

The REAL Man's File Volume Two.



Who Will You
Decide 2 Be . . .
a Growing Man **or** a Struggling One?

Keith P. Gore

**Who Will You [Decide 2 Be...](#)
a Growing Man [or](#) a Struggling One?**

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“Christ was clear in His invitation to us. While He does not promise health, wealth, or ease, He has promised to transform us from the inside out. God is intensely interested in the person we are becoming.

[so please know this]

God equips us for the future by transforming who we are. His Word brings clarity, wisdom, and guidance. While God is the one who transforms, we can embrace the process through setting aside time to reflect upon His Word.

[and remember]

While our circumstances may not change, our trusting and transformed heart will find hope in Him.”

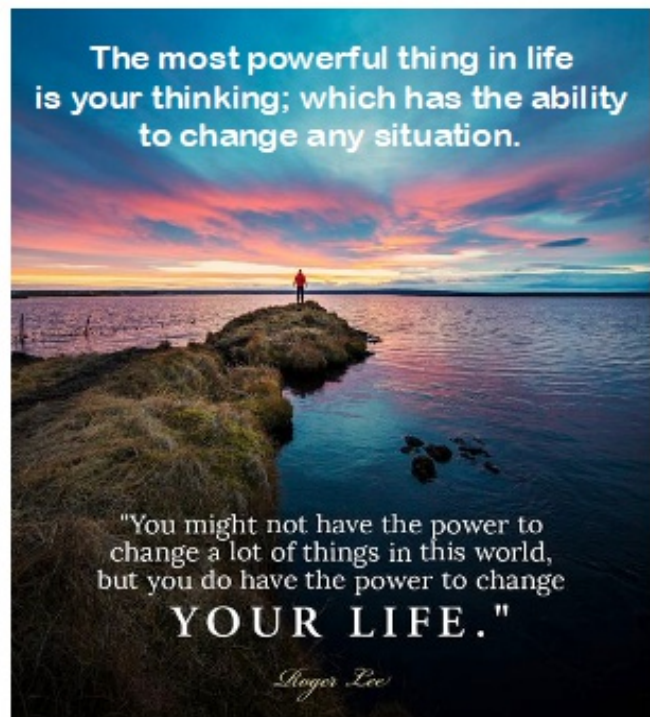
- Dr. David Jeremiah

Introduction

This second book (aka Volume Two) was started years back when our Lakes Area Men's group was meeting regularly. But then life began to change up on me and my focus to get this written, began to drift. Not in a negative way but in a way that life does; it surprises you with events that prompt us to change gears and to go down paths we may not have anticipated.

Which is where we are now as of the start of 2023. I just looked over and saw that Volume One had been completed some good years back and now events unfolding in our extended family, prompted me to get back on this collection.

And it was in that review of Volume One, that prompted me to get back to getting this Volume Two completed. And yes, it is hopefully a better late than never action. For what you'll find over the pages that follow, are my efforts to 'grab words' shared before with our Men's Group, and to add some 'here are my added thoughts now' aspects. Which means: you get the best of both worlds. Insights shared with a double look upon them (aka a type of pre-Covid and post-Covid set of thoughts). Which comes down to you picking and choosing what you like best. And don't forget. As men, we all need some help now & then.



So to help you get into the mindset of what this Volume Two is all about – here are the lyrics from 'Help' by the Beatles – as an example of what a lot of men need . . . that being help. So, take a look at these lyrics (or go and listen to the song one more time) and remember this: All of the following information shared is to help as you look at where you are at and in thinking about what you need to do in going forward (and yes, we get by with a little help from our friends).

Help! I need somebody. Help! Not just anybody.
Help! You know I need someone Help!
When I was younger, so much younger than today
I never needed anybody's help in any way
But now these days are gone and I'm not so self assured
Now I find I've changed my mind, I've opened up the doors

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being 'round
Help me get my feet back on the ground
Won't you please, please help me?
And now my life has changed in oh so many ways
My independence seems to vanish in the haze
But every now and then I feel so insecure
I know that I just need you like I've never done before

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being 'round
Help me get my feet back on the ground
Won't you please, please help me?
When I was younger, so much younger than today
I never needed anybody's help in any way
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured
Now I find I've changed my mind, I've opened up the doors

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being 'round
Help me get my feet back on the ground
Won't you please, please help me?

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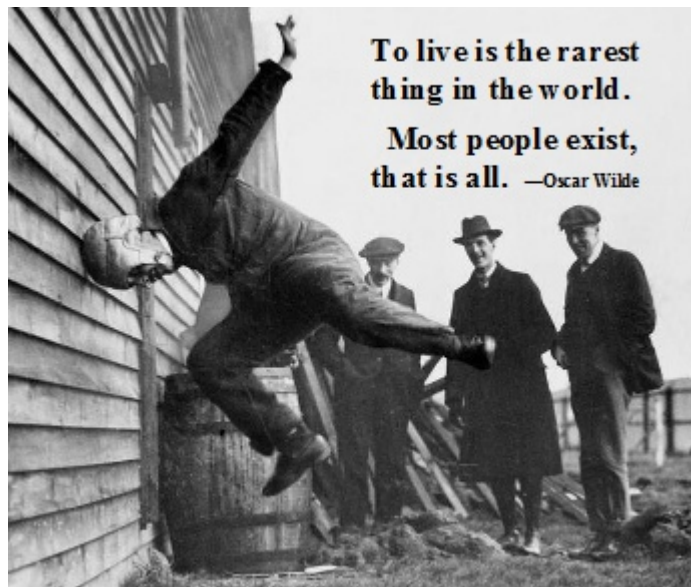
Epilogue

Acknowledgments

First, this book would not have been possible if not for the desire of a group of men, young and old who wanted to come together in our “lakes area of Minnesota” so that we could learn, share and grow as men. Grow into what? No, it wasn’t a larger pants size. It was the desire to grow as men so that we can pursue the type of life that we are glad of. My thanks to those men!

Second, is a thank you (like I did in Volume One) for all the various pictures and quotes that you will find spread throughout this book.

Like this one to help get us going for Book 2:



Third, a big 'thank you' to you for reading through this book. I know your time is limited and all I ask that as you read through each chapter, you then think and ask yourself. . .

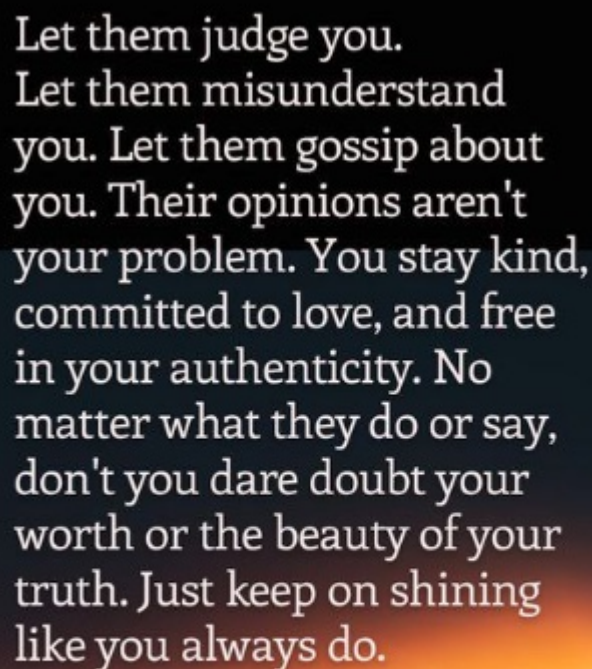
Is there something I can learn from this?

Or,

does this help me to realize things I should do or stop doing?

Which then brings us all to this. If you think you are up to the 'learning challenge' that this book presents, then read on (and please note – I still am stumbling from time to time on things I know I shouldn't but I still do them). None of us are perfect but pursuing the 'Growing Man' is the challenge we should not avoid.

And please don't forget – the words, images, quotes, Bible verses, etc. are all provided to help encourage you to think.



Let them judge you.
Let them misunderstand
you. Let them gossip about
you. Their opinions aren't
your problem. You stay kind,
committed to love, and free
in your authenticity. No
matter what they do or say,
don't you dare doubt your
worth or the beauty of your
truth. Just keep on shining
like you always do.

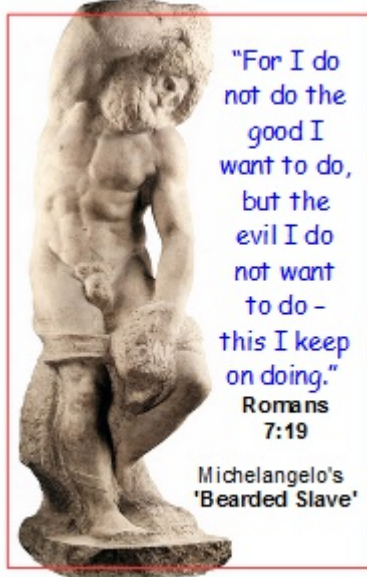
– scott stabile

Because, when we are thinking – we can make better decisions.
And that is the key to a better life.

Prologue

[the trial was many years ago but in some ways – it feels like it was only yesterday]

He looked up. The trial was in process, the outlook, grim. His brother had just completed his testimony and had been told that he was excused. He looked first at his brother and was not sure what to think on what was said. He then looked over at the faces of the jurors to see if their expressions conveyed any insight as to what they just heard. To him he wondered, did that help or not? Their expressions seemed to give no strong indication.

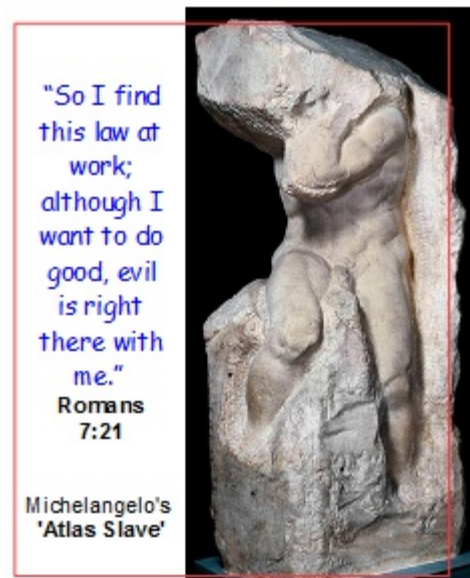


For me, as I stepped away from the witness stand, I had a mix of emotions going through my mind. I was struggling with, what was the right thing to say and do? I will admit, I was so frustrated with the prosecuting attorney; how he selectively worded and questioned me, that I felt all of the truth was not revealed and I was mad at him.

