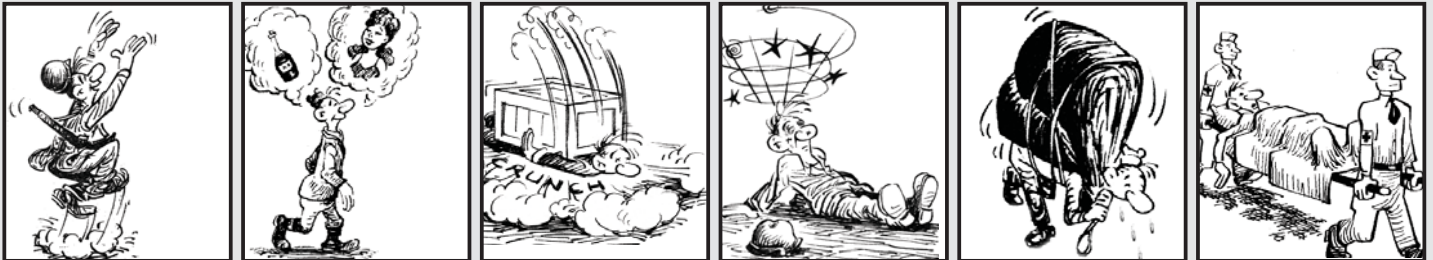


SPECIAL OPS! AN INTRODUCTION

Is this the story of your Christian walk in pictures?

ST. SCREWUP

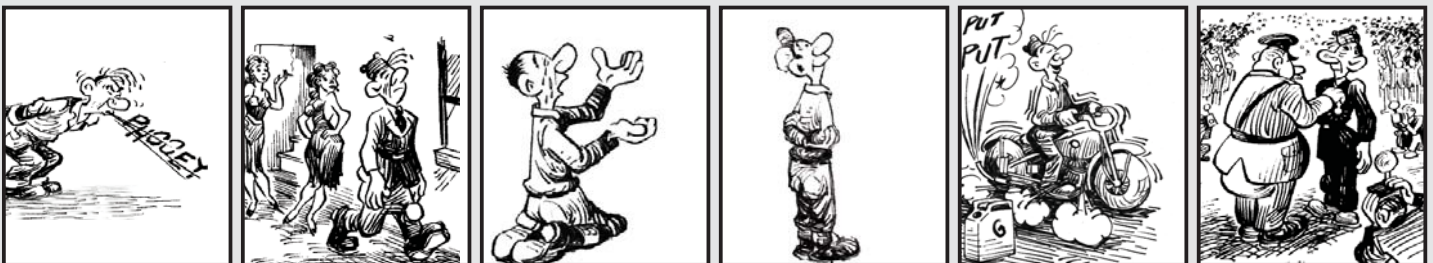


Meet Saint Screwup. When he first met Jesus, way back when, it was love at first sight. He read his Bible and prayed every day, witnessed to anyone who would listen, helped the poor, and lived his life on fire for God. My, how times change!

You see, no one ever told Saint Screwup about the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13, Luke 8) and the fact that only 25% of Christians will every amount to anything more than a saved screwup because they will remain permanently stuck in the baby stage of Christianity, never spiritually mature, and end up eaten alive by the devil. Everyone was so busy telling St. Screwup all the benefits of getting saved no one bothered to warn him about the inevitable attacks or about the siren song of worries, riches, and pleasures; things like sex, drugs, rock n' roll and money and divorce and abuse and addictions that steal the life from your soul or the times of testing and suffering that God puts every believer through, the dark nights of the soul where you wonder where the hell God went when you needed Him most. Nobody warned St. Screwup, so when the world showed him all her goodies and the devil came in like a flood, he was sucked in, smashed up, spun around, and so screwed up that he became yet another Christian Happy Meal for Satan. St. Screwup and the rest of the 75%, the idiot virgins who lost their first love, will have to stand there on Judgment Day watching their lifetime of wasted works burn up into nothingness in God's holy fire as they enter heaven with everlasting third degree spiritual burns. "Not well done, you foolish and faithless servants!"

Are you Saint Screwup? Or are you Saint Steadfast?

ST. STEADFAST





PERSONAL DEPTH CHARGES HURT YOU AND EVERYONE AROUND YOU!

Saint Steadfast has been through all the same attacks, addictions, and testing that waylaid Saint Screwup but with one absolute, eternally crucial difference—he passed the tests, he overcame his addictions, and what didn't kill him made him oh so strong in Christ.

