

**Would'a** (Fatherhood - **stepping up** - the Kid years)

# Would'a



## Being a Dad – Stepping Up

(because the years will roll on quickly)

aka: **Fatherhood – In the Midst of Challenge**  
(a Dad's Challenge for Raising a Great Kid – as best you can)

By **Old Man River** (plus \*)



I added this image & words above because I like how it reminds us . . .  
how we raise our kids matters  
(aka do well and be happy or do poorly and be sad).

And like Book 1, if you want a different type of book on being a Dad,  
this is more of that  
(insights to consider and challenges to pursue that builds upon  
the framework of information shared in the first book).

**Woulda: Being a Dad – Stepping Up**  
aka **Fatherhood – In the Midst of Challenge**

is  
Cabinright 2023 by **Old Man River**  
Outing Mn. 56662

\* = FYI: A huge thanks to Bill Watterson and his Calvin & Hobbes comics.  
His humorous look at the life of a child helped me tremendously as an parent,  
to remember to keep things into perspective – and that the perspective  
of kids is so different then of parents.

And also big thanks to Gary Larson and his Far Side comics.  
His humor helped me to look at things broadly, to appreciate  
a wide view of life and yes, it is okay to laugh at ourselves.

*This book is dedicated to our kids . . .  
Wendy, Zach, Alex and Corey.*

*It was their actions as our kids that challenged me  
to step up and to try to be the best Dad that I could be.  
Thank you – I love you all!*

And know this . . .

**My son asked me what this was.  
I said it's a tree ... in a nutshell.**



First, as a parent, you may get a few questions now and then from your toddlers as they are starting to figure things out. When your little one(s) move into the kid age, then you will get more and more questions.

So, answer those well – and yes, you can have some fun from time to time (just be careful).

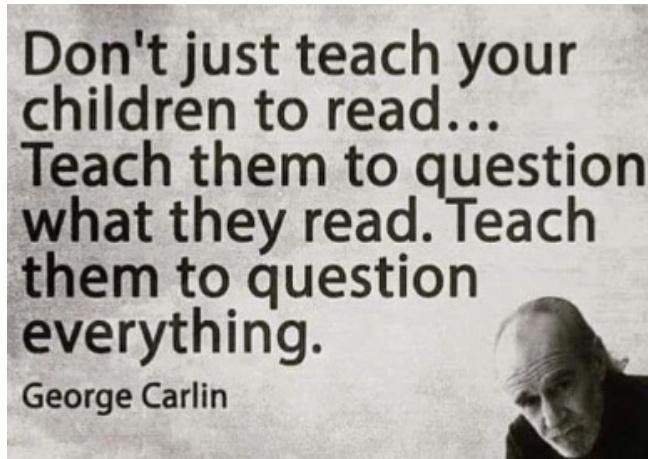
And second, this book two continues this framework where these three Dad books focus on the ages that our kids grow though.

<b>Book One</b> <i>For when our kids are between the ages of 0-6.</i>	<b>Book Two</b> <i>For when our kids are between 7-12.</i>	<b>Book Three</b> <i>For when our kids are between 13-18.</i>
Our Faith (introduced)	The Bible (explored)	Their Life (pursued)
Lessons (yours shared)	Lessons (others shared)	Lessons (theirs learned)
Imagination (fueled)	Intelligence (pursued)	Integrity (taught)
Patience (required)	Perception (experienced)	Perspectives (appreciated)
Challenge (is beneficial)	Coaching (is critical)	Cheering (is memorable)
Laugh (does a body good)	Live (as best can)	Love (carefully)
Look (why)	Listen (when)	Learn (how)



And yes – remember from the first book (**Coulda**), that was to challenge you to consider those things that would help you to be the Dad you need to be, as your little one was starting out. Now this second book, **Woulda** is where you need to know that it is time to step up, because that toddler you once had, is now a kid. As to why? Well, that is what the rest of this book is for (aka keep reading).

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- Chapter 2: Lessons (others shared)
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- Chapter 5: Coaching (is critical)

Chapter 6: Live  
(as best can)

Chapter 7: Listen  
(when)

Epilogue:  
**The Sword**

And FYI:  
With grade school age kids, remember that our kids of this age want the most, are these three:  
to be listened to,  
to be understood; and  
to be taken seriously.

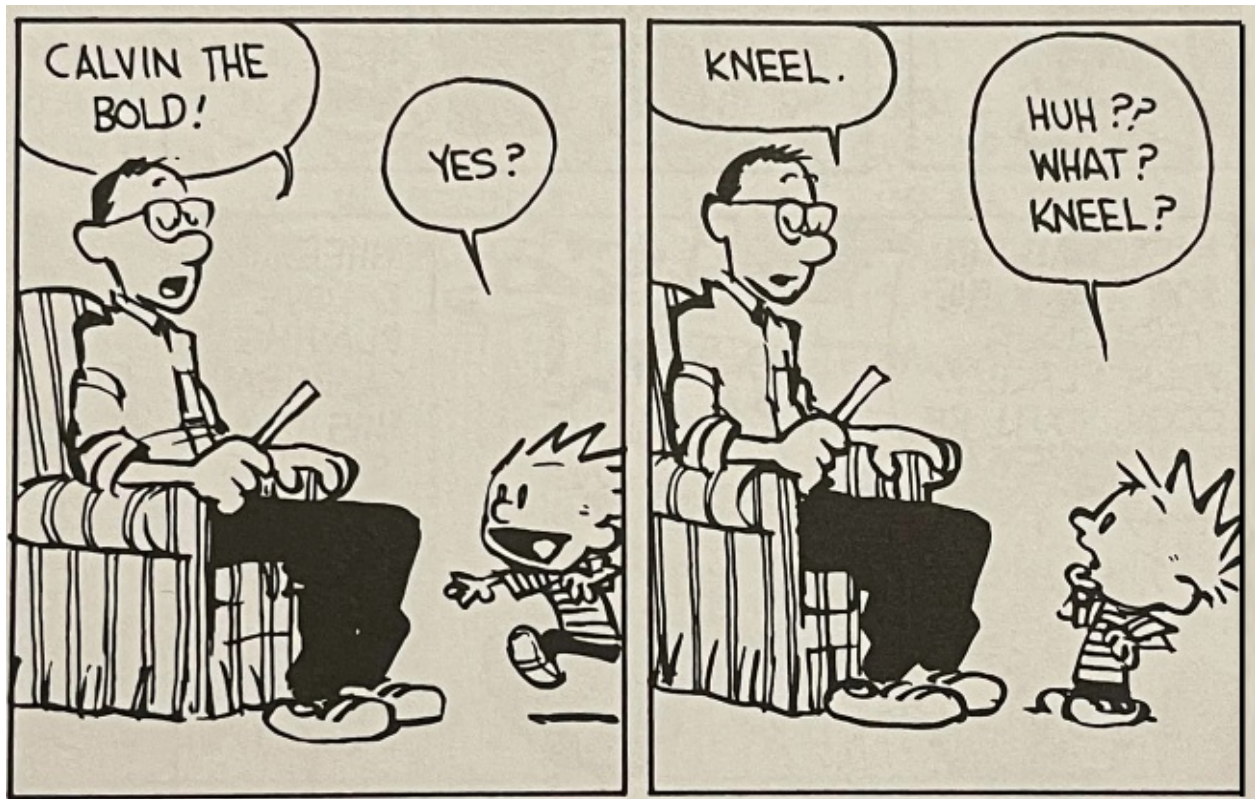
Which we need to then remember . . .  
to make time to understand our kids as best we can (don't let the hectic pace of today distract you).



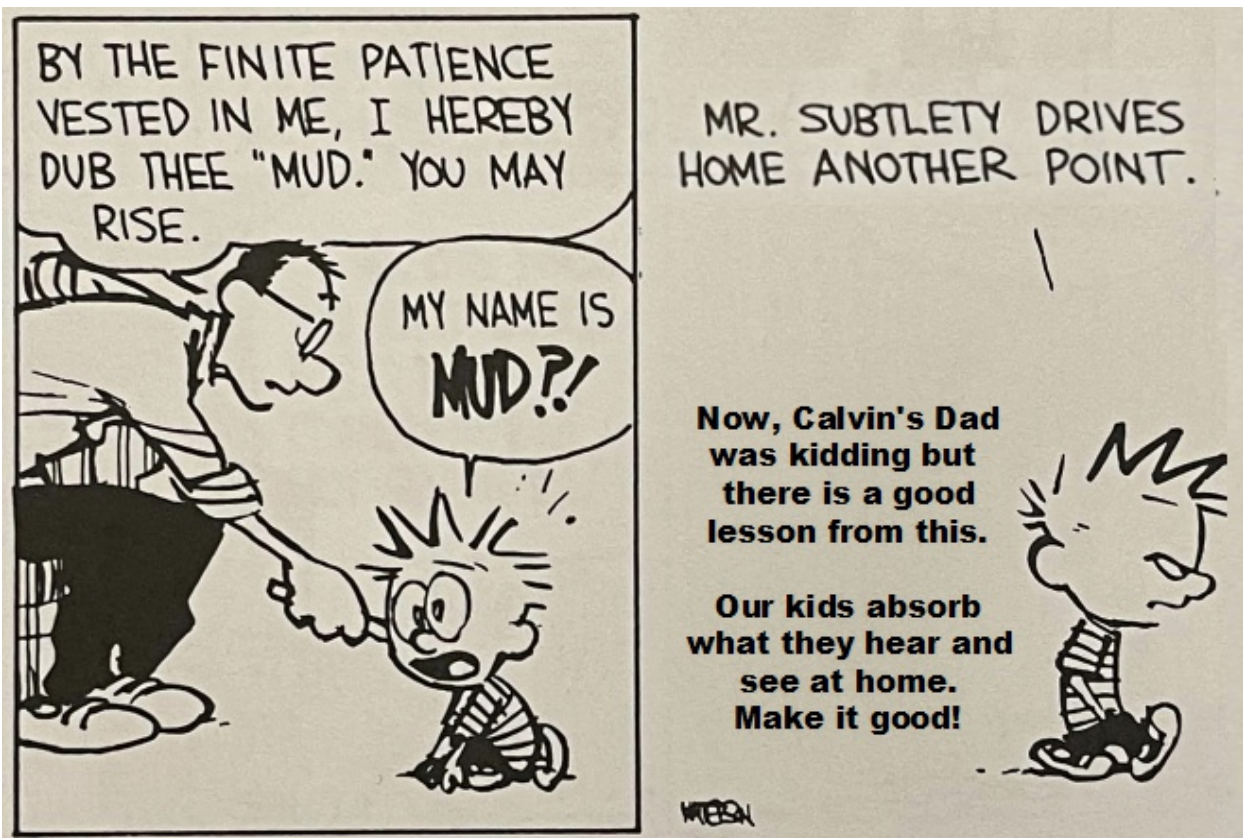
## Introduction:

I assume if you are reading this, you have already read Book 1 and are now curious as to what this Book 2 will share. Oversimplified, it is just take you through what I call the 'next turn of the crank' in regard to some of the considerations you need to make decisions upon as a Dad of a grade school age kid (or even of multiple ones in this age group).

I'm also going to have a little more creativity involved in regard to the format of the information shared (pictures, quotes, etc.). But as I do so, remember my goal is to help get you to thinking as to at least some of the key things that you may want to address as your kid(s) go through their grade school years. Now, as to why? It is because your 'Oops, I should have done that' type of mistakes that you can get by when you are a dad of toddlers, is now smaller. And that means your kids are a lot smarter as to what they see unfolding around them. Scars can be in the process or can be avoided, depending on what you do and don't do in these years of your kid's lives.



So just keep these three things in mind as you move forward through this book . . .



First, remember from Book 1, where I shared: *“a majority of dads have good intentions and try to do well but too often end up making mistakes that years down the road they wished they would have done things differently. But also know, some dads realize that insights from others help them to add to their knowledge sooner rather than later and they skip most of the pit falls that they normally would fall into.”*

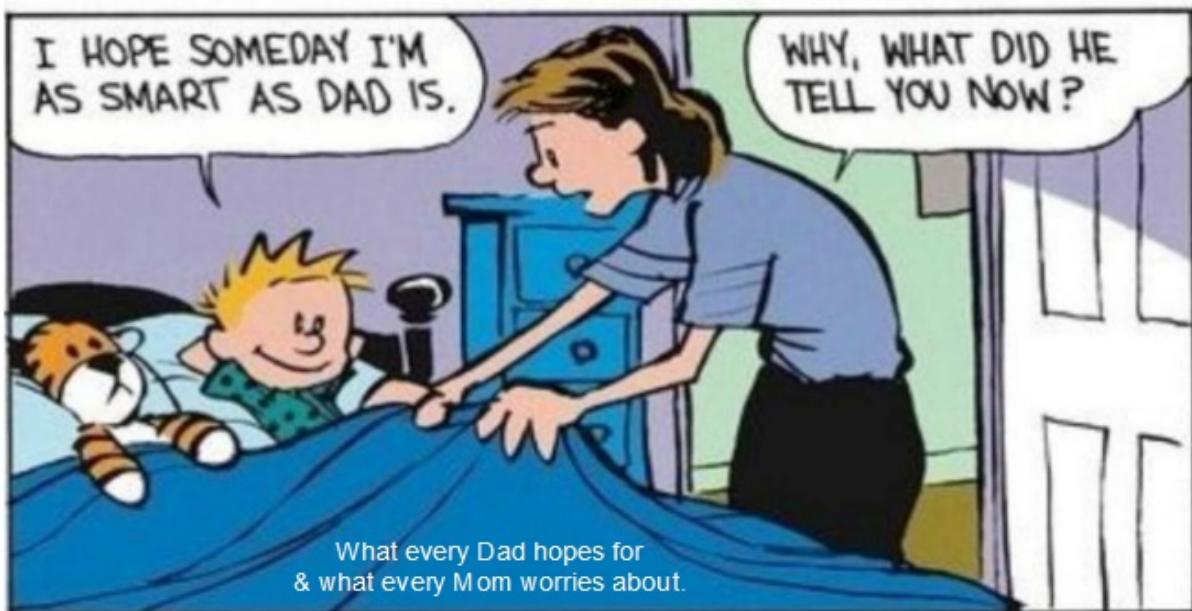
I bring this up again because I really want to challenge you to step up in your 'Dad actions.' Don't be like me – I looked at my dad and at the other dads that I had periodic interactions with and I tried to pull in and use the 'good' that I saw, and I tried to avoid the 'bad' that I saw.

What I want you to do is to consider 'stuff like I am sharing' and for you to go out and gather additional insights as well. Challenge yourself to be the best Dad that you can be. How to do so, is up to you.

Second, talk with your wife and come up with a game plan for these kid years as to 'how are we going to do this juggle?' your kid(s) may want to try sports or various school related actions – so come up with a plan as to how you both are going to enable those as best you can.

And third, be aware of what other parents are doing and determine if the action plan that you & your wife are on – makes sense, or do you need to make adjustments? Why this? Because none of us are perfect and we can always have our mindset open – not to copy others but to keep in mind that we can always learn and if someone else is doing something good, there is no reason that we can't learn from others.

So . . . just think, observe, consider and try doing all the things that are needed for you and your family to achieve what you wish (happiness).



Because, if you are not trying to have a fun life as a family, your family members will be off looking for it elsewhere.

So, read on through the following to see if anything shared triggers a good idea or action that you want to pursue. And a bonus challenge is for you to help & to encourage other dads as well (we need good dads).



**And please note:** After I had drafted Book 1 (**Coulda**), you will see back on page 9 of it, I shared a few words based on this question . . .

**'What should children learn by age 6?'** I provided my answer there and it got me thinking . . . **'What should kids learn by age 12?'**  
So I thought on this and jotted down these words as a kick off consideration for you – to see if you would agree or add to it.

[Before age 12 . . . ] **They begin to develop their skills (in sports or music and or in whatever); they know of and are aware of danger (bullies, mass shootings, bad touch, etc); they understand what integrity is (don't lie, cheat or steal); and they know that everyone stumbles from time to time, that you can't win all the time, and you don't always get what you want and that is all okay. Basically, the framework they started building years earlier, is now seeing them learn from their experiences and they are developing their character.**

And it is that 'developing of their character' is where the pages that follow come into play (so yes – like in **Coulda**, here in **Woulda** you get to decide which you will pick and choose from).

Also, to help make sure I did miss anything – I shared the draft of this book with my favorite son-in-law JJ and asked him to read through and to see what else he would add as additional considerations. Yes, I liked what he shared – see those comments on page xx.