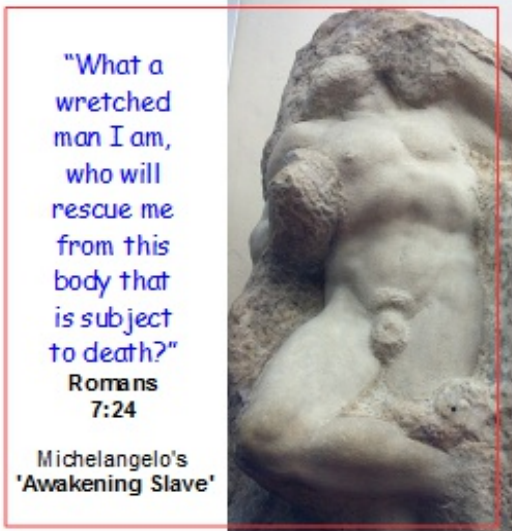
I found myself looking at the prosecutor, looking for a glass of water or a cup of coffee, so that I could stumble and bump his table – to knock over the liquid and to make a mess . . . a kind of 'accidental, oops'. But as I walked back and by him, I did nothing but walk and feel very, very frustrated by what had just happened with me up on the witness stand – by what I had just testified to.

Was it all the truth? Yes but it was what I thought as also being 'cherry picked'. Just what the prosecutor wanted the jury to hear, some facts but not the whole story.

For that trial & for the next 30 years to come, the whole truth would struggle to surface.



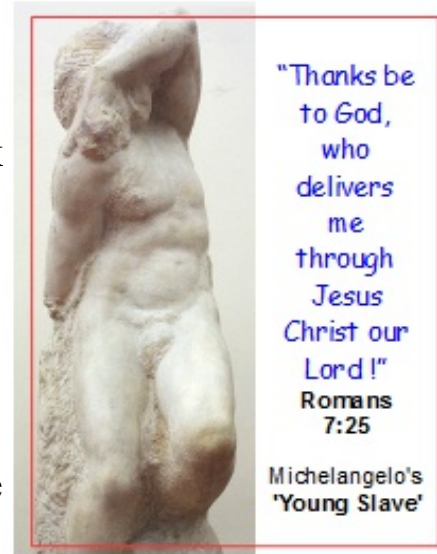
It reminded me of . . . “*You want the truth?*” which was a great line from a famous Tom Cruise/Jack Nicholas movie. The follow up . . . “*You can't handle the truth!*” was a reality then and probably true today for us all. We struggle to know and to accept who we truly are.



We may have good intentions but we struggle, we stumble and if you are a person of faith – you know we sin all too easily. Now, is there more to that story? Yes, but I'll circle back to that at the close of this book. For now, with the few lines

that remain for this page, let me close with the following.

I shared the words above as a continuation of what I had begun sharing in our Volume 1 of this TRMF series. My intent – we all can work to 'plug our way through the years' but then there are the times we are caught off guard and life hits us with a challenge, or a tragedy or something that we are not prepared to handle.



And that is the reason for this series of insights to consider – possible tools to leverage. Now, are all the files shared – usable for you or anyone? Possibly, but most likely you will be able to leverage most of what is shared and the rest – I hope you won't need to use.

And with the above shared, I'll close on this brief recap on a part of my life that change how my wife and I, with our kids would live in the years to follow. It all boiled down to this. My brother's crime caused me to question where faith fit into my life. It made me realize that it was the most important thing for me to embrace and to pursue. And yes, I have been trying to grow in my faith and to honor God as best I can.

1.0 – Decisions 2 Be Made (aka the Journey Forward)

This first section of our Volume Two is focused on insights to be considered in regards to the 7 decisions shared in Andy Andrews book called "The Traveler's Gift".

Now, you don't have to read Andy's book to gain insights from these decisions shared – but you would gain so much more if you did. But that is a decision that you have to make. Just know this. That the following files shared (#s 19 through 25) are summary insights based on these 7 decisions covered in "The Traveler's Gift".

D1: "The Responsible Decision"

D2: "The Guided Decision"

D3: "The Active Decision"

D4: "The Certain Decision"

D5: "The Joyful Decision"

D6: "The Compassionate Decision"

D7: "The Persistent Decision"

And please note: In Andy's book, he shares the travels of David Ponder who is given the chance to interact with some important people in our world history. You and I get to consider what he (David) learns from them as his journey to understand how critical the decisions we make, shape our words and actions in moving forward.

[so]

You just have to decide if the few words shared by Andy, with my added words, are worth considering and pursuing some new thoughts, words and or actions as you deem best.

My hope as you reflect over the following is that the words shared get you to thinking and in wanting to consider more. As to the more, I would hope you would at least want to go and read Andy's book. As to why? When I read it, it opened for me a whole new way to thinking about the types of decisions that we need to make.

1.1 (file #19) – Decision 1: "The Responsible Decision"

David finds himself in the presence of President Harry S. Truman, who is about to make one of the most influential decisions of human history. The decision is difficult, but one that must be made.

Here is President Harry S. Truman's message:

The buck stops here.

From this moment forward, I will accept responsibility for my past. I understand that the beginning of wisdom is to accept the responsibility for my own problems and that by accepting responsibility for my past, I free myself to move into a bigger, brighter future of my own choosing.

Now those words above were just the start, and I would assume most are like me, and have heard the words "The Buck Stops Here". But probably more times that we would like to think, we didn't apply them to ourselves (or at least not as often as we should have).

So, as you start to ponder this, remember:
We all are responsible for who we are and for what we do and ultimately achieve. Our past doesn't predict our future, but it sure can have an influence on how we go forward. And we need to remember that our future is unknown - happy or sad, many years or few - something's we control and others not.

And he ended with . . .

The buck stops here. I control my thoughts. I control my emotions.

In the future, when I am tempted to ask the question "Why me?", I will immediately counter with the answer: "Why not me?" Challenges are a gift, an opportunity to learn. Problems are the common thread running through the lives of great men and women. In times of adversity, I will not have a problem to deal with; I will have a choice to make. My thoughts will be clear. I will make the right choice. Adversity is preparation for greatness. I will accept the preparation. Why me? Why not me? I will be prepared for something great!

I accept responsibility for my past. I control my thoughts. I control my emotions. I am responsible for my success.

Which brings us to: **What say you?** (aka. . . what am I responsible for?)

As for me, I'll share more on 'my thoughts' as it relates to these decisions as these pages unfolded over the six more files. So then, until you get to reading those, I encourage you to have the passion to pursue what is needed for your life at this time.

"Decide 2 Be Passionate..." Challenge.

WHEREVER YOU CHOOSE TO GO.



GO THERE WITH ALL YOUR HEART.

Ok guys... we're not talking about snuggling with your sweetie (but yes, loving your wife is very important).

The point we're making is being passionate about all those important things in your life.

If it is worth doing, pursuing and having – give it the focus, the effort and the dedication that it deserves.

What that is and how done is up to each of us.

Do it from the heart or not at all.

And remember. . .

"Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dreams is more powerful than one with all the facts." Albert Einstein

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:12

1.2 (file #20) – Decision 2: "The Guided Decision"

David's travel then takes him to an ancient court trial that we all have read about and from that, he gains this wisdom from King Solomon . . .

Here is King Solomon's message:

I will seek wisdom.

Knowing that wisdom waits to be gathered, I will actively search her out. My past can never be changed, but I can change the future by changing my actions today. I will change my actions today! I will train my eyes and ears to read and listen to books and recordings that bring about positive changes in my personal relationships and a greater understanding of my fellow man. No longer will I bombard my mind with materials that feed my doubts and fears. I will read and listen only to that which increases my belief in myself and my future.

Now this second of seven decisions dwells on the subject of wisdom (as in do we pursue it?). And before I share some closing words from King Solomon, please consider these two actions.

1st - there are great insights (wisdoms), you could say that we either come across or we learn on our own because of the circumstances of our life that we work our way through. So watch for insights to be found.

2nd - is to know, we don't have to wait for insights to unfold upon us, we can go out and find them. For example, there are so many good books, pod casts, etc to pursue – like the following link to a book intro for

“The gift of being yourself” by Dr. David G. Benner.

<https://conversatio.org/the-gift-of-being-yourself/>

So, in appreciation for your pondering the above, I'll share this.

It starts with these closing words from King Solomon:

I will become a humble servant. I will not look for someone to open my door—I will look to open the door for someone. I will not be distressed when no one is available to help me—I will be excited when I am available to help.

I will be a servant to others. I will listen to the counsel of wise men. I will choose my friends with care.

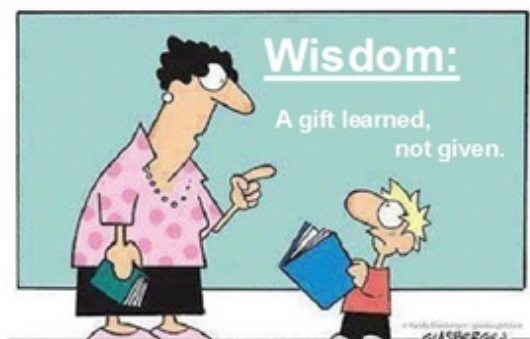
I will seek wisdom.

And last of all to give you plenty to ponder – is this. As your days ahead unfold, remember these words that **Jesus** taught us (from Matthew 7:7)

Do or don't, it is up to you.

Learning is the process of gaining knowledge.

The how, when and where is the journey to Wisdom.



It's called **reading**.
It's how people install new software into their brains.

'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.'

Which I can't encourage you enough, and that is to make sure your wisdom pursuit includes your faith.

“Don't learn to do, but learn in doing.” Samuel Butler

1.3 (file #21) – Decision 3: "The Active Decision"

David's third visit jumps him to our Civil War and the opportunity to meet Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain – when action is needed and he shared this insight . . .

Here is Joshua Chamberlain's message:

I am a person of action.

Beginning today, I will create a new future by creating a new me. No longer will I dwell in a pit of despair, moaning over squandered time and lost opportunity. I can do nothing about the past. My future is immediate. I will grasp it in both hands and carry it with running feet. When I am faced with the choice of doing nothing or doing something, I will always choose to act! I seize this moment. I choose now.

