

Author of *Crime, Criminals, & Redemption*

POLICING IN FAITH

**A Discussion About The Police,
For The Police, and
The People They Serve**

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Preface

It was Monday, October 13, 2014, when I saw an Instagram post of Dr. Cornell West, former Professor of the Practice of Public Philosophy at Harvard University and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University and Dr. Jamal Bryant, social justice advocate and Senior Pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, being arrested for demanding that the Ferguson Police Department be held accountable for the wrongful death of Michael Brown, a young 18-year-old Black man fatally shot by Darren Wilson, a Ferguson police officer who'd been on the force three years prior to the shooting.

When I saw that he, and other men of God, had been taken into custody, it grieved me to the point that I woke up in the middle of the night to pray and ask God if there were accounts of police brutality in scripture that I could study to get some guidance and biblical clarity on the subject because to most, the state of policing today seems hopeless. But because I am a student of the Word, I knew that if I could find at least two witnesses of biblical precedence to stand on, then we, meaning the people, could not only have hope but could bring a solution to this mounting issue. Much to my surprise, He led me to what has become the book you are reading now, ***Policing in Faith: A Discussion About The Police, For The Police, and The People They Serve.***

As I began to study the scriptures, I soon discovered that instead of this book being a one-sided us-against-the-police type of work, it would be an all-inclusive body of work which would house hope, instruction, and biblical precedence of interactions between we the people, while also providing guidance for law enforcement of how the Bible says officers should conduct themselves. I must admit, it took well over five years for the Lord to convince me to write the book. Not that I

am an overly disobedient child of the Most High, but my disdain for law enforcement was at an all-time high. In fact, I questioned if what I was hearing in my heart was even the spirit of the Lord. But over the years I've discovered that God has always '**...chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise...**' (1 Corinthians 1:27) Therefore, it is His modus operandi to choose someone who has an extreme aversion for a person, thing, or cause in order to change his or her way of thinking while simultaneously bringing the truth of His perspective to light. By doing so, that once adversarial person can provide a 360° view on the subject so as to leave no room for doubt or debate by advocates and critics alike. One such person was Paul the Apostle who admitted to punishing, incarcerating and persecuting, Christians.

Yet God chose him to write three-fourths of the New Testament, and though he did, he even questioned his qualifications. The same is true for me because I did not take this assignment willingly. Not only did I not want to author this book, but I am highly unqualified.

I have neither a background in law enforcement nor do I hold any type of criminal justice degree. Yet God chose me. Not because I'm qualified but because I was available. I know with certainty that there were several high-ranking, long tenured officers, nationwide, chosen for this assignment but turned it down. God chose me simply because I prayed a prayer, told Him yes, and sought the solution in His Word. That said, if you are still questioning my credentials, I encourage you to refer to the scriptures where God used one shepherd to kill a military superpower; a queen to expose an existential threat, and a

Man born of a virgin to not only die for all mankind but to go to the regions of hell and defeat God's archenemy in three days. So, think it not strange for God to use the least likely to bring about change in the culture of policing.

Change is going to happen the same way it always has...byway of prayer. David prayed. Esther prayed, and Jesus prayed but that's not all they did, and neither should we. But because we do, God will give some of us the plans and policies needed while placing others of us in positions of power to ensure that those who abuse their policing authority are held accountable. But first,...

**We must locate instances of proper policing,
in the scriptures as well as locate examples of
how communities should be policed in
addition to locating incidents of police
violence – in the Word.**

Once we, **as believers**, investigate these instances, then we, **the people**, will then be in a better position to align our faith and prayers in accordance with the Word so that we, the people can become members of law enforcement; so that we, the people, can do the work needed to ensure that God-ordained decision makers have the wisdom and votes needed to pass legislation to make a change and so that we, the people, can receive the wisdom, strategy, and favor needed to reposition ourselves to become those decision makers.

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is [being brutalized by police], ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “[I wish someone would do something

about it],” but you do not [vote and do the things necessary to make a change], what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

– James 2:14-18 NKJV
(Author paraphrase for emphasis)

If you’re still reading, then it’s possible that you’re either an intercessor which means you’ve been called to pray about the state of policing today or you’re being groomed to become a decision maker or a member of law enforcement.

