

C4 SPIRITUAL FITNESS
TRAINING PROGRAM



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A FRAMEWORK FOR THE WARFIGHTER

The Armed Forces have long understood the importance of faith and spirituality in the warfighting vocation. In the Air Force, a healthy warrior is well-rounded in the mental, physical, social and spiritual domains. This concept is termed Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF).

Central to holistic wellness is the inner-core of the warfighter, the soul. In fact, premier military leaders have said as much, "the soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end." This sentiment is echoed in warfighting manuals that elevate the critical role of morale for military organizations.

For the Air Force, spiritual fitness is "the ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, or values needed to persevere and prevail in accomplishing missions." Warfighter wellness and warfighting resilience are firmly grounded in spiritual health.

The military recognizes and affirms the necessity of spiritual fitness for the warrior, but does the Bible? Does warfighting receive biblical attention? Is the God of the Bible interested in spiritually fit warriors? Can the warfighter turn to the Bible for guidance and answers in their vocation? The answer to each of these questions is an emphatic "yes."

The Bible's guidance to the warfighter can be summarized under four categories: warrior calling, warrior code, warrior community and warrior cleansing. God affirms the dignity of the warfighting vocation by calling individuals to protect their neighbor, provides ethical wisdom to encode their mode of operation, narrates the importance of communal rituals and support, and prescribes spiritual disciplines and practices for purification. By exploring and strengthening these four areas, the warrior's spiritual fitness will be enhanced.

BIBLICALLY-BASED & DATA-DRIVEN

Spiritual Worldview	Spiritual Practices	Spiritual Community	Spiritual Coping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological health Contentment Happiness Life satisfaction Decrease in depression Ability to cope w/ stress Strength to cope w/ pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical health Psychological health Decreased stress Decreased anxiety Higher quality of life Decreased drug use Improvements to PTSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical health Psychological health Purpose in life Decrease in depression Increase of coping skills Financial stability Relational health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical health Psychological health Improvements to PTSD Increase of life span Ability to cope with loss Purpose in life Decrease in anxiety

Studies on spiritual fitness in the Air Force have linked human flourishing and warrior resilience to those who operate with a spiritual worldview, engage in spiritual practices, draw strength from a spiritual community, and utilize spiritual coping in the face of adversity. One study catalogues the specific health benefits connected to each of the four categories. These are visualized in the above chart. These research themes integrate seamlessly with the C4 model and move it toward a data-driven model with proven outcomes.

Call
Code
Cleansing
Community

WARRIOR CODE

The warrior code is about translating ethical principles into solid action. It functions as concrete practical wisdom, an ethical guide, a moral how-to that enables the combatant to navigate the dangerous military vocation. Inculcating and applying biblical guidance for the believing warrior calibrates the moral compass and disciplines the conscience. Further, the moral code protects the warrior's humanity, insulates them from moral injury and increases the likelihood of returning home intact and with honor.

WARRIOR CLEANSING

Warrior cleansing affirms that war leaves no one unscathed. Good and evil, life and death, just and unjust, moral and immoral are often framed as black and white concepts. For combatants, the fog of war impedes ethical visibility; clear categories become blurry, black and white becomes gray and clean becomes messy. Sin, shame, and guilt are regularly tied to the warfighting endeavor. Cleansing is essential for the warrior. Scripture is honest about this dynamic as it encourages combatants to own their stuff, confess boldly while embracing and practicing forgiveness.