This 3rd of 7 decision considerations challenges us to realize that our actions are critical. And what David finds in the midst of a horrible battle, sometimes it seems like we have no options – but we do. So as we all live our lives, we need to determine . . . do we take action when we need to?

Fear no longer has a place in my life. For too long, fear has outweighed my desire to make things better for my family. Never again! I have exposed fear as a vapor, an impostor who never had any power over me in the first place! I do not fear opinion, gossip, or the idle chatter of monkeys for all are the same to me. I do not fear failure, for in my life, failure is a myth. Failure only exists for the person who quits. I do not quit.

I am courageous. I am a leader. I seize this moment. I choose now.

I am a person of action.

Now these two portions of Joshua's words point to the decision he made in regards to taking action. But what say you – are you a Man of Action and this something you don't have a problem with or is taking action something you need to consider?

And as you think about this, I encourage to take a few minutes and view this short video clip called: **Walk the Talk.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4AJFyK63Hg>

Because when we open up our eyes and begin to see all the things that we need to see, we are better positioned to consider the actions that we need to take. But, that depends – do you agree?

Beware of Hazards:

There is an island of opportunity in the middle of every difficulty.
Miss that, though. . .
and you're pretty much doomed.



Remember. . .

That
motivation
is the
reason one
has for
behaving a
certain
way.

"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go;
they merely determine where you start." Nido Qubein

And don't forget these action words from **Mark 10:45**. . .
"Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."

1.4 (file #22) – Decision 4: "The Certain Decision"

David's fourth visit takes him back to 1492 and the opportunity to learn from Christopher Columbus. So first consider this . . .

Those 8 words, **Today I will begin to exercise that power** (a decided heart) are easier to say than to do. And that is the challenge, what some have called 'analysis paralysis'. It is good to think but we must then decide.

How best for us all to do this well has no simple – just do this.
So consider Columbus' closing words and my follow up.

Yes there are a lot more words not shown (which is another reason to go and read Andy's book) but for now – that is okay. Why? Because you now have to determine, do you have a 'decided heart' or are you one who can't seem to make a decision?

If you're not sure, determine if there is an issue or action that may be needing to be addressed and consider these questions . . .

***What do I need to do? When do I need to take action?
Why do I need to do it? Where should I start?***

While you think about this - [Decide 2 Be Smarter](#) - and your plans will begin to fall in place.

**“There are no secrets to success.
It is the result of preparation,
hard work, and learning from failure.”**

Colin Powell

Remember...

Preparation is
the process of
making ready
for use.



What can we do? “[Decide 2 Be Smarter...](#)”

And remember. . . **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

**“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up,
just as in fact you are doing.”**

1.5 (file #23) – Decision 5: "[The Joyful Decision](#)"

David's fifth visit – was for me the saddest – because he finds himself in the company of Anne Frank, the young girl who was wise beyond her years, and sadly never got the chance to live them all. She shared:

I don't know about you but for me, this is probably the most difficult one to do of the seven decisions shared. Even though all would most likely agree, wanting to be happy is a good thing, how we understand and pursue this is the challenge. I encourage you to consider the following . . .

Can I greet each day with laughter? That will not be easy but I can welcome each new day. **Can I smile at everyone I meet?** Doable, yes but will I remember to do so is the challenge. **Am I the possessor of a grateful spirit?** Yes, I just may need to work at showing that more. But that is me. **What say you?**

It is in reading the above, it is with a sad heart that we know there are those who do evil to the innocent, but the innocent can motivate us. Therefore, let us all remember that a joyful heart can take on the sad.

What lies at the end of your rainbow?

Remember. . .

“Happiness is not in our circumstances, but in ourselves. It is not something we see, like a rainbow, or feel, like the heat of the fire.



Happiness is something we are.” John B. Sheerin

Pursuing happiness is another one of those easier said than done. If you are not sure where to start, consider this from **Proverbs 16:20**. . . **“Whoever gives thought to the Word will discover good and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.”**

1.6 (file #24) – Decision 6: “The Compassionate Decision”

David's sixth visit is the back bookend to the Civil War – this time he comes face to face with President Abraham Lincoln, shortly before what history would know as the Gettysburg Address.

Now this is one I thought - wow, I bet there are a lot of people who have been wronged or frustrated by someone and for whatever reason . . . they can't get over it, there is no forgiveness. And yes, I think anyone of us could fall into this type of challenge from time to time; you just never know but one good thing, considering Abe's words can help us all.

It has been said that anger when not resolved becomes a poison. We just don't know when something will impact us and when anger then begins. If the above 'decision' helps you, that is great. If not applicable for you, maybe someone you know may benefit from it (share it with them).

And don't forget, no one is perfect. We may need forgiveness at times and at other times, we need to give it (as men working to be the best that we can be, we need to understand both sides of forgiveness and to embrace them both as best we can).

"It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.

Luke 6:37. . .
"Do not judge,
and you will not
be judged.
Do not condemn,
and you will not
be condemned.
Forgive, and you
will be forgiven."



It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace." Agnes M. Pharo

1.7 (file #25) – Decision 7: "[The Persistent Decision](#)"

David's seventh and final visit is to the "place that never was" and there he gets to meet the archangel Gabriel. Now, you have to read the book to grasp the full insight but until then know this:

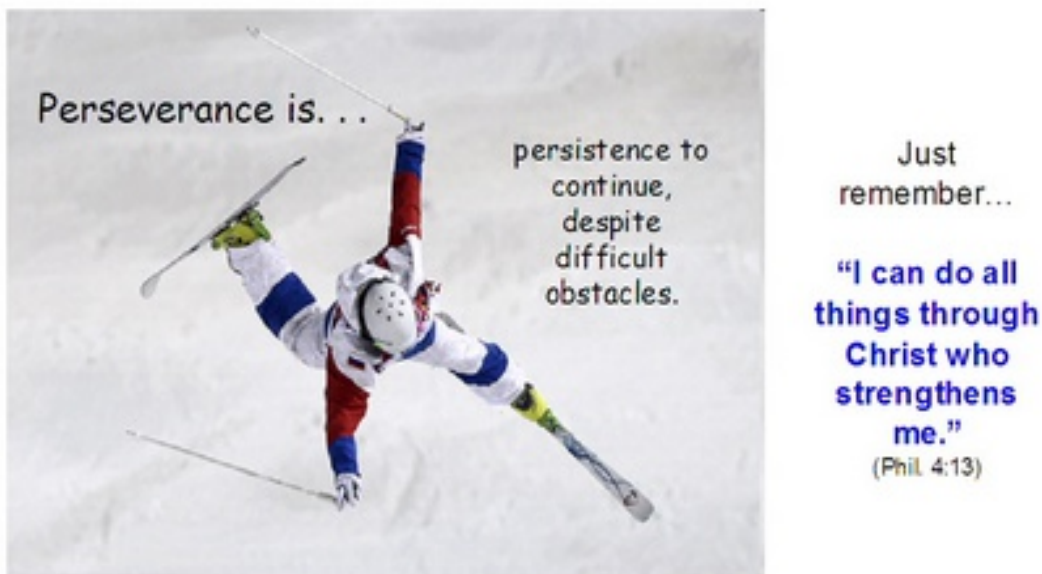
Too many just give up verses hanging on, fighting on, doing what is needed to achieve their goals . . .

This 7th and last of the seven decisions shared from Andy Andrews, challenges me to think and ask. . . **why am I here and what am I trying to achieve?** In thinking on this, my mind bounced across so many things and I know if you think on this, your mind may do the same. So then, you know by now that it is not easy to live the life of a Christian. We can have good intentions but it all comes down to our actions. We need to decide, do we live by His entire Word or just by those few words that are expedient for us? It took me awhile but I know that God has placed within me my purpose and I am pursuing it to the best of my ability.

Which then brings me to you and your efforts. Are you persistent?

And remember. . . We all have challenges that unfold and many have goals being pursued. Unfortunately the ups and downs of life that happen as our busy schedules unfold, too often derail our efforts.

Ever said. . . **“Lord, help me!”**



“A winner is just a loser who tried one more time.” George M. Moore, Jr.

Don't be discouraged, be dedicated and persevere.

And with that above, you have the seven decisions shared from Andy Andrews. Now, easy to remember and to embrace?
No but doable.

D1 Monday = The buck stops here (and remember Romans 14:12)
"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."
(I will accept responsibility, control my thoughts and will have a positive attitude)

D2 Tuesday = I will pursue wisdom (and remember Matt 7:7) *"Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened for you".*
(I will learn as much as I can, listen to others respectfully and will choose carefully)

D3 Wednesday = I am a person of action (and remember Mark 10:45)
"Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."
(I will ensure my progress, be courageous and will trust God for guidance)

D4 Thursday = I have a decided heart (and remember 1 Thes. 5:11)
"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
(I will review my dreams, decide best options and will do what is needed)

D5 Friday = Today I choose to be happy (and remember Proverbs 18:20)
"Whoever gives thought to the Word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord."
(I will show others my smile, I will be grateful and will help others)

D6 Saturday = I will greet this day with a forgiving spirit (and remember Luke 6:37)
"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."
(I will forgive others & myself, and I will work to love others as Jesus loved us)

D7 Sunday = I will prevail without exception (and remember Psalm 118:7)
"The Lord is with me; He is my helper."
(In all things I will persevere and will grow in faith)

And please note: I have really appreciated the various books, stories and insights from Andy Andrews that I have read and or listened to over the last 10 plus years. My first was his book, The Heart Mender. From that, I wanted to pursue more and I was glad that I did. So, if you want a mix of insights, humor and challenges – please pursue what Andy has to offer (you'll be glad that you did).



2.0 – Relationships (start with us)

This section two will build upon some insights from Patrick Morley's *Man in the Mirror* series: *Man Alive*. And as men, we all are on a journey - to where and how well we do are the key questions.

Consider the following . . .

Have you felt - "I just feel like I am in this alone".

Do you have a litmus test for a real friend? You may want to read Philippians 1:30, Galatians 6:2, and Hebrews 10:24-25 to gain some faith insights to this or. . .

Have you thought - I don't feel like God cares about me personally".

Many men know just enough about God to be disappointed. If this is you, have you considered the words found in Luke 15:11-14, Romans 5:5, Ephesians 2:4-5 and 1 John 3:1 or. . .

Do you believe - "I don't feel my life has a purpose".

Poor and rich alike have wondered that as well. See Ecclesiastes 2:11, Matthew 28:19, Luke 6:46-49 and you will see we all have a purpose and so much more.