St. Steadfast took God's truth to heart and spat out the devil's lies and schemes. He turned his back on fear, money, and addiction. Like Job, he sat in the suffering and sorrow until God heard his cries and brought him out of the pit into the peace that passes understanding and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. And then, like the seasoned veteran he was, St. Steadfast went to work fulfilling his God-given calling and destiny in life, "put-put-putting" around happily saving the lost and discipling the saved. Take a look again at his life in pictures. That's him in heaven getting the first of many awesome eternal rewards. "Way to go, my good and faithful servant. You da man!"

I don't know about you, but for most of my Christian walk I was St. Screwup on steroids! Note, however, the all-important "was"! I have learned through the school of hard knocking pain and failure how to make the all-important transition from St. Screwup to St. Steadfast. In my three books, *Basic Training!*, *Special Ops!*, and *Battle Stations!* I will teach you step-by-step how to make your own transition so that you can stand there with me on Judgment Day as yet another St. Steadfast receiving your well-deserved reward!

There is, however, so much more at stake than just your individual salvation and sanctification. Please get this, dear brothers and sisters: this is the heart of this book's message and the reason I call this book *Special Ops!*. Your Special Operations mission is to take all those traps and barbs the devil has hurled at you, all the dysfunction and wounds you inherited from your screwed-up families, and all the pain and suffering that comes from living in a seriously messed-up world and allow God to turn all that evil into good so that you in turn can go out and help rescue all the other screwups out there. Remember, Jesus cares most about the sheep outside the fold, the lost and dying and desperately waiting for you to get your act together so you can be the scarred hands of their Savior. St. Screwup can't help rescue any of these lost sheep because he can't even rescue himself! St. Steadfast on the other hand knows exactly how to give hope to the hopeless because he is living proof that the Gospel works—he lives to see others set free precisely because he knows the darkness of living in slavery *and* the sweet taste of freedom. This then is your Special Ops mission—should you choose to accept it!

The Bad News: Depth Charges Hurt!

One of the first things you will notice about this book is that for every "bad news" chapter about depressing things like sin, pain, curses, divorce, and demons, there will inevitably be a chapter about the "good news" of how God can help you transform all that junk into the precious diamonds of healing, deliverance, authority, and power.

Take a look at the cover of this book. Notice that the sailor is holding an armful of TNT. Think about that for a second. It's actually a depth charge, basically a big barrel of explosives dropped in the ocean in order to blow up submarines. What's going through that sailor's mind as he manhandles enough explosive power to send him to kingdom

come and then some? How would you like his job? Then again, you already have his job...

Special Ops! is all about the explosions that have gone off deep down in your soul, the “depth charges” that over time have wounded and broken you. Many of you are carrying around barrels of spiritual TNT inside your chests, bombs that are just waiting to go off. Some of these depth charges detonated long before you were born, but you are still suffering the consequences. Some of them have blown up in your face. Blown up in your family’s face. Filling them with the shrapnel of many wounds, which in turn form a new generation of depth charges, the wounds of your ancestors combining and compounding with your personal brokenness, which is then passed on to your children, who add to the familiar heritage of dysfunction and in turn curse their descendants, the cycle perpetuating itself until the end of time. Screwups producing yet more screwups...

For many years I was just like that sailor, personal depth charges exploding all over myself and others at seemingly random moments. Like the time I was meeting with Dr. Dickason, chairman of Moody Bible’s Theology Department, and the demons started shaking my body. Imagine my surprise as I flopped around like a rag doll. I was raised a Baptist for crying out loud, a Conservative Baptist! Jesus and the strange people on TBN might believe in demons, but normal Christians from polite society know better. I may have looked nice on the outside, but on the inside I was a mess. *(You can read my “demon story” in the chapters about Demons and Christians.)*

You know it’s bad when you’re so messed up you don’t even know how messed up you are! A short list of my personal depth charges includes sexual abuse, ritual abuse, sickness, sexual addiction, demonization, character flaws too many to mention, generational Masonic curses, poverty, and spiritual immaturity—I was a failure as a husband and a father, a failure as a pastor—heck, I couldn’t even figure out who I really was or why God had put me on this planet. St. Screwup incarnate!

Many of you reading this are just like I was years ago, oblivious to the barrels of personal TNT rolling around inside your heart. Not to mention generational sins and ancestral curses, lions and tigers and demons, oh my! You think that addiction is your main problem, but addictive behaviors are just the symptom, not the sickness itself. And trust me, brothers and sisters, you have to figure what’s making you sick before you can get healed, clean, and sober. Everything, and I mean everything, hinges on you getting healthy, breaking free, growing up, and maturing in Christ. You have to deal with your dynamite if you want to become St. Steadfast!

Don’t believe me? Think I exaggerate? Check out this guy’s TNT. A certain Mr. E. E. Winship decided to study two 19th-century couples and what became of their many descendants. The first man studied was Max Jukes. He was a godless man married to a godless woman. Look at the legacy left by the explosive mess of his life...

