



SPOKANE COUNTY
CHAPLAINCY
SERVICES



SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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IT'S ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP, NOT RELIGION

Think back to when you first entered law enforcement. Maybe, it was something you always wanted to do and finally got your chance. First there was the academy, when you had to learn all the laws written in legal jargon. You had to change the way you shoot to be tactically correct, learn defensive tactics, learn how to investigate a crime scene, and don't forget criminal procedure with all its grand excitement. After finishing everything required, you finally graduated. Then came the field training, and depending on your FTO this could be good or not-so-good. Maybe during that time you got into your first fight on the job, or your first chase and you're thinking, "this is awesome!" You learned everything from defusing domestics, to clearing buildings, to the inner workings of the department. After field training you were probably then assigned to a shift, and maybe even got the keys to your first patrol car. Next, you are on your own, no longer assigned to an FTO and their way of doing things, you can now make your own decisions, and the decisions come quick. A life changing career has been launched.

Now lets fast forward to the present. Maybe you are still working the street, or maybe you have moved into another position. Either way you have seen a lot, endured a lot, and changed a lot. You have been to countless domestics where men, women and children have been beaten, you have seen many dead bodies, you have been frustrated by the revolving jail door,

and possibly you yourself have been assaulted at least once. Through it all you have become street wise, and probably street hardened by developing a thick skin. I'm not saying that is necessarily bad, because after all, you have to have a thick skin to do the job. We learn to detach ourselves from what we see and let it roll off our back so we can go to the next call. It's this thick skin I want to briefly talk about. As I already said, thick skin can be necessary, but if not kept in check it can be detrimental to us personally, professionally, and most of all spiritually. Part of what makes a good law enforcement officer, is the ability to take control of whatever situation they find themselves in. When they arrive on a scene people expect them to have the answers, or to solve the problem whatever it may be. If not careful, this can spill over into our personal lives making us think we have to shoulder everything on our own and show no weakness. Add to this the fact that people from all walks of life are lying daily, and we can become a person who trusts almost no one, and refuses to be helped by anyone. This makes it easy to put up walls between ourselves and others, even our spouse. Experts offer many different solutions to these problems as well as the high levels of stress officers endure. Some of the solutions include exercise, a hobby to take your mind off the job, counselling and so on. I'm not knocking these things and they can be very important tools, but I would like to say that I know of a

way that trumps them all and it comes with a relationship with Jesus Christ. I know we have all seen the people who all of a sudden get super religious when put in handcuffs, or the self proclaimed preacher who got caught drinking and driving. We also know the old saying, "the difference between preachers and police is that police see church members at their Saturday night worst, while preachers see them at their Sunday morning best". This leaves a sour taste for religion, which is why I'm not talking about religion. Religion will get you nowhere - it takes a relationship! People will let us down, even those who appear the most moral and religious, which is why we can't look to man, we need to look to God and have a relationship with Him. Each of us are loved by Him more than we can possibly imagine, or dream of, and He wants us to know Him. Going back to the thick skin we talked about, this can prevent us from coming to Him which is disastrous. Cops are tough, and can handle a lot of things, but **ALL** need Jesus Christ.

I want to share my appreciation for all the LEO's for your dedication and commitment to serving those who may never appreciate or even know all you do. You sacrifice so much protecting our communities. Thank you.

Chaplain Mark Smith