Remember. . . “Gratitude is being thankful.”

“Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.”

Epicurus



What can we do? **“Decide 2 Be Grateful...”**

Therefore, if you want to be better, consider the following pages.

2.1 (file #26) – Relationships 101 . . .

We start with this question: How good are you at relationships? I know for us guys, we may struggle on this to a degree (in some cases apathy is the starting point of our challenge). Well if you have some relationships not working as you would like, I came across the following and share it for your consideration and remember the "[Decision 1, The Buck Stops Here](#)" info shared earlier - on our own accountability? The following builds upon that and we'll summarize this as your starting section 2 insight - aka consider this:

What is the most effective way to create and sustain great relationships with others? One answer is the "100/0 Principle": That being you take full responsibility (100%) for the relationship and expecting nothing (0%) in return. When I read about this - I thought doing this "100/0 Principle" is not natural for most of us.

It takes a real commitment to the relationship and significant self-discipline to think, act and give 100%.

To pursue the "100/0 Principle" you apply it to those people in your life where the relationships are too important to react automatically or judgmentally. Each of us must determine the relationships to which this principle should apply. For most of us, it applies to family, friends and work associates. It is as follows:

STEP 1: Determine what you can do to make the relationship work, then do it. Show respect and kindness to the other person, whether they deserve it or not.

STEP 2: Do not expect anything in return. Zero, zip, nada.

STEP 3: Do not allow anything the other person says or does (no matter how bad or annoying) to affect you.
In other words, don't take the bait.

STEP 4: Be persistent with your graciousness and kindness. Often we give up too soon, especially when others don't respond in kind. Remember to expect nothing in return.

The Principle Paradox: This may strike you as strange, but here's the paradox: When you take authentic responsibility for a relationship, more often than not the other person quickly chooses to take responsibility as well. Consequently, the 100/0 relationship quickly transforms into something approaching 100/100. When that occurs, true breakthroughs happen for those that try to pursue this. And if you would like to read more on this, read "[The 100/0 Principle](#)" book when you can.

"Decide 2 Be Positive..." Challenge.

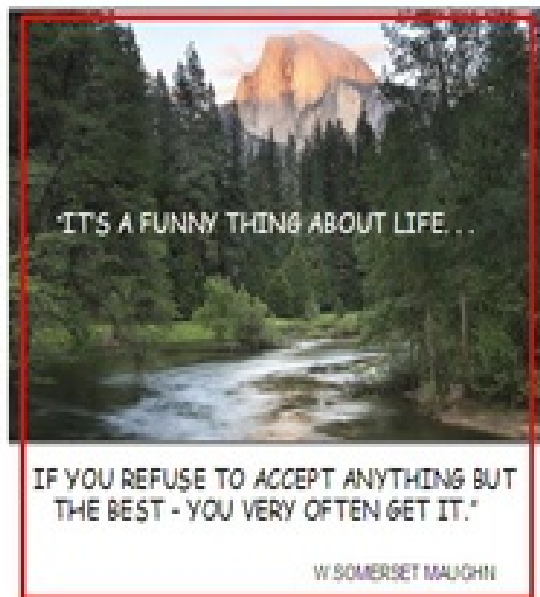
Our attitude is either our
fuel for success
or our ticket to no where.

A **positive** attitude knows
that there will be ups and
downs as we live our life.
It uses the good times to be
appreciative and the hard
times to learn from.

A **negative** attitude
blames others and is
unsure of what to do next.

**We get to choose...
what type of
attitude do you have?**

EXPECT THE BEST



And remember:

This is what the Lord Almighty says, "Give careful thought to your ways". (Haggai 1:7)

And before we leave this file #26 – remember that the words above and over the following pages are intended to give you something different to consider. Some may be great to try as shared and some may be good to help trigger ideas as to what you want to pursue.

Thanks for thinking about all of this.

2.2 (file #27) – How bad were you hurt?

This type of a question is something we guys normally think that we ask of others - and not one we think of in regards to ourselves. We men need to look at this from a different perspective or at least in ways that we may have not thought of in some time.

Like. . . "hurt where, hurt how, and hurt when" type thoughts quickly come to our mind. Now consider the following and see if these trigger any ideas or actions from you.

The little hurt = we all have been there and most likely, it was during those younger days. Probably racing around the yard, playing games with your friends, climbing a tree or whatever and then it happens. We have fallen, scrapped our knee or somehow got a cut - maybe a tear or two would unfold but usually after Mom would clean the wound, add a band-aid and a kiss for good measure, the healing would begin.

The big hurt = is one that not all may experience, for example a badly banged up body from a terrible car accident. This could be a situation where there are bruises and broken bones and most likely, significant pain. Thankfully with the help of doctors, nurses, physical therapist, etc - we slowly heal over a longer time.

The unseen hurt = is sometimes the worst if it happens to us or is so unknown to us because we can't see it in a friend or loved one. This can be something like a broken heart or depression - not easy to get through but either by our-self or with some help, these can be overcome or dealt with in a way where we can move on.

Now, with just these three examples shared, I wonder if you are like me? Did you think more on your strength or have you ever thought about the healing aspect that our own body does and pursues, without any switch being turned on or request made? When you think about it, our bodies have amazing capabilities to heal and that is a great gift from God.

So as we journey forward and those various hurts that happen unfold, be thankful for those that help us to heal but also - don't forget the master healer [God] - who made everything possible.

Because appreciation is a great thing.



"Strength does not come from physical capacity.
It comes from an indomitable will." Mohandas Gandhi

While you consider all of this, embrace **Psalm 139:14** . . .
"I will praise You [God], for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"

2.3 (file #28) – Consider The Next 10 Commandments.

I don't remember who first published these but I do know they are called The Next 10 Commandments; and although some may not agree to these, we should all at least consider them and pursue those that help us, and or share these that may help others.

- 1] **Pursue Prayer** – it is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a "steering wheel" that directs you to the right path throughout the journey.
- 2] **Look Ahead** - so why is a Car's WINDSHIELD so large & the Rear View Mirror so small? Because our PAST is not as important as our FUTURE.
So, Look Ahead and Move on.
- 3] **Make Friends** - friendship is like a BOOK. It takes a few minutes to burn, but it takes years to write.
- 4] **Appreciate Everything** - all things in life are temporary. If going well, enjoy it - they will not last forever. If going wrong, don't worry, they can't last long either.

- 5] **Be Compassionate** - it is easy to be a difficult, uncaring and self focused. Think of others and when possible, help others.
- 6] **Have Hope** - often when we lose hope and think this is the end, GOD smiles from above and says, "Relax, it's just a bend, not the end!"
- 7] **Understand Faith** - when GOD solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when GOD doesn't solve your problems – know that HE has faith in your abilities.
- 8] **Have Vision** - a blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision!"
- 9] **Pray For Others** - because when you do, God listens to you and blesses them, and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
- 10] **Don't Worry** - WORRYING does not take away tomorrow's TROUBLES, it takes away today's PEACE.

Welcome to **Cool Cars** & **Great Quotes**



**"Consult not your fears,
but your hopes and your dreams."** Pope John XXIII

And as best you can: Live simply, love generously, care deeply,
speak kindly and leave the rest to God.

3.0 – Quick Lessons (never hurt)

This section three will now 'change gears' in regard to the challenge: **Are you up for learning some quick lessons?** And by this I mean it is time to step up. Because if section one did not get you to taking a good look at the decisions in your life – what will it take?

*It is good from time to time
to pause & to explore!*

**"Every now and again
take a good look at
something not made with
hands; a mountain, a
star, the turn of a stream.
There will come to you
wisdom and patience and
solace and, above all, the
assurance that you are
not alone in the world."
Sidney Lovett**



And if section two did not get you to start looking at your relationships . . . what will?

So I will make the assumption that you are thinking and you are making some changes in your

life and those actions are a good start. Because everything in this book is intended to help you to work, to step up to the challenges in your life.

And I hope you noticed that I used the words: “to work” because it you are going to step up, it means you have to move beyond good intentions and you have to start taking action. Which is what these quick lessons are intended to do. They are a start. So read through them, ponder as you deem best and then pursue the actions that you need to do.



3.1 (file #29) – QL#1: Prayer

The following are some words to consider from **Dr. Charles Stanley**.

*One of our big life lessons to learn is in regard to prayer (do we pursue it, does it help, etc). **Perseverance in Prayer**, reference [Romans 12:11-13](#).*

As a pastor, I speak with many people about their spiritual journey. From these interactions, I know that most individuals are not satisfied with their prayer life. They lack anticipation and faith, and time with God feels empty. Most likely, this is why many [Christians](#) pray so little and so passionlessly.

So please, look at any obstacles to a healthy prayer life that you may have. For many, one hindrance that blocks vibrant communication between God and us is impatience (is it something you struggle with?).

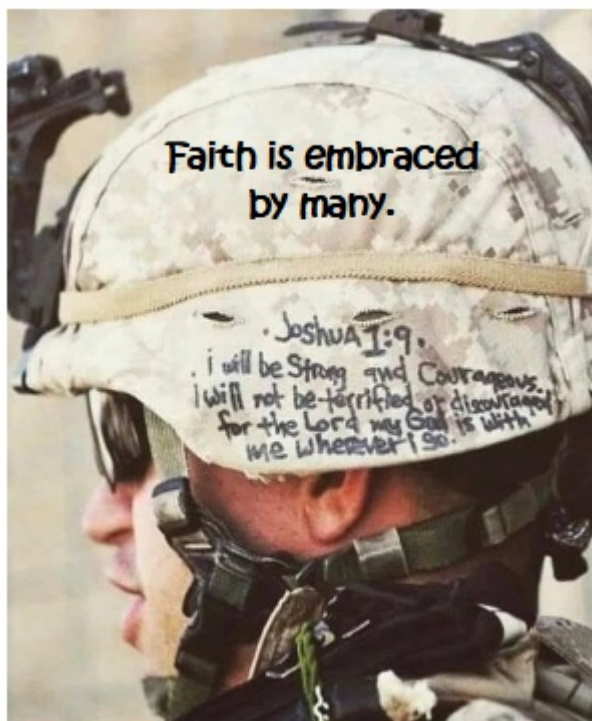
Most of us have at some point brought our supplication to Jesus vigorously but did not see the desired results. Unfortunately, humans are, by nature, fainthearted. We get weary of asking and listening when all we perceive is silence. Remember, though, that God is not some “cosmic bellhop”; He does not act on our cue. In fact, if we could see the big picture as He can, we would gladly wait for His way and time.

