers together. We have each other's back.

Jeff P: That's good.

Andi: So, it took, let's see... I've been home almost ten years, so it's taken a long time but it's been a journey... let's just call it that.

Jeff P: Just wondering, can anybody give examples of how people have connected with chaplains, helped them to do their job, connected with them in different ways?

Matt: I've recognized is the need for personal time for themselves, so they can reenergize, reengage and build... and regain just what's needed to be the best chaplain they possibly can. And so I've seen within the Joint Base Lewis-McChord having individual retreats set aside for them, that just actually blew me away about how the community pulled together and pretty much spoiled them in a way that allowed them to set aside their... being around commands but taking their families and just re... enjoy a retreat setting, that just really blessed their socks off.

Sandra: The chaplain at the reserve unit that is... the unit is about an hour away from where we live... and just to have that opportunity to support the chaplain. And also the chaplain was an avenue for us to be able to let the military know that we cared about them and that we wanted to be there for them and that we wanted to pray for them and let them know that we cared and that we did... we did want to hear what they had to say, and what their struggles were. And one of the things that we were able to is to go and assist the chaplain in leading the worship service and, uh... on their drill weekend, and to have communion and then to pray for them. And so that was one of the ways that we were able to be a part of sharing that message of hope and care, "There's a community that loves you." And we did that through the chaplain.

Jeff P: It's been a great experience.

Josh: And so somebody who wants to minister to the military doesn't necessarily have to have that experience. They don't even have to have a psychology degree. They just have to be a loving, compassionate person, that's willing just to be there and meet your basic needs wherever they're at. It's, uh, fixing a fence for a

spouse or bringing over a hot meal for a busy mom; taking the kids so that you can go out on a date night; whatever those basic needs are, being a... being a human that cares and is compassionate is all you need to be.

Jeff P: Well, Josh, that's a great answer to the question. I'm... I'm reminded that when Jesus commissioned the disciples He told them to go forth and make disciples. And what you just described is the privilege that all of us have had being disciplined by others and in some cases, disciplining others and working with them. And so, while we've done that in the military community, there's this tremendous opportunity out there for all of us to continue to disciple and be disciplined by other. And you're evidence of exactly how that works and how it can work. So that was a great answer.

End of "Living Room Discussion" video 3

Jeff Presnal, wrap-up, video 3

Jeff P: You're probably asking, "What can I do?" Well, what are you already doing as a servant of Christ? How is your local church already uniquely serving the community? Those skills, gifts, talents, facilities and ministries you're already exercising are probably what God is asking you to use for and with the military in your midst. With prayer and thoughtful consideration you'll discover how your current ministries can expand or adapt to address the unique needs of our military.

You can **Start where you are, Use what you have, and Do what you can.** We've also learned a number of best practices [examples of what others are doing] from churches already involved in these ministries. These are available on the website. (www.crumilitary.org/e-kit)

There are three things you can start doing now. First is fervent and intentional **prayer**. Prayer's the foundation of the ministry. It is, in fact, *the* ministry. Everything else flows from what you learn in communion with God. Pray before you start anything. Pray for God to provide the workers you'll need and to show you where to connect with military people. Pray that He will show you their needs and how you can meet them, all before you ever do anything to actually serve them. Allow God to go ahead of you and prepare the way. When you have to have events, have prayer teams during events. Pray for and with the military people you meet.

Second, host **Special events** honoring veterans, military and their families: Veterans Day parades, Independence Day barbeques and picnics honoring military families with events for the children. Have a place at these events where you can connect with those who come.

Third, as you start building relationships encourage these men and women to join a small group. Resources like *The Combat Trauma Healing Manual* and *When War Comes Home* not only address the issues they're facing but consistently bring Christ into the conversation. Small groups using resources like *Loving Your Military Man*, and *Making Your Marriage Deployment Ready* will build Christ-centered foundations for military marriages. **(Guides for facilitating these small groups are available on our website.)**

We're here to help you to do what God is calling you to do. You can do it!

Let's **Take Five** one more time. Pause the video and reflect or discuss how the ministries you're already doing can be used specifically for military men and women and their families.