You’ve either been doing the work of an activist or you’re now being prepared to do the spiritual legwork required to navigate, legislate, and govern in your given space, or even better – you’re already a believer currently working in law enforcement. In which case, you should read this book with the intent of learning how to properly police in accordance with the scriptures.

On the other hand, you could be an unbelieving skeptic looking to find fault and/or prove me wrong. If that’s you, then I can tell you upfront, that even you’ll walk away referring to something mentioned in this book.

Either way, we all have a part to play.

So, to you I say get in position and get ready because it’s time for us to do the spiritual investigative work needed in order to effect change. That being said, let’s get to the first order of business which is to see what the Bible says about policing.

Please note: Throughout the book, you'll come across Sweet Solutions. Sweet Solutions is my attempt to explain the problem and provide a viable solution. It is my practice to never complain about what I'm not willing to change. This is my attempt to do just that.

POLICING IN FAITH

**A Discussion About The Police,
For The Police, and
The People They Serve**

Sample Chapter

In the same way we took the time to review officer misconduct byway of wrongful use-of-force, I think it's only fair that we review officers of love. Go with me to Acts 10, where we find an example of a Bible-believing, faith-filled lieutenant by the name of Cornelius.

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ²a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

⁴And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." ⁷And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. ⁸So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Here we have Cornelius, '**...a centurion of...the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.**' The first thing we need to know about Cornelius is that he is nothing like the centurion we learned about in chapter 1. Cornelious is a **devout man**. **Devout** in Greek means, 'dutiful or pious.' Typically, when you

think of someone being devout, you tend to only think in terms of religious piety, but it also has to do with work ethic. Hence, the term 'dutiful.' Dutiful means to be 'motivated by a sense of duty.' His duty as a centurion was to command one hundred men which consisted of 80 legionaries and 20 servants. 'Roman legionaries were viewed as the foremost fighting force in the Roman world' ^[1] which means he was responsible for leading, training, commanding, and disciplining one hundred of some of the world's finest fighters. This also was a man who was highly respected, without corruption; one who had infallible integrity.

Secondly, Cornelius was also known as a man who, '**feared God.**' But this isn't fear in the sense of being frightened or afraid. Fear, as it's used here, means respect, reverence, and honor. Perhaps this is a good time to recommend that you read John Bevere's 'Awe of God', but I digress. Ordinarily, that wouldn't be that much of a big deal but because there were an 'array of gods...spirits...and foreign cults' ^[2] being practiced in Rome, this is very significant because at the time, the Israelites were under Roman occupation. Therefore, for a Roman centurion to fear the God of a people whose nation had been taken captive, was unheard of.

That would be the same as a Russian general, during the Russo-Ukrainian war, whose troops were now occupying the Donbas Luhansk regions of Ukraine who not only gave generously to the Ukrainian people, but also prayed to the God of the Ukrainian Jews as well as believed in His Son Jesus. Yes, that's how the headlines would read today. Therefore, this verse could now read,

'a Roman military general, known for his outstanding work ethic, who's people were known for mythology and cultish practices, revered, honored, and served the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'

That gives you a clearer understanding of who Cornelius was and why his story is significant.

The third thing we know about this officer is that he **'gave alms generously to the people'** which means he financially supported nonprofits, places of worship, the homeless, and other vulnerable communities. Think about that for a moment. A high-ranking officer known for protecting and SERVING the community. But not just giving back, he's known for his generosity.

He saw a need in his community and did something about it.

He recognized how important places of worship were to the Jews, so he built a synagogue.

This high-ranking officer personally financed a multimillion-dollar church, of sorts today.

As a citizen, we tend to think of law enforcement in either one of two ways: very ethical or ineptly corrupt.

But no one builds a church for no reason. Yes, there could have been tax incentives, but this man genuinely believed in what and Who was needed. He wasn't doing this for fame, notoriety, publicity, or for the likes. He was truly a man of God. And let's not overlook his work ethic, which is something I think we take for granted in policing today.

Coupled with his outstanding work ethic, we can readily see, he was nothing like the officers we hear about today.

Work ethic not only applies to morality but doing the work ethically.

Ethically in the sense that abiding by the Word of God is more important than adhering to the code of silence. Ethically in the sense that you protect and SERVE all people as opposed to those who hold your same political views, ideology, or skin color.