Actually, I believe that we benefit by not receiving all that we request. Understanding this concept is a sign of spiritual maturity. When we are thoroughly satisfied with the Lord’s presence, our relationship with Him will flourish, even when we don’t get all we ask. When that is the case, we grasp what prayer is—not a long want list, but a relationship.

Barriers can develop if we persistently cry out to God but nothing changes. Continue to pray. Beyond this “wall,” you’ll sense God’s presence, where you will find peace, joy, and awesome glimpses of His glory. This will be completely satisfying, even if He never gives you exactly what you requested. Just pray and trust God for His blessings and help.

Now, with those words shared above – you’re probably wondering – isn’t there more to this? And the answer is yes. Here is what I would add and I ask you to consider this below, with the above.

It starts with having a good understanding as to what our prayers are for. For me, it is a chance at the start of the day to thank God for last night's rest and to ask Him to bless, protect and guide myself and my loved ones. It is all at the end of the day, to thank God for what has unfolded and to ask Him for rest, renewal, protection and healing through the night for myself and my loved ones. And yes, just these two prayer actions are my way to connect with God as bookends for each day.



But what about in the midst of the day?

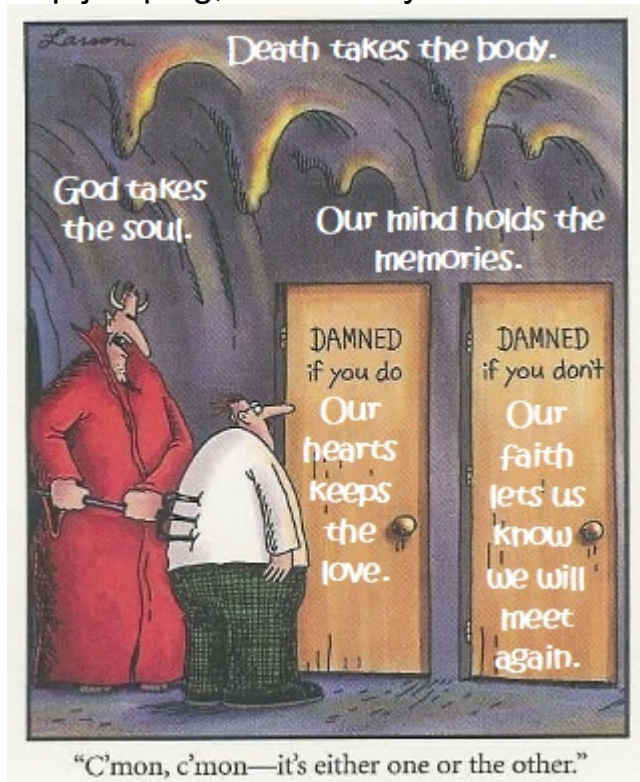
When a crisis unfolds or frustrations are building – happens to us all at one time or another. And it is in these various situations that we usually react as best we can, but often, we don't make the time to pause and pray, asking for God's help and guidance.

This is what I encourage you to think on and to take action. It starts with us pursuing a relationship with God – it's not hoop jumping, it's honesty and trust.

It grows by us asking God for His help (and when) as He deems best. For when we accept that no matter what, God will be with us and He will have things work out over time.

For when we know that He will work things out as He does, we can give up any stress we have on it. Easy? No but it is what is needed.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians 4:6



3.2 (file #30) – QL#2: Optimism

For this Quick Lesson #2 – it builds upon having the right attitude and if you do, you will see success fall into place. But you may be wondering if there is more to this? And the answer is yes.

Optimism is easier said than done. For example, what is its definition? It is an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events

or to anticipate the best possible outcome. And that is where the big challenge is – to really anticipate the outcome we desire. We do so when we think about this but too often we are more focused on the actions we are pursuing and not so much on the outcomes we desire.

So as you think about this, remember these 3 things. First, know that .
Life offers a second chance, it is called TOMORROW.

Remember... "If we will be quiet and ready enough,
we shall find compensation in every disappointment."
Henry David Thoreau



**REMEMBER:
WHEN
THERE'S
A WILL,
THERE
IS
ALWAYS
A
WAY.**



Second, know that our optimism fuels our attitude (and that is goodness).

And third, never forget . . .

**This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice
and be glad in it.**
Psalm 118:24

P.S. And encourage your kids on this.

3.3 (file #31) – QL#3: Finances

Where QL #2 was brief, QL #3 has a lot to consider in regard to your finances. It is as simple as this: Understand your expenses, manage your funds, pay your bills and don't use your credit cards to your disadvantage.

Now, if you would like to see a more detailed plan - then consider the following that I came across and thought had some good basics to consider and where beneficial, to pursue.

Don't do these things anymore if you want to make extra money, you might consider getting a second job or paring back your budget. Both are smart strategies, but first consider whether you have any bad money habits you need to curb. After all, if you're always paying bills late and getting hammered with late fees, that may be what's draining your bank account.

R U Paying bills late? Late fees can be as much as 10 to 15 percent of your monthly bill. If you're frequently late with most bills, you're probably spending 10 percent more each year on bills than you should. And if you're constantly late with some bills, like credit card payments, the credit bureaus are probably taking note and dinging your credit score. **How to break the habit:** It sounds so easy: Pay on time. But it isn't easy if you're living paycheck to paycheck, and you never have enough money on hand. If that's the case, being more organized will help. Experts recommend setting up calendar reminders through your email or phone to alert you when bills are due. If you have ample money but are just forgetful, consider setting up auto pay so the bills are paid automatically from your bank account each month.

R U Getting hit with bank fees? Every fee you pay your bank for having insufficient funds in your account is money you could have spent on yourself or your household. If you get hit with multiple bank fees a month at \$36 or so, that's over \$1,000 a year you could save by ending the overdraft fee madness. **How to break the habit:** If you're constantly collecting bank fees, it's probably due to a lot of reasons, from not making enough money to overspending. If it's a joint account, you may be communicating badly with your spouse about how the money should be managed. Analyze everything you're doing to pinpoint the culprit.

And don't be afraid to consult your bank manager, who might go easy on you and reverse some recent fees. The manager might also have some practical suggestions for curbing your fees, like opening a savings account so if your checking account goes into overdraft, money would be pulled out of savings. There are often fees to that approach, too, but smaller fees – and there's also the matter of funding the savings account.

R U Taking out a loan for everything? If you're putting daily purchases on credit cards and not paying them off every month, or if you're taking out payday loans or drawing on a home equity loan, you're collecting more interest every month and digging a financial hole. **How to break the habit:** Like collecting bank fees, you need to do a financial exam to see exactly where you're going wrong. But you would help yourself a lot if whenever you get paid, pay yourself first. You can set aside an amount, automatically deducted from your pay, to set up an emergency fund. Start with a small amount and build from there (if you could put away \$10 a week, you'd have \$520 by the end of the year for emergencies).

R U Overspending? This leads to just about every financial problem and bad habit, from mounting debt to feeling like you need to take out a loan – to pay for the loans you already have. **How to break the habit:** Your overspending problem may be due to a lack of clarity on how much money you have to spend. If you start tracking your expenses (so that you know all that you are spending your money on), as well as work to delay your purchases for when your finances are better positioned, you will start to control your spending and making better decisions. This is not easy but be committed to getting your spending under control.

R U Spending money as soon as you get it? Spend your paycheck without thinking things through and putting savings aside, and you'll never have money on hand when you need it. **How to break the habit:** Break all of the other habits first. You're probably spending money quickly because a bill is due, or overdue, and hanging onto it isn't an option. Or perhaps you've been going without something for so long that you're grateful to have a little money in the bank, and you can't help but spend it. But if that's the case, it's quite possibly because you're paying bills late, collecting bank fees, taking out a loan for virtually everything and doing a lot of overspending. In other words, break your worst financial habits, and you'll stop breaking the bank. Have a budget and make it work.

So yes,
the above gives
you a lot of ideas
to consider - and
remember,
if you are doing
well - then share
your successes
on this with others
(because anything
we can do to help
others is a great
thing to do).



3.4 (file #32) – QL#4: Wisdom

This week's **Quick Lesson #4 (on pursuing for wisdom)** was found on line from Dr. Jack Graham and as we men are pursuing knowledge - it is for your consideration.

"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." James 3:17

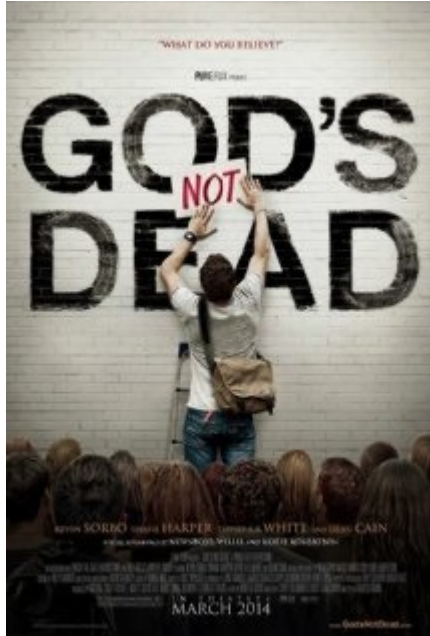
It's amazing to think about all the advances in human thought that have been brought about over the years. Isaac Newton was sitting under a tree one day when an apple fell on his head, inspiring him to coin the Universal Law of Gravitation. And when Gutenberg saw a scribe diligently copying a scroll, he thought there must be a better way and invented the printing press. It was Einstein who conceived the Theory of General Relativity and turned the science world on its head. And the great writer William Shakespeare penned some of the most prolific theatrical plays in the history of the world. Yes, mankind has had some amazing thoughts that have changed the world. But I believe none of them compare to the profoundly simple words of the shepherd-king named David, who wrote,

"The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

In that phrase, He summed up the essence of life: to acknowledge God and find our satisfaction in Him.

Wisdom without God is temporal. But godly wisdom informs us for this life and the life to come. So grow in knowledge and remember that wisdom that truly endures comes not from the world, but from God!

**FILL YOUR MIND WITH GODLY WISDOM THAT ENDURES
FROM THIS LIFE TO THE NEXT!**



In closing on this, you can see the "**GOD'S NOT DEAD**" (movie) picture shown. I include it here because we all have to start somewhere.

