

Heroic Examples

Does the Bible Support A Directional Process That Encourages The Study Of And Personifying Of Heroes Of Long Ago, Like The Knights Of Old?

In the last chapter we dealt with the imagery of the bow and arrow and roots and wings, to illustrate the need for fathers to prepare their children to be loosed into the world in much the same way as what an archer does when firing his arrows at a target. Reaching back to learn from the principles of knighthood comes from the same idea. In using knighthood as an aid in developing a directional process, we are in effect reaching back in time for a model or ideal toward which to aim our children. The question we want to answer in this chapter is whether or not there is such an enduring symbol/model/icon of authentic manhood that existed in the ancient past that is a worthy model from which to mold and shape the kids of today so that they will impact the world of the future for Christ and for good. Is the principle and practice of looking to past generations in order to find heroes of faith and honor and valor Biblically sound? Were there others in the Bible who did so in order to find an identity and purpose and code of conduct to implement in their own lives? Were there times in the Bible when there was a famine of heroes so that one couldn't look to one's own generation to find what one needed as an example worthy to identify with and follow?

It is my opinion (among others) that the imagery of Knighthood provides enduring and powerful symbols of potent, masculine manhood and gracefully strong, virtuous, womanhood. It has within its principles and philosophy a gradual directional process that graduates young boys and girls¹ along a continuum toward the goal of early maturity, through the incorporation of standardized achievements and accomplishments, rites of passage, solemn

¹ In the days of knighthood there are records of female knights, too! There was one Order of women Knights called *orden de la Hacha* or the Order of the Hatchet. It makes my knees buckle to think about why they chose that name. In our knighthood process, girl pages (hand maidens) and squires (lady in waiting) are trained in those things that separate them from the world's value system for women, as well as in those things that will prepare them to be better equipped to be wives, mothers, homemakers, as well as in financial management, social etiquette, etc... They are not kept back from the hardness of knighthood training, nor are they discouraged should they want to be knights instead of Ladies (Lady was the female equivalent of a knight). But they are still trained differently. Just as we are careful to not let our boys be feminized, so we are careful to not make our daughters masculine. But some just lean more toward Deborah (like my own daughter, Shakinah Rae) than toward Esther (like her friend Katy). Yet both women were heroines in their own way.

ceremony, symbolism and regalia. A very important question to raise and answer at this point is: does the whole practice of reaching back in time to find a worthy model or example for our young sons and daughters find support in the Bible? Let me give just three powerful examples that support the concept of reaching back to hero's and heroic times of old, like the days of knighthood, in order to implement some of those things that served as a rule of life in their times into our lives in modern times.

Example # One: Josiah – 2 Kings 21 – 22

Josiah's grandfather was the most evil man recorded in the bible. His name (Manasseh) has gone down in infamy. The bible says in 2 Kings 21:16 that he "filled Jerusalem from one end to the other..." with the blood of sacrificed children! To make matters worse, Josiah's father (Amon) was just like his grandfather. We are told in 2 Kings 21:20 – "He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done." Talk about being born into a dysfunctional family!

Josiah (2 Kings 22) became king at 8 (the age most kids become a Page or Hand Maiden). Where does such an unfortunate young man look to find an example or pattern to follow? In Josiah's case, it wouldn't be in his family tree, that's for sure. Now in his 16th year, verse 26 tells us one of his workers, while cleaning out rubble and rubbish from the temple, discovered in the garbage, the Bible, which had been lost for many generations. No one had read the Bible for generations, so they had to find someone who could tell them how to interpret it. After careful search, they finally found a prophetess named Huldah (yet another Biblical heroine). She helped them understand what they were reading.

Now as Josiah began reading the Bible for himself, he began to gain wisdom and as a result, began to understand the times in which he lived and how to lead his people to do what needed to be done. I wonder if he also discovered his ancient ancestor King David, the giant killer, as he read about the kings of old. I am sure he did, because I can see King David's influence all over Josiah and throughout his reign. In this case, researching his ancestral roots also gave him the wings necessary to begin a campaign of reforms that took on the idolatrous nation Israel had become. The combination of scriptural direction, personified in biblical heroes like Arthuresque military leader, King David, and his special band of warriors, would spark vision and direction in any young king in search of the same.