TAKE FIVE:

- What are the ministries your church is known for?
- How might you use them in serving the military in your area?
- What practical things can you do for the servicemen and women you already know?

End of "How, Part Three" video

A Conversation with the Clarks and the Presnals

Jeff Presnal: Well, our story really begins out of a discipleship training program, and our son's story and our own personal history of being called. You know, really feeling God call us to start a military ministry. I think we had not resisted it, but why on earth would we start a military ministry in Houston, Texas? You know, why would you do that? Fort Hood was two and a half hours away. But once we lived through some things, especially with our son's first deployment, we knew that we needed to get involved. God wanted us to be involved some way. We began to... we prayed a lot and asked people to pray with us and for us. Had a prayer shield of people that really, kinda, laid the groundwork before us. And we initially, sort of, sought out what we should do. Ultimately, we ended up having a luncheon at church and invited anybody who was interested in serving the military community. That was... that was the topic.

We told them our story and told them why we were doing it. And we told them then... we said, "We don't know what we're gonna do. We don't know what it looks like. We have no idea what next month will bring. But we are willing to... we want to serve. And we're willing to do whatever we can think of... wherever God leads us, we're willing to serve. And so, we had about 15-20 core volunteers, that came on board with us at that point. And together we began to seek God for where He would lead us to go and serve and connect. And started doing everything from visiting the Vet Centers to calling a chaplain direct at a local Reserve unit. Even working with our son's unit at Fort Hood, trying to just figure out where we could begin to make a... to make a difference.

It's really an amazing story of God inspiring you in an unusual way, but one of the key parts to that was that you did something and you didn't stop with just you. You know, you realized there were other people who could benefit from doing that, and invited them.

Scott Clark: One day, a friend of mine from church, he came to me and he said that his son was having some problems with PTSD. He'd never... this man had never been in the military and really didn't know what was going on with PTSD, but he'd heard that I had PTSD, so he was seeking a little help. And he had this book called "The Combat Trauma Healing Manual," and he wanted to know if I felt that that would be helpful. So I look at this book and I'm like, "Yeah, great. Thanks, Jeff."

About a month later, I just had an overwhelming feeling to call Jeff. I was still having every problem in the book with my unresolved combat trauma. And, we go out to lunch the next day, and Jeff and I are talking. In that short conversation, in that short lunch, I received more help than all the help I'd received before from all the other counseling, everything I'd been through. And I begged Jeff to take me through this book, to go through it with me. And, again, Jeff had never had any experience in working with the military, or anything. His

son had joined, but really didn't... he personally didn't know very much about it. So he agreed to do so.

Well, the first time we sat down and we met, about thirty minutes into it, I'm saying, "Hey, I know somebody this can help. Can he come the next time?" And Jeff said, "Yeah, sure."

Next week we have two of us, the next week we have four, the next week we have eight, and it just kept going on and on and on. And more and more groups were growing. Jeff was helping me do all these things. We got some contacts with the Military Ministry and went through prayer meetings and I found even more people that were interested in helping the military, reaching out to helping those suffering from PTSD. Now we have groups all over Arizona that are meeting weekly and getting the healing that they needed from this process. We have an internet radio show. It's just going out and doing stuff and letting the Holy Spirit guide you. God'll put people in front of you. Get ahold of them and if you pray on it, you can make it happen.

Jeff P: Well, we do what we can, y'know, to serve those around us. And we've got a... for example, a Navy family in our church, whose getting... he's getting ready to deploy. And so, our job is to support that family while he's gone. And we've ministered with them before, and we'll be there with the wife, and certainly pray for him during, and then help them with reintegration, when he... you know, when he comes back. So...

Scott: Well, it sounds like there was a lot of focus and prayer to get you going in this process and... I know that... that was something that we also looked at greatly, is relying on God to guide us and not doing it ourselves but just turning it over to Him and letting Him take it from there.

Jeff P: [to Sandra] Y'know, talk about the Solace... just their role with us...

