

# The Way of a Knight

The Lessons of Chivalry and It's Impact upon a Knight

By Pastor Pete Bertolero

***A knight should be bold, fair, courteous and well-mannered, generous and loyal, not foolish or rash, and should speak fairly without discourtesy. A knight should be all this, and also proud and fierce to his enemies, and kind to his friends."***

- *Durmart le Galois, 13th century*<sup>1</sup>

***Young knights, learn to love God and Honor women. Be chivalrous and learn the art that your honor will increase in war. Wrestle well, skillfully wields spear, sword, and dagger in a manful way.***

- *Master Sigmund Ringeck, fencing master to the Duke of Bavaria, c.1430*<sup>2</sup>

***What then is Chivalry? So strong a thing, and of such hardihood, and so costly in the learning, 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 Biography of William Marshall*<sup>3</sup>

Did you carefully read the above quotes? Did the qualities of a knight leap out at you, as they should? Are these qualities common or rare in our society today? They are rare indeed! In fact, they are almost non-existent in older adults, let alone in young men and young ladies. The fact of the matter is, unless these things be instilled and engraved into the hearts and habits of young men and women, they will not become standout characteristics in them as young adults, and later, as mature men and women with families of their own.

This is why our knighthood program and the accompanying rites of passage is called a *directional process*. By *directional process* I mean a way or system of doing things, in which a specific philosophy of training is used by a number of parents (with an emphasis on the fathers taking a more active role) as an aid to bringing their young boys and girls to early maturity. This is what it took in order to train a young man in ancient times to become a knight: it took a training process that shaped and formed his mind and body into well-mannered gentlemen, and a well trained warrior. This is what every would be knight and maiden needs: an intentional, strategic, well thought out and proven system of training that, if committed to by it's trainers and trainees, will mature them and

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted on John Clements excellent websight ARMA Youth

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> As quoted by Robert Lewis in his book Raising a Modern Day Knight, p. 43

make them uncommon young Christian men and women who mature early, and are more than prepared for the challenges life will attempt to throw at them.<sup>4</sup>

Now there may be some of you who read this and who do not particularly like the idea of being a knight or maiden or heroine. Some would like it better if the example we were using was cowboys, or sports heroes, or rock stars, or soldiers, etc. This is understandable. No one example is going to speak to everybody alike. However, please keep this in mind: virtually every field of life that values nobility, discipline, bold courage under fire, honor and respect for everybody, and most especially women, children and the elderly, etc, have been influenced by the ancient ideals embodied in knighthoods code of conduct – chivalry. And so, even if the vision of being a knight, maiden or heroine isn't your thing necessarily, remember, it is the ideals embodied in the knight's code of conduct (which every other area of life values), and the process that forges these ideals into the heart and habits of young men and women, that this whole training process intends to do (and already has done for many who have completed it). Maybe you won't be as excited to wear the particular garments, or receive the symbols and jewelry and weapons and such, that are earned at each level, but if you enjoy completing objectives that are recognized and honored as real achievements that are helping you acquire skill, and character, and healthy habits that are part of a mature person's character, these other things you are required to comply with won't deter you from entering and finishing this process. Obviously, *"the heroes of today do not ride on horseback, wearing full armor, but they are made of the same stuff they have always been [made of]--courage when it matters most, placing the good of others above one's self, and pursuing what is 'right', no matter what the odds against."*<sup>5</sup>

### **Marshall's Quote**

Let me just say one more thing about the process of chivalry before we get into the history and roots of it. The quote above from the biography of William Marshall, one of the greatest and most godly Christian knights who ever lived, is very important to remember:

***What then is Chivalry? So strong a thing, and of such hardihood, and so costly in the learning, 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.***

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<sup>4</sup> Although I use the term "young" as in young men and women, this is not to discount older men and women who desire to become knights, maidens or heroines. Such are welcome. But this directional process was chiefly crafted to help parents cooperate with the mission of the church to disciple and train their boys and girls to grow into strong and faithful Christians and to develop those skills and characteristics that will give them the advantage in a competitive world to be successful without compromising their faith and integrity. Also keep in mind that there is a price tag on becoming a knight, maiden, heroine, and that is in the passing of the baton: coming alongside not only ones own children but those children whose fathers are uninvolved in their lives for whatever reasons.