Have you ever read about David's mighty men? These dudes were freaky. 2nd *Samuel* 23:8-23 gives a list of these men, among whom were Josheb-Basshebeth (we'll call him Jo), a Tahkemonite, who killed eight hundred men in one, single encounter! And with nothing but a spear. Another was Abishai, the brother of Joab son of Zeruah, who raised his spear and dispatched a mere three hundred men. Then there was Shammah, son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a strategic location, and threatened to storm the

Israeli troupes headquartered in a field full of lentils, Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it single handedly and struck the Philistines down, *“and the LORD brought about a great victory.”*

Before David came along, Israelite men were terrified of Giants. One Giant was taunting the whole Israelite army for someone who had the guts to challenge him, but none were brave enough to. Then came a 16 year old shepherd boy named David. After David killed Goliath, many came and joined him, and soon we start hearing about up and coming giant killers just like him. Among his mighty men was a giant killer by the name of Benaiah. 1 Chronicles 11:10-25 tells us Benaiah was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. And get this: on his day off he went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion! In one fight he struck down an Egyptian who was seven and a half feet tall! Are you impressed yet? The Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in his hand, and Benaiah had only a club, with which he snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear! Man, you don't mess around with Ben.

It gets even more awesome. You're not going to believe this, but in 1 Chronicles 12:8 we are told that some of the men that joined with David had very strange features as well as abilities, such as the Gadites. It is written that some of the Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the desert. They were brave warriors, ready for battle and able to handle both shield and spear. The Chronicler records that their faces looked like lions, and they ran as fast as gazelles in the mountains!

Can you imagine what it would be like for a boy king like Josiah, facing insurmountable odds, and a corrupt, devil worshipping nation, to read a distant ancestor who faced the same sort of things and how God helped him be victorious? This was all Josiah needed to enter into a destiny-shaping, directional process that squeezed out of him every last ounce of manly, courageous leadership so desperately called for in the day in which he lived. So too, the knighthood process hearkens our young boys and girls to look backward into the past and acquaint themselves with Christian and Biblical heroes of the faith in hopes that they, like Josiah, will sense a Holy Spirit connection with them that will help them mark out the path before them. The non-canonical (that means it wasn't inspired like the other Biblical books, but was historically accurate) book Ecclesiasticus 44:1-10, 13-14 supports the principle of looking to ages past for inspiration in modern times. I like to read this passage when we celebrate Hallomas Sunday, a replacement for the occult Halloween. Instead of it being a celebration of dead saints, we turn it into a celebration of Christian heroes, past and present. This is how it reads,

*Let us now sing the praises of famous men,
our ancestors in their generations.
The Lord apportioned to them great glory,*

*his majesty from the beginning.
There were those who ruled in their kingdoms,
and made a name for themselves by their valor;
Those who gave counsel because they were intelligent;
those who spoke in prophetic oracles;
Those who led the people by their counsels
and by their knowledge of the peoples lore;
they were wise in their words of instruction;
Those who composed musical tunes,
or put verses in writing;
Rich men endowed with resources,
living peacefully in their homes—
All these were honored in their generations,
and were the pride of their times.
Some of them have left behind a name,
so that others declare their praise.
But of others there is no memory;
they have perished as if they had never existed;
They have become as though they had never been born,
they and their children after them.
But these also were godly men,
whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten;
Their offspring will continue forever,
and their glory will never be blotted out.
Their bodies are buried in peace,
but their name lives on generation after generation.*

In some cases, not only were principles formed by studying past heroes, but a whole persona, including diet and dress was also imitated as in our next example.

Example # Two: John the Baptist (Matt. 3)

In the beginning of the N.T. we are introduced to what appears to be a deranged, insect eating, beehive raiding wild man from Borneo! He dressed very strange, making him appear as if he was covered in fur. He would have freaked out the today's gothic culture without a doubt. We are told he lived alone in the wilderness like a hermit. John's parents were very old when they had him, and were probably dead when he was still a young man. He too lived in a time of co-opted manhood, impotent, politicized religious leaders, and cowardly men. Where would he turn to find a model, example, or pattern of manhood the likes of which was called for in the day he lived? Where would he find the kind of hero he could relate to, that would call forth in him the man he needed to be to fulfill his calling to be the forerunner of Messiah?

Well, like Josiah he turned to the Word of God and, as he began studying it, he was pulled back 700 years, and who did he find standing there in the book

of 1st kings? A wild, hairy, crazy man, with strange clothes and a weird diet. He found Elijah, the Tishbite. 2 Kings 1:8 tells us he was either a hairy man or dressed in a garment of hair, depending on the translation, and wore a thick leather belt around his waist. He too lived a lonely life in the wilderness and ate a restricted diet not much better than John's - of meat and bread provided by Ravens, which by the way, were carrion eaters (sorry, too much information), and drank water from a brook at the Kerith Ravine.