All the words above point to faith and the pursuit of it as a path toward knowledge – will bless you. Don't forget to take the first step, decide if you believe (our Christian faith). If you do, then the second step is to pursue a growing faith (learn, live, love).

And please know this - I really liked this movie. I hope as many people as possible can see it. For Christians, it is a great reminder for us as to our faith and why we love it. For non-Christians, it may be a starting point for them. For those

that don't see the movie - don't forget, **we then become an example of a Christian that others see (are we then a good or a bad example?).**

3.5 (file #33) – QL#5: Positivity

Okay **Quick Lesson #5 (on being Positive)** is a brief one [I'm positive].

Why? Because our attitude is one of our keys to success. If yours is good and one that others appreciate, congrats! If yours is not so great, than take on our challenge to make yours better.

How? Consider the following. . . **Live your life and forget your age. Never talk defeat. Use words like Hope, Belief, Faith, Victory. Life's blows cannot break a person whose spirit is warmed at the fire of enthusiasm. Help other people to cope with their problems and your own will be easier to cope with.**

Develop a tremendous faith in God and that will give you a humble yet realistic faith in yourself.

Get worked up about your job and you will work your job up.

Try this for one week and see how you feel. Ten times a day repeat these dynamic words, *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31)

Now these words above in dark bold text are from Norman Vincent Peale's "Positive Thinking Every Day" writing. If those above don't help you, then find some other positive, motivational words and think upon those.

In closing; to the right is a mix of some words to

ponder and a little humor. Thank you for taking a look at yourself, for considering our quick lessons and for sharing this info with others when you can. REAL Men know what to do and what life expects of us.

The **typical man** doesn't understand **Positivity...**

Some would
Say...

If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands. And put your face between them when your do – you have saved us a lot of trouble.



But REAL MEN know that a positive attitude is the foundation of success – despite hardships.

Remember...

Confidence Not Misplaced "The LORD God will help me" (Isaiah 50:7)

3.6 (file #34) – QL#6: Expectations

As men moving forward, one thing we need to quickly learn – is the key things in life if we want to see the happiness and the success we desire. Over the previous 5 QLs, we have covered some foundational lessons to help us to become better men. But now, what about those about **to become a husband** or you already are a young husband but you're not sure if you are **on track as needed?**

This word below should be a good level set that all husbands should commit to as best they can (so, if you are not – then step up).

Why? Because so many young men don't have the awareness as to what is expected of a husband. The Bible offers great information to help us to become the best that we can be. I know when I came across the words below, I thought - this would be great if every man about to be married, read the following and signed this as a type of a "Commitment to Marriage Certificate". If we all did, the number of successful and happy marriages would be phenomenal. It is now shared below for your review.

Most are familiar with the 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 words of "[Love is patient, love is kind...](#)". The focus of this week's lesson is tied to the words found in [Ephesians 5:22-33](#) (notice where the wife is told once to submit to her husband, but the husband is told three times to love his wife; that must mean it's pretty important!). So read the following carefully.

Husbands are called by God to be loving leaders of their household. The husband's basic role is to love. That word is 'agape', a deep, unconditional, irrevocable type of love.

That's the standard: Husbands, unconditionally, irrevocably, love your wives. Not "rule your wives" or "order them around," but "love them." The husband is to initiate with love. Though he is to be the head of the home for the sake of authority and structure, in another sense he's to be the heart of the home. The husband sets the tone of love in a household, with leadership balanced by affection.

Verse 25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." That may sound unattainable, but Paul wasn't saying, "Never make a mistake." Here are some principles to model your love as a husband, based upon the love of Jesus Christ.

Your love is to be sacrificial love. Jesus loved us enough to come to the earth, take on the form of a man, and die for us. Some men can honestly say, "I'd take the bullet for my wife." But if you can do that, it should mean you can do lesser things. The Word calls you to live sacrificially for your wife. Agape love isn't based on the other's performance, it is a choice. You make the choice to sacrifice for your wife.

It's to be sanctifying love. Jesus' love for us didn't stop at the cross. It continues as He sanctifies and nurtures us. The verb "to husband" means "to till the ground." The husband is to cultivate, to till the marriage ground, so that the wife is nurtured. The husband is drawing her away from worldly influences and closer to Jesus Christ. This means that husbands need to spend time with their wives (a good, healthy marriage is that the couple spends time together). Cultivate that love; let her know you want to be with her.

It's to be secure love. "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself" (v. 28). In other words, a man's wife is an extension of himself. When he cares for her, she will have a great sense of security in his love. She will feel a part of him. As Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). Wives are to be nourished and cared for. Tell her, "I love you," and do it frequently (and when you say it, mean it).

It's to be stable love. "The two shall become one flesh" (v. 31) speaks of a permanent, stable love. Everything takes a back seat to this relationship. Becoming one flesh means to be glued together, inseparably and permanently. The absence of this stability in marriages causes many of them to fail. After marriage, some men think, "I've won. I can relax now" but without fuel to stoke the fire, the flame of love will soon subside.

Now in closing and in circling back to the "Why sign this?". I hope all men join me in thinking about the above, to ensure we pursue love of our wife, our kids and of God as we should. Thank you all.



**Time heals all wounds.
But it usually leaves a pretty big scar.**

When needed, an Apology is a great way to start the healing.

As you wrap up reading the words above and to the left, know that we all make mistakes - sometimes the things we say or do hurt those that we love. Just make sure that you apologize when you need to and never stop trying to show your love.

3.7 (file #35) – QL#7: Discipline

And now to wrap up these **Quick Lessons**, I have a brief 3.5 minute video that I liked and I thought you would as well (it shares 7 ways that discipline can help change your life). Click on the following link (or find it on YouTube) if you would like to gain some insights on self-discipline as it relates to the Goals, Character, Time, Health, Money, Courage and Responsibility aspects of our lives.

[The Power of Discipline](#)

And don't forget that self-discipline is not to be confused with sacrifice. So I hope you pursue the above, ponder the following:

View our own self-discipline as the fuel that will ensure success in the following: #1: **Goals**, set them and work toward them (have the vision and perseverance to see your goals achieved). #2: **Character**, it takes will power to do the right thing (self-discipline builds our self-worth and self-esteem). #3: **Time**, you can't save it but you can invest it wisely (some things need to be done today, others tomorrow). #4: **Health**, commit to a proper diet, exercise, rest, weight and attitude (easier to maintain then to try and fix it down the road). #5: **Money**, if you can be disciplined about your money management, you will achieve your financial goals (and yes - a budget does a body good). #6: **Courage**, leverage your self-discipline to address (practice over and over) to unlearn fear.

#7: **Responsibility**, by accepting responsibility; we take care of our thoughts and feelings which enables us to become more effective, happy and positive (**choose to do what you should do when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not**).

Why? Pursuing self-discipline builds self-confidence.

What does our work ask of us?



"All we ask here is that you give us your heart."

What Say You?

Are we fighting through the jungle, climbing the Ivory Tower or ?
(Its ok to work hard but don't sacrifice your family)

Which then helps us to review our faith and to do as we learn from Titus 2:12 – which is: "To renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives".

There you go, 7 Quick Lessons of various lengths, to give you some good things to think about. And if you thing there should be more – well, there always is. For example, just these few words on "Life is . . ." from Mother

Vision: the ability to think ahead with imagination or wisdom.



Teresa. I thought these were a great message for us to ponder and to pursue as we get ready for the next steps ahead in our lives.

- Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
- Life is beauty, admire it.
- Life is a dream, realize it.
- Life is a challenge, meet it.
- Life is a duty, complete it.
- Life is a game, play it.

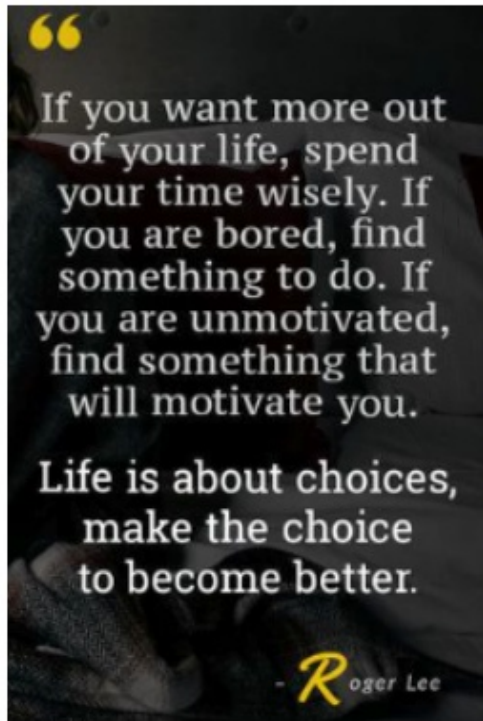
"What we see depends mainly on what we look for."

John Lubbock

- Life is a promise, fulfill it. Life is sorrow, overcome it.
- Life is a song, sing it. Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it. Life is an adventure, dare it. Life is luck, make it.
- Life is too precious, do not destroy it. Life is life, fight for it.