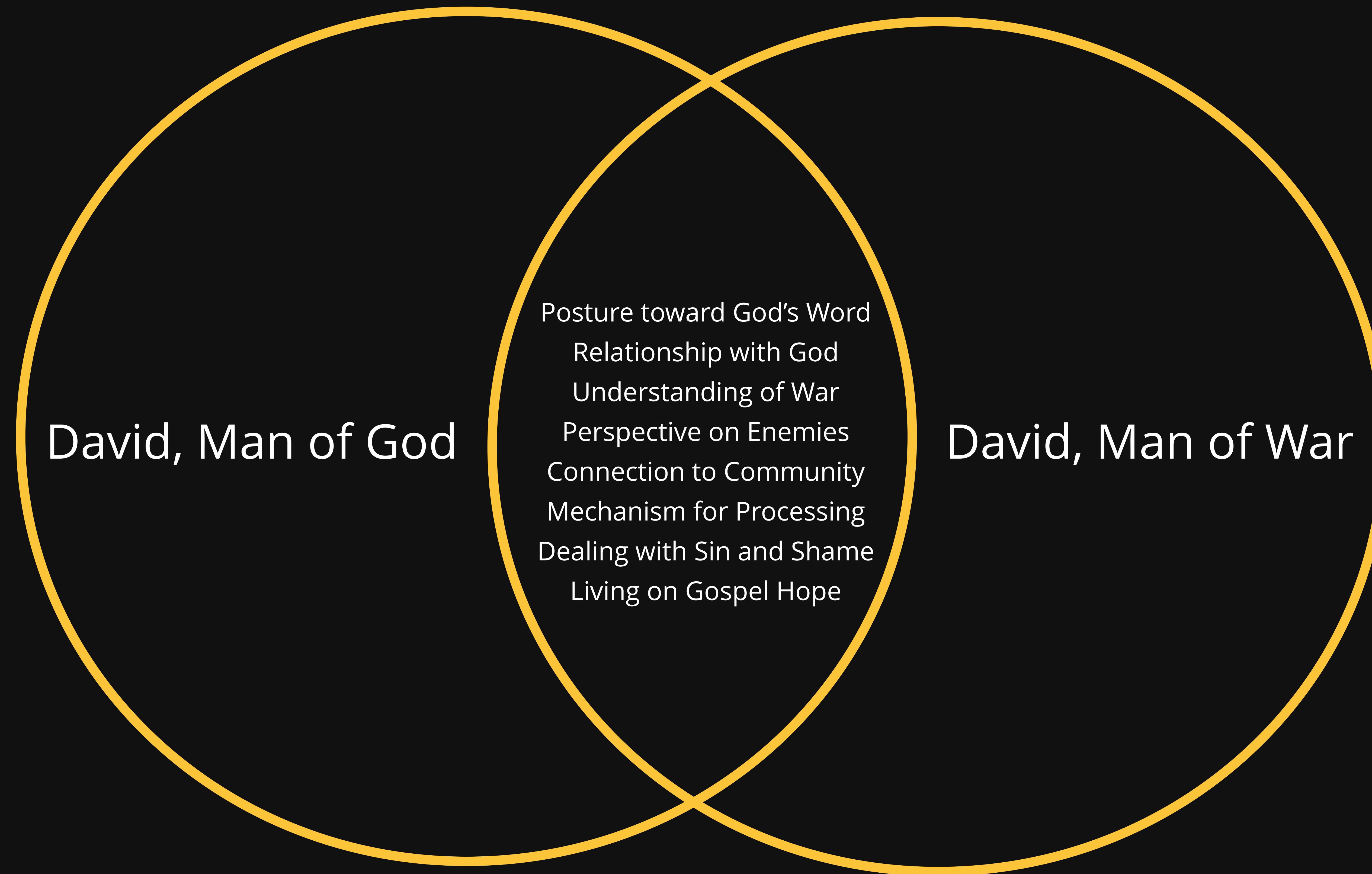
WARRIOR CALL

The warrior call is about the individual aligning their viewpoint with the divine perspective. Grounded in relationship with God, the warrior strives to understand their creator, themselves and the world around them. As the warrior's view synchronizes with the Divine Warrior they have a proper view of war, warfighting and the warfighting vocation. This biblical perspective centers the uniform-wearer, assures them of the sacred nature of their work and equips them to walk confidently before God in the face of grave challenges.

WARRIOR COMMUNITY

The warrior community ensures uniform wearers that they are not alone. Waging war is a corporate endeavor. Warriors are representatives, they are the sword of their people. Sent out from them, they fight for them and return to them. When communal solidarity encompasses the movement to, through and from battle, a safety net undergirds warriors. The biblical paradigm of the warrior community ensures corporate accountability, war rituals, a safe context for confession and lament along with assurance of communal honor and remembrance.