John ate Locusts and wild honey, and Matthew 3:4 tells us he wore a garment made out of camel's hair, and wore a large leather belt around his waist. In the last book of the Old Testament, named after him, the prophet Malachi prophesied of a future prophet who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah. See the connection? John found a scriptural example of what God had called him to be a do, and the kind of leadership needed to be modeled by him, personified in an Old Testament biblical hero who was both inspiring and enduring. And off of this fresh insight, John took up his mantle, and like an arrow loosed across the Judean countryside, thundered across the Jordan river defining the times in which he lived instead of being defined by them. He reached back to the past for someone he could identify with, and then hurled himself into his awaiting destiny marked out for him by Almighty God. I've got to tell you, I love it! It gets me fired up every time I talk about. How about you?

There were times when even our Lord and his family drew inspiration from famous heroes of the faith whose exploits were called to remembrance and celebrated in story and song, and feasting. Perhaps our third example is one of them.

Example # Three: Mattathias Maccabaeus (166 B.C.)

My third Example from the Bible lived in the inter-testamental period, which is the period between the last book of the Old Testament – Malachi, and the first book of the New Testament, Matthew (400 B.C. to 4 BC.). This Inter-Testamental hero's name meant "the hammer". Have you ever heard of the Jewish Festival of Lights, or Hanukkah? Hanukkah celebrates the Jewish historical event that occurred in the second century B.C (165 B.C.), several hundred years before the writing of the New Testament. Some say that it was this feast that Jesus was alluding to when He claimed the title, "Light of the world" in John 8:12. This important festival commemorates Israel's deliverance from the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes (an Old Testament model or prototype for the New Testament's concept of the Anti-Christ) by the Jewish hero Judas Maccabaeus.

This victory included the restoration of the Temple which had been profaned by Antiochus when he erected a statue of Zeus in it, and the purifying and cleansing of the altar which had become desecrated when he sacrificed a pig to Zeus upon it. He had demanded that all his subjects, including the Jews, worship the Greek gods and adopt the Greek way of life. In other words, he was

attempting to Hellenize the Jews. He demanded that the Jews break the bow string of their roots (the tenets of their faith, core values, traditions, etc...) and come and bow down before the statue of Zeus and worship him. He also demanded that they eat the flesh of the sacrificed pig, both of which were forbidden to the Jew. Some of the Jews obeyed the Syrian guards out of fear for their lives. Many others refused and decided to finally fight back.

The fighting began in Modlin, a village near Jerusalem. This is how it all came about (this reminds me of the revolt led by the Scottish hero William Wallace, made popular by Mel Gibson's classic film "BRAVEHEART"): a Greek officer and his soldiers assembled some villagers and commanded them to bow down to the idol of Zeus, and eat the flesh of a pig. When the officer came to Mattathias, the well-respected Jewish High Priest, he steadfastly refused. When another Jewish villager standing in back of Mattathias, voluntarily stepped forward and ate a piece of pork, Mattathias became outraged and took out his sword and killed him. He then turned and killed the Syrian/Greek officer as well. His five sons and brothers, along with others, then attacked the rest of the soldiers and killed them too. Mattathias's family then fled into the nearby mountains and remained in hiding, gathering an army of other Jews who became a type of guerilla warfare unit, united in their faith in God and obedience to His commandments, and their resistance of the Syrian army and their king's tyranny. Using a type of hit and hide tactic, they ambushed and destroyed Greek battalions whenever possible, bringing about heavy casualties to Syria's army. About a year after the Maccabaeun revolt started, Mattathias died. But before his death he put his brave son, Judas, in charge. The origins of what we know today as chivalry and knighthood have been credited to Judas Maccabaeus. After only three years of fighting, the Jews, under the leadership of the Maccabaeus brothers, defeated the Syrians, despite the fact that they were sorely out-numbered, and had fewer weapons.

This great victory made it possible for the Jews, who had been banned from observing the Sabbath and studying the Bible, to once again worship the one true God in the Temple at Jerusalem, which eventually led to the re-establishing of the Kingdom of Judah. It could be said that this great victory was among the first for religious freedom in the world. Some say Judas Maccabaeus (or Maccabee) might have indeed been a biblical hero of Jesus when he was a young boy. After all, his family celebrated Hanukkah annually. It is not far fetched nor does it violate Jesus' divinity to surmise that he² and his brothers exercised their boyhood imaginations about Biblical heroes like Joshua and Caleb, David the giant killer, and yes, the "hammers" of the Maccabaeus family.

