

Dealing with Predictable Ethical Dilemmas Mill

Very good, happy to do that. Yes, my name is Dean Mills.

I have been involved with ACTS for a long time and with Officer's Christian Fellowship before then. I'm going to go ahead and share my screen now.

Became a believer at the Air Force Academy in 1980. I'm a fellow speaker of Christian Athletes. ministry.

And but then right as I graduated from the Academy was introduced to officers Christian fellowship and Robin Jenny Woodruff and have been involved with OCF ever since.

And then my first wife, Dina, and I were also then introduced to Axe at a later time, actually got to meet The Bielenbergs in Australia when we were going to staff college down there and others, the Dawes up in Norfolk area and so on, God just kept putting Acts people in our path. And then Cal asked us to come on the board. So we were board members to begin with.

and then came on staff about eight years ago and have started working with the Academy, sorry, what we can now call the Axe Exploration Program to take cadets on trips.

to cast vision about international military ministry and so on. So, Yeah, a little bit about my testimony there. And again, really, I'll have more to say about that as we sort of talk about this topic today.

and how a lot of that then plays into my walk and why I like this topic and was happy to jump on this.

So let me make sure, is everybody able to see my slides preparing for predictable ethical problems? Very good.

So I'm gonna go ahead and start clicking through. This is a part of, as Cal has presented, the 10 enabling biblical training elements.

And you see that preparing for the Predictable Ethical Problems is number four. It actually relies also heavily, and I'll talk about it on number five, the 10 common challenges.

and those sorts of things. So I certainly see those as being a very nice pair of lessons to be presented together and so on.

By the way, I made an egregious error in going on. I forgot to mention that, But Daryl and Martha are classmates of mine from the Air Force Academy, best class, two best in blue. So had to acknowledge that as well. Happy to see them today.

Okay, so let's talk about this as part of this idea of training for ethical challenges.

And so let's go ahead and kind of explore that.

One of the things that as a cadet at an academy, we always liked is the idea of war stories. As a matter of fact, I use the terminology of war stories now and even a broader sense that many people get uncomfortable if you tell them You need to tell your testimony and they, especially if they're new believers or something like that, they get a little antsy or nervous.

But I haven't met a military person yet, and I'm meeting a whole bunch of new vets and military folks in the location we're living now.

and I haven't met one yet that doesn't love to tell war stories. What went on in their career, what's gone on in their life, and so I always frame that and say, Well, your testimony is really your God war story. It's about the spiritual battle and the things that you've done in your life And often there's danger, there's excitement, there's all of those things and there's triumph and there's good guys and bad guys and those sorts of things.

And I certainly, I spent 18 years of my adult life at the Air Force Academy for as a cadet and Six as an officer and eight as a civilian and I haven't met a cadet yet that didn't love war stories two reasons one The instructor would then use up class time if they were asking for them in classes. It would use up class time that they didn't have to answer questions on the reading that they hadn't done the night before.

And then the other was, though, they always want to hear what's it going to be like when I get on active duty? What's it going to be like when I go into the real Air Force? And so often you will learn those things because all of a sudden the other thing that you start hearing is, wait a minute, An early war story for a lot of people is here I am going into battle and all I've got is a cap gun. All I have is something that makes a little noise.

I'm just totally under equipped and under prepared for these battles that I might be facing.

Mine, I was a young believer, became a believer at the academy, graduated, still needed to grow a lot. OCF was doing great things, being involved in the Bible study.

I was going through my initial training in fighter aircraft in the F-111 and had just gotten engaged to my first wife, Dina, And I'm trying to catch up with this airplane and do the right things. And we're going to go overseas and move into a different culture.

And I felt a real threat to my witness in my walk, which of course is what I didn't want to do. I did not want to mess up.

and do that, and yet I felt threatened and I wasn't sure about my weapons. How good was I at being able to use the things I was learning in my walk? And I can certainly identify and people I've talked to, I was not alone in that.

Many other believers, especially early in a military career or a police career, or whatever are gonna experience the same sorts of things, that rookie feeling, and especially maybe as new believers going into that environment.

And not only that, but even Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10, he sent them out to go do things. But he told them, I'm sending you out as sheep among wolves.

And you need to be prepared though. You need to be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. You need to take this attitude that yes, you want to be innocent in the sense of how you love and talk to people, but you got to be prepared. You got to be able to do good things. You're going to be put up in front of kings and magistrates and all of those things.

and you need to be prepared for that. So it's normal that we might feel ill-equipped, underprepared, but I can tell you that is not a place from which we can serve, whether it's serving in the role that we have in our military police force, a one of fear where you feel like you can't do anything, but it's also not true of serving God.

and serving and doing those things. We've got to be better prepared and we have to start gaining confidence in the tools that we have and the God whom we serve. So we have to trust Him and the training that we receive when we. When we study His Word, we're involved in fellowship and we're doing Bible study, we learn these things over the time.

not from our own strength that's certainly true we we have to be very careful about about that but it's through God and through the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, in that same section in Matthew 10, verse 20 says, for it's not you who speak, but the spirit of your father speaking through you.