I encourage you to reread the chapter on *Objective Reasoning* again in light of what you just discovered but let's get back to our discussion on Cornelius who the Bible refers to as...

'...a centurion of...the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.'

Again, we're discussing Cornelius and good policing. Notice the scripture says that Cornelius, **'prayed to God always.'** Don't take that lightly. Here's an officer that prays but notice how he prays...**always**. Which means even whether he was on the job, drafting a report, or in the community, he was always seeking the Lord for answers and direction which lets us know that his decisions were made with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Cornelius' Leadership Style and Staff

When you read the rest of Acts 10, you'll also discover that not only did he pray, but he fasted too.

³⁰ So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing," ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.' - v. 30, 31

And this is a great point. *To be a high-ranking law enforcement official requires prayer and fasting.* That's because when it comes to positions of leadership, you need that type of consecration and closeness with God so that you can hear how

to respond in life-or-death situations. You also need the wisdom of God to know how to lead and how to interact with the various cultures and those who don't worship, think or act like you. Cornelius' approach to leadership was not a one-size-fits-all. He sought God.

Because he followed God, it showed up in his ability to influence his staff. In Acts 10:7,8 we get a bird's eye view into the lives of those he led when it read, **'And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.'** Notice that a member of his staff was described as **devout**.

"Devout" again means, *dutiful or pious* which lets us know that he too was faithful and operated in integrity; much like his Chief. He too feared and prayed to God.

This man worked alongside Cornelius both professionally and privately which meant he knew the ins and outs of both his personal and private affairs. Yet the Bible refers to them both as devout which lets us know whether on and off the job, these officers were men of God.

These verses also let us know that it is possible for law enforcement personnel to live in accordance with God's standards. And just so you know, it is our responsibility - as citizens of the community - to pray for and over our local police department, who have sworn to protect and serve us. Even though there may some rotten apples who may not be walking in biblical integrity today, these verses give us hope and biblical precedence that it is possible.

If you're in leadership or law enforcement...

Pray this with me: Heavenly Father, I desire to lead, protect and to serve like Cornelius. Show me ways that I can be more devout, reverent, and serve You. Show me what's needed in the community and with citizens as a whole. Lead me to places where I can give, and more importantly Lord, teach me how to pray. I've heard that prayer is just talking to You, so Lord, I'm going to start talking to You more, on the job. In Jesus' name.

Good job! Now I challenge you to look for opportunities to serve the community in which you've been charged to protect. Ask God to show you ways you can be known as a servant officer and a generous giver; whether it's giving of your time, talent, or money. To make sure that you do...

Pray this with me: Heavenly Father, show me how to become a generous giver. Lord, I'm willing to give my time, of my talent, and even my money, if need be. Because I want to not only protect my community but serve as well. In Jesus' name.

For citizens reading this...

Pray this with me: Heavenly Father, I see that both Cornelius and this other officer were faithful men of God which lets me know that it possible to have officers and high-ranking officials with the same character traits within my community. Lord, though they may not be living according to Your standard now, I pray that You would send Peter's into their lives so that they too can be saved, filled with Your Holy Spirit, and live as devout examples within our community. In Jesus' name.

Let's take a look at another good cop in Matthew 8:5-13. Here we find a lieutenant and quite possibly a captain, interacting with Jesus. When you examine the text, you'll discover the interesting posture of the high-ranking official. It reads,

'Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion cameto Him, pleading with Him, ⁶saying, "Lord, my

servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”
⁷ And Jesus said to him, “**I will come and heal him.**” ⁸ The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed....” ¹⁰ When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “**Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!**”

Notice verse 6 says, “**Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.**” When you dissect their interaction, you can readily see the officer’s posture of humility when he first approaches Jesus as he refers to Him as **Lord**. Because he was a high-ranking, well-respected law enforcement official, he could have easily addressed Jesus by name and said, “Jesus, one of my officers is at home sick.” Yet he addresses Him as Lord - a sign of immediate respect.

After paying homage, he then shows compassion for his direct report by explaining his condition. Jesus then agrees to make a house visit, but the centurion takes his humility a step further by saying, “**Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.**” Again, referencing Jesus as Lord and explaining why he doesn’t believe he’s worthy enough to be under the same roof as Jesus.