Surely you can see that the Bible supports the idea of reaching backward in time to find enduring symbols and imagery that exemplify those things we want our own sons and daughters to embody. The entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews hearkens us to remember those it includes in what some theologians have called

² As touching his humanity, of course.

“the Hall of Faith.” Knighthood too, serves in such a capacity, as we shall further see in chapter eight. Let’s answer an important question at this point.

Is Knighthood a useful Symbol for Manhood and Womanhood?

My answer to the above question is: yes, very much so, as I hope by now you can plainly see. Knighthood provides a clear, inspiring, definable, and historically enduring image of true biblical manhood (and, secondarily, womanhood). Knighthood also provides a directional process that takes an eight-year-old boy and girl and assists parents in molding and shaping them into early maturity. The terminology of knighthood provides the kind of “manly” language that will help our sons cast a vision for their own manhood, which is sorely lacking in today’s feminized and feminizing society, to say the least. The concept of knighthood provides plenty of ideas for rites of passage, formal ceremony and intentional symbolism, as well as a continuum complete with achievements and accomplishments and other means of qualifying for both boys and girls. However, the curriculum and titles are different in regards to them. The girl’s curriculum includes those things that will help them become a Christian Lady instead of a knight, patterned off the Proverb 31 woman. And we teach our sons what to look for in a woman when one day they are ready for courtship and marriage (and vice versa).

We have found that knighthood incorporates the hands-on direction of parents, especially the father, as well as fosterage from non-biological fathers of the church, in the shaping of those children whose parents are not active in the church or who are, for whatever reason, not involved in their lives. Our vision and application of knighthood is held together by a fraternity of a growing number of men who have given themselves to the calling of “loosing sons of thunder and daughters of lightning.”³

The Principle of the Threshold

Societies as well as families need strong, courageous, values-driven fathers. Jesus taught a lesson about a “strong man” who guarded his treasure.⁴ So long as he took his place at the threshold of his door, guarding it from any intruder or thief who would dare attempt to rob him and his family, his treasures were safe. Fathers need to see that danger lurks as near as the very threshold of their homes! Fathers have been charged with the God-given, delegated authority to stand guard over the thresh-hold of their home, guarding their most valuable treasures (their family) from those things that corrupt, deceive, and otherwise negatively influence his family, causing them to wander away from the faith.

³ From a sermon by the same title by the author

⁴ This teaching of Jesus in Matthew 12:29 was about Jesus authority over the devil. I am stretching my usage of this teaching to mean the necessity of a strong father to stand at the door of his home in order to guard and scrutinize everything that comes across it.

Nothing should be allowed to cross the threshold of our door that would dilute the beliefs, convictions and core values of our family. This calls for vigilance. At times such vigilance is not received well by one's children, who consider such vigilance an invasion of privacy, and words like "nosey" might be uttered under their breath as a possible intruder is uncovered and "busted" by their ever watchful parents. But such caution and vigilance is a man's calling from God, nevertheless. I've often told my children that I was called to be their father first, and their friend second. And sometimes, being a father can seem to be very unfriendly to your kids, as well as a very unpopular thing to do. It goes with the territory.

Jesus himself gave such an example in describing a good shepherd, who would lay his own body across the threshold of the sheep gate at night, so that any predator or thief with shish kabob on his mind would have to go through the shepherd first. Fathers need to model such self-sacrificing courage to their sons and to their daughters by keeping a protective watch at the threshold of their own doors.

Do you remember the story in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, when God confronted Cain about his growing jealousy toward his brother Abel. A dark shadow was casting itself over his countenance. 1 John 2:9 informs us that if we hate our brother, we are in darkness. And so it was with Cain. An evil influence had come to exploit his jealousy of Abel. Cain was warned in verse 7 to reject passivity and do the right thing, because if he didn't, "sin" was "crouching" at – guess where? The thresh-hold of his door! The word for sin here came from an ancient Akkadian term for a terrifying night demon who lurked near the entry way of peoples houses waiting for someone who would come out unawares, so it could grab them and tear them apart, limb from limb. This is what the world wants to do to our families. Like the Akkadian night demon, the world's decadent value systems want to lead our children away from our home and our influence, in order to take them, exploit their desires and tear them ultimately, to pieces, morally and spiritually speaking.