<sup>5</sup> From the web site of Brian P. Rice called ChivalryKidZone

## Chivalry is a *Breaking Process*

When Sir Marshall said that chivalry was so “*strong a thing*” he was speaking about the rigorous nature of it. It is a forging process. That means it has within it a shaping potential. Chivalry can’t make you unless it breaks you of certain things that are the negative consequences of living in our current worldly society, including vulgarity, which includes a lack of manners, rudeness, being discourteous, impoliteness, self-centeredness, restlessness, lacking proper respect for authority, property, and people in general, and all things sacred (irreverence); indiscipline, indecency, lacking good taste, lacking culture and grace, etc. Not only do we develop these bad habits and bad attitudes because of our culture, but to some degree, because they are modeled in our homes! It will take a consistent, ongoing, tough training process to break you of these habits and attitudes. They will not surrender easily. The training process embodied in chivalry is itself *strong* enough to break you of these habits, if you are faithful in completing each assigned task and taking to heart the values they seek to instill.

While it is true that high honor and title await those who compete for such a high prize, it is nonetheless a prize that must be pursued at the cost of other things, the tokens of those who have Chosen a less honorable road. For instance, the knights of the Order of the Green Cross have taken a vow of poverty, chastity and faithfulness. This equals out to be certain limitations upon their persons that others have every right to pursue and enjoy. As an example, the vow of poverty is such because although we have not been forced into poverty of material goods or financial hardship, we do not allow ourselves those things that would compete for our pure devotion to Christ and our singular goal of defending the faith and protecting Christ’s church from false teachers and those who would divide or deceive. Our pursuit of the worthy title – knight, has cost us a great many things others enjoy, for the purpose of serving in the name of Christ in the way of time, study, service, and progressing in the way of a knight. Our poverty is an enforced poverty we have gladly and freely chose to embrace. It is not so much a loss of things to us, as it is a refusal of ownership over the things God, in His mercy and grace, have given us to steward, that all might be enriched by our wealth, and all might derive some benefit from our successes and blessings.

We do not give ourselves to sexual pleasures outside the marriage covenant we have or will make with the wife God has seen fit to give to us. We have made a covenant with our eyes, according to Job 31, to not look upon things that are pornographic, lewd or vulgar. We do not condone blasphemy and will walk out of a movie at the theatre or home where the Lord’s name is not honored, but profaned or otherwise dishonored. We do not permit ourselves inordinate time spent on things that do not profit our souls or advance God’s work in the world. When we do play, we are not unduly competitive or dishonest in our dealings with others, ever mindful of the example we are under orders to set, that men and women may praise our Father in heaven when they see our chaste and honorable conduct. For true is the ancient proverb which says “*Humility comes before honor*” (Proverbs 15:33; 18:12).

## Chivalry is Hard and Costly

Marshall also used terms like *hardihood*, and *costly* in describing the kind of temperament and investment of time and effort the process will require of you. How badly do you desire to be the best Christian gentlemen you can be, by the grace of God? How great is your desire to be extraordinary in your level of maturity and character development, so much so, that the kind of person you are stands out when your not even trying, bringing honor and pride to your parents, mentors and cohorts? Because the chivalry process you will undergo to become a knight, maiden, or heroine will provide you with the training necessary to become such a person, but not without a cost. It will cost you to become these things. You will indeed pay a high price for the things chivalry offers you.

It will cost you sacrificially. You will need to sacrifice certain activities and luxuries your peers have the freedom to enjoy and pursue. It will cost you in terms of your ignorance about the kinds of things that, in the knowing of them, you will become empowered and wise by them. It will cost you in that you will have to learn to fast, grow more committed to your church, and learn to serve at the pleasure of others. It will require of you a generous heart in the way of giving to others, not just yourself. It will require you to learn to govern yourself even at the table, by learning proper etiquette and manners.

## Chivalry Weds Military Excellence with Courtesy

John Seward, wrote,

*Courtesy is the mark of a Christian knight. To be more than a mere warrior, a man must be gallant in considerateness as well as courage. In late medieval literature, the exemplary knight is decked not just with iron mail, but with the whole armor of the virtues, of which courteous chivalry is the helm.*

*Of Sir Gawain it is said that "his cleanness and his courtesy crooked were never," and in The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer's Knight is praised as a "worthy man" who loved "chivalry, truth and honor, freedom and courtesy." When he was ritually blessed by the bishop, the new knight made promises touching chiefly on faith and charity: unfailing obedience to the Church and a constant readiness to defend the widow and orphan. The secret of chivalry was in the soul."<sup>6</sup>*

The code of chivalry is a man-making process, and more than that, a hero-making process. It is a breaking process; a hardy process; a self-sacrificing and costly process, because it is a process that chisels the image of God out of the

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<sup>6</sup> From a paper by John Seward entitled The Grace of God in Courtesy. Seward teaches dogmatic theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia.

hardened, calloused, discourteous hunk of marble this world causes us to become. Since God is the epitome of courtesy, the process of chivalry will put into us, or if you prefer, carve out of us, a person of manners, courtesy and etiquette.

