

**A Charge for New OCF Graduates**  
by CAPT Arthur L. Halvorson, USCG, OCF President

This is my first letter to the OCF body during this term as president so, at the outset, I want to offer a brief greeting and word of encouragement. It is a great privilege to serve OCF in this capacity and with so many godly fellow ambassadors. Thank you for your trust during this remarkable time of service to our risen Lord and our nation.

I recently had the awesome opportunity to deliver “the charge” to the Naval Academy graduating class of 2005 OCFers. It was a particularly special event because we knew all of them personally. It was a good time to remember why we serve. I’d like to share excerpts from that charge in this column in the hope of encouraging you today.

As you are commissioned today, I’d like to look at three attributes that will stand you in good stead. They are Godly Character, Perseverance and Servanthood.

**Godly Character:** Galatians 5:22-24 lists universally accepted character traits... God’s character that He wants to build in you. But character-building is hard work. Though God does the work in us, growth often involves pain, setback and disappointment. Just like gold is refined in the fire, muscle is built through hard exercise; character is developed through adversity. So, embrace challenges and surrender to Him so that the fruit of the Spirit can be worked out in your life. Those character traits will set you apart from the pack, you will be different, better, and your performance will be recognized...even as you are salt and light, reflecting God’s own character...God will be pleased to build His character in you for others to see so that Glory can be given to the Father. And “against such there is no law.”

**Perseverance:** Work hard, keep after it...a lot of things only come through perseverance. It is essential for Godly character, but is also essential on every level. The greatest marker for success is not ability, but a willingness to ‘press on.’ Many of my career opportunities only came after my third time requesting them. Give everything you do your best shot, just as we are urged in Colossians 3:23-24.

**Servanthood:** Serve your people, find out what their needs are and help them meet those needs. You will be amazed at what problems people have and what needs they have, from financial, to emotional and physical. God has given you both the right and responsibility to serve your people. And, according to Matthew 21:26-28 you’ll be in great company! The life God calls us to as Christians, is a life of servanthood...if you live this out with those above you, beside you and below you, you will, “shine like stars in the universe” (Phil 2:15).

God’s promise here, and I challenge you to practice it, is to place your future...your career and other personal plans into His hands, and He will work all things together for good...deny yourself, serve others, and He will see you through...Remember...it’s all about Him!

Live out the commission God has given you and you will shine in a dark world, always ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you.