Sandra Presnal: Um... I'd rather talk about something else. [laughter] Well, what I would like to say is: There are so many ways to... to serve in a military ministry. What your ministry focuses on is something different than ours would or that yours [Clarks] would. And it takes all kinds and it takes all talents and it takes everyone to... to sign up and just... just get involved.

Jeff and I personally want to be a part of the groups. We want to be hands on. We... That's what we like to do, but that's not what everybody in our group does. They... there's different levels of commitment and it... it works. What might fit your community and work with your people, then that is what the Lord has for you to do.

End of "A Conversation with the Clarks and the Presnals"

“Call to Action” video

“Call to Action”

Jeff Struecker: Thanks for spending time equipping yourself to answer God’s call. As a pastor and former Army Ranger, this project has been an answer to my prayer. I’ve been begging God that He would motivate His church to reach out to the men and women who defend our country. Today’s warriors have spent more time in combat than, perhaps, ever before in the history of our nation. They’re an all-volunteer force, who have said repeatedly, “I’m willing to leave my family, go into harm’s way, and die, if necessary, to preserve our way of life.”

Let’s be honest. We can’t do enough to thank them and their families for the sacrifices they’ve made for us. My prayer has been that God would move His church to reach out to these great citizens and describe the greatest sacrifice ever made for man: the sacrifice of our King Jesus on the cross for sinners. And that thousands, if not millions of men and women will join the ranks of the army of God through the simple efforts of His people.

As you think about what you saw and heard today, what needs stood out? What are the opportunities to serve right where you are? What are the gifts, the talents, the resources God has given you?

Jeff Presnal: It’s time to take action. What action will you take to use what you have?

Pause the video now and write down what you will commit to do. When you’re done, share it with someone.

On screen:

- What will you do to use what you have?
- What three things are you going to put into action?
- What is God asking you to do right now?

Jeff S: You’ve heard today how people just like you, from churches just like yours, started right where they were, used what they had, and did what they could to make a difference.

Jeff P: Working in the power of the Holy Spirit, they saw amazing things happen in the lives of servicemen, veterans and their families. God will do amazing things through you too. Anyone can do something. Remember: Start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God.

Jeff S: Okay. Are you willing to take the next step?

Jeff P: Jeff, let’s pray for every single person watching this video.

Jeff S: God, You’ve promised to give power to Your people through your church to change the world. I ask you now to put a passion in the hearts of every single

person watching this video to make a difference in the lives of men and women in the military. Will You give us the pleasure of seeing Your son, Jesus, change lives and heal the hearts of warriors and their families? Amen.

“If I could say just one thing...”

Jeff Struecker: I think if I could say only one thing to somebody who wants to get serious about reaching out to the military, it would be that this can be really challenging work, but it will also be very, very rewarding.

Jeff Presnal: The one thing that I would want everybody to know is to start now. There’s no reason to wait. You can make a difference today.

Sandra Presnal: I would say that if you are considering it in any way, that the Lord has put that on your heart and that you need to step out and act upon that.

Scott Clark: The one thing that I would say is, from a military terminology: Shoot, ready, aim. Let the Holy Spirit guide your actions. From a more civilian way of saying that: These men and women... they were there when you needed them, when we needed them. They need you now. And, please don’t give up on them. They didn’t give up on you.

Karen Clark: The one thing that I would say is that there are so many service members and their families that are hurting. And they need help as soon as possible, so please get involved as soon as you can to start helping them.

Matt VanderFeltz: It’s just a simple step, and that’s just stepping forward, and then getting to know and building relationship with the military.

Gabe Garriga: Military ministry is a way to impact the world from your backyard. The sailors, the airmen, the troops, the Marines, they’re going everywhere around the world, and it’s a good opportunity to be able to have a global impact, locally.

Josh Renschler: I would have to say, it doesn’t take a psychology degree to help a soldier. It takes practical assistance in showing them love and support in whatever means that they need at that very moment.

Andi Westfall: If there’s one thing I could say about helping the military it would be: Show up, and then keep showing up... and then show up some more.

End of “If I could say just one thing...”

End of “Call to Action” video