And with all of that, I'll close on this introduction with these words (lyrics) from Rodney Atkin's song . . . **“Watch'n You”**.

It is the bridge from **Book One – Coulda . . .** (see page 14) where what we do as Dads when our kids are in their preschool years, is so critical. Because . . .

**they are watching what we say and do.**

So, keep that in mind as you pursue their 'kid years'.

Driving through town, just my boy and me,  
with a happy meal in his booster seat  
Knowing that he couldn't have the toy, 'Til his nuggets were gone  
A green traffic light turned straight to red  
I hit my brakes and mumbled under my breath  
As fries went a flying and his orange drink covered his lap  
Well, then my four year old said a four letter word  
That started with "S" and I was concerned  
So I said, "Son, now where did you learn to talk like that?"

He said, "I've been watching you, dad, ain't that cool?  
I'm your buckaroo, I wanna be like you.  
And eat all my food, and grow as tall as you are  
We got cowboy boots and camo pants  
Yeah, we're just alike, hey, ain't we dad?  
I wanna do everything you do, So I've been watching you"

We got back home, and I went to the barn  
I bowed my head, and I prayed real hard  
Said, "Lord, please help me help my stupid self"  
Then this side of bedtime later that night  
Turning on my son's Scooby Doo night light  
He crawled out of bed, and he got down on his knees  
He closed his little eyes, folded his little hands  
And spoke to God like he was talking to a friend  
And I said, "Son, now where'd you learn to pray like that?"

He said, "I've been watching you, dad, ain't that cool?  
I'm your buckaroo, I wanna be like you  
And eat all my food, and grow as tall as you are  
We like fixing things and holding mama's hand  
Yeah, we're just alike, hey, ain't we, dad?  
I wanna do everything you do, So I've been watching you."

With tears in my eyes, I wrapped him in a hug  
Said, "My little bear is growing up"  
He said, "But when I'm big, I'll still know what to do"  
"'Cause I've been watching you, dad, ain't that cool?  
I'm your buckaroo, I wanna be like you  
And eat all my food, and grow as tall as you are  
Then I'll be as strong as Superman  
We'll be just alike, hey, won't we, dad?  
When I can do everything you do,  
'Cause I've been watching you."

## Chapter 1: The Bible (explored)

Per book 1, share words about introducing your kids to faith (if that is your desire). As for this book 2, I would encourage you to find ways to introduce the Bible to them and to build a foundation within them so that they have a desire to learn of and to pursue their faith as their years continue to unfold.

Now as to the why? You may not realize this or you may not appreciate it as much as you should, but you get to decide the what, when, where, who, why and how for every critical thing that you want your kid(s) to

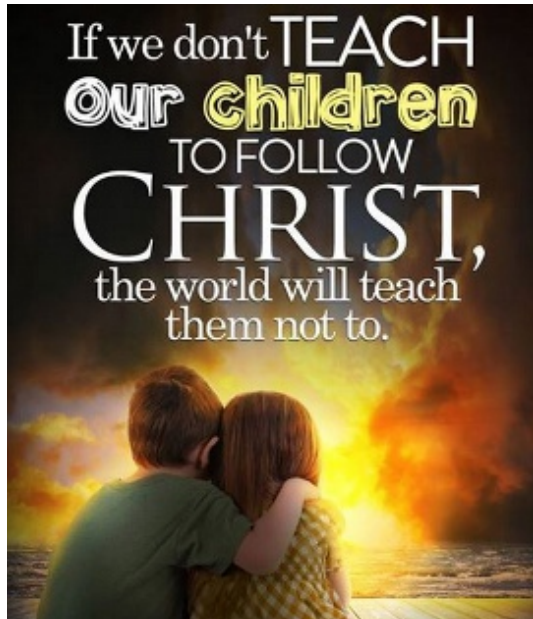
experience, to learn and to appreciate as they are growing up. And the one critical subject that I recommend that you do not overlook, is on faith. And it starts with this.

You have to first look at yourself and decide - what does faith mean to you? If you do not have a faith or are not active in faith anymore – is that something that you want to explain to your child at some time? If you are pursuing your faith - are there things about your faith that you want your child to know? And remember this. What you don't share, someone else will share with your kid(s).

Also remember to consider – are the examples that you can share, that help show how or why your faith comforts you, convinces you. One example I love to ponder is the periodic solar eclipses (the size/distance of the sun & moon\*\* – a simple coincidence?)



Another consideration is your wife – what are her thoughts on faith, or not and on what each of you would like your child to know?



The third consideration is the how – as in what do we want our child to know and how will we pursue that? At a minimum, there could be actions that you want to pursue, and actions that your wife wants to pursue and then there are actions or events that the world will have unfold all around you that will either challenge or encourage your efforts to convey faith pursuits as you deem best.

So, at some time you need to determine the what, the who, the when, the why and the how aspects that you will engage your child in on faith and as to how they should view the Bible. For this book, I'm going to assume that you have a Christian faith and want to share some examples that you could consider for your preschool age child. But if you are unsure – I'll offer up these words from Dr. David Jeremiah . . .

Jacob's sons nearly drove him crazy. When we read the story of his twelve sons, we can understand why he told them, "*You have bereaved me.*" It's a saga of corruption, rivalry, and even violence.

Few people worry more than parents. It's hard to raise children in a culture like ours; most parents have lots of sleepless nights worrying about their kids, whatever their age.



Sometimes we worry more about them as young adults than we did when they were schoolchildren or teenagers.

Parenting is filled with highs and lows. Store up the good moments, the golden moments, to get you through the tough ones. And whatever the moments bring, pray. The prayers of a righteous parent are powerful and effective. Whenever you're tempted to say, "All these things are against me" remember **Romans 8:28** — *all these things are working for the good of those who love Him.*

**Now, what would I add?** I made the mistake of never really talking about the Bible with our kids because they were attending Church with us, they were attending their Bible study classes, etc. I made the assumption – they were gaining the right insights that they would need.



THE BIBLE IS MEANT TO  
BE BREAD FOR DAILY USE,  
NOT CAKE FOR SPECIAL  
OCCASIONS.

What I didn't realize then – was that I missed some great opportunities to talk with our kids about faith, about the Bible and what I found so valuable in my reading pursuits. That is now where you must decide. Is the Bible important to you and if it is – what about it will you share with your kids, and what will you encourage them on? Because, if you don't – your kids will never have an insight as to what you've learned.

For me, I wish I would have share how the Genesis story of Joseph meant so much to me, and how I needed – and enjoyed reading through the Bible multiple times because I learned so much from it. So – thank you for thinking about this and in pursuing what you deem best.

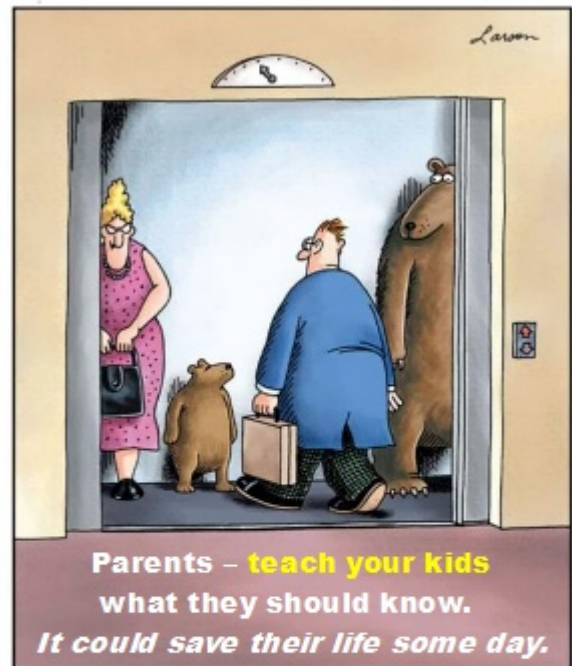
**\*\*** = let me know if you want to know more amazing facts about the moon, the sun and how it relates to us here on Earth. The # 400 is key and the impact of the moon upon our planet is astounding. To me, it is an example of God at work in the universe – but for others – it is just a bunch of coincidences and 'yep, that is interesting' stuff.

## Chapter 2: Lessons (other's shared)

This chapter 2, builds upon the insights shared in chapter 2 of Book 1. Which is the challenge of how best to help your kids to learn lessons that will help them to be smarter, kinder, braver, etc. as their kid years unfold? And as I thought on this and the goal for this chapter to be on what we can learn from others – prompted me to share these three considerations.

First - It was January 4, 2015, 6:01 PM and Sailor Gutzler (age7), her parents, sister and cousin were aboard small plane when it went down; only Sailor survived. After the crash, she pulled herself out of the wreckage and walked a mile through cold, dark woods to a near by house. The 71 year old man who heard her at his door said she was the bravest little girl he had ever met. Despite the tragic event, Sailor was also able to help authorities locate the wreckage of the plane and the remains of her family and cousin who all died in the crash.

Which got me to thinking . . . how well do you think your young child could do in a tragic situation like this or any type of a tragic event? If you are like me, you probably never thought that this type of a situation could unfold – but it does, Teaching our teens about honor, compassion, self-confidence, etc is good but we need to begin teaching those aspects to our young kids as well. The challenge, how best and when? So, think about this and remember – how well you help do this, is critical.



Tragedy struck when Conroy, his mind preoccupied with work, stepped into the elevator—directly between a female grizzly and her cub.

Now, don't ram 'survival skills' down your young kids throat as some would want but do think about what you want your kids to know and then work on teaching, training, and exposing them to the types of things that you want them to be aware of. And if you are not sure what would be the best game plan to pursue for this, then you may want to try starting with something like this. That is to begin drafting a “things to teach by what age” type of list.

For example: what do you want them to know by the time they start school? (are there things you may have missed doing when they were in their preschool years – that you need to address now?) What do you want them to know in each year of grade school, so that by the time they become a teenager - they are best prepared for those even more challenging years yet to come?

Second – is to be aware what is happening across of society. There seems to be mass-shootings in schools and elsewhere, across the entire country. Teens are getting guns, drugs are all over the place and social media is influencing kids more then their parents. So you need to ask yourselves - how best to pursue lessons for our kids in the grade school age? And remember - what is done for a 7 year old can be drastically different than what is done for an 11 year old. And as you ponder this, consider what my daughter had come across after the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas. At that time, Charlie Hoehn posted:

*Boys in the United States—just like all human beings—need touch, caring, warmth, empathy, and close relationships. But as we grow up, most of us lose those essential components of our humanity. What’s worse: we have no idea how to ask for those things, or admit we need them, because we’re afraid it will make us look weak.*

*As a man, you might be thinking, “Not me, I’ve got drinking buddies. I play poker with the guys. I’ve got friends.” But do you have confidants? Do you have male friends who you can actually be vulnerable with?*

He went on to share . . . *There is a fantastic documentary called **The Mask You Live In**, which explains how some boys in our society are ultimately shaped into mentally unstable adults. [which raises the question] How do we combat the loneliness that kids are feeling? All of them attacked people in their own community, and all of them attack people they blamed for their own loneliness. And sadly, this loneliness compounds as men grow older. Without deeper friendships or a strong sense of community, the isolation is soul-deadening and maddening. They feel they are alone.*

Now those insights are just an example of learning about boys and men, but there is also the need to learn about girls and women. So it comes down to determining what is best for kids to learn, that sets the stage for more to learn when they become teens. to be learning from others that we as adults can do – but we also need to teach our kids to learn from others as they grow each year.

Third – is to remember that we all want to be smart, to then take our wisdom, advice, etc and to pass that information on to our kids. To me, it is a mix of everything and the following two images give you a simple framework to start from:

Here is the first for girls (and thanks Addy for your actions) . . .



#### A Daughter Needs a Dad:

- ... to be the safe spot she can always return to.
- ... to teach her that men and women can be good friends.
- ... to give her gentle pushes that help her grow.
- ... who does not mind when she steps on his toes while dancing.
- ... to show her how it feels to be loved unselfishly.
- ... to teach her that her value as a person is more than the way she looks (what's on the inside is what counts).
- ... to teach her how to recognize a gentleman.
- ... to teach her to experiment for the sake of challenging her own assumptions (this will help her to learn as she grows).
- ... to show her how to fix things for herself.

And why do we need to know all the above?

And the second for boys . . .



### A Son Needs a Dad:

- ... to encourage him when he is in doubt of himself.
- ... who allows him to question things.
- ... to show him how to love others even when it is hard.
- ... to wrestle with him in the grass (or downstairs).
- ... to teach him not to let pride get in the way of listening (and how 'listening' helps them to learn).
- ... to pull him back when he is headed in the wrong direction (it happens).
- ... to help him understand it isn't necessary to be like everyone else (it is good to be unique).
- ... to share the wisdom he has not yet acquired.
- ... to be a role model for the father he will become.

Because one day, those little green army men will come in handy.



**Which comes down to . . .** you have now seen all of the above – did any of it trigger any ideas on things to discuss, decide and do?

## **Chapter 3: Intelligence (pursued)**

This chapter builds on chapter 2 for you to help your kid(s) to do all that they can to learn. As to **how best to?** I recommend you consider the following as a way to help trigger your thoughts and plans for this. And one way to start is having a type of game plan like the following: [yep, the focus is on what you may want to learn about yourself first]

### **For the preschool years (you did this – right?):**

I want my children to know they are loved, that we thank God for all things and we pursue our faith, that they know what manors are and that they are confident in themselves (how they speak, read and learn).

### **For the grade school years (this is the now unfolding time):**

I want my kids to grow their knowledge, their skills & their confidence.

I would try to build on ideas like the words shared earlier on what a son/daughter needs from their dad, and on aspects like those shared by

Dr, Steven Stephens (“**Be Aware, Be Accepting, Be Assertive, Be Affectionate, Be Approachable and Be Alert**” recommendations

as shown throughout the following), and to share with them the values that I believe they should understand and try to pursue.

**For their the middle school/high school years (coming soon):**

I want my teens understand the positives verses the negatives that they will experience, how the values they have learned will help them to make good decisions that they are proud of, that they can make bad decisions (we all do) and they can learn from them and that they can always come to their Dad and Mom for help or advice.

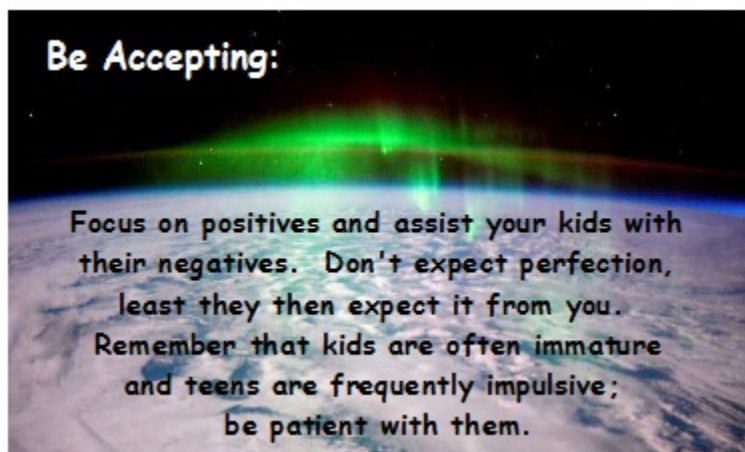
But we also must remember that despite our best efforts, our kid's friends and others will also influence them and it starts in the kid years.

[also]

**What we do in regards to these other influences is up to us.** For example, they will experiment . . . they will lie in some way, they will do actions that they do not want you to know of, and there will most likely be times when they specifically do things against your wishes.



So – in knowing that you will have some influence and others will have influence on your kids as well – what should you do?



That is the set of decisions that you will have to make. I would strongly caution against being 'their friend' (that type of an approach has caused more problems than it has ever helped).

I would therefore recommend you help your kids to considering the following:

Learn from your past and leverage those 'lessons learned' so that you can pass on to your kids, those beliefs, experiences and aspects that you want them to be aware of.

**Be Assertive:**

There are lessons you have learned so pass them on.



Teach truth. Provide reasonable rules and consistent consequences when those rules are broken. Be strong and give your family security without being rigid, insensitive, angry, abusive or exasperating.

Learn from others – like the information shared in this book and from other resources that are available. But be wise, just because someone

**Be Affectionate:**

Hug them often and tell them every day that you love them.




Compliment and encourage them. Don't yell, hit, or belittle them. Treat them with respect and treasure them.

states that you should do this or that as a dad, it may not be good advice. Use your common sense. If it seems like good advice, leverage it but if it doesn't seem right,

then avoid it (aka the 'pick what is good' challenge).