The concept of God as courteous, comes from the teaching of the 14th-century English mystic, Julian of Norwich. The blessed Trinity was seen, by Julian, as the source of all the perfections that are either sought or found among his creatures, and so in the Godhead it can be said there is infinite courtesy. Julian said, "Our Lord himself is sovereign Homeliness. But as homely as he is, even so courteous he is; for he is very Courtesy." Lady Julian reiterated what St. Thomas Aquinas had already said in a sermon expounding the parable about the king who held a wedding feast for his son. God the Father, he says, displays "generosity, courtesy and familiarity" in inviting us to the nuptials of his incarnate son. "Great is the courtesy when the King of Kings and Lord of Lords invites us to his wedding feast."

### **The Discourtesy of Antichrist**

If God's grace is in courtesy, the devil's disgrace lurks in discourtesy **According to the author of Piers Plowman, discourtesy will be one of the marks of Antichrist.** William Langland prophesied a terrible falling away from Christ and his Church in the end times, and the sign of that apostasy would be discourtesy. Intellectual arrogance would lead men into infidelity to the Christian Church, contempt for the little and weak, and depravity of morals--in a word, into what Scripture calls "the pride of life," the deadly opposite of courtesy.<sup>7</sup>

Knighly courtesy is derived from the Biblical characteristic contained in the word "grave".

#### **1 Timothy 3:8**

*"Likewise must the deacons be **grave**, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre..."*

#### **1 Timothy 3:11**

*"Even so must their wives be **grave**, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."*

#### **Titus 2:2**

*"That the aged men be sober, **grave**, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."*

The King James Bible uses a strange word. The word "**grave**" comes from the Greek word - **semnos**, meaning "honorable", "noble", "dignified"... we still speak of the "**gravity**" of a situation, meaning the seriousness of it. Chivalry is an idealization of virtue, a wedding of military excellence with courtesy, a sense of justice, piety, and honor. The Code of Chivalry includes these principles and ideals:

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

- **Prowess:** To seek excellence instead of mediocrity in all one's endeavors, and especially those expected of a knight, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than for personal gain.
- **Justice:** To seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy.
- **Loyalty:** Be known for unwavering commitment to the people and ideals you choose to live by. There are many places where compromise is expected; loyalty is not amongst them.
- **Defense:** The ideal knight was sworn by oath to defend his lord and those who depended upon him. Seek always to defend your nation, your family, and those to whom you believe worthy of loyalty.
- **Courage:** Being a knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one. Knight must be prepared to make personal sacrifices in order to live consistent with his values and convictions. At the same time, a knight should seek wisdom so that he can see that stupidity and courage have not become cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief.
- **Faith:** A knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives hope against the despair that human failings create.
- **Humility:** Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds.
- **Largesse:** Be generous in so far as your resources allow; largesse used in this way counters gluttony. It also makes the path of mercy easier to discern when a difficult decision of justice is required.
- **Nobility:** Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and duties of a knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennobles the spirit, growing the character of the knight. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

**Courtesy** is, first of all, reverence for one's fellow man.<sup>8</sup> In the Christian knight, it is a habit of seeing people through the eyes of faith and charity, which sees in every person, great or small, the shining image of God, the brother for whom Christ died. The courteous person has an attitude of reverential respect and humility toward his fellows: by small deeds of kindness, he acknowledges their worth, their dignity, as human persons.

## **Courtesy in God**

The triune God is the source of all the perfections to be found among his creatures, and so in him is infinite courtesy. This is the teaching of the 14th-century English mystic, Julian of Norwich. One of the "showings" she received from the Lord was of his courtesy. "Our Lord himself is sovereign Homeliness. But as homely as he is, even so courteous he is; for he is very Courtesy." Lady Julian only translates into English what St. Thomas Aquinas had already said in a sermon expounding the parable about the king who held a wedding feast for his son. God the Father, he says, displays "generosity, courtesy and familiarity" in inviting us to the nuptials of his incarnate son. "Great is the courtesy when the King of Kings and Lord of Lords invites us to his wedding feast."