Fathers need to train their sons to embrace their masculinity and the way God has chosen to "wire" a man. In her book, *The War Against Boys*, author Christina Hoff Sommers wrote about "How misguided feminism is harming our young men". I found her book very interesting, but one of the profound themes of the book is it's analysis of how feminism has successfully misinformed the American public for years about the contrived fragility of girls and violence of boys, and the anti-masculine bias resulting from this faulty research. From this kind of feministic misinformation, whole generations of boys have grown up ashamed to embrace their own masculinity, to the point where androgyny is now almost preferred over any kind of differentness and acceptance of one's gender.⁵ Past generations of women, from mothers and teachers, to girl friends and counselors, influenced by this faulty research, constantly pressured our sons to

“get in touch with their feelings” and act in ways more characteristic of the feminine gender than the masculine gender. In fact, not even girls and women were embracing their own femininity. While pressuring boys to act more like girls, girls were growing up learning to act more masculine. No wonder we are now a culture of men who have lost a vision of what true, strong, virile manhood is really like. It seems that as we became softer, women became harder.

Sommers research exposed what boils down a social experiment that has failed, and that as a result of that failure, our country has been weakened, our boys feminized, and our men emasculated. Now what you are about to read is going to make you ma, so be prepared. Sommers wrote in the chapter entitled Guys and Dolls,

Resocializing boys in the direction of femininity is now high on the educational agenda of many educators, women's institutes and government officials. Notably active on this front of the undeclared war against boys are the Harvard graduate School of education, the Wellelesely College Center for Research on Women, and the U.S. Department of Education.⁶

You have probably heard of curriculums bent on resocializing (castrating) boys, under the title, “Gender equity.” The idea here is to remove from boys and girls from k through 12th grade, any gender specific, gender empowering, gender strengthening examples, stories, toys, books and other kinds of gender specific items (called by these castrators “Gender-stereotyping”) from our sons and daughters, in order to blur the lines of gender specificity. In other words, Boys were given dolls to play with (girl dolls), because as Sommers put it, “*Getting boys to play with dolls is the principle goal.*” A guide to “Gender equality” curriculum in one pre-school urges the day care teachers to reinforce the boys nurturing side. And the dolls had to be of a very specific kind that did not stereotype gender roles (no mama bear dolls with aprons and brooms; no G.I. Joes holding guns, etc...). Sommers findings are chilling,

*The government sponsored day care guide also urges vigilant monitoring of the children's fantasy play: 'Watch your children at play. Are stereotypes present in the fantasies and situations they act out' Intervene to set the record straight. 'Why don't you be the doctor, Amy, and you the nurse, Billy?' The end justifies the interventions: Unless we practice nonsexist child rearing, 'we cannot fulfill our dreams of equality for all people.'*⁷

My goodness! Forget saving the whales, whose going to save the males!? Rather than blurring the lines of what is feminine and what is masculine, the opposite is true: we need to model and reinforce in our young men and women

⁶ Ibid, p.76

⁷ Sommers, p. 77

examples of true womanhood and manhood. Fathers need elevate and encourage a biblical vision of manhood to their children; for their daughters so they will grow up to defend their convictions and select a husband who reflects the true qualities of a godly-man; and for their sons so that they will become manly and strong, and who stand with their father and one day stand as a father, at the thresh-hold of the door as the strong man God has placed as provider, protector and teacher over their own home. What happens if the man who guards the door is over-powered? The treasure is threatened by the thief who comes to “steal, kill and destroy.”⁸ Brothers, our sons need to be shown a model of godly masculinity that assumes the responsibility to stand ready at their watch, to lay down their lives if necessary to make sure no evil comes across that thresh-hold. Such sons will be taught to be disciplined and self-controlled, but not stymied by paralysis that comes from too much analysis. There is a time to prepare and a time to take action. Teach your sons and daughters to know the difference. It is harder to motivate a dead horse than to slow down a racehorse. Teach them to be men of action. Boys can be shaped and honed into young men who can discern when it is time to act, and they will be prone to act decisively if they are prepared beforehand. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Sons of Thunder, Daughters of Lightening

Keep in mind that our Lord Jesus had two especially passionate and temperamental disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They would just as soon call fire down from heaven and incinerate a city as tolerate it's rejection of Christ. That is how they would handle conflict. But Jesus took them under His wing and they responded over time to the Master's touch as Mark assures us-

“James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to whom He gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder).” Mark 3:17

The nick-name Jesus called them was not disparaging of the way these temperamental disciples were wired. It was an affectionate way of calling attention to their temperament, which, under Jesus' control, would aid them in the ministry he was calling them to. Jeremiah was like them, as was most men God called to be leaders of His people. Jeremiah, feeling so stirred by righteous duty that he was about to become like an exploding volcano, cried out-

“His word is like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed I cannot.”