And I'll close on this with the following. Intelligence can be gained in many different ways. Trying and failing (and hopefully learning from that) is a great way but can be painful at the worst or disappointing at the best. For most, it is frustrating (but you can learn).

Don't create emotional distance with your kids. Spend quality time with them; laugh with them and play with them. Make sure you truly connect with them.



**Be Approachable:**

Which all means – all topics (or experiences) to address during the 'kid years' need to include the scary, the sad, etc. as well as the exciting and



all the basics. And you need to understand that whatever you want your kids to learn, you will have to share it via saying it, via showing it and most likely – by also repeating it. Which means – it doesn't matter what you say if you are not a good parent.

Because, if you are not a good role model, then don't be surprised if your kids learn from others or go in a different direction.

And with the above – **now comes to the hard part.** That being the awareness that no matter what you want to teach your kids – they may not care as in the 'why am I needing to know this?' reality or they may not be ready (the 6 vs 8 vs 10 year of brains differ for all kids). So, the big challenge comes to this: Think back to when you were a kid and what you wish you knew then.

As to, how do you help your kids to learn those things and the other critical things that they should learn? Aspects such as being aware of bullies, of people with physical or mental challenges, of divorce, and all aspects of diversity – such as heterosexual, homosexual & transsexual awareness, race, religion, bigotry, swearing, lies, stealing, alcohol, drugs, guns, etc. and you see the 'there is a lot that kids need to know'.

The challenge is huge, so please partner with your wife and do as best you can on this. Because whatever you can do to help your kids to be smarter, to be compassionate, to be brave, and to be respectful – are the type of things that you can be proud of and we all are thankful of [aka *the smarter kids that we have, the better world we will have*].

Oops, and I almost forgot, don't overlook the challenges of what best and when, in regards to the more complex subjects. Such as – are you and your wife going to be the ones who bring up these topics and share what you want your kid(s) to know – or will you just let others influence them as they desire?

For example . . .  
What is the difference between good & bad?

Life & death?

Polite & mean?

Marriage & divorce?

Heterosexual,  
homosexual  
& transsexual?

Also on things like: just because you

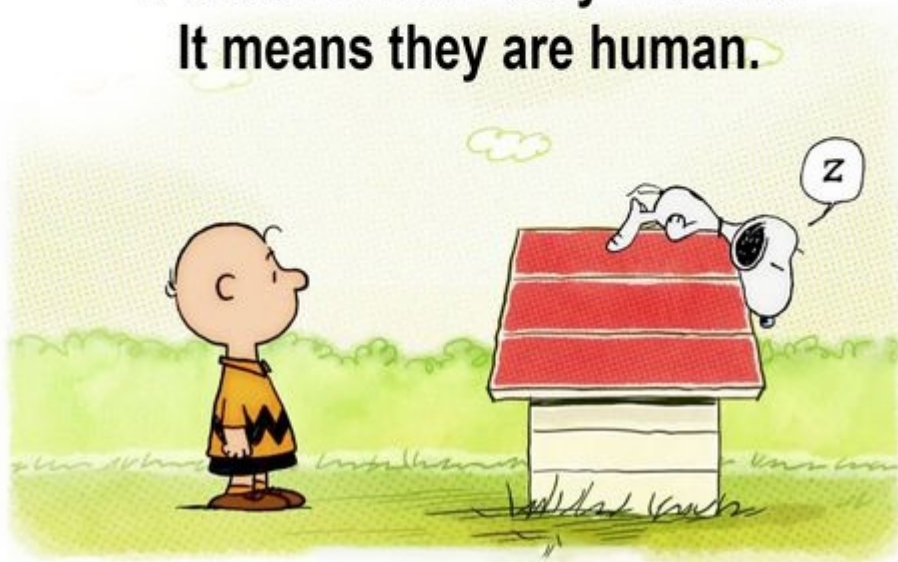
could - doesn't mean you should”, racism/bigotry, swearing, stealing, drinking (alcohol), drugs, sexting, sex, lies, manipulating, etc etc.



And yes there can be so many other good, challenging issues, topics and or events unfolding that you need to find a way to talk with your kids on (and yes you can be honest with them, that you may not know all the answers but that you want to discuss those things that your kids should have awareness on; with them also knowing, they can talk with you on anything at any time).

And at this point, we pause, and you know why.

**Everybody makes mistakes in life.  
But that doesn't mean  
they have to pay for  
them for the rest of their lives.  
Sometimes good people make  
bad choices.  
It doesn't mean they are bad.  
It means they are human.**



Yep, you wish you had been taking some notes, wanting to remember to do this, that and that other action – based on what Chapters 1, 2 & 3 shared. It is okay – we all make mistakes. You can pause now, jot down what you wanted and can then continue on to Chapter 4.

And yes, remember all of this information shared is for you to ponder and decide what to do or not. I'm just glad you're thinking because that is what good dads do. So keep doing, your wife & kids like that in you.

## Chapter 4: Perception (experienced)

Okay, with this one (on perception), I'll admit it is a bit of a different topic. So please, just consider the following and see if it leads you to some good ideas that you want to pursue with you kid(s).

First, there is a good chance that your kids are pretty smart, but are they as wise as you would like them to be? For example, do they have a good grasp as to what faith, hope, love, peace, courage, kindness, sacrifice, etc. etc. values are? And yes, if you're like me, you're already starting to think . . . what about integrity, forgiveness, happiness, etc? Now, I could go deeper on those right now but I won't. I just wanted you to start seeing that there are interesting things that all of us (kids to) may have an awareness, a perception on – that may be good, or, insufficient or not even there.

Which leads to this; being the seeing and the **experiencing** (as kids hear and see), what usually locks in their memories - good or bad - is how they experience what unfolds in their life.



Consider this, what if you asked questions like these (as follows) and had conversations with your kids? Not to force them down a path of thought but to give them the chance to talk, to express their views, to listen and to possibly adjust their thinking because they are receiving in more information (remember - gaining wisdom is a long game). And what I like about this, is the benefit from when we have conversations with our kids, they are learning to converse not only with their parents but they are building conversation skills to interact with their friends and adults. So then, for example - say you asked your 6 year this question and then again when they are 8, and then 10: ***“If you asked yourself who am I, how would you answer?”***

So lets first consider the 6 year old's possible response. Their words may be very surprising because it may be the first time they are asked to reflect on who they think they are and how best to describe themselves.

Now, would they respond that they are loved, they are a part of your family, that they are brave, silly, a Christian or whatever . . . who knows because they are only able to summarize their 6 years or life so far.

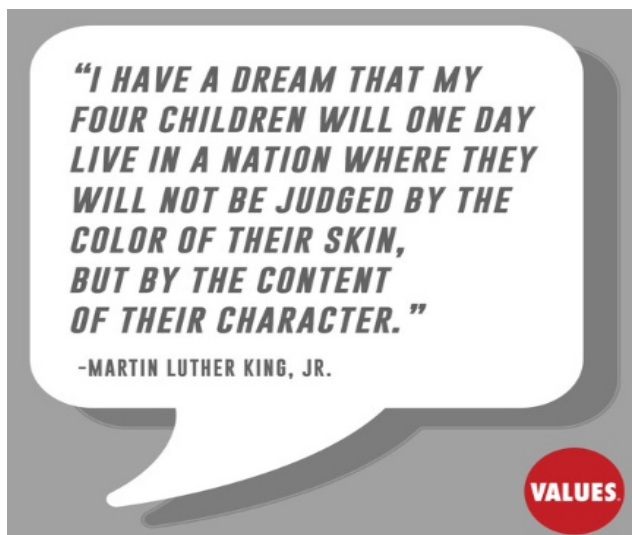
Next, ask them . . . **“Where did you come from?”** They may say they don't know or they came from a hospital or from you and their Mom. It all depends on what they have learned, remembered or believe.

The reason I bring these two example questions is because they are simple 'door opener' type questions that can lead to fun and hopefully insightful talks that you can have with your kids. And please remember, don't view talks or discussions as a 'one & done' action. Your kids are learning and building upon what they learn. That is why you would want to ask them the same questions every few years or so – to see how much their responses change or stay the same. Why? Your influence may not be as you'd wish if you don't build a good rapport with your kids and talking with them is that path toward building that rapport.

Now for my third point to share on this subject of perception. That is to remember that you and your wife are **in a competition** against the

world as to what will influence your kids. The TV, their friends, their teachers, strangers and their extended family, all have various ways of influencing your kids.

So then, are you doing what you believe is needed to help shape the thoughts, words and actions that your kids pursue?





What if, after thinking about this – you're a bit nervous, that maybe you need to do more? Well, if that is true, it is better to catch this early vs later, so you can start doing things differently. Or do you think you're doing a pretty good job and a few years down the road will prove if you did well or have regrets?

And last all, take a look at this image above – the words from MLK Jr. I saved that, because it reminded me of who I was and who I have gone on and have become. I was a kid in the 60s and I remember the race riots . . . and wondering 'why is this a problem?' I was a white kid living in a white world for the most part and it is a bit sad [in my opinion] that my parents did not sit me down and explain to me what was happening in most of the major big cities across America at that time. What if I lived in one of those big cities then, what if I was black, yellow or red, what would my perception be? And that is why this chapter is here. If we as parents don't look at the world that is unfolding and talk with our kids as to what they should understand, they will perceive as best they can. Will it be good enough is the risk we take by not talking with them and in helping their awareness, their perception to grow.

And while you are churning in your mind on all of this – please don't forget the nuance of growing up. The difference between a 6 year old and a 12 year old is significant. Our opportunities as parents to engage and to influence our kids becomes harder and harder as they grow toward their teen years. Please don't underestimate the competition that you have. Know that you are very much outnumbered by your kids friends, and by what they hear and see through TV and the exposures to those various social media platforms. Oh yeah, and add to this time of challenge – the distractions that you and your wife must deal with aka many challenges.



## Chapter 5: Coaching (is critical)

Okay, before I get into this one, pause first and remember that in book one for chapter 5, that dealt with challenging your kids. As in trying



new things, how to play games, to build skills, sharing, teamwork, etc.

All of those were in the pursuit of learning and applying life lessons: when you fall down, you get back up; treat others as you want to be treated, being honest, helpful, etc. Then, we have to change gears a bit as they become kids and get more involved in organized activities.

This is the time for you to directly or indirectly – do some coaching. So make the time to think on

this, to partner with your wife and to come up with a plan as to how you both will 'coach' your kids in their youth activities and actions (which could be sports, music, art or whatever). And if you do pursue coaching directly or indirectly, remember back to when you were a kid. Where there then, some good coaches that had a style or an approach that you thought worked well – that you may want to mimic in some way?

And please, remember this. First – for Sports. It is great to encourage your kids to try different sports, but remember – sometimes their skills, their coordination and their desire to try or play sports – may be out of whack for a while. That is why no yelling or negativity because if you frustrate them – they could get turned off before their abilities and desire kicks in (and that would be a sad loss of potentially a lot of fun experiences).



Second – for just growing up. Remember that coaching is not just for sports. You have insights that can help them to deal with friendship that have been broken, feelings that are hurt or for challenges that scare them from even wanting to try. So remember – life is a long game and what we as kids learn in our youth, in our sports, in our whatever we try – is a part of what helps us to develop the 'who we will become'.

And I'll close with these words of 'me coaching you'. Here are some simple phrases that will help you praise your kids and encourage them to repeat their positive behavior: **I appreciate the way you...**

**I'm impressed with... Thanks for going all out when you...**

**One of the things I enjoy most about you is... I admire your...**

**Great job with... I really enjoy working with you because...**

**You're terrific, because... Your team couldn't be successful without your... Thank you for your... You made my day when... You can be proud of your...**

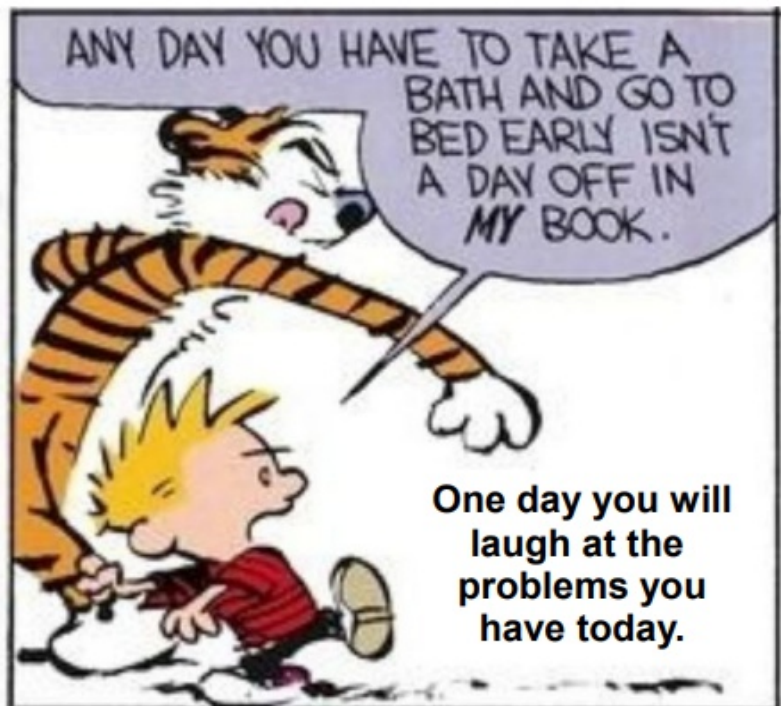


**You did an outstanding job of... I like your... It's evident you have the ability to... You deserve a pat on the back for...  
You should be proud of yourself for... You're really good at...  
You've got my support with... I admire the way you take the time to... What a great idea! It's evident you have a special knack of...  
You were a great help when... You have a special gift for...  
I enjoy being with you because you... I know you can do it!  
It's fun watching you... I believe in you...  
Thanks for thinking about this, and for trying as best you can to put the challenge of 'coaching' into the best game plan for you.**

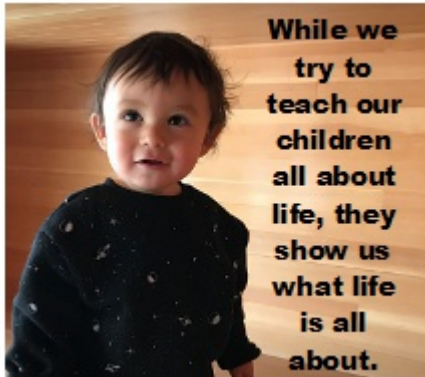
## **Chapter 6: Live (honorably)**

Now here – with this topic – everything shared already, begins to be tied together. For when we – and our kids – make decisions on our faith, the lessons we choose to grasp, our imagination enjoyed and intelligence pursued, as well as everything that unfolds – we would would call the good, the bad and the ugly of life – shapes us. So, knowing this, I would encourage you to consider the following . . .

First, remember that the life that you and your wife have (work, friends, and whatever challenges), are factors that will affect what you both do with your kids. And in thinking about that, I know 'the bills have to be paid' . . . but don't forget that your kids are not to be overlooked as you decide all the what you will do and not do (= everything).



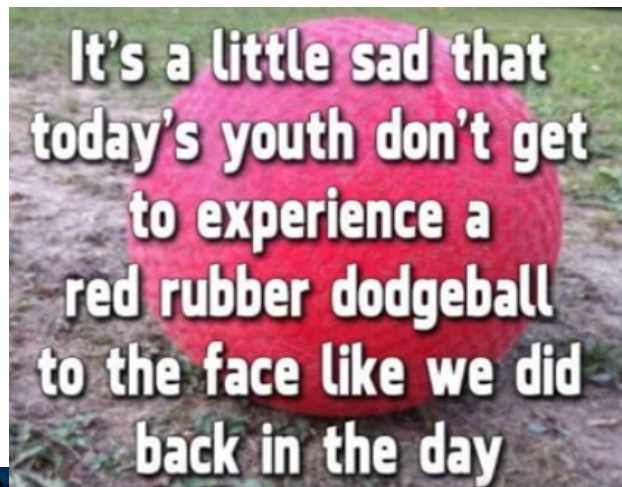
Second, not that 'what your kids say or want' is the critical aspect for all of your decision-making – but they should be considered at a minimum.



As to why? We make better decisions when we factor in what is important to us. So, if your kids are important to you – their input may be just the right perspective needed, for you all to be aligned as best can, for those activities (events, sports, vacations, etc), that need to be pursued at the current time, as well as what

should be pursued in the various months and years that are ahead.

Third, is to remember that you have learned a lot as well in your years that have unfolded. You, I and every adult have years of ups and downs. So don't overlook the



tough times, the stumbles, the negative times that have unfolded but, you've also learned so much from.