So we have to build up in young believers and young military folks this idea that So number one, there's work for me to do to be ready. But number two, it's not on my strength. It's on the Holy Spirit working through me and God enabling me to do those things.

So let me run through a framework of kind of how I sort of put this together. Well, how do we get there? How does somebody get there as part of the tools that we're going to give them in their toolkit here? And so this is the framework that I came up with, this preparation for building that foundation on the Holy Spirit.

So number one, we identify our problem areas. What are the things, and that's where that lesson number five came in, how do we identify some of the common things that we just know are going to come up in our first first week on the job or first assignment, or maybe a little farther down the line, but somewhere along the way, we are likely to encounter this problem this temptation to violate our ethics, to sin, to do those things.

Then we need to go dive into God's word and find that biblical stance and that supporting guidance, those things that will help Give us that foundation and anchor our actions to make sure that we're reacting properly.

Third, we then need to brainstorm that process of sitting and coming up with ideas. Well, okay, if I'm gonna face this, What might be some ways that I can react to counter that or what might I do? Now brainstorming, if you've ever gone through these sorts of things, they'll tell you brainstorming, it's like you just start tossing out ideas. You don't do any judgment or clearing on them to start with. You brainstorm from start to finish. So that's the next step.

And then we'll work on it. And then you'll do some paring those down. And finally, the last thing, and I'll use the Air Force terminology here, and that is that you chair fly it.

You go through and that's like chair flying in the Air Force or anywhere where you're flying is literally you sit in a chair and and you maybe have some of the charts around you to show the cockpit layout or whatever, it's like this simplest of simulators to be able to work through the whole mission. And so they teach us When we're doing a job like that in a flying thing, you go through from start to finish, whatever task it is that you're trying to learn how to do, And you're doing it in something as simple as a chair. You've got some of the things around you. You don't have to have an expensive simulator or whatever.

The Army has lots of different practices. One of them they call a rock drill where they're really getting everybody together and you're going through all the pieces and you're fitting it.

It's all about practice. It's all about doing that so that you can be well prepared in those areas.

That's sort of the framework. Let's just take a quick look at each of those areas. Identify potential problem areas.

Well, number one, probably, you know, one of the first things you can do is go to the Bible. God knows us and he knows some of the things that we're going to have trouble with, right? And so he lays out those things. First place we might want to look, look in Deuteronomy 5 to the Ten Commandments because God gave those commandments because those are areas that he knows, otherwise we'd go straying off the path. These are some things that he wants us to do.

The idea of, you know, I am your God. You will have no other gods before me. You will not worship idols. You will not do these things. So, we can certainly use that framework of the Ten Commandments as a way of identifying potential problem areas. Then you can go through other Bible verses, and I happen to jump on to Galatians 5, Galatians 5 talks at the end about the fruits of the Spirit, but I call it the anti-fruits that are in the verses before the fruits of the Spirit when he says, These things people will do and they won't inherit the kingdom of God. He's saying anybody who's stuck in these things habitually 15 works of the flesh, he calls them, cover this

broad range of ethical dilemmas. And if somebody's stuck in those, they're probably not really serving God, they probably may not even really know God and have that full relationship with God.

but they certainly are areas too that even we as believers can have trouble with.

and that we need to address. And those 15 things cover this broad range. Probably everybody doesn't do all of them, but I bet everybody has dealt with some of them.

And you go into those, and again, key in some of those sorts of things uh right up front sexual immorality impurity lying envy dissension division jealousy i mean okay think about a young officer, a young person in the military trying to work hard on their ethics. And what are they going to be faced with? Well, they're going to be faced with a lot of those sorts of things.

I can tell you, certainly, my mind flashes back to some of the things that I faced going into the fighter community. And I was like, oh my goodness, we're gonna be fighters. It's the tip of the spear.

Thank you.

And oh, yeah, but man, the environment is crazy. It's nonstop drinking and chasing women and doing all these sorts of things that are expected of you in the fighter community.

And most of those are not acceptable to us as believers in the body of Christ and the things that we ought to be doing.

I was thinking through all those things about, okay, How do I know how to handle these things? Well, one of the other things that you can do besides what God's word is saying, you can hear those war stories that you were hearing from from, you know, older people in the military who were telling the, you know, what it was like for them. And maybe they threw in some of the more salacious things that went on and so on.

You know, and some of that stuff is good. It might, some of the good stuff may motivate you, but the bad stuff is, that's the stuff of your nightmares.

That's the stuff that you worry about. I'm going to go in and I'm going to fall flat on my face and I'm going to sully the name of Christ.

and so on. So those are the things that I want to pay attention to.

So from those areas, either the war stories and the things that you hear or just straight out of the Bible of the things that might come up, make a list.

make a list of your potential problem areas, and I would say, I would put the things that you fear the most, the things that you know, that you know you struggle with the most, put those at the

top of the list and say, right, that's the one I want to work on. And I want to try and come up with something that's going to help me.

