

Running Into Gunfire

Loyalty is a cherished attribute. A faithful allegiance to one's lawful government, a cause, ideal or custom is inspirational. It is especially so when loyalty between people is apparent. Earl C. Willer tells the story of two men who grew up best friends.

Though Jim was just a little older than Phillip and often assumed the role of leader, they did everything together. They even went to high school and college together. After college, they decided to join the Marines. By a unique series of circumstances, they were sent to Germany together, where they fought side by side in one of history's ugliest wars.

One sweltering day during a fierce battle, amid heavy gunfire, bombing and close-quarters combat, they were given the command to retreat. As the men were running back, Jim noticed that Phillip had not returned with the others. Panic gripped his heart. Jim knew if Phillip was not back in another minute or two, then he wouldn't make it.

Jim begged his commanding officer to let him go after his friend, but the officer forbade the request, saying it would be suicide.

Risking his own life, Jim disobeyed and went after Phillip. His heart pounding, he ran into the gunfire, calling out for Phillip. A short time later, his platoon saw him hobbling across the field carrying a limp body in his arms.

Jim's commanding officer upbraided him, shouting that it was a foolish waste of time and an outrageous risk. "Your friend is dead," he added, "and there was nothing you could do."

"No sir, you're wrong," Jim replied. "I got there just in time. Before he died, his last words were, 'I knew you would come.'"

What kind of world would we have if that kind of loyalty ruled in relationships? Romans 12:10 encourages us to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."

When that happens, a lot of our problems go away.

--Beecher Hunter