Do whatever you can to help ensure your young ones know that their life will have a mix of everything . . . and no matter what, they will be okay. It comes down to this.

Help them to have a deeper view of values, a wider view of life and a longer view of time.

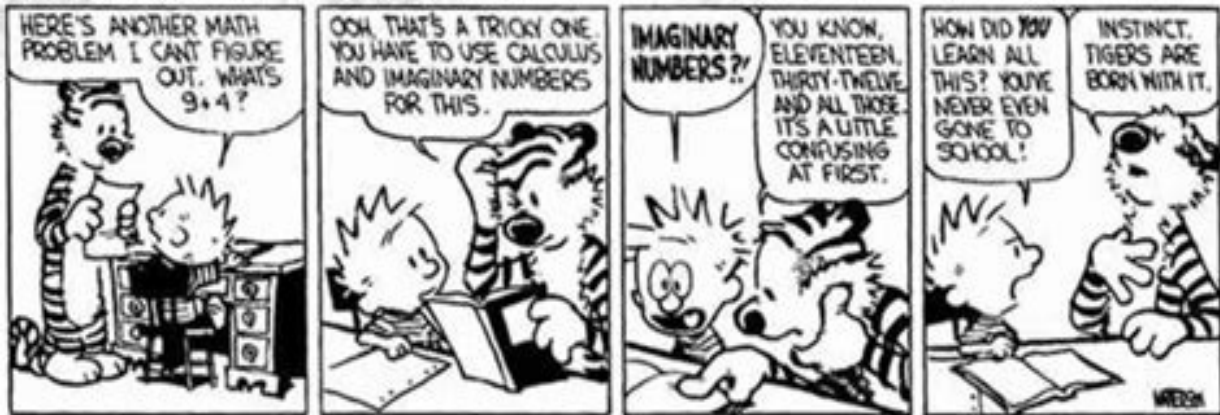
And there you go – the end of this book of insights. Nope, I was just kidding. It is like taking a 30 minute break after eating and before you go swimming. And since you have this break – did anything in Chapters 4, 5 & 6 jump out at you or did anything trigger some ideas that you want to pursue with your kid(s)?



And if this break does prompt some good thinking – thank you for doing so. A Dad's job never ends because we're always thinking about what do we need to do, to help our kids?

## Chapter 7: Listen (when you can)

Know this. Kids are not that much different from us parents aka we all are trying to figure things out (and we don't know everything).

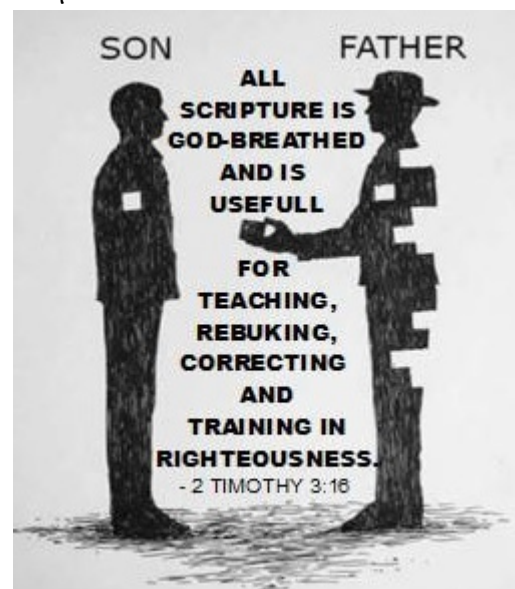


So please, consider other resources to help you to think on the various words and actions that you should consider pursuing as your Dad years unfold. For example – from Tony Dungy and his All Pro Dad writings, he shares the following [*I have it here as an example of what dads need to keep in mind as they live their life while their son(s) are watching*].

### 4 Ways You Accidentally Teach Your Son to Be Mean

Recently, I overheard my son talking to one of his friends about political opinions we had discussed as a family. I became concerned when I noticed the strong tone of the conversation—and that my son actually used the word “hate” to describe his feelings and opinions. Thankfully, after talking to him, he realized his poor choice of words. However, it was a humbling reminder to me as a dad that my son picks up on things, positive and negative, verbal and nonverbal, from me.

This is true for all of us.



Boys don't become men, or gentlemen, without coaching and guidance from good men in their lives, especially their fathers. And mean boys don't become mean without influence either. Are you guilty of inadvertently instilling or encouraging meanness in your son in any of these 4 ways?

### **1. Making Fun of People in Front of Him**

Whether it's done in jest or out of ill intent, making fun of others in front of your son leaves an impact. It sends a dangerous message that such behavior is acceptable when we see others who are different from us.

### **2. Losing Your Temper with Him or Others**

Very few things are as toxic in a man as uncontrolled anger. This is probably why the Bible's greatest warning to fathers is not to provoke their children to anger. Many boys grow up with father wounds from a dad's anger. And many boys carry a father's anger into their own adulthood and parenting.

### **3. Responding to Him with Sarcasm**

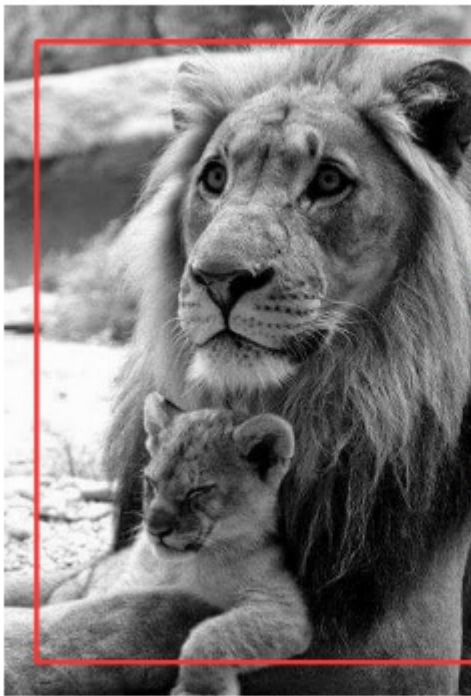
After asking your son to do something, has he ever asked you to clarify? And if so, have you ever responded with a sarcastic or condescending tone, like, "Didn't I already tell you this?" Sadly, fathers who would never call their sons "stupid" to their faces may inadvertently make their sons feel stupid with sarcasm. And the best remedy to sarcasm is a good dose of patience and humility.

### **4. Disrespecting Women in Any Capacity**

More than your son will ever become what you say, he will become who you are. There ought to be no room for disrespect of women or girls in your home or in your dealings with your son. This includes the way you interact with your son's mother and sisters, as well as how you treat and talk about women in general. Boys who grow up to disrespect women usually had poor examples to follow in this area. Think of it this way: How would you feel if your future son-in-law



treated your daughter the same way you treat the women in your life now? Remember, your son will probably be someone's future son-in-law someday.



**Being male  
is a  
matter of  
birth.**

**Being a man  
is a  
matter of  
age.**

**But being a  
Gentleman  
is a  
matter of  
choice.**

The reason I shared the above from Tony and the following words is to help encourage you to keep gaining insights. Especially when your children are in this 'kid' age. You may be tired or think they are not watching but most likely, this is the time they are very much focused on your words and actions. So please, also consider the following.

### **From Dr. James Dobson on 'raising girls to be ladies' . . .**

*A few years back, Dr, James Dobson shared these words. He had actually referenced back to the beliefs and recommendations of the second President of our United States, John Adams. He highlight some of the key considerations that are still valid today (isn't it interesting that some things stand the test of time?). And remember, none of us are perfect and what one may state about being honorable or on pursuing a faith based life may not be agreed to by others. That is why we would recommend you consider the following and that you pursue those aspects and actions that you believe are worthy.*

*In his autobiography, Adams wrote a commentary on the subject of moral behavior, which he called "manners." He stated that manners are "the most infallible barometer by which to ascertain the degree of morality and virtue in a nation." As for today, we look across our country and the various problems unfolding and increasing (shootings, road rage, crime, etc), makes us think that in a broad sense, **we as a nation are not teaching manners, respect or accountability as we should.***

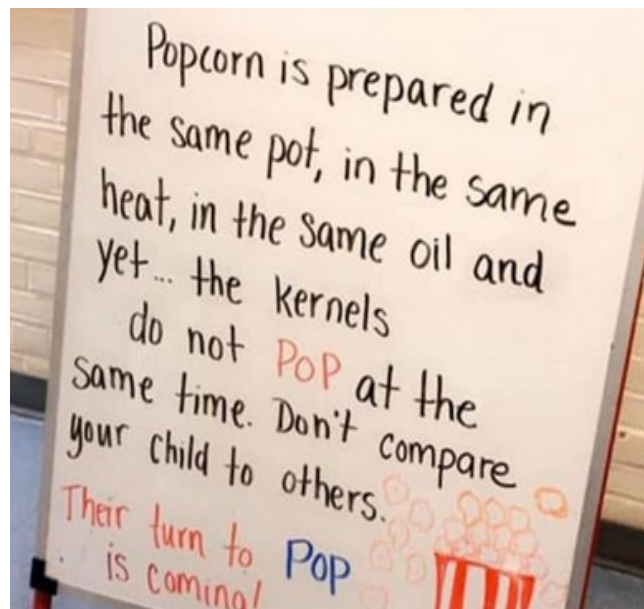
*Adams believed that the mothers are the earliest and most important instructors of youth, and that the essential moral character of our nation lies squarely on the shoulders of mothers. He also wrote . . . "Fathers play a key role too, of course, but moms are absolutely indispensable."*

***Wouldn't it be great if every mother and father understood and accepted their primary task to transmit enduring principles of right and wrong to the next generation?***

*President Adams also wrote . . .*

*"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion." Our political system, which Abraham Lincoln said is intended to be "of the people, by the people, for the people," can be no more stable than the collective character of its citizenry. There is no king, dictator, or tyrant to restrain our behavior.*

*So what can we do? For example, what form does early training take in today's world? [He offered] It begins with basic civility, because manners and morals are directly connected. As Horace Mann said, "Manners easily and rapidly mature into morals." The first tends to lead to the second. Jolene Savage, who runs the Social Graces School of Etiquette in Topeka, Kansas, says society has reached an*



*all-time low when it comes to matters of civility. Exhausted moms and dads seem not to have noticed what has happened to their children. Clearly, instruction in civility is needed now more than ever. Getting that done, however, can be a challenge. As the late dancer Fred Astaire said, "The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any."*

*Where do we start?*

*Our kids need to be taught how to eat, talk, walk, dress, converse on the phone, and respond to adults with respect and poise. Parents should not only teach their kids these skills but should also be a role model of them as well. Look at yourself; are you burping, gobbling food, and picking your teeth at the table? Do you say thank you and please when needed? If not, you may not be effective in trying to teach the **do's and don'ts** that your kids need to learn.*

*Yes, kids are all different so you need to remember that what you can teach them and when, may differ from one family to another, as well as from one of your kids to another. As to the why should we teach our kids critical skills?*

*While manners tend to facilitate morals, there is another good reason to teach them. They also help develop self-confidence in our kids and that leads to a strong sense of self-worth. Don't you think if all of us as parents worked at teaching our kids manners, respect and accountability, there would be fewer incidents in teens and adults of road rage, cutting in line, throwing litter from car windows, and other types of general nastiness that we see as common place?*

*It all comes down to this. There are many great resources available to gain insights on teaching kids good manners and all the characteristics that most would call honorable. Dr. James Dobson's [www.focusonthefamily.com/](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/) is one resource, Sheryl Eberly's "365 Manners Kids Should Know" is another.*

*Parents just need to think about this as their preschool age children are starting to grow, and to then apply the ongoing teaching actions for those things that we want our kids to know and do.*

*And we all need to remember: what we don't do, someone else will. Do you want your kids to learn how they should act and what they should expect from others?*

*And to close on this 'resource' section, is my recommendation to watch the movie **COURAGEOUS** that came out in August of 2011. Yes it is a few years old but it touches on a very tough subject . . . **what if you lost a child and what does that do to you and your family?***



I know when I saw it, I really liked how it challenges all dads to step up to their responsibilities as fathers. And that is in dealing with all of the good, the bad and all of the stuff that happens in between. Because, as I've stated before – don't forget that our kids are watching (and yes, they are even learning from how we hand the tough times as well).

And with all of the above covered, this brings us to the end of this **Book Two – Woulda**. Now all you have to decide are upon these 3 . . .

First - is there anything in all of the above, to do a re-read?

Second – do you want to see the story on 'The Sword' that is shown in the epilogue (below)? It is the follow up to what was shared at the end of **Book One – Coulda** . . . that being 'The Tower'.

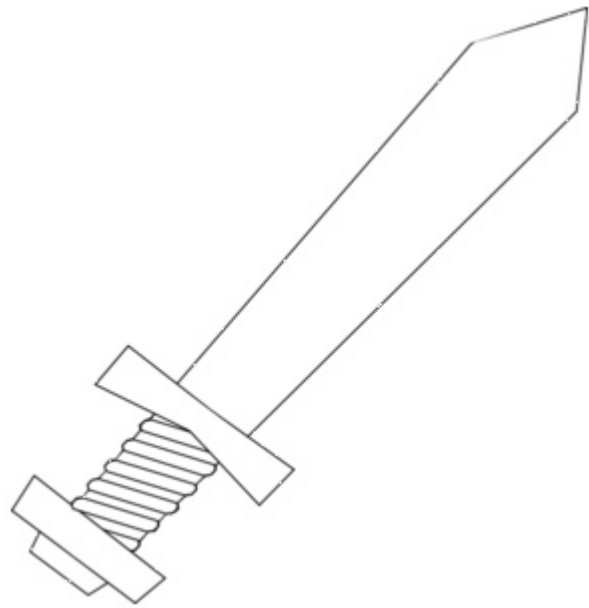
Third – is then the critical question – what will you do next?

And remember: There is never a wrong time to do the right thing.



## Epilogue: [consider] The Sword

**The Back Story:** This story came about a good many years after I had written 'The Tower'. The basic story was bouncing around in my head as it was well known in various forms as 'The Sword in the Stone'. But now my audience was to be the next generation in our family . . . aka the grandkids (yep, a lot of years had rolled by). And over those years, I was jotting down various quotes



and miscellaneous sayings that I liked - and I wondered how best to pull them together into a hopefully interesting story? My goal was to take the King Arthur story and give 'origins' to various sayings - where I could. And that all became what is on the following pages. Which brings us to the challenge for you. Is there any lessons or words or quotes or whatever that you'd like to share with your kids or grandkids some day? If yes, would you use a story of some sort to do so? If yes, below is an example.

**And remember - it's intended to just be a story to show a different way of getting various issues and ideas shared. My hope is that it gives you some ideas.**

## Chapter One - Evil Rises . . .

A long, long, long time ago, the world was good, but over time it was overcome with evil. Good had returned for a time but the people struggle to understand it, to accept it and to maintain it. Unfortunately, evil was always looking for weakness and opportunity.

The world had many challenges and once again evil had found a way to bring sadness and suffering to so many. How or why, no one knew but one thing was for sure... the people were caught between the forces of good and evil. And yes, although the people were now experiencing hard times, they did have some help and those were the Fairies, Elves and Spirits. How they helped, was only known by the few that knew them.

No one really remembers when things went from good to bad or when evil was actually present, for it came on slowly over time. Marching steadily, gaining strength, growing across the land. The people did not realize how bad things had become until it was too late. It was like the darkness of night was slowly overtaking the light of day. No one could not pinpoint the moment when evil was present but all knew it was happening around them and getting worse. But, there were some who did recognize evil and they fought the good fight to assist those that could not see it for what it was or did not yet have the faith to deal with evil. In this time, there were the eternal. They held a special place on this earth and they were called upon when needs were great.

Back then, most had never seen an eternal or knew what one looked like. When the first eternal was seen, is not know but some of the people did know that they – eternal - were living among them. They were the fairies who helped those that suffered and the elves who fought with men to turn back those that were evil. Along with them were the spirits. It was true, few knew of the spirits and most never believed that they exist. Regardless, they always seemed to be near and when needed, to whisper words of encouragement to those that needing extra help. For those that knew of them all – the fairies, the elves and the spirits, all agreed, they were their friends. What the people did not realize was that the evil ones were present as well.

Sadly, deception was hard to recognize until it was too late.

