



Eric Owens, HM1(FMF)
US Navy Reserve, Retired
Veteran Ministry Coordinator

“Burn the Ships!”



In the year 1519, Hernán Cortés arrived in the New World with six hundred men and, upon arrival, made history by destroying his ships. This sent a clear message to his men: There is no turning back. Two years later, he succeeded in his conquest of the Aztec empire. He burned the ships!

One of my daughter’s favorite Christian music groups is King and Country. They have a song on their latest album called ‘Burn the Ships’. There is a line in the lyrics that goes like this: “Don’t let it arrest you /This fear is fear of fallin’ again /And if you need a refuge /I will be right here until the end /Oh, it’s time to **Burn the ships!**”

What did Jesus command His followers? He ordered them to “*burn the ships*”!

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. Matthew 16:24-25

Hebrews 11:24-28 is an excellent passage to explain the scriptural concept of “burn the ships”:
²⁴ By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,
²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he

endured as seeing Him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Self-denial is the hallmark of military service. Service over self. A complete and total surrender of self for the betterment of the unit. We were, and in most cases, still are willing to give our lives for those we love. So, it is in our daily walk. The desire of God is for us to 'deny' ourselves, to take up our cross (be willing to give our very lives), and to follow Him! Burn the ships!

Our cross may be heavier at times. Our relationships, our occupations, our own mental or physical challenges that would make even the strongest, most diligent follower cringe. However, this is our calling. This is our mission. Continue the mission! Burn the ships!

The hope of paradise with God is far better than the immediate and temporal trappings of this world! Burn the ships!

As former or current members of the military, it's easy to compartmentalize thoughts and emotions to complete the mission. Others opinions or our perceived thoughts of how people receive us can often cause us to doubt. Remember who you are. Remember *who's* you are. Burn the ships!

Semper Fi!

Doc