"David was a man after God's own heart." -1 Sam 13:14



"David was a mighty man of valor, a man of war." -1 Sam 16:18

The narratives of David are filled with warfighter theology. In fact, it is difficult to find material in 1-2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles and Psalms detached from the theme of war. Specifically, these narratives provide access to the interior life of a man of God (1 Sam 13:14) and a man of war (1 Sam 16:18). In David, godliness and vocational warfighting intersect. 1-2 Samuel reveals a man consistently exposed to combat. And "there was war again" (1 Sam 19:8, 2 Sam 21:15, 18, 19) aptly summarizes context of the Davidic narratives. As a warrior, he was highly respected by his people and celebrated for his valor (1 Sam 18:7, 16). He was held in high esteem by his brothers in arms for his prowess, discipline, leadership, humility and faith (2 Sam 17:8, 10, 23:13-17). This esteem and respect given by his battle buddies and community extended to his enemies (1 Sam 18:30, 29:4-5). In his warfighting vocation, David had broad experience. He led small units of warriors, commanded elite troops, had charge of hundreds and thousands and eventually was the chief over an entire army (1 Sam 18:3, 22:2, 23:1-5, 2 Sam 12:29, 23:8-39).

He knew life on the front-lines of combat and experienced calling the shots from the back (1 Sam 17, 2 Sam 21:17). He was combat proven veteran and leader. David's combat exposure was profound. Called a "man of blood" (2 Sam 16:6-8). He took many lives, saw many lives taken, lost friends, family and loved ones. David's combat experience spanned roughly 55 years. The narratives and psalms of David are not shy about the impact of combat on this warrior's. David was not just a man of war, he was a man of God. He was a worshiper of God, a man of prayer and a lover of God's word. The only thing more pervasive than combat throughout the Davidic narratives is faith. David was "man after God's heart," a warfighter with an interior life aligned with God. He models the proper posture for the warfighter toward God's word, relating with God, properly viewing war, engaging enemies, connecting to community, processing combat experiences, dealing with sin and shame, and living on gospel hope. The C4 framework and S.T.R.O.N.G. model explained on the next page capture these dynamics.

S T R O N G

Study the Sacred Text

The study of the Word of God equips a warrior with the right view of God, the self and the world. It provides the warrior with a moral code and perspective on all critical matters pertaining to the warfighter vocation.

Train the Conscience

The biblical warrior code grounds, equips and protects the member when it is properly applied. The conscience must first be educated and then trained for the warrior to operate adeptly in a combat environment.

Rely on Community

Community plays a key role in stabilizing the warfighter. The important place of combat rituals, the creation of a safe context for honest confession, and the gift of communal worship all ensure warrior health.

Offer Prayer and Song

Processing the full scope of emotions and experiences is essential for warrior health. The practice of prayer and song provided within the Psalms gives voice to the warrior's layered emotions, challenges and experiences.

Name Sin and Guilt

The need to live a life of confession and repentance is utmost for warrior health. Refusing to hide, naming one's actions and taking complete responsibility moves an individual toward forgiveness, peace of mind and health.

Grasp Mercy and Hope

Warriors carry heavy loads, they need an invitation and context to unload. The gospel promise connects them to the mercy of God, his forgiveness, and the freedom of hope. This is fuel for the warrior's journey and assurance of their well-being.

THE S.T.R.O.N.G. MODEL FROM THE WARRIOR JOURNEY OF KING DAVID

King David is a biblical template of the godly warfighter. His life models the intersection of the warrior vocation and the life of faith. The narrative window into David's life is a treasure trove for the contemporary combatant. In him, the treacherous terrain of soldiering is navigated before the face of God. In David, the biblical marks of warrior health are discernible: gospel dependence, a life of repentance, embracing lament, leaning heavy on community, a right posture toward enemies, a theological grasp of war, a solid relationship with God and a steady diet of God's Word.

The Davidic narratives and Psalm teach the warfighter that guidance and grounding flow from the Word of God, freedom and expression come through prayer and song, solidarity and support is provided by community, and redemption and hope are found in the Divine Warrior who comes in the flesh. The literature on David touches moral complexities in the profession of arms, including: proper posture toward enemies, the function of the image of God in warfighting, the role of the conscience, moral injury, honoring the fallen, the temptations unique to warriors, relational strain on families, the power of shame and guilt and the role of forgiveness.

David's story is rugged, its authenticity is intrinsically life-giving for the contemporary combatant. His journey confirms that living and operating in the kill chain leaves no one untouched. 1-2 Samuel is an expose of the impact of living in death's shadow. Yet, the raw narrative is equally infused with faith and health. The realism of his story speaks hope to today's warrior and equips them to navigate with skill and strength. The S.T.R.O.N.G model is a subset of the C4 model that captures and operationalizes the principles of warrior health discerned in David's journey.

"Blessed be the Lord, my Rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle." -Psalm 144:1