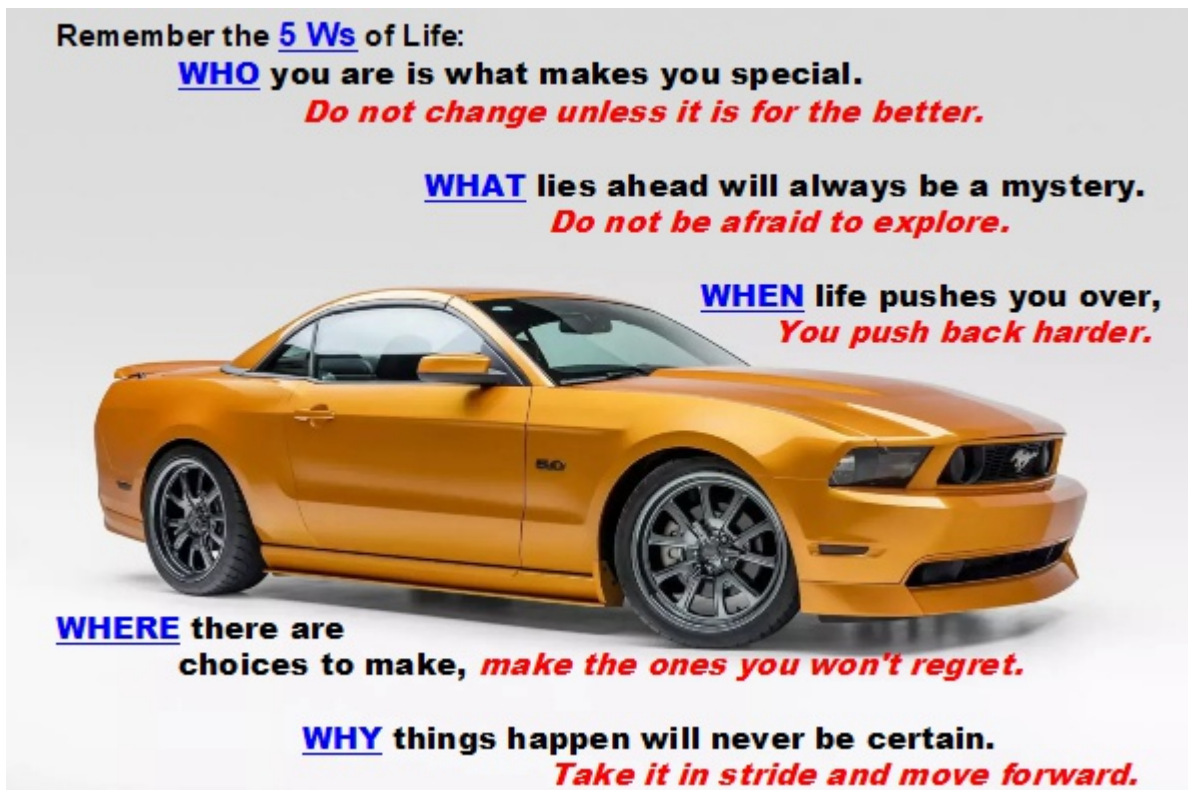
But those are her words.

What say you?



Okay, I know by now (after 40 pages of 'good stuff'), you're wondering if you can handle any more that is good to ponder and possibly . . . even good to pursue.

Well, I thought some additional insights as to some of the considerations our Men's Group pursued a couple of years back, would be a good wrap up for this Volume Two. But, before we get to those, here's a visual I created and I wondered . . . where could I best use this?



And you guessed it right. Above in what is known as the . . . “Here & Now”.

So, ponder those 5 Ws as needed and then, continue on with section 4 and its considerations shared. For the below is like the above . . . something different to ponder and for you to decide if anything is worth embracing and pursuing.

4.0 – Knight Time (not night time)

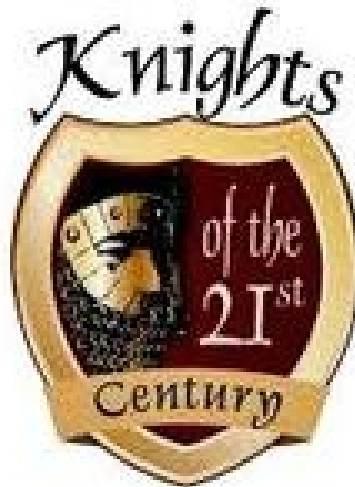
This section four provides a recap of the series of meetings our Lakes Area Men's group pursued – based on the study . . .

Knights of the 21st Century.

As to why? It starts with this:

**Sow a thought, reap an act.
sow an act, reap a habit;
sow a habit, reap a character;
sow a character, reap a destiny.**

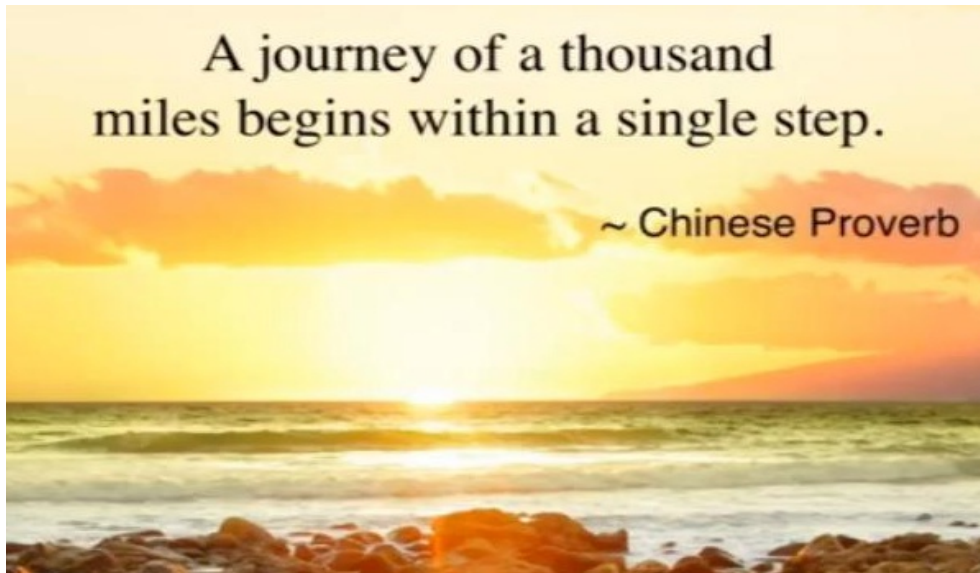
Thanks in advance for considering all that is shared.
And yes, please live the life that God wants you to pursue.



P.S. Don't forget that all that is shared above and below, is a challenge for us as adults to: determine if we are on the the right track in our lives and as to what to consider for us in sharing, teaching and leading our kids on the path that they should pursue.

The wording below is going to be different – to get you to slow down and to think, and to decide what you need to consider.

4.1 (file #36) – K21/1: Consider the Heroic . . .



Our men's group wanted to look at "**The Heroic Journey**".

Why? Because we all are on our journey of life. For some it is just to navigate the ups and downs as best can and for others, it is a faith journey that also encompasses all aspects of life - the good, the bad & the ugly.

- Consider the world, the environment, this life that each of us are engaged in. Some would call it the 'jungle' and others would call it the 'rat race' but for this **Knights/21** program, we'll call it the 'forest' (because it will help us to see that like in a forest, we can adjust our path, we can move a tree, go around a rock, etc as we need to).

- **The culture of today has taught (or conditioned) males to . . .** be afraid of thinking big, to conserve our energy for things that will not happen, to exchange confidence for comfort, to avoid risk, to count on luck, etc.

- **But what we are learning is that every Man is designed . . .** to grow into his potential (but do we?), to long for adventure (something big to do), to have a battle to fight (for a cause, for our relationships, etc), and to protect the hearts of our family members.

As to what do we need to embrace, to do? It is as follows:

Become aware of the purpose for our life, to develop our potential, to gain insight of "Self" and "Others", and to see how the Bible's view of reality can be understood and relevant for our manhood journey.

[and don't forget]

Matthew 7:14 "But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

4.2 (file #37) – K21/2: Principles to live by . . .

In the above, we started our **K21** journey and a follow up thought from that insight was - are others glad when you enter a room or when you leave it?

If you think sometimes the latter, then consider these words that we covered in our second session. . . **"Principles to Live By."**

First, **you are no longer a simple man, you are a Knight of the 21st Century**, you are leading your family, contributing to your community and pursuing the purpose that God has enabled you for.

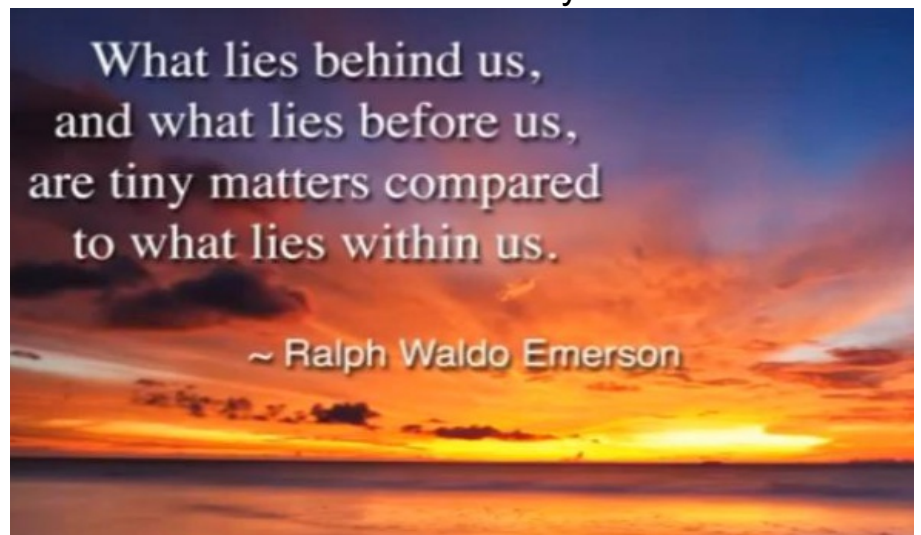
Second, **know that principles, values and beliefs are what lead you to success that is good, honorable and appreciated.** Now what those are and how to apply them is up to each of us. In our session today, we went deeper into what are the 15 principles to live by that a True Knight pursues. To give you an example, I drafted a subset of those principles shared - to give you an idea (see below). But before scrolling down, ask yourself; do I live a life that my loved ones and friends admire me for? If you believe

yes, then you are on a good path for your life but if the answer is no or I'm not sure; then maybe you need to start by looking at the principles that guide you as you pursue your journey in this forest we call life.

That's plenty for now and I encourage you to start drafting your principles.

For example . . . why not a framework like the following?

I am a man forged by my experiences and I am responsible for all my choices. I have amazing talents and I am of infinite worth. I do what is needed, and with no regrets. I am dedicated to continuous learning. I know that the true me will get me through all trials. I know that the world can affect me but I will impact the world. I will stand for what is right even if I stand alone. I will apologize when I am wrong, I will learn and make it right. I am a man of faith and will grow that faith until the day I die. I will live by my principles, values and beliefs.





4.3 (file #38) – K21/3: Don't be that Man . . .

As I thought about this, it made me wonder how many men don't even slow down to review who they are and the path they are on. Is that you or someone you know? I also know we touched on this way back in our 11/5/2013 blog (remember that brief story?). It covered one aspect that we review in today's insight.

To tie this altogether, I'll summarize the info we covered as follows: First, where have all the 'good knights' gone? Yes there are many out there but unfortunately, there are way too many 'bad knuts' out there. Why?

Which leads us to the second point and that is do you know anyone who. . . wants their parents or loved ones or their friends or their company or the government or even their church to "take care of them"?