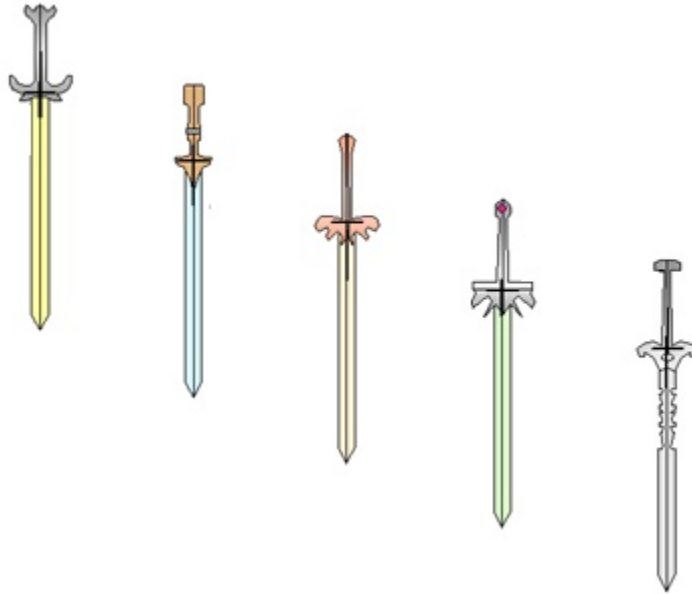
Those that knew the fairies recognized them as being tall and beautiful, with long hair and slight points to their ears. There were four of them. **Panomth** with her blond hair, **Hemsis** with her red hair, **Olee** with her brown hair, and **Eve** with her black hair. Yes they had been helping the people for generations. The old people had either known them or passed on stories about the fairies to their children and grandchildren.

Better known, were the five elves. Because of the many wars over the years, there were many stories of their bravery and successes. If you asked anyone who knew them, they would say they looked more like boys than men but their strength and stamina was known across the land. Besides their slight appearance, what stood out the most for the elves was the fact that they were never without their swords. It was thought that their swords made them invincible because they were never defeated in battle. If you did not know the elves, you could be mistaken as to who was who.

Those that knew them recognized them by their swords. Each of their swords were large, sharp and each sword seemed to have a unique color that flashed in the rays of the sun. **Idie's** sword was called the Viking sword. It had the shape of a Viking ship in its handle and had black etchings that contrast with the gold color tint it reflected in the light. **Faric's** sword was called the Gladiator sword. It had carvings of Chariots on the end of its handle with wood handle inserts and it had a bluish tint of color when seen in battle. **Tkarish's** sword was called the Barbarian sword. It had an orange tinted when seen in battle and those who saw it up close said it had a strange demon face on the end of the handle and gargoyle heads as part of the handle. **Amicus** had the Dragon sword. It had serpents, a skull and horns carved into it and a ruby on each side of its handle. Those that saw it said it flashed of green in battle and looked like the skin of a dragon. **Homen** had the most recognized sword. The people called his sword the Kingsman sword for it had a partial serrated blade and the handle was carved with the shapes of lions and serpents. It gave a silver colored flash when used in battle and it was feared by all who saw it.

For those five elves and their five swords; those that knew them, respected and feared them because they did not just stand by and let innocent people be hurt or be taken advantage of. They acted when needed. They were not afraid of anyone or anything.

Each of them knew their purpose for this world and they lived it, dedicated to good and decided against evil.



Last were the Spirits Enthra, Lamsis, Vell and Omilia who existed in voice and their felt presence but they were never seen. Those that had heard them would tell you they spoke to your heart and gave you the confidence you needed to get through a hard time or the thoughts to recognize danger and to avoid it. One thing was for sure, during the dark times... the Fairies, the Elves and the Spirits seemed to be the only ones that held off evil from taking over the world, but could they forever?

Prior to the wars, there was a young boy named **Arthur**. From his childhood, all he remembered was living as a servant boy at the monastery and looking forward to the day that he would leave as a man. Surprisingly, this day seemed different for some reason. Arthur found himself wondering how long he had been there, 10 years he



thought but it was time for him to find out for sure. He would talk with **Atticus**. For Atticus was one of the Monks who befriended Arthur, who took him extra food and when he could, he taught him how to read and write and to learn about the scriptures. Yes all the others seemed to yell at Arthur but Atticus was his friend.

Earlier that morning, the bell rang at the monastery gate, it was **Merlin** the Wizard. The Monks knew why Merlin was there; he was allowed in and taken to Atticus' chamber. They were talking when Arthur knocked on Atticus' door. It opened as if by itself and he was invited in. Who was this old man standing with Atticus? Arthur wondered for he had never seen someone who looked as old as this man. "Please sit Arthur, I'd like you to meet Merlin", Atticus said. As Arthur walked to the chair and sat, he thought, this man seemed familiar but where and how did he know him?

Atticus walked over, gave Arthur a hug and said, "Arthur, it is time for you to go. You may not remember but Merlin brought you here as a child and he will now take you to safety... for there is evil all around and you are no longer safe here. Listen to Merlin and trust him. I hope you remember all that you have learned and I want you to know these final words. When you were just a little, little boy, your father was dying on the battle field at Havervitch when we came to tend the wounded. It was as if he knew we were coming and he willed himself to stay alive until we arrived. I bent down to check his wounds when his eyes opened and he struggled to grab my arm. He said... "Please hear me and remember these words. . . find Merlin the Wizard for he has my son and tell my son these words. . ."

Atticus paused, wiped his brow and then continued to repeat the words of Arthur's father. "Your father said... 'On the day my wife died, she begged that I would tell our son how much she loved him and that he should always remember this prayer she had for him. I never knew that this day would come so soon. Although I will not live to see my son again, please tell him her words, from us both... May love always lift you, may hope always guide you and may faith always lead you.'

He struggled to tell me those words and when he finished, his eyes closed and he breathed his last. He loved you Arthur and I'm sorry you never got to know how great a man he was". With that said, Atticus said his good byes to Arthur and Merlin. Little did Arthur know that at that moment, his childhood ended and he was now beginning to pursue his destiny.

*"Merlin, please tell me more"* Arthur asked as they traveled to the woods of Acirema. It seemed as if he was in a daze. Only yesterday he was being told of his Father and Mother and now he was traveling with Merlin. **"Time is short Arthur and we have so much to do, I will tell you what you ask as long as you promise to pursue your training"** Merlin responded. *"I will, I will, tell me now as we journey"* Arthur pleaded. And with that, Merlin told him of his Father the King of Gammedim, his Mother the Queen and of the attack by the Warlords, their armies and the battles that destroyed the Castle York. How the catapults bombarded the castle with huge stones and the one that hit the Queen's chamber and fatally wounded her. How she had cried out for her husband and when he arrived from the battle at the castle wall, how she pleaded that he take their son and escape with the people to the north.

He then shared . . .

**"There your Mother died in your father's arms and there he vowed that you would not be harmed. Your father gathered you and his remaining forces and escaped from the advancing army. Castle York fell to the warlords but you were safe. You were 3 years old at that time and your father came to me in these woods of Acirema. He asked that I find you a safe home until he could unite the other Kings and fight off the warlords. When they were victorious, he would return but that was 10 years ago. I took you to the monastery to be safe."** Merlin paused and could see that Arthur was focused on each of his words and he then continued, **"Atticus is a friend of mine and I asked him to help you and to be your friend"**.

With that said Merlin stopped talking and pointed to the thatched house that was now in front of them. **“We are here and this is where you will learn to fight”** Merlin said as he got down from the wagon. Arthur was surprised that they had traveled so far and it went so quick. As Merlin had talked, it was as if they magically traveled deep into the forest. It would not be the last time he would have that feeling. As quickly as Merlin had brought him, he was gone. Here was Arthur, a boy of 13, standing in front of **Javan** who was a large man, with a future ahead that he did not know.

Although Arthur thought he looked old and mean, he soon found out that Javan was only 30 years old and was a Prince from the Kingdom of Beth-Togarmah. Javan was blond, tall and strong. Little did Arthur know at that time, he would spend the next 7 years learning from and fighting with Javan against the warlords and their armies.

## Chapter Two - The Deception . . .

Arthur initially thought Javan was a brute, he quickly learned that he was an excellent swordsman and a fierce fighter. He worked with Arthur to teach him how to fight, how to use a sword and how to plan a battle. One day while Javan was showing Arthur how to use his sword to attack in battle, Arthur kept struggling and could not master what he was being taught. He sat down dejected and said,  
*“I can’t do it, I’ll never learn!”*

At this point, Javan walked over, put his arm on Arthur’s shoulder and said “Young Arthur, life does not require that we be the biggest or the best, it only asks that we try.” With that, Arthur looked up at his friend and smiled. They got up and continued. At the end of the day, Arthur was tired. He washed his face and looked up, there was Merlin the Wizard, sitting there and smiling. They talked and Arthur told Merlin about all that he was learning. He then asked Merlin,  
*“Merlin, will you stay with us for a few days?”* Merlin answered,  
**“In the struggle between the stream and the rock, the stream always wins. Not through strength but through persistence”.**

Arthur began to restate his question but Merlin finished,  
**“No more questions Arthur, think on what I have told you”.**  
With that, Merlin got up and walked into the woods. Arthur thought about what Merlin said and then knew he must persevere. He nodded as if Merlin was right in front of him. Arthur decided that he must not give up, no matter how hard it seemed or how tired he felt, he would push on and he would succeed!

The months came and went and Arthur learned much. Javan was a good teacher and mentor. These months had actually been four years. Arthur was now 17 and becoming a young man. Time was running out, more and more of the people were suffering, and wars continued to spread across the land. It was time for them to leave, to gather other men, to fight. Arthur would now have to take all that he had learned and would now have to fight or die. They would travel to Arvad in the morning. It would be their last night of peace. In the morning, they awoke to smell of a fire and rabbits cooking on stakes. Arthur and Javan walked out and there, sitting by the fire was Merlin.

**“A good meal is a good start for the journey ahead of you. Sit and enjoy for we must talk as we travel”** Merlin said softly. The three sat and enjoyed the meal. They knew a long journey was now in front of them and they were ready to go.

Then Merlin and Arthur rode side by side and talked as Javan led the way. Merlin told Arthur how pleased he was of Arthur. His training went well and Arthur was growing in strength and in knowledge. Arthur asked Merlin, *“Can you see the future, do you know what is ahead for us?”* Merlin responded...

**“This is the beginning of a new day.  
You have been given this day to use as you wish.  
You can waste it or use it for good.  
What you do today is important because you are exchanging  
a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be  
gone. In its place is something you leave behind.  
Let it be something of good”.**

Arthur looked at Merlin, he thought for a few minutes and did not say a word. He then galloped his horse to catch up to Javan. Merlin smiled and knew that Arthur was becoming a man.

Elsewhere in the land, the Kings had been at peace but now over the last few years, they had lost trust in each other. Where good times had once blossomed, hardships were now spreading across the land. King **Remlican** was first hit by the famine. He called his Wizard **Natas** to consult him. "My people are now starving, what can I do to bring back the harvest?" Natas calmed the King down and told him that healing the land required a sacrifice. All that the King had to do was to allow Natas to pursue the sacrifice unchallenged and that King Remlican would soon be cheered by the thanks of his people.

Natas sent out word for the elf Faric to help King Remlican. The word spread and soon Faric arrived at Natas' chamber to ask what he could do to help the good king. Natas lied to Faric and told him how one of his apprentices, **Rennis**, had captured the fairy Hemsis and was torturing her to make the land well again. "No!" Faric screamed in anger and drew his sword, "Where are they? I will save her!" Natas tried to calm Faric and told him how powerful Rennis had become. He convinced Faric that it would take them both to free her and that he had a plan.



He recommended that Faric give him his sword so he could battle and distract Rennis while Faric freed Hemsis from her chains. Faric agreed and they broke into Rennis' chamber. While Natas took the sword and began to attack Rennis, Faric ran to the chamber where he heard Hemsis' screams. When he reached the door, her screams stopped and they were replaced by a sinister laugh. He spun around quickly to see Natas in front of him, with his own sword now turned against him. And then, before he could say a word, Natas plunged the sword forward, knowing the evil he was doing.

Faric did not cry out, but his eyes conveyed his shock. He had been deceived and that mistake cost him his life. As Faric fell to the ground, Natas pulled back the sword and said... "It has started". He then turned to leave and with a smile on his face, he told Rennis "Now to set the next trap". Natas then went to see King Remlican and with Faric's sword, he knew his plan would not fail. In the King's chamber, Natas showed the King the sword of Faric the elf. "That is one of the swords of the eternal, how did you get it?" the King asked. "It is the blue sword of Faric the elf, who was too trusting. The elves believe God is on their side but He has passed away so long ago. It is I, Natas who yields the sword and when I am done, all will bow down to me, starting with you" Natas said as he slowly pointed the sword at the King. The King stood with the look of anger etched on his face. Natas continued, "You have two choices... To die here and now or to live and be one of my warlords" and before the King could say a word, Natas swung the blade quickly by Remlican's head. There was no pain but Remlican felt the blood dripping down the side of his neck and there on the floor was a part of his left ear. And in pain he asked "What shall I do?"

Natas' plan had started. The screams of horror were heard by the people in the village outside of the castle and the worries of the people filtered through the woods until they came to the attention of Hemsis the fairy who was helping a poor family. She stopped and listened to one of the poor women from the village. Hemsis knew what was needed. She paused and raised her hand into the air. A Dove flew to her and she whispered for the Dove to seek out Olee and to have her come and help. The Dove flew off and Hemsis went to the castle of King Remlican. At the gate she asked to be taken to the King and she was escorted to his chamber. "There is pain and suffering here, what are you doing?" Hemsis asked. The King fell to his knees in front of Hemsis and cried out, "It is my Wizard Natas, and he has captured Faric the elf and is torturing him in order to bring wellness to the land and to my people. I have lost control of him and need your help". Hemsis knew she could not wait for Olee and demanded that the King take her to Natas' chamber.

Hemsis heard the screaming and with the wave of her arm, the door opened. There was Natas and behind another bolted door, she heard the screams continue.

“In the name of the most High, stop this torture immediately!” She demanded. Natas’ reply surprised her, “I would if I had too, but you see, I have Faric’s sword and I’m about to end his life. Maybe you have something that could cause me to change my mind”. “What would it take to free him?” Hemsis replied cautiously. “Only your beautiful red hair” said Natas as he gently tossed Faric’s blue sword back and forth between his hands. Natas raised his finger and the screams ended. “If I do so, you swear your life to the most High if you do not release him to me?” Hemsis asked. Natas agreed and walked to her, grabbing a scissors from the table as he came to her.

She stood defiantly as he cut off her long red hair. When Natas finished cutting off Hemsis’ hair, he called out, “Release him”. Hemsis looked on in horror as the doors opened up and two of his warriors dragged the body of Faric out to her and dropped him at her feet. “You promised” she yelled out. Natas’ reply was soft and drawn out... “I only promised to release him, I did not promise that he would be alive” and with that, knowing that without her hair, she was mortal... he took the sword and ended her life. There on the floor laid the bodies of Faric and Hemsis yet the smile on Natas’ face was not mistakable. He was pleased that his plan was going just as he wanted it to go.

## Chapter Three - Darkness Grows . . .

The dove had arrived and passed on the message from Hemsis to Olee. Something was wrong, there was a pain and evil presence that she had not felt before. She called to the spirit Omelia and they discussed what Olee was feeling. Omelia confirmed there was a hatred coming from King Remlican’s castle that was making it hard to sense what was truly happening. Omelia cautioned Olee to get

assistance from the elves before she did anything. She would then speak with the other spirits to determine what actions should be taken to turn back the hate that they were sensing.

Amicus the elf was the first to respond to Olee's call. He was helping King Bladick fight off the army of Remlican the warlord who had attacked. His fellow elves Idie, Tkarish and Honem were each in other separate battles farther away. Something was wrong, armies where forming and Kingdom versus Kingdom were now fighting. Only one thing worried Amicus, he could not sense Faric. For some reason, he to was now drawn to Remlican's castle. He met the fairy Olee outside the castle. There they shared their feelings they had sensed and planned their next steps.

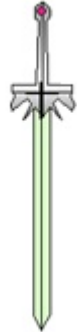
Little did the fairies and the elves know what Natas was doing. He first took his Scepter and melted it with the blue sword of Faric's in a large pot over a huge fire. As the steel bubbled in the pot, he added the red hair he had cut off of the fairy Hemsis. From these he created a new sword that was red in color but it was more powerful then the swords of the elves because it now contain the power of Faric the elf, the power of Hemsis the fairy and his evil radiating throughout it.