Of **560** descendants studied, **310** died penniless. **150** became criminals, **7** of them murderers. **100** descendants were known drunkards. More than half of the female descendants were prostitutes. In all, the descendants of Max Jukes cost the US government **1.25** million 19th-century dollars.

These are just dry statistics, however. They don’t tell us much about all the pain and wounds and hopelessness and sin and crimes behind the numbers, the stories of real people suffering real consequences. So take a look at the faces on the next page. Let’s see if we can at least visually picture what these depth charges produce in real life.

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50 FACES. 50 PEOPLE.

These are public domain pictures of the latest round of people arrested by the local cops; everything from DUIs to trespassing to armed assault. Study their faces for a moment. Can you see their wounds? Can you see their anger, their shame, and their despair? Now think about 560 descendants, pages and pages of mug shots and wasted lives. At 100 faces a page, it would take roughly 5 more pages of this book to display all their pictures. Now imagine the pages listing all the photos of all your spiritual and biological descendants. What stories are their faces going to tell? What kind of legacy you are passing on to your children, spiritual or otherwise? St. Screwup or St. Steadfast?

Don't have any spiritual children? Neither did Max Jukes. Apparently none of the people in my Mug Shot gallery have any spiritual fathers or mothers either; no one up to this point has successfully stood in the gap of life on their behalf. They are headed for hell and they know it, you can see it in their faces. Where is their St. Steadfast when they need him or her most?

The Good News: Purple Heart Promotions!



Are you a Max Jukes in the making? The bad news is, if you remain a spiritual screwup addicted and bound and wounded, you will not just destroy yourself but you will destroy your legacy, including all the spiritual and biological descendants you failed to transform. There is good news, however, so don't despair! For every wound you have received, every body blow from the enemy, and every curse and torment, God promises to bring good out of that evil. For every Purple Heart medal you have received for wounds suffered on the battlefield of life, a promotion is waiting in the wings. Where once you were weak, you can become strong, past failures become future successes, and bondage turns into authority to set the captives free.

I am living proof of this fact; I still think it's one of God's great jokes that He put me, as perverted as I was, in charge of a ministry called Pureheart. I am continually amazed at how God uses all the pain and dysfunction in my past to help bless brothers and sisters now. I have authority to help these dear saints achieve profound deliverance and change precisely because God has used my suffering to refine me into a vessel that He can use for His kingdom. He wants to do the same thing with you, brothers and sisters, believe you me.

So simply put, the purpose of this book is to do a *Special Operation* on your soul, open you up just like the old Milton Bradley game and pull out and expose and identify all your wounds and dysfunction, the internal issues that have been driving your external addictive behaviors. Then I will do my best, with God's help, to get you started in the process of turning that pain into production, taking that weakness and making it a strength, and changing failure to success. For each wound, I will provide you with extremely practical *this-is-how-you-do-it* steps and refer you to the best people, books, and websites I can find for each particular wound or dysfunction so that you can learn from their additional wisdom and break through your bondage to finally achieve stable maturity in Christ.

You see you want to be like Jonathan Edwards, the famous, 19th-century pastor and Mr. Winship's second case study. A godly man married to a godly woman, Rev. Edwards had **1,394** descendants:

295 descendants graduated from college, **13** of these became college presidents, **65** became professors. **3** descendants became US senators, **3** state governors and others diplomats to foreign countries. **30** became judges, **100** became lawyers, **56** became doctors, and **75** officers in the Army and Navy. **100** became well-known missionaries, preachers, and authors. **80** held some form of public office, **3** of whom were mayors of large cities. **1** became comptroller of the US Treasury, and **1** Vice President of the United States.

Wow! How's that for a legacy? Are you going to be a Saint Jukes? Or are you a Saint Edwards? There is nothing abstract or theoretical about this discussion! This is the difference between health and disease, marriage and divorce, maturity and immaturity, sanity and insanity, prosperity and poverty, sobriety and addiction, freedom and incarceration, and literally life and death for all eternity. Wake up, brothers and sisters, and pay attention. I am talking about the legacy you will pass on to your spiritual and biological children. And you will pass on a legacy, it's as inevitable as the sun rising and setting. Will your children and their children have their mug shots listed on God's gallery of shame or will they be rewarded for all eternity for making the heavenly honor roll? What will your legacy be?

This is why you need to take some serious time, as painful as it may be, and work your way through this book.

Your Special Ops mission, should you choose to accept it, is to turn your wounds into wonders so that you can become a spiritual father or mother deeply impacting the lives of those who cross your path and passing on a powerful legacy of transformational healing and hope. Get to work, brothers and sisters, there is no time to lose!



WHAT KIND OF
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**SAINT SCREWUP OR
SAINT STEADFAST?
IT'S YOUR CHOICE...**