Think about that for a moment.

A high-ranking official so meek that he doesn’t deem himself worthy to be in close proximity to the Lord. Today, many officers enter homes without search warrants, will stop-and-frisk, or take other liberties, at will.

Yet this officer doesn’t abuse his power, which lets us know that it is possible to believe the same for our local police departments today.

Another point is that he could have also **commanded** Jesus to come and heal his direct report. Remember the Jews had been captured and taken as political prisoners. Back then, a Roman officer could command a citizen to carry a particular item or run an errand of a mile or less. This was required of both Roman and Jewish citizens which is why Jesus said, "...**whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.**" (Mt. 5:41) Instead of compelling the Lord, he simply releases his faith by saying, "**Lord... only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.**" And though we can get into the great faith this officer exhibited, the one thing we need to walk away with is that it's possible for law enforcement to demonstrate meekness in the presence of others.

Never should an officer think him/herself to be higher than any other citizen, regardless as to your state invested power. Officers should be required to refer to every citizen by name and never call them racial slurs or make them feel less than. Yet many times this is the case, and such is the time. But if we, as believers, come together and begin to confess and believe that God can change their hearts and minds, then officers within our respective communities will become more like this centurion and respect us as human beings.

Pray this with me: Heavenly Father, I lift up every officer within our community and state and ask that You'd please forgive them of their pride. I ask that You'd teach them spiritual servanthood so that it will correlate into their public service. In Jesus' name.

There is yet another example of good policing which can be found in Acts 27. Here we witness Paul's extradition. Notice verses 42 and 43 says, '**And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.**

⁴³ **But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose.'**

This group of officers were planning on killing the prisoners because in Roman times, a soldier would be put to death if a prisoner escaped. Therefore, in order to save their careers, they were willing to kill them. Yet their lieutenant, '**...kept them from their purpose.**' Even though it would have been easier to just kill them, this lieutenant/centurion did the right thing which means it's possible for officers to not shoot fleeing suspects because again, we live in an advanced society where tools are readily available to locate the suspect at a later date.

You may have heard that some people down in the prep school wrote some racial slurs on the message boards. If you're outraged by those words, then you're in the right place. That kind of behavior has no place at prep school. It has no place in the United State Air Force. You should be outraged not only as an airman but as a human being. And we would all be naïve to think that everything is perfect here. We would be naïve to think that we shouldn't discuss this topic. We would also be tone deaf not to think about the backdrop of what's going on in our country. Things like Charlottesville and Ferguson, the protests in the NFL. So just in case you're unclear on where I stand on this topic, I'm going to leave you with my most important thought today.

If you can't treat someone with dignity and respect, then you need to get out. If you can't treat someone from another gender, whether that's man or a woman, with dignity and respect, then you need to get out. If you demean someone in any way, then you need to get out. And if you can't treat someone from another race or a different color skin with dignity and respect, then you need to get out. Reach for your phones...because I want you to use it so that we can all have the MORAL COURAGE together...what we should have is a civil discourse and talk about these issues...we have a better

idea and it's about diversity. The power of us as a diverse group...the power that we come from all walks of life, from all parts of the country, that we come from all races, we come from all backgrounds, gender, all makeup, all upbringing, the power of that diversity comes together and makes us that more powerful.

- Retired Lieutenant General Jay B. Silveria
Speech given to Air Force Academy in 2017
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SOURCES

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2-Wasson, Donald L. "Roman Religion." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 2 Dec. 2022.

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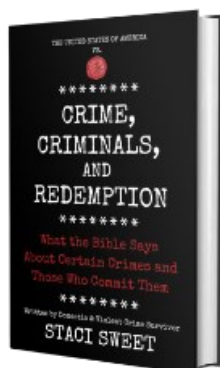
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This book is ideal for pastors, chaplains, counselors, criminal justice professionals, prison ministries, and everyday Christians who want a deeper, more balanced understanding of justice through a biblical lens. It challenges assumptions, confronts hard questions, and reveals the redemptive possibilities God extends even to those society has written off.

Whether you're seeking theological clarity, practical insight, or spiritual encouragement, *Crime, Criminals, and Redemption* offers a powerful reminder: No one is beyond God's reach, and even criminals are eligible for redemption.