When they entered the castle, Natas was waiting for them. Amicus and Natas immediately began to fight each other with their swords while Olee searched the castle. Their sword battle was fierce, but it seemed as Amicus tired, Natas grew in strength. The clashing of the swords echoed throughout the castle as the battle wore on. Then there was a scream that surprised Amicus. He stopped and turned to the sound of the scream. It was Olee, she had just found the bodies of Faric and Hemsis. She fainted in shock and sadly for Amicus, his pause of his attention to Natas was now fatal. When Amicus turned, Natas swung and knocked his sword from his hand. Amicus was now exhausted and Natas now stood between him and his sword. The anger in Natas' eyes made them look as if they were on fire. Amicus dove to reach his sword but it was too late.



Natas lunged at Amicus and mortally wounded him. Amicus, fell back against the wall. As his life force was leaving him . . . Natas then picked up Amicus' sword and he walked away quickly toward the fire pit.

Olee awoke and found herself in chains. Her long brown hair was cut off and she was now a prisoner. Natas then took the green sword of Amicus, the brown hair of Olee, his red sword and melted them all together into a new larger and even more powerful sword. It was so black in color that in its blackness, it seemed to pull light into it. And yes, Natas now had the power of four eternal and he wanted even more.



At that same time, the men of Castle Arvad were in battle with the Warlord Remlican and his warriors. Javan and Arthur had joined forces with the other men defending the castle. They fought valiantly and for the first time, they turned back the army of Remlican. The men saw how effectively Javan used his sword and they were surprised that Arthur was talented as well. Javan would lead them, he would teach them and they would take the battle to the warlords. As for Arthur, this battle taught him a another lesson on life and that being; we don't fight just to fight, we fight to defeat the wrong that exists.



After the battle, Arthur was walking around, checking the wounded and helping where he could. He came across a small boy, sitting on the ground, next to his mother. The boy was silent, holding his

mother's hand as she lay on the ground. Arthur knew what had happened, the woman was one of the many that had joined their group, to help where she could but unfortunately, she was too close to the battle. Her mistake cost her son the loss of his mother's life.

That little boy looked up at Arthur, a tear rolled down his cheek.

Arthur asked the boy his name. "Cagen" the boy answered. "How old are you Cagen?" Arthur asked him. The boy's response put a smile on Arthur's face for the boy tried to hold up and show three fingers but needed his other hand to hold his fingers in place. "Come with me Cagen, your mother has died but I can see she left us a brave young man to help us in the years to come. I need someone like you. You can help us with the other boys and girls, to retrieve arrows from the field. Can you help us with that?" he asked as he bent down to pick up the boy who nodded positively and put his arms around Arthur's neck. Arthur then saw the women working their way toward him. As he walked with Cagen, he knew that these battles must end soon. Too many were dying, children were losing their parents and the sadness of these losses could only be understood by those who lost a loved one. Arthur was too young at the time and never saw the death of his mother or his father. He knew he did not want the children to see what Cagen saw... he would have to find a way to end these battles. He asked the women to take care of Cagen, to feed him and to love him for he knew that Cagen's mother would be watching them from heaven.

Sadly, the battles continued and the years passed. At Castle Gebal, Javan and Arthur joined their men with the men lead by **Tubal** and **Dedan**. They too lost their fathers, the Kings of their lands to the evil warlords. As they fought, they gathered the men of their lands, trained them and fought back against the warlords and their evil armies. Their small groups of fighters were now experienced warriors. All had seen death and had delivered it but unfortunately, the worst was yet ahead. They also knew they must stay together if they were to totally defeat the warlords. The four of them were an interesting sight. Javan was the oldest at 37 years of age.

Tubal was 31, Dedan was 28 and Arthur was the youngest being only 20. They brought their men together and pursued the warlords across the lands. The battles at times were small, but some were large and yes, regardless of the size of the battles, all were very bad.

They had four groups. Javan lead the 400 plus warriors who had the difficult task of the man to man combat. He taught them how to be swordsmen and fierce warriors. Tubal lead the archers. He was taller then Arthur yet not quite as tall as Javan. And, where Javan had straight blond hair, Tubal had curly blond hair. Javan was seen as the heroic one, always first to go into battle, Tubal was more the thinker, always looking for opportunities to turn every advantage in battle his way. Tubal's 150 or so archers had the task of pinning down the enemy, giving Javan and his warriors the time they needed to attack or to escape.



**Castle Gebal**

Arthur led the horseman. They attacked with speed and with valor. His 100 plus men were the most talented swordsmen who could ride and fight. Their attacks forced the enemy to move or to retreat into the paths of Javan's warriors or into the arrows sent forth from Tubal's archers. The last group was the smallest and they were lead by Dedan. He was the shortest of the 4 leaders but probably the boldest. He was not afraid of anything and his black hair was kept long to support his specialty. Dedan, his 22 men and 10 women were the

spies. They would always disguise themselves as needed for they had the most dangerous tasks. Their task was to slip in and out of the camps of the warlords, of the captured towns and castles, and to do what ever was needed.

And for all of them, the battles continued. Most were successful for Arthur, his men and their friends but tragically, in every battle, men and women were dying or injured as they fought against evil. Arthur was tired and sad over all those that died. He walked over and sat back against a tree. He closed his eyes and wondered . . .  
'Would the fighting ever stop?'

Then the words '*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth*' came to his mind. Arthur thought of where did he hear those words from? He knew that Atticus his old friend had taught him those words years ago. Then he remembered, those were from the Bible, in fact **Colossians 3:3**. Little he did he know at that time but the spirits had been watching over and helping them when they could. It was the spirit Vell who whispered those words to Arthur. She smiled when he remembered and then she went to help the others once she saw that renewed energy return to him.

Then, with each battle, the four men found their friendship growing. The people of the land, did what they could to help against the warlords. What was often overlooked was the help the women and the children provided. The women treated the injured and found ways to feed the people as the moved from battle to battle. The children collected arrows and swords after the battles to replenish their warrior's supplies. One battle ended with Arthur being wounded by an arrow. It was stuck in his right thigh. During the battle, he snapped off the shaft of the arrow and continued fighting, leading his men to victory.

When the battle ended, he rode over to Tubal. "*Your archers are losing track of who the enemy is*" Arthur teased his friend. "Adversity does not build character, it reveals it!" Tubal yelled back and then

continued, “And arrow wounds are the adversity that comes our way now and then, but mainly, they provide an opportunity to gain a little attention from the women!” Tubal then looked and saw the women, he shouted... “Women, where are you? I have a dying warrior here!”

Tubal seemed to enjoy teasing his friend as he looked for help for Arthur. Arthur sat on the ground and waited. His wound was painful but just another in the many that he had endured over the years.

It was at that time that an old woman and a young woman came toward them. “Ah, it is old Grebekka. I think she is as old as the hills but she does know her potions” Tubal chuckled, “and my little sister **Belle** is with her” and he continued “Is Grebekka teaching you to be a witch or what?” Belle looked at her brother and slapped his arm. “Be gone and let us help him”. Tubal walked off to join the others and with a laugh in his voice he departed... “Be careful my young friend, the witches are with ye and they may desire to cut out your heart and leave the arrow instead”.

## Chapter Four - Unite or Die . . .

Arthur sat there, not saying a word as the women attended his wound. He watched and felt sick yet excited at the same time. For the arrow wound hurt but seeing Belle again always made him feel good... he just could never find a way to talk to her. When they took the knife and dug into his wound to free the arrow head, he passed out from the pain. But while he slept, he was safe in their care.

Little did Arthur know but the spirit Enthra had come and was watching over him and now she whispered in his ear “wake up Arthur, wake uuuupppp”. When he awoke, there he laid with his leg bandaged and his head on the lap of Belle. She had been sitting there with a damp cloth, wiping the dirt and sweat from Arthur’s face.

He sat up quickly and winced in pain as he tried to stand up. Arthur tried to look strong but he felt his expression gave him away.

She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen and normally he had no trouble with words with his friends but now, he struggled just to say thank you to her.

She seemed to sense what he wanted to say. "You're welcome... that wound should heal within a couple of days. Please make sure you change the bandage each day and clean the wound daily" she stated as she looked toward him. Arthur then asked "*How come I've not seen you for weeks?*" She replied, "You men are too busy with the fighting to notice the women and the children. We are here, always near by, and helping when we can". Arthur watched as she slowly walked closer. She stopped, looked down and stood there a few feet away. "*Belle, tell me, what are you thinking?*" Arthur asked and she replied, "While you were sleeping and even now, I was just thinking that our lives are what our thoughts make of it. That I do the best I can, where I can, with what I have. I've been watching you and see that you are so brave. I do worry about you and the others. I just hope that some day, you may think of me beyond the edges of the battlefield, to a time of happiness and of the future", and with that said, she turned and went off to join the other women.

He smiled and watched her go out of sight. What he thought was true, he loved Belle. He was not afraid of battle but he was afraid to show Belle his true feelings. One thing Arthur was sure of, the day would come soon that he would ask her to be his own but first peace would have to be obtained. Then the spirit Enthra smiled and departed. She had been watching them and she was pleased.

Arthur's thoughts were broken by the shouts of the spies. They had heard that the warlords were joining forces and were moving toward Castle Evas and already had advance men attacking the castle. It was a 3 days journey away, they need a plan and they needed to move immediately. He no more then turned to look for his 3 friends when Merlin walked toward Arthur and said "**Arthur, I've been watching you and I am proud**". Arthur was surprised to see Merlin but then remembered, it always seemed like Merlin showed up

when he least expected. Arthur replied, *“Merlin my friend, it has been months, I’ve missed you!”* He gave Merlin a bear hug and then they went and looked for Tubal, Javan and Dedan. As they walked and talked, Arthur told his friend of his feelings for Belle.

Merlin smiled but did not respond. Arthur continued but his words now shifted about concern, the need to move them men to Castle Evas. Merlin stopped, looked at Arthur and said **”Arthur remember, courage does not always roar. Sometimes, it is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying... I will try again tomorrow”**.

Arthur looked down and thought, surprised at Merlin’s words. When he looked up, Merlin was gone. Arthur found himself smiling. He knew that when Merlin said something and disappeared, the words would guide Arthur in the days to come.

Arthur, Javan, Tubal, and Dedan had become a united fighting force, they were winning battles against the warlords and the people were helping them and joining them as they moved from battle to battle. Arthur thought back over the last few years. There were so many battles as the warlords attacked all the villages in the area. The warlords had taken control where they could or left the villages burning. Over those years, the people found their only haven was in the woods of Acirema, for there they used the hills, the trees, and the streams to their advantage.

Those earlier years had gone by so quickly. Arthur now knew that his men on their horses were feared by the warlords because of their fierce attacks and speed which they would come, attack and leave before the warlords could react.

Javan and his army had become known as mighty swordsmen. Tubal and his archers gave the armies time and protection as battles started; their ability to slow the advancing warlords and their evil warriors gave the people time to mount a defense or launch a surprise attack of their own. Dedan and his men and women spies waged their war in the dark of night, under the illusion of deception.

For they were the spies that worked in the midst of the enemy,  
to gain them an advantage; not only before,  
but also as the battle evolved.



Arthur's thoughts of the past were like a dream being replayed in his head. He thought maybe he had fallen asleep and was dreaming for the last thing on his mind were the words... *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'*. As he shook his head, he found his thoughts racing... *'Where did he know those words from?'* "Arthur, shame on you, don't you remember that Atticus had told you these words and they are from **Philippians 4:13?**" the spirit Lamsis, his friend said. Arthur smiled and replied... "Thank you Lamsis and yes I remember now but you know me, I just need a little prodding now and then".

Over the last two years Arthur had come to know the spirits. They had visited him and his friends often. He enjoyed their visits for they gave him a feeling of comfort and confidence. Unfortunately, the challenges and realities of his world would also come bursting back in. This time, Lamsis quickly left as well for her fellow spirits needed her. Evil was now so strong, only a few in the world truly knew. For Arthur, his friends needed him. They were all being drawn to the evil and little did they know at this time of the perils before them.



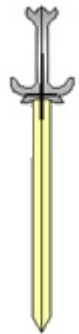
Then, Dedan's spies had found out about the attack being planned against Castle Evas. He called out for Javan, Arthur and Tubal so they could make plans to journey to Castle Evas, to join forces with the other fighters against the warlords, to end the war.

The sooner the better because this fighting could not continue. The people were suffering and it was time to do what ever it took to defeat Natas and his warlords. The words Dedan learned from his father, he passed on to his friends "We must always remember...

Wisdom knows what path to take next, integrity is taking it... We must take our men to Castle Evas and stop the warlords".

No additional words were needed between the four friends. They knew what they must do and went to get their forces prepared for the journey. Little did they know that others were planning. The partnerships, the sacrifices, and the commitments they needed were coming together. Getting their plans together was the most difficult challenge because they could not let Natas and the warlords know their plans. For the beginning of the end was near.

## Chapter Five – The Plan . . .



The spirits Enthra, Lamsis, Omilia and Vell immediately knew that Natas' hatred was now more powerful than the powers held by the fairies Eve and Panomth and by the elves Honem, Tkarish and Idie. They knew the people were fighting the warlords and their armies but that was going poorly and unfortunately, Natas was growing stronger. There only chance to rid the world of this evil would be an alliance between them that would require a sacrifice to save all of them.



They all came together and discussed what had happened and what needed to be done. They agreed that a new sword, more powerful than the Black sword of Natas, must be created. The sacrifice would be great, first they would melt down the Gold sword of Idie, with the Silver sword or Honem, with the Orange

sword of Tkarish, and then they would take the blond hair of Panomth the fairy and the black hair of the fairy Eve. Yes . . . these sacrifices would mean the loss of their lives but they all agreed, it was the only way. The spirits understood the sacrifices of their friends. It would be up to them to help the people, to give them the confidence that their love could take on and defeat evil. The elves and the fairy's had to make the new sword, to protect it and to get it to the chosen one. For the chosen one would have to lead the people in the fight against Natas and the new sword would require all of the sacrifices to be made.



Somehow, they would find a way to get the sword to the chosen one. But before they cast the sword, the fairies knelt in prayer and the elves stood in silence and listened. The fairies had been teaching this prayer to the people that they have helped, now they needed it for themselves for fear was a power that grew if not addressed.

***“Turn O Lord my fears around.  
Let them become a positive force for good in my life until I  
Fear not that I should fail,  
but fear that I may never dare to discover my potential.  
Fear not that I may be hurt,  
but fear that I may never experience life's pains.  
Fear not that I might love and loose,  
but fear that I might never love at all.  
Fear not that people may laugh at my mistakes,  
but fear that God will say to me... 'Oh you of little faith.'  
Fear not that I might fail if I try again,  
but fear that I might miss my chance for happiness  
if I fail to give hope another opportunity.”***

They all knew that they needed hope. Not for themselves but for the people of the land. The new sword was being made. The elves Idie, Honem, Tkarish, along with the fairies Eve and Panomth, freely gave of their immortality to create the new sword. The spirits Vell, Enthra, Laraylic and Omilia had also departed and were busy whispering words of love, encouragement and desire into the free people.

For the men, women and children of the Kingdom of Evas, they could not run and hide. It was time to prepare for war and they went to the castle of King Evas to prepare.

For the Kingdoms of Remlican, Bladick and Menic had all fallen under the influence of Wizard Natas and now were under the Warlords Remlican, Bladick and Menic. The other kings that resisted were killed, their castles destroyed and their people killed or taken prisoner. For those going to the great battle, many died due to the raids of the warlords but the people were brave and fought valiantly on their journey to Castle Evas, their last hope.

The three elves knew what had to be done. While the new sword was being prepared, the people needed time and help. They agreed that Tkarish and Idie would go and fight with the people against the Warlords and their armies. Honem would tend to the sword and deliver it to the chosen one. The fairies Eve and Panomth would join the women and would help the men in any way that they could. Before they left, they knelled together in prayer. Tkarish started their prayer, *“Please Lord, as you have blessed us. Give us the strength to help those that we can and bless the people who are fighting evil. Instill in them this prayer of Faith”*. All three elves then said together...

***“Give them the power to decide, the courage to dare,  
the energy to do, the willpower to be determined,  
the grace to be dedicated and the patience to be diligent.  
For in these, their Faith shall grow and be strong.”***

Tkarish and Idie departed to join the army that would fight to defend Castle Evas. Eve and Panomth gathered food and bandages and joined the women. They all knew that they must not only fight and help the people any way they could, but they must get the people to come together to fight as a single army against the warlords, against the evil Natas. The battle was starting and Natas was near.

They needed time for the sword to be prepared . . .  
and Natas must not be able to use it.

