



The President's Perspective



Standing Next to History

In the last few days, I have been reading an outstanding book entitled *STANDING NEXT TO HISTORY* by Joseph Petro. The book is the reflections of Mr. Petro, who was for 23 years a special agent in the United States Secret Service. For eleven years, four of which were with President Ronald Reagan, he guarded presidents and vice-presidents.

Much of the early portions of the book are attempts to correct misconceptions regarding who the Secret Service is and what they do. For example, it is commonly believed that Secret Service agents take a blood oath in which they swear to “take a bullet for the president.” In Mr. Petro’s own words, “There is no such pledge, no such promise, and maybe more important, no such requirement. It is a myth, nothing more than part of the mystique that surrounds the Secret Service.” In reality, Secret Service agents do everything in their power to so thoroughly prepare for any possible scenario so that such a decision never has to occur.

To protect an American president, three perimeters of security are established around the man who occupies the Oval Office. First, there is an OUTER perimeter of security provided by uniformed police officers. That outer perimeter can be hundreds of feet up to several miles. Inside that, there is a MIDDLE perimeter provided by uniformed and non-uniformed Secret Service detail. Finally, there is the INNER perimeter provided by the president’s special detail. Should an event occur that required an agent place his body in front of a bullet, these men are trained to do opposite of what comes natural. Most of us, on hearing a gunshot, will duck. These men are trained to stand tall and become as large a target as possible.

There are a lot of parallels to these “perimeters” in the spiritual realm. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.” To appropriately guard your heart, three “perimeters” of security should be established. First, we should establish an OUTER perimeter of moral security provided by godly, spiritual men. These men can be our first line of defense. These men should be men to whom we become accountable and from whom we can draw strength. Men like this exist in good Bible preaching churches and can be some of the greatest assets in our life. If anything destructive gets past this first line of defense, we should have a MIDDLE perimeter of security in the person of our wife. Many times our wives sense trouble coming before we are aware of it. It is a wise man who loves, trusts, and values his wife’s discernment. Many times, down through the years, my wife has saved me much trouble through her discerning spirit.

Should anything harmful get past these first two perimeters, we should have a third INNER perimeter of security. Actually, this INNER perimeter is the most critical.

We will stay pure in heart only if we have a vibrant and vital daily relationship with our Wonderful Savior. To cultivate this “perimeter” of security, we must spend time daily with our Lord in His Word and prayer. In addition, daily reading to strengthen our minds is a must as well. I am amazed, as I often ask in meetings, how few Christians read good books, whether religious or secular. I read several years ago, a preacher who wisely stated, “Read yourself full. Think yourself clear. Pray yourself hot. Then, let yourself go!” Great advise to any man who desires to have a life that counts for God. Dear Christian man, establish these three “perimeters” of security in your life.

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