My church is fortunate enough to have as its Youth Pastor a young father by the name of Andy White. Andy is a good model of a strong, manly Christian, who, in the words of Lewis, is a good balance of “velvet and steel.” By that I mean that Andy has a gentle and soft-spoken “velvet” demeanor – that is - most of the time. But on occasion, when the situation calls for it, he can become steel and fart

⁸ John 10:10

nails! Andy had T-shirts made for our Youth Group with the above scripture out of Jeremiah printed on the back with an icon of a man engulfed in a flame of fire. Wow! And may God raise up our sons and daughters to be like Andy and Jeremiah! God calls men of decisive action and passionate convictions, who, like His only begotten Son, would jump in front of a bullet, and lay down their lives sacrificially if the need calls for it. We need a generation of sons who earn such a nick-name as “the sons of thunder” (and daughters who are lightning) not because of their uncontrollable temper or impetuosity, but because of their moral courage and ability to be Christian men of action and strength, who reject passivity, are “strong in the Lord and the power of his might”⁹ and “having done all to do to stand, stand in the evil day.”¹⁰ From the home to the church, we are in need of a generation of sons who thunder with decisive action, moral conviction, and a vision of how a man should act in any given situation no matter the risk or the cost. The fiery faith of our daughters should flash like bolts of lightning if the need should arise for them, too, to defend the faith and take care of business as shield maidens of the kingdom. God help us all!

The Process won't be easy

On a few occasions, parents have tended to be a bit casual in their approach to the knighthood process in our church. They attempt to sign up their sons and daughters for the induction ceremony without giving much thought to what will be required of him or her (or them). This is why we have a screening process that parents and their prospective candidates for Page (*handmaids* is the girl equivalent), have to go through. And to tell you the truth, it usually isn't the kids who are flaky, it's their parents, and of course, their fathers are most to blame because they are the most responsible. Knighthood will require a radical change in the lifestyle and life-focus of the father if he is to fill his role as the principle teacher and mentor of his children. This means there can be no “dumbing down” of the knighthood process. It is tough, challenging, stretching, and arduous on both the kids and the parents. Anyone who wants to embrace it will be embracing a way and rule of life; a shaping perspective on life. That is why you as a father will have to become an *Arma Patria* (or, if you aspire to, a knight), in order to help your children one day become a member of the fellowship and brotherhood of knights (or the female equivalent).

William Marshall, the greatest of all Knights said something very sobering about the directional process of knighthood. He said that it must be “*So strong a thing, and of such hardihood, and so costly in the learning [of it], that a wicked man or low dare not undertake it... Whoso would enjoy high honor first must suitably display that he has well been schooled to such arts.*” The whole process loses integrity if there is a different set of standards for one person than there is for others who went before him. The only way a son or daughter can fail at any point in the knighthood process is if they are 1) just too lazy or disinterested to

⁹ Ephesians 6:10

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:11

put forth the time and effort; or 2) their parents are too lazy or disinterested to put forth the time, effort and investment needed to help their child work through a life-defining process, 3) the church fails to support, reinforce, recognize and help organize a fellowship or round table of likeminded men who will come alongside of dads and their kids to help them in the process. If a father claims to be too busy to be an Arma Patria, then I or one of the Arma Patria will gently challenge him by pointing out that perhaps his priorities are out of order. Many a young person's eternal destiny, temporal existence and future success will be put in jeopardy around the world in the next few seconds simply because their fathers were too busy to give them the input they needed to become mature and strong.

It hurts my heart so bad when I think about it that I must confess I've lost patience with the same old worn out excuses I've heard in over 25 years of pastoring. I've seen the consequences of these excuses too many times. I've had to look into the face (or lack thereof) of a once beautiful teenage girl whose face was sheered off in a car accident. She should have never been riding with the boy, who was drunk at the time, and had her father been there for her, at the threshold of the door, he could've prevented her from going out with such an unworthy young man. I've seen too many teenaged mothers – "babies raising babies" and too many teen suicides, and too many teen alcoholics, drug addicts, and porn slaves, just to name a few in a long list of casualties, who will be suffering for the rest of their lives from the results of the curse of fatherlessness in our country. I've seen too many kids make the wrong decision because they had to make it alone, to not challenge the "I'm too busy" excuse anymore. Too many times we have said yes to everyone else, and "no" to our lonely, needy sons and daughters. I say – "No more!" dads, "No more!"