The next step is to then go and say, right, but I wanna make sure that my reaction is a biblical, God-honoring reaction, the things that I do. Because sometimes there are things that we may not want to do that Some of that may be cultural. Some of it may be just, okay, what did I learn today? I want to make sure though that the way I react is in fact biblical, that I'm on good solid ground in the actions that I choose to take.

Some of the things you'll find in the Bible will be very specific and spot on, you know.

flee sexual immorality, you know, and then it goes and gives a war story about a guy named Joseph who actually fled and left his coat when he was faced with the temptation for sexual immorality. So the Bible is full of great guidance for very specific things.

Other times maybe it's going to be more generic and universal in the way that it gives that guidance. So make sure you start with your worst Problematic areas.

and go find those. And again, a couple of places, Deuteronomy 5, the 10 commandments is a nice place to start. And then go back to Galatians 5, and go beyond the anti-fruits into the fruits of the Spirit and say, right, what are the things that I should be doing? What's the right stance and the right foundation I ought to go? Get involved, make sure if you've got a mentor, an ethical coach, a pastor, a priest, a brother, sister, wingman, any of those sorts of things.

help you to clarify, work through what those dilemmas are, as well as they'll come in handy in the next step where we're going to try and come up with some solutions.

And finally, you might also consult some trusted ethical resources, some of the stuff that this group's trying to come up with.

to give to people to reference. But just make sure it has a good worldview, ethical foundation, biblical and sound.

Third area is then brainstorm these courses of action for each area.

Again, COAs are something that are familiar for many throughout the military of creating COAs.

to come up with to assess what actions are we going to take. So this should hopefully be something that resonates with many of the people that we're dealing with.

As I mentioned earlier, brainstorming is a wide open exercise. The first idea is get everything written down of all the things that you might do.

I love to think of it on a spectrum. I like to think of I can take actions over here on this end of the spectrum, and then I go all the way to the other end of the spectrum, and then I'll get everything in between.

because once I get those written down, I make sure I've got it covered, Maybe I have my wingman, my friend, my mentor help me to come up with that list.

Because then we're going to go back and pare that down. Because some of the things, especially often the things that are on the extremes of the spectrum, are things that we don't want to do.

You know, one way of of not a particular ethical dilemma, say it's lying, is I'm going to go be a hermit in the mountains and just avoid having to ever lie, say a lie to anybody at all. Well, okay, that's really extreme. You're right, that is a possible course of action.

But if God has called you to be in the military and to be a believer and a light in the military, well, guess what? That one's off the table.

So you can start eliminating some of those things that maybe you brainstorm.

and you start working them back into the middle somewhere of those things that actually are possible and might be options for what you might do.

And finally, you'll flesh out those koahs so that there's something you can see yourself doing and that they're consistent with your biblical guidance.

And that's when we get into the last step, which is the chair flying. And this is the part, I think most of the things that I've mentioned here, many people do Hmm, maybe not in quite as deliberate away as I've laid out here, but they'll get to that point and say, well, yeah, you know, I could do this or I could do that. And then they never go any further.

And then all of a sudden they get they're out with the folks at work or they're out in a social event and they get faced with a dilemma.

and they never worked through and they never chair flew to see how do I go about doing this? How do I go about making this work? And to me, this is the key step, get to that point, run through the scenario. So you come up with this thing that says, well, if this happens, and I know my guidance is I need to do this and this. Well, how can I go about doing that? I mean, you know, somebody asks you to go get drunk or somebody asks you to lie about something, one way to react would be to just very forcefully you know, back at them and, you know, screaming at them, aligning, well, okay, again, I would suggest, well, that's possible. Maybe that's not the best way of going about doing it.

Well, how do you do it? Well, maybe you actually turn it around so it's a conversation and you sort of redefine what it is.

An example I can give, So I'm in the fighter world and I was a navigator, two seat aircraft side by side, pilot on the left, WIZO or navigator on the right.

And one of my jobs in the right seat was to track the time that we were flying and the way we did it.

you wrote down the time you released brakes on the runway to start flying and when you came back when you landed you then added five minutes for taxi and that was the time you flew. Well, in the fighter world and then the flying world, flying time is like one of the top metrics.

To be able to advance and do things, you need more flying hours. And so it was very carefully measured. And right away, I had pilots that I would fly with.

And when we would land and we'd be rolling out and they'd say, okay, we got down at 1230. Why don't you make that 1232? Cause that gets us an extra 10th of an hour.

And by the time you do that, you know, over hundreds of sorties all of a sudden you have extra hours. So they'd say, yeah, make make that make that twelve thirty two that we got down.

Well, guess what? That's why.

We didn't get down at 1232. We got down at 1230. But because they wanted some gain, they were asking me to lie.

And so I knew it was coming and it sure enough, it came at me very fast.

And so I had to stop and think, what am I going to do when that situation comes up? And so I sort of worked through it. And so I came up with what my standard response was, which was, nah, that's okay. I'm just going to.