While Arthur traveled with other men from the area to Castle Evas, the battle for the castle had already begun. Natas and the warlords were laying siege while the people fought them to keep them out while the new sword was being made. The spirits Vell, Enthra, Lamsis, and Omilia knew they must work to encourage the people and had departed to spread the word. While that was happening, the new sword was made at the top of the castle's tower while the battle raged below. Honem looked at the new sword and knew that it was special. It gleamed and it looked like it by itself could radiate light. It could be the sword of righteousness he thought. Honem knelled and prayed... *"Dear God in heaven, we have tried to live as you had intended but we did not keep our guard and were tricked by Natas. We give our lives in pledge to your will, that no one shall wield this sword unless they are chosen by you"*. He then knew what he must do. He grabbed the sword and threw it into the air. As it flew over the side of the tower, Honem felt the pain of death throughout his entire body. It was like the sword had pulled the last portions of power and life from him to make the sword into its final form.

It landed upon a granite stone and penetrated it with an explosion never seen before. Those at the castle did not know what happened.

The explosion was a loud, sudden and ending moment. It was as if God had slammed His fist down on the earth, there at that spot. All in the battle died immediately.

No one knowing what had just happened and the smell of death was all that remained.



Castle Evas (after the battle)

Natas and Rennis stood and looked at the destroyed castle. Natas' army and all the others were dead. All that remained was a sword stuck half way in the granite stone. It seem to glow as he reached for it. He grabbed it and tried to pull it out. It did not move. Natas did not say a word but just turned and walked away with his black sword in hand. This battle was over but one more remained and he knew he would be victorious. He and Rennis departed to gather his remaining armies.



## Chapter Six - The Surprise . . .

Javan, Tubal, Dedan, Arthur and their army arrived at Castle Evas the next day. They came expecting a battle and found a strangely silent but totally destroyed castle. Smoke was still hanging in the air from the fires that had died out. They had split up, looking for wounded, any friends but found only the remains of those who must have died in the battle. As they were walking around the ruins, some men from Javan's warriors had found the sword sticking in the granite. They all tried to pull it free but could not. They were amazed by the destruction all around yet the sword looked like it was new. How it got stuck in the stone, they did not know.

They sent for Javan and when he arrived, they explained what they found. Arthur, Dedan and Tubal then met with Javan and his men. They all looked at the sword and then guessed where it could have come from and how it could have been thrust into the stone. As they talked, the various men tried to pull the sword out but could not. Javan had already tried and now Dedan and Tubal had tried as well. No one could pull the sword from the stone and now they yelled for Arthur to try. At first he said no but then Dedan grabbed him by the arm and pulled his friend toward the stone. *“Try Arthur, we all have and who knows...*



*we must be optimistic. My father told me that people who attempt the difficult often attain the impossible... you have always chosen the hard way, try and pull the sword from the sword”* Dedan told his friend as they approached the sword. Arthur smiled and reluctantly stepped up to the sword. He stopped and looked around at all his friends and fellow warriors as they cheered and yelled “Arthur! Arthur!”

Arthur’s smile stopped when his eyes caught sight of his old friend Merlin, who stood across the way watching. “*Merlin!*” He yelled and ran over to him, “*Merlin, the sword, do you know anything about it or what happened here?*” he asked his friend. “**Arthur, something important has happened here, I sensed this and came immediately. The sword is waiting**” Merlin said, then paused, looked down and then continued as he move the dirt slightly with his foot. “**My dear friend, always remember. There are always two ways of meeting difficulties. You alter the difficulties or you alter yourself to meet them. Think at all times and remember that there are many ways to achieve success.**”

As usual, Merlin’s words challenged Arthur to think beyond the moment, to bigger possibilities. He turned and walked to the sword and looked at it closely. It appeared as if it was stuck half way into the granite. He remembered watching the others struggle with great stress in their attempt to remove the sword from the grasp of the granite. He reached down with just his right hand and with a smooth and gentle pull, the sword rose slowly, almost majestically from the stone until its full length was displayed as Arthur raised it in front of all to see. Then displayed for all to see was Arthur's smile, not cocky but honored.

“Impossible!” Javan exclaimed as he walked over to his friend. Dedan and Tubal just stood there in disbelief. Arthur saw the disbelief in his friend’s eyes and the surprised look held by the others. He took the sword and with a gentle push, returned it to where it was and stepped back away from it. Javan, Dedan, Tubal and many of the others walked up to the sword and with the same results, whether

with a soft pull or with all their might, they could not move the sword. When they had finished trying, Arthur stepped up to the sword again and as if it desired to be in his hand, he pulled it easily from the stone and raised it above his head while cheers arose from all those there.

This was no accident and Arthur turned to look at his friend Merlin who then smiled back and walked over to Arthur as they with Dedan, Javan and Tubal then walked to a quiet place to talk. The men talked about what they must do next. They knew this sword was special but they wondered how and why it came to this place. While they talked, the reports came in from the spies that Natas was spotted heading north with a small group of his men. While Tubal, Dedan, Javan and Arthur discussed their plans, Merlin sat and listened. It was agreed that they had two choices. One, to head south, back to the forest area of Acirema, to rest their men and to regain the strength of their army or to head north and to track down Natas while he was vulnerable.

Merlin, stood and walked to the center of the men. His words were brief but his message was clear **“The highest courage is to dare to be yourself in the face of adversity. Choosing right over wrong, truth over popularity... these are the choices that measure your life. Travel the path of integrity without looking back, for there is never a wrong time to do the right thing”**. When they heard those words, each remembered what Dedan had told them about his father's words on integrity. They each nodded and knew, they would go north to find and to fight Natas and his army.

As they all went off to sleep for the night, to prepare for the journey, Merlin talked privately with Arthur. He told them of the fairy's Eve, Panomth, Hemsis and Olee and their sacrifice along with the elves Amicus, Idie, Faric, Honem and Tkarish, of their swords, their service, their sacrifices. Arthur listened quietly as Merlin explained to him the importance of the sword he now had in his hand. Arthur looked at the sword with respect, with dedication in his heart and a tear in his eye; and he named it ' **Excalibur** '.

And yes as it was agreed, they had to move as fast as they could to track down Natas and his evil army. Javan, Tubal, Dedan and Arthur met and quickly agreed on their plan. Dedan under his Blue banner and his spies were first to go in search of Natas and the other warlords. Yes, something was happening in the north and if anyone could find out, it would be Dedan and his spies. Arthur under his Green banner and his horseman would go west through Cumpria and then north along the coast. Javan under his White banner and his warriors would spread out and go north through the central lands. Tubal under his Red banner and his archers would go east and then north along the sea. The hunt was on and little did all of them know of the sadness that would affect them all.

It was only the second day after Dedan and his spies had left what was left of Castle Evas. He and his spies were spread out looking for the evil Wizard Natas, his warlords and armies. It was at Barnard Castle where they stopped for food and a short rest. Unfortunately, Natas and his men were waiting for them. Dedan and two of his men were captured. Dedan was chained, gagged and beaten until he passed out. The two spies were brought in front of Natas and he coldly talked to them and said. "You have a choice, to take word to your friends where to meet me or to die", and before either could reply, he took his black sword and with a quick swing, he sliced a huge open cut across the chest of the taller spy.

The wounded spy fell to the floor, clutching his chest and without saying a word, died in horrible pain that was inflicted upon him. Natas then stood in front of the remaining spy and said "Now that I have your attention, I'll tell you this only once. Return and tell the others that I will meet them at Urquhart Castle. They should choose one to meet me in battle. If I loose, then your friend Dedan will be freed and all of my armies will surrender to your champion. If I win, I will kill Dedan and we will fight the war of wars until only one is left standing. Go now or I shall end your life now!"



When the spy found Javan and his warriors, they were in the valley of Beth-Togarmah, also known as the Valley of Death. It was called that because so many men had died there years before when King Bladick was captured there and tortured. It was at this time that Javan's warriors found out that King Bladick was Javan's father.

Javan was the Prince of Beth-Togarmah but due to the deaths and the destruction in that valley so many years ago, there was now no kingdom for Javan to rule. He was walking through the ruins of his father's castle when the spy found him and told him of Dedan's capture. Javan called together two riders, one to go west to find Arthur and the other to go east to find Tubal. He told them he and his warriors would advance to Urquhart Castle and meet with them when they arrived. The riders departed and Javan led his warriors to the edge of Loch Ness. From there they could see the stretch of land that went out slightly into the Loch and there stood Urquhart Castle. The waiting for Javan was too much, he knew that Tubal, Arthur and their men would arrive in a day or two but he was the stronger fighter and he knew that he must face Natas. At dusk, he alone went to the castle gate and was met by Natas' apprentice Rennis. "Go away fool, you are not the chosen one!" Rennis yelled at Javan. As he turned to walk away, Javan raised his sword, yelled and charged Rennis. They battled and Javan's anger with Natas allowed him to overpower and kill Rennis. Javan then walked into the courtyard of the castle and in his anger he yelled for Natas to come out.

The smile on Natas reflected his confidence and could not be missed by anyone who saw him walk into the courtyard with his sword. He knew this was not the chosen one and that Javan's death would help his plans even more. As the moon reached up to it's highest point in the sky, their battle started. Javan and Natas battled and the clash of their swords could be heard throughout the castle. Their fight was fierce but short. Javan was no match for Natas. The speed of Natas and his swordsmanship easily outmatched Javan and his strength. For every powerful swing of Javan, it appeared that Natas could block and swing again . . .



cutting into Javan with each swing. The battle ended when Javan's last cry of pain echoed across the castle. As he fell to the ground, the warlords and army of Natas rode out from the castle and attacked Javan's warriors.

The battle was long and bloody. As Tubal and his archers came up from the east, Arthur and his horseman came up from the west. Each group saw the battle before them. Tubal's archers quickly aimed and released a shower of arrows on the bloody battlefield. It was too little, too late. Javan's warriors had been killed by Natas' army and the arrows sent forth only seemed to kill a few of those on the battlefield who had not yet retreated into Urquhart Castle. Arthur and his horseman rode quickly down into the battle field to see who they could help but all were dead. When Arthur stopped and looked all around, hundreds of dead men lay all over the battlefield.

Arthur looked and saw two figures standing on top of the hill near by. He rode his horse toward them with his sword in hand. There on top of the hill were not two standing men but his two dead friends.

Dedan and Javan had been killed and were tied to stakes.

Around their necks were the ragged remnants of their banners. Arthur dismounted from his horse and walked up to his two friends. He first removed Javan's white banner remnant and gave his friend a hug. He next removed Dedan's blue banner remnant and hugged him as well. Arthur then turned to look at that castle and two tears trickled slowly down his cheek. He was not afraid but he was sad over the loss of his two friends. He also knew that tomorrow would bring more bloodshed and that there must be a way to end this.

With sadness he cut his two dead friends down.

As Arthur was walking his horse back to the remaining forces, the bodies of Javan and Dedan had been laid across the saddle of his horse, to be buried in honor with the rest of the dead. As he was returning, Tubal came up to Arthur and told him of what they found. All of Javan's warriors were dead and the only remaining fighters were Arthur's horseman and Tubal's archers. And yes . . .

everything looked against them but Arthur had a feeling inside, what it was he was not sure but he did know that the battle was not over.

## Chapter Seven - Final Tribute . . .

It was the dawn of the morning and Arthur gathered the people to prepare them for the battle. One thing had changed that evening, it was more than those that were with them. Hundreds of men and women and children had been coming from all around. Arthur knew the people were frightened but dedicated to the battle that had to be fought. Although it was not planned, there was now an army. A thousand strong with abilities yet unknown, committed to unite and to fight Natas and his army. Arthur knew he had to talk to them, his words are remembered to this day. *“Friends, today we go into battle. Not for territory but for our survival. I can not give you good reasons to fight today but I can tell you why we must make a decision today. First, we must thank the fairies Hemsis, Olee, Panomth and Eve... They gave their lives and taught us the meaning of **HOPE**.*

***For we can not change yesterday.  
We can only make the most of each day,  
the most of the abilities we have and we can look with Hope  
toward each new tomorrow.***

*We next must thank the elves  
Faric, Amicus, Idie, Tkarish and Honem. They fought with us and  
gave their lives so that we may live. From them, we have learned  
**FAITH.***

***For when we believe in God, Faith is alive.  
We gain strength and confidence which enables us to do that  
which we think we can not do.***

*I have hope that we will see tomorrow and I have faith that God will deliver us. I ask you to fight the good fight so that generations from now, our heirs will be proud of our sacrifices today. I also know that some of us may not survive the battle but we should not be afraid of the fight ahead".* Arthur raised his sword above his head, showing it to all and continued, *"I shall lead us on the charge and Excalibur will cut through the enemy before they know they are doomed".* He then paused and walked back and forth, slowly raising his voice as he said *"We will be brave, we will be proud, we will have faith . . .*  
***WE WILL BE VICTORIOUS!"***

As Arthur stepped aside, it was now Tubal's turn to explain their plans for battle. "Natas and his men will be deployed in front of the castle and will be ready for us. Arthur will watch for me to wave my red banner, he will then drop his green banner and will lead the horseman on their charge of the line. It will be two by two. As they start, we will have four sets of archers. I will call out the volleys and we will lay down a line of arrows to split their line and to lead Arthur and his men through. As they pass through, they will separate to the left and to the right and battle back upon them from the rear. Then as they turn to fight the riders, we will charge and close in on them. Make every arrow count and every swing of your sword a success."

Tubal and Arthur gave each other a brief hug and separated. They felt as brothers, each prepared to do what they knew had to be done. The sunrise was beginning when Arthur and his riders spread out to his left and right, opposite Natas' army in front of the castle. Arthur was in the center and Tubal was at the right end of the line of his men who lined up behind Arthur's riders. Arthur looked first at the castle, then to the sky and then to the ground. As he looked down, he closed his eyes and thought of Belle and her words that gave him comfort. It was as if he could hear her whisper then in his ears one more time *'I expect to pass through this world only once. Any good I can do, I try to do now, for I shall not pass this way again'.* He then thanked God for His love and guidance and looked at Tubal. He and his men were ready and Tubal waved his red banner. Arthur took his green

banner, waved it back and forth and threw it toward the Urquhart Castle. As it sailed in the air, Arthur began their charge forward.

Tubal swung his banner and the first volley of arrows shot over Arthur and his charge as they began to come together.

Tubal swung his banner again and the second volley of arrows were on their way. As Arthur and his riders picked up speed and came together to start their two by two charge... Tubal swung his banner a third time to unleash the next volley of arrows. Natas' army was caught off guard, where they thought the arrows would come against them all, they landed in the middle of their ranks. As the second and third volleys of arrows fell, a huge hole in their lines was opening up. As they shifted their men toward the middle to fill in the hole in their line, the fourth volley fell on top of them as the lead riders were almost upon them.

The battle had begun and more was happening than Arthur knew. Merlin was there and he had gotten inside the castle. He knew that Natas' power was immense and he would stop him or would die trying. For the warriors and all the people there did not know but this was a day that either good or evil would triumph. Natas' army tried to move into the center to cut off the charge but the riders were too fast and too fierce with their swords, they were suffering terrible losses as the riders split their lines. Before they could regroup, they found themselves split and surrounded. For the riders had split behind them and were now attacking them from the rear. As they fought them, arrows then rained in on them from behind by the archers who advanced upon them.

The battle was bloody and hard fought by all as it continued to unfold. As Arthur lead the battle, he became wounded when his horse was speared and he fell to the ground. Excalibur had cut his left arm slightly during the fall. He was now on the ground, fighting in the thick of the battle. His sword against the others, the clashing sound was everywhere but in an eerie way, something else was happening. . . there was another battle going on.

Arthur could sense it, it was Merlin and Natas, battling high up in the tower. Although he could not see Merlin, he could hear him in his mind as if Merlin was talking directly to him, warning Arthur as someone came up behind him and then encouraging him on as he battled. Yes Arthur's confidence was high and Excalibur was a mighty sword. From when he first used it until now, he was quickly winning each sword fight and doing so with greater ease with each swing of his sword.

While Arthur battled, the thoughts he perceived from Merlin were becoming clear and distinct. It was as if Merlin was close by and said... **“Arthur. . . know that your true character is revealed by your actions, by the choices you make and the promises you keep. Hold strongly to your beliefs and refuse to follow the easier path. What you say and do defines who you are”**.

And with that said, Merlin knew he could no longer fight off Natas. He was losing the fight and deep down inside, he knew his time was ending. Arthur was ready for what would unfold. No one knew or saw Merlin die at that moment but they did see Natas leave the castle with the look of evil on his face. For those who saw Arthur, they saw the look of goodness and honor. And yes, it was time.