The 'bad knuts' of today (aka 'spandex males') are not unlike those of years gone by. How do you recognize one? Look around at those you know - and even at yourself - do you see **someone who is. . . overworking or engaged in sexual conquests or addictions, who abuses the power they have, or creates fear, has excessive demands or explodes in bouts of rage or just wants others to help them?** What about those who give up and tune others out or move through life aimlessly and lacks goals or motivation?

Today we gained great insights as to seeing the types of behaviors of the 'bad knuts' as well as to the 'good knights' that are out there (those who move toward and take on their problems, those that take responsibility, who develop plans to solve their problems or to succeed - and pursues those, those that know that God has given them talents to use and a purpose to pursue).

The big question, which are we?



4.4 (file #39) – K21/4: Influences . . .

Now for this **fourth consideration**, we look at: **"5 Influences You Can't Ignore"**. This topic made me wonder - how many men realize these influences in their lives and how important they are? For those of you who have thought on this and would like to add your comments - please do.

For those of you who were not able to join us for our meeting, I'll recap these for as follows:

Appreciate **the "Tribe"** (the community) that you are a part of. They all are diverse, have different experiences and skills. Are we aware of these resources and do we leverage what we can learn from them? Find **the "Elders"** (the mentors and coaches) that have already learned a lot on the ups and downs of life, whose insights can help you to pursue the right path forward or how to avoid the wrong path to trouble. Set **your "Personal Standards"** (the principles, ethics) that you have learned that help you to set high standards for yourself - the framework that you want to use to guide your life. Hear **your "Internal Voice"** (the guidance system) that reminds you of right, wrong and of importance. Pursue **your "Spirituality"** (your relationship with God) to understand and to enable your purpose.

Now the above are "trail markers" for us to leverage as we navigate our way through the "forest" (our environment that we can influence) as we pursue real manhood.

And yes, it all comes down to all of our decisions. So, remember the above and **1 Chronicles 28:9**

"Acknowledge God and serve Him wholeheartedly and with a willing mind; for the Lord knows every heart, every desire and every thought. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever."

Beware of **Incompetence:**

When you earnestly believe you can compensate for a lack of skill by doubling your efforts, there's no end to what you can't do.



What can we do? "Decide 2 Be Successful..."

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children... to leave the world a better place... to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded" (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

4.5 (file #40) – K21/5: Our Armor . . .

This insight is one where we slow down and **learn about the types of 'armor' we put on and leverage** as our challenges unfold. Unfortunately, we also realized that we sometimes don't use the right **'armor'** or don't remember to take it off. I share the following summary points for your consideration . . . (kind of a "Am I aware of this, should I adjust?").

We choose the types of armor we use: When it is **rigid or thick**. . . it may seem like we were protected but in many cases, we become limited.

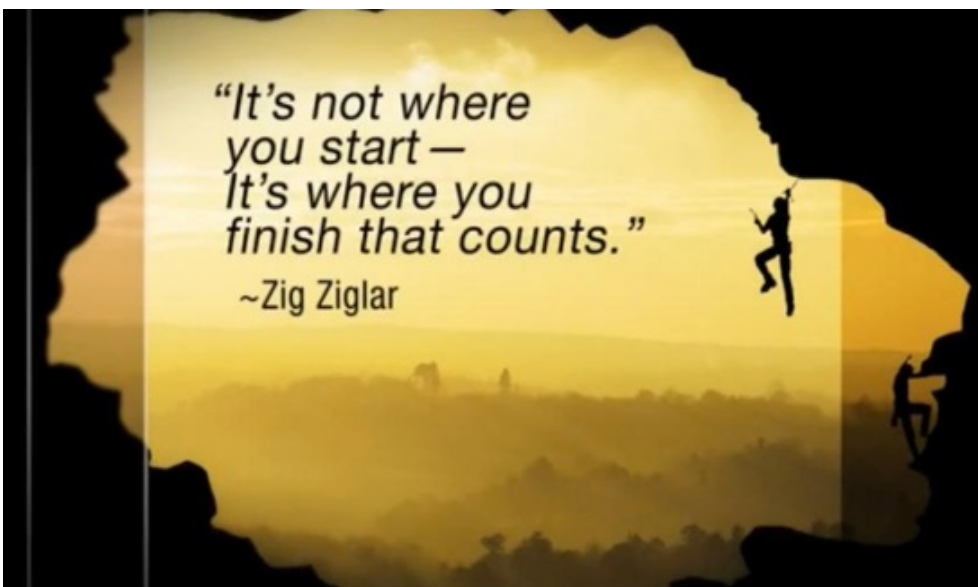
When it is **light and flexible**. . . we may feel more vulnerable but it may enable greater core growth. And the use of our armor (for effectiveness) requires us to **understand the principles of armor**. Examples are: **It is our responsibility to decide the type of armor to use for each situation we face, and respect toward other people's need for armor is always given.**



Understanding the armor available to us as well as knowing which armor to use for which situation enables us to see and to experience the benefits of using our armor correctly. We have the freedom and confidence to explore new areas and to face different situations. We recognize what makes people feel safe or unsafe and to set boundaries accordingly. We also learn that we can trust God as the words from **Ephesians 6:10-17** remind us. So thank you for reading

the above and reflecting on your awareness and use of **'armor'**.

And remember these words to the left . . . a great quote to embrace.



4.6 (file #41) – K21/6: What is Worth Dying for?

This 6th insight challenges us all to consider the 'chain mail" (the mind set) we need to ponder. As in, have you thought about and have you calibrated your mindset? If you are like most of us - no, so consider the following:

When a REAL man takes responsibility for his beliefs . . .

- he Views life optimistically. - he Approaches relationships with hope and passion. - he Sets goals and works toward achieving them.
- he Attracts social support. - he Inspires others. - he Achieves more of his purpose by leading himself and others more intentionally.

When a REAL man then puts his beliefs into action . . .

- he Understands his dreams and goals. - he Enables his strategic plan by backing up his decisions with proper actions. - he Recognizes the success of his plans is often dependent on the details. - he Is Not passive and initiates the behaviors that are consistent with his ideas and beliefs.

Now, why the above?

- (First) Don't you want to have a firm knowledge of your beliefs and why you believe in what you do?
(Second) Don't you want to know the difference between what you are taught and what you choose to believe? (Third) Don't you want to



be better at recognizing lies, at better learning from your past, at becoming fearless and focused so that you become the man that you and your loved ones are glad that you became?

So, it all boils down to this. Are you tired of the way things have been going for you? Or are you doing okay but you want to do more? Do you want to have a Character and Integrity that are solid and consistent? Do you want to have aspects of your old self to die so that you can live better?

If yes, consider the above, read your Bible and grow in faith.

"All Scripture is God-inspired and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

4.7 (file #42) – K21/7: The Dangerous Truth about Men . . .

Now, for our Men's group meetings, we had more than 7 insights to consider. But for you, here and now, I'll wrap up with this 7th insight for your consideration. And yes, I know, as soon as you see or hear those words in the title above, your mind begins to quickly 'paint a picture'. But I also know that when I saw this title, it first reminded of the lyrics from Tracy Byrd's song: **"The Truth About Men "** which starts with . . .

*We don't like to go out shoppin'
We don't care what's on sale
We just want to sit with a bag full of chips
Watchin' the N.F.L.*

*When you come over at half time
An' say, "Does this dress fit too tight?"
We just look you in the eye with a big fat lie
An say, "Uh, uh, it looks just right"*

Although they may give you a chuckle, it is sad to say they are more closer to the truth than we probably would like to admit. **So what does this all mean - should we care?** Hopefully you would answer yes. The more we know about ourselves helps us to see the strengths that we can build on and

of the weaknesses that we can address. To do so, consider the following:

What makes us 'tick' is our core and it is more complex than we would tend to first think. The choice we have to make is in deciding if we want to develop our core to become a Real Man or to just stay as a male. Our visuals for this week may help you to decide.

And as you ponder or chuckle on aspects shared, don't forget these words from **Galatians 5:16-17**

"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so do not do whatever you want."

Beware of Foolishness...

"Perhaps the secret of living well is not in having all the answers but in pursuing unanswerable questions in good company."

Rachel Naomi Remen



Remember
...
Friendship is sharing a mutual bond of trust, understanding and commitment.

So then, there you go. 7 insights as to the information our Lakes Area Men's group pursued in regard to →

Now, was there more covered? Yes. If you're interested in taking a look at those – they can be found via my D2B website . . .



<https://decide2be.weebly.com/blog/archives> Those are:

K/21-8: If I Were God

K/21-9: What Shape R U in?

K/21-10: Feelings (not our strong suit)

K/21-11: R U Stuck in a Rut?

K/21-12: Thoughts, Words & Signs

K/21-13: Can I Have Another Crisis?

K/21-14: What is love?

K/21-15: Fight or Flight?

K/21-16: What is Friendship?

K/21-17: Can't You Read the Signs?

K/21-18: What is in your Genes?

K/21-19: R U a Soul Man?

K/21-20: Yes Sir. . . .

K/21-21: Any Bad Habits?

K/21-22: What is Influence?

K/21-23: How is your Core?

K/21-24: Looking Back and Ahead

Epilogue

TRMF Vol. 2 (D2B a Growing Man or a Struggling One) is now complete. And like Volume 1, I hope you got some good ideas to consider from this Volume 2 as you began to pursue actions that are now taking your life down a new path.

Now, will there be a Volume 3? My goal is yes but the challenge, with all my other writings in process, when best to get on track for that wrap up to this TRMF series. So, until then, remember that our country needs more men to be better, to serve, to lead, to teach, to do what is needed across all our communities. The what you can do and when, is up to you.

On behalf of our Lakes Area Men's group, we wish you success in all that you pursue as you days, weeks, months and years ahead unfold!

And if you're like me . . . (a Dad), remember that you are also living a life on behalf of your wife and your kids. So, make a stand as to who you are and what you will embrace.

Make A Stand

By Jimmy Osborne

Keep your wits about you,
And expect the unexpected;
Speak for those who have no voice,
And protect the unprotected.

We always have a choice,
To be the ones to make a stand;
To step up and make some noise,
For the silent ones who can't.

Will you fight for what is right,
Be the light, and take command?
Or will you flee into the night,
And hide your head beneath the sand?

And if there ever comes a time,
When I no longer can...
I hope you'll fight for me,
And be the one to make a stand.

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