Arthur was pleased as he looked across the battlefield. It was their battle's end; he took his shirt, tore it and wrapped his wound. They were victorious and now was the time to tend to the wounded. His mood then changed as he looked back and forth as his eyes then fixed on his friend Tubal walking toward him with a man directly behind him. Something was wrong and Arthur pulled Excalibur from its sheath. As he watched his friend come near, the others also saw and began to spread out in a circle around Arthur and the two advancing men. When they were twenty feet apart, the man behind Tubal stepped to his side and pulled back the hood that was over his head. It showed the face of evil.

It was what they had been fighting.

Natas held his long black sword against Tubal's back. "So you must be the chosen one" Natas said as he looked at Arthur. "This one and the others cannot be because I see fear in their eyes" and when he said that, Natas plunged his sword into Tubal's back and then he yanked it out as Tubal fell to the ground. "Arthur... no, leave, ruuunnnnn..." Tubal struggled to say as his life was leaving him.

Arthur's thoughts seem to betray him. It was too late, Tubal, Javan and Dedan, all his friends and so many others had now died. It must end and it must end today. Thinking those thoughts and seeing the smile on Natas' face made it seem like Natas knew exactly what Arthur was thinking.

Yet, as Arthur stood before Natas, he heard these words from his friend the spirit Omilia... "Remember these words Arthur... *I will never leave you nor forsake you* ... you have heard these before and know they are true". Arthur smiled slightly because he knew these words were from **Hebrews 13:5** and they were some of the last words that Atticus had taught him. Arthur then looked at Natas and raised Excalibur above his head, looked at it and said . . .

*"I do not know if I'm the chosen one but I do know that I am standing before you. My friends gave their lives to defeat you and now I will take this sword and end your life today"* as Arthur responded with a calmness that seemed to make Natas very nervous.

"You are not much more than a boy and you think you will defeat me? I will kill you as easily as I have killed all the others for you may not know but I have the sword of death and it has not been defeated in battle" Natas stated as he began moving toward Arthur. With that, Natas swung his black sword toward Arthur and he responded with the bright blade of Excalibur in defense. The crash of the two swords sounded as if lightning had clasped. Their battle had begun and the two men mixed their charges, their swings, and their blocks in what seemed a perfect harmony of each other. It appeared that neither could gain the advantage as their personal battle raged on. "Is this the best you can do boy?" Natas stammered as they battled.

*"It may be my best so far but now let me show you what my friend Javan has taught me"* Arthur replied and with new strength, he then battled Natas with greater speed and strength to his swings.

And as their battle continued, it was now Natas who seemed to begin doubting the outcome. As he battled Arthur, Natas thought . . .  
'How could this be, why am I not defeating him?'

Natas became more desperate as their battle continued, the continuous clashing of the swords sounded as a lightning storm in full rage. It was then that Natas swung low and then quickly reversed his turn to catch Arthur by surprise but suddenly there was cold feeling coming from within Natas stomach. He stopped to see that Arthur was looking at him face to face and that Arthur's right hand was near his stomach. He then looked at his sword to see that it had been snapped in two with half the shaft now lying on the ground. Natas dropped the rest of his sword and pushed Arthur back. As Arthur stepped back, Excalibur came out of Natas' stomach. It had cut through Natas sword first and then into him with such a deadly force that the pain of death was now racing throughout Natas' body. He looked shocked as if how could this be and with a final gurgling sound, Natas fell to the ground and died a defeated man.

Then it was if all the sounds of the world had stopped all at once. The silence that now surrounded them now caused all to pause. Natas was dead and everyone wondered if this was the moment they prayed for or if there was more to come. Arthur knew it was over for now. He walked over to his dead friend Tubal, took a strip of his red banner and put it into his pocket. He called for his men to take and bury Tubal next to the graves of Javan and Dedan. Arthur knew that Merlin's body would not be found but in a strange way, he felt as if Merlin were watching him. Closure and healing were required. Arthur thought of the words, the teachings his friends had given him over these years. It was time for him to talk to the people; for they all had fought hard and they all desired peace.



## Chapter Eight - Battle's End . . .

Arthur stood among his warriors along with all of the women and children that had traveled to join them. In a slow and deliberate action, he raised Excalibur above his head for all to see. The people cheered and clapped and shouted out Arthur's name. To quiet the crowd, Arthur then waved Excalibur slowly to the right and then to the left and finally back down to his side. His words that followed surprised all that were there. They were not the words of a conquering hero but more the words of a man that knew the horrors of war, who now wanted peace.

Arthur's words were strong and reassuring. *"Friends, our battles have ended and it is time to start anew. Over the years we have lost husbands or wives, children or parents, homes and possessions. In times such as this, some can lose faith and some can even lose hope, but today we know one thing and that is that Love remains, regardless of the desires of evildoers. For I challenge us all to reclaim the love we have lost or have hidden for safe keeping. For with love, we can regain our family, our friends, our hope and our faith"*. Arthur then paused, looked across the sky and then across the people before him. He did not know but his words would be remembered for generations.

*"Previously I praised our friends the fairies and the elves. Now is the time that I must thank all of you and some special friends who have probably done more to help us than we know. I'm not sure how many of you have been blessed as I have been to know of the spirits Laraylic, Omelia, Vell and Enthra. I have heard from many of you, that they have touched your lives as they have mine. If it had not been for them, they're constant attention to us and their whispers of confidence, we may not have been here today."*

Arthur then paused, looked up, and then he continued . . .

*"They have taught me the meaning of **LOVE**.*

***For Love always endures.  
It remains long after everything else is forgotten.”***

He then turned, looked at the castle and then looked back at the people saying... *“It is now time to rebuild our homes and to focus on our families. I thank you all for what you have accomplished today. I thank those who gave their lives so that we may live. I have lost my friends who taught me, who challenged me, who fought beside me, who died fighting that we may live. For so many years we were lost, we cared of ourselves and took advantage of others. Evil crept into our lives because we did not trust in God and did not follow the ways of his son, our true Savior. I now look back and think of all that we have lost, all that we have forgotten and I remember the words of my friend Atticus. He taught me as I now tell each of you... to go forward this day and to live your lives with these five guidelines...*

*First, know that we have all sinned!*

*So many years ago our Savior died on the Cross so that we may be saved. Live your life in gratitude and avoid sin at all costs.*

*Second, know that God’s word stands forever!*

*Return to God, read his Holy Word and learn from the Bible.*

*Use it to guide you on your faith journey.*

*Third, know that God rules over all!*

*From the dawn of time, through these times, to the end of the ages.*

*Know and praise God, for He rules over all things and all times.*

*Remember that Jesus shepherds you!*

*We are not lost for He carries us close to His heart.*

*He always looks for us, He protects us, He guides us, and He comforts us because we know that the Holy Spirit sustains us!*

*And, no matter how hard the trial, remember the words of Isaiah...*

***They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
and they shall walk and not faint.”***

Arthur paused, looked down at his sword and continued...

*“Evil has been defeated and I will now return Excalibur to God.*

*It was created by great sacrifice. It belongs to the ages, to be available if evil shall ever rise again.”* Arthur then took the sword

down to the water of Loch Ness and placed it into a small sail boat.

He released the ropes that were holding the boat and the gentle breeze pushed it from shore, toward the middle of the lake. Arthur then called out to Tubal’s archers and they set their arrows a flame.

He raised his right arm and then with a sudden downward motion, the archers then released their arrows. The flaming arrows flew through the air and into the sail boat, setting it ablaze. The smoke of the fire drifted up into the air as all stood along the shore, watching in silence. The boat drifted for a short while longer until the flames consumed it totally. It quickly sunk in the middle of the lake and Excalibur was gone.

He then turned back to the people and said these words as he pulled the red, white and blue banner remnants that represented his friends from his pocket and said, *“These colors represent my friends.*

*I know they would approve what I’m about to say.*

*There is someone who I love, who I hope loves me and will give me the chance to prove it so”.* At that time, Arthur then saw Belle

walking toward him and he continued... *“If she will have me, I plan on us returning to the land of my parents, to the hope of rebuilding a new York”.* Arthur then raised the colored remnants above his head for all to see.. *“These colors will now be my colors, for they represent all that is good with the men and women who have come together to fight off evil”.*

At that time, Belle had worked her way toward him and then stepped up to Arthur. They hugged and he then gave her a long kiss. Arthur then paused, thought and then said these final words to all that were there...

***“Think of every day, every challenge, every triumph, and indeed every defeat as feathers in your wings. Then day by day, the Holy Spirit’s breath will lift you up and enable you to fly. Where only eagles dare!”***

Arthur and Belle had returned to Gammidim and Castle York once again had a King and a Queen. A year had passed since the last battle, peace had return and a new child was born in the kingdom. Arthur took the baby from Belle’s arms and smiled. His first words to his child, his son, was a whisper from an earlier time...

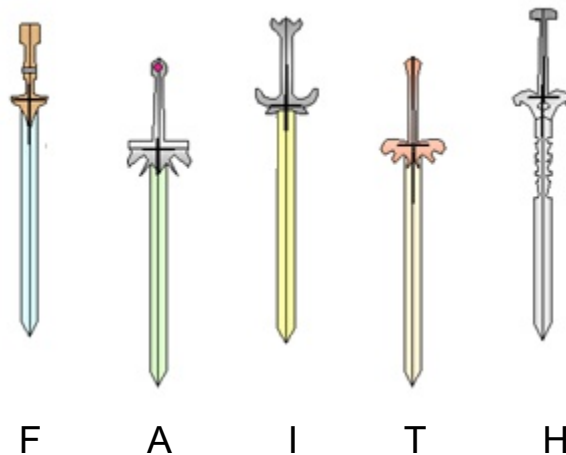
*“My parents would have wished for you to know these words...  
**May Love always lift you, may Hope always guide you and may Faith always lead you. They died with the hope that we would know this. Keep these words close to your heart as you grow in Faith, Hope and Love.”***

Arthur had been waiting for this day. He had much to teach his young son and he knew that one day, he would teach him the very words that he was trying to live his life by. As he slowly walked around the room with his young son in his arms, he heard his own voice as if his mind was talking to his son... ***Now, for this very reason, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, in your moral excellence, knowledge; in your knowledge, self-control, in your self-control, perseverance; in your perseverance, godliness; in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.***

He smiled and knew these words from **2 Peter 1:5-7** now guided him but were a little more then what his young son would understand for a few years. He wanted his son to know these words and he would in time, but for now his first present to his son would represent the faith lesson he wanted his son to learn and embrace.

Arthur would ensure that his son would learn from the Bible as he grew older but to help remind him, he chose to have made a copy of the five swords of the Elves as a gift to his son. As best he could have copied, Faric's Gladiator sword, Amicus' Dragon sword, Idie's Viking sword, Tkarish's Barbarian sword and Homen's Kingsman sword.

They now hung from the wall in his son's chamber. He hoped that when the five swords were hung in order, would remind his son of the word **FAITH**, that the elves had and all that it guides everyone to.



Arthur also desired to create a new Coat of Arms for his family that would become the center piece of his son's room. He would work over the next few years to use the image of an eagle and the words that inspired him; **Faith, Service, Integrity** and **Desire**, to be the focus of his Family's Coat of Arms. But that could wait for now, for he loved his wife, his son and he knew they were blessed. He then walked back over to Belle and laid their young son in her arms and kissed her.

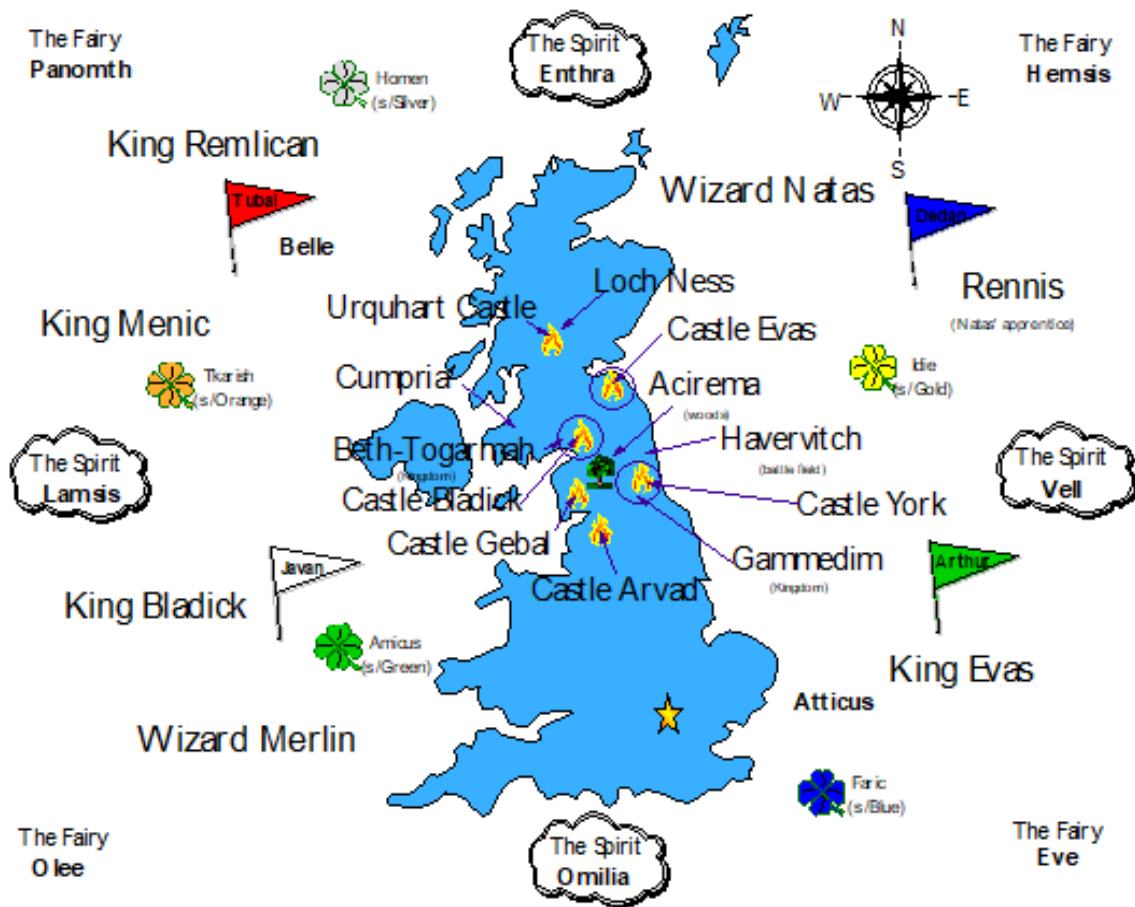
Belle looked at Arthur and knew they would be well. Although she was happy for the birth of their young son, she was not as happy with Arthur's gift of the swords but she understood his intent. She knew he had his ways and that the story of the swords would be told and

retold over the years. It was their story as much as it was for all the people of the land and she agreed, it must never be forgotten. A new beginning had started. Little did they know that their son and the generations to come, would bring forth men and women of character, of strength, of honor and of faith.

For Evil would rise again and new heroes would be there.

The End

### Arthur's World...



There you go, another story altered from the old classic fairy tale, but remember it is for kids - that hopefully you could read it to them and have talks along the journey through it. Or, it all may give you some good ideas as to the story that you would want to create and share.

And now to close - if in some way you share this 'Sword' story with your kids, please have some talks to get their comments. It is a great way to see how they are understanding it, what they are thinking and or to hear what questions they may have. But also know this, they may not be able to think right off, what their comments or questions would be - so maybe you could prompt them like this:

- \_ **Have you ever thought about what it would be like to live way back then?**
- \_ **If you ever are scared, what do you think about, or what do you do?**
- \_ **If someone was hurting others, do you think you could do anything to help them?**
- \_ **Is there anything from this story that you really liked and if yes, why?**
- \_ **Why do you think people do bad things to others?**
- \_ **Why do you think people help others?**

Now, these 6 questions are just some initial ones that you could consider asking.

If you paused and thought a bit, what questions would you have and would ask of your kids?

The goal = get your kids thinking.

Also note, when I wrote this story, it got me thinking - what would be a follow on story? Well, it gave me an idea, and that then became my third story - 'The Cross' (and yes it is different because it takes a look at some various times from history that teens may like, and I have it for you at the end of book three).

That is it, thank you and remember:

If at first you don't succeed - try, try again.

### BOGART CREEK



The first henge was made of straw...

And yes the rest of this page is intentionally blank  
(use it for notes if you'd like).