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Saward goes on to write that during the 12th century, when chivalry reached its highest point, five important things happened to the ideals of what was first called "knighthood."

**First**, the church, ever dominant in medieval affairs of morality, began to reshape the idea of the social warrior to its own ends. Knights were called to crusade, to be the "soldiers of God." As the crusades were launched, the ideal put forward by the church sought to add new virtues to the potent strength of the warrior--**that with God and right on one's side, the sword arm itself was strengthened.** The church added piety, justice, defense of the innocent and the weak, honesty, humility and purity to the code of chivalry.

**Secondly**, courtesy is closely tied to humility. In fact, Lord Chesterton defined courtesy as "**the wedding of humility with dignity**" and gave us an example of the Black Prince, who waited like a servant on a man who

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<sup>8</sup>From a paper by John Saward entitled The Grace of God in Courtesy

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

was his own prisoner. The courteous man has dignity, but he does not flaunt it. There is something in courtesy that was exemplified best in our Lord Jesus Christ, which in the book of Philippians 2:6-11, has been best described as self-emptying. When we use that term for knights, it means the noble refusal of self-worship. The proud or self-centered man may be polite, but he can never be courteous, because he refuses to serve.

**Thirdly**, courtesy has been said to be the first cousin of chastity. A lustful man is blinded by his own passion. He cannot look upon his lady as a subject, but merely as an object to gratify his desires. Because lust has blinded him, he cannot see his lady as the worthy recipient of his courtesy. She has become a thing to be used rather than a person to be served. The knights of the courtesy literature strive to be saintly. They can be deceived by the world, attacked by spirits of greed and lust, and tempted by the devil, but in Christ's power they struggle to overcome. Courtesy and moral cleanliness are measured by the wholeheartedness of the struggle to rise above one's base nature. Before all else, the Christian knight strives to remain in the state of grace. He does not arrogantly presume that this is his moral and attitudinal condition, but if he is not in God's grace, he will fervently pray for God to put him there.

**Fourthly**, courtesy is a species of mercy, a kind of compassion. "Pity maketh a king courteous," says John Glover, "both in his word and in his deed." The courteous man has *fellow-feeling*. His heart senses the possibility of pain and embarrassment in the other person, and he spares no cost in avoiding it. The courteous man is "a very perfect gentle knight." The bruised reed he does not break. At the same time, we must add that there is nothing effeminate or timid about the courteous man. He is, after all, a knight, a crusader. When he needs to fight, he does so. The gentle kindness of his courtesy is precisely directed especially toward women and children-- that is to say, toward the defense of innocent life and everything small and vulnerable. In the heart of courtesy, the lion lies down with lamb.

**Finally**, may I say to you that in courtesy there is a loveliness – a beauty. It is an attribute of the whole person, at once graceful bodily gesture (the "curtsy") and gracious attitude of mind (courteous). St. Thomas Aquinas said that the spiritually beautiful and the morally right were really identical, because when a man is righteous, the splendor of reason shines through his actions. Now courtesy is inseparably linked to the morally right. Therefore, the courteous person is beautiful and sheds beauty on those to whom he shows courtesy. To display courtesy to a brutal man is to show him the loveliness God gave him in his nature and the even greater loveliness he could have if only he allowed God's grace to change him.

## **Hardihood**

Are you feeling overwhelmed yet? You should, because you are yet unbroken of your worldliness and selfishness. We all are in some way. That is why Marshall used **hardihood** to describe the kind of temperament you're going to need to have. To be hardy, means that you grow in your endurance. You're going to have to be tough enough to do things you do not want to do, that are currently too hard or difficult for you to do, and some of which you may naturally turn away from. You will need to not only start well but finish well if you are ever to become the kind of person worthy to be dubbed a knight, and the accolades and favor shown to such a man.

If the chivalry process sounds too demanding, and you're not sure you have the inner desire and proper motivation to commit to it, then perhaps you are right. If everybody could become knightly, and if such things embodied in the knighthood process of old were easy and cost nothing, and required no endurance, obedience and self-discipline, then anyone could do it and nothing would change at all in their character, or in their conduct and personal habits. Admittedly, such things are foreign to our current culture, and cannot be acquired outside a breaking process. That is why Marshall wrote that

***a wicked man or low dare not undertake it.***

## **Lowborn Men**

You are probably saying to yourself right now, something like –

***Now wait a minute Pastor Pete. Just because I may not want to participate in the knighthood process doesn't mean I am wicked!***

I would say back to you, "That is correct. Well spoken." But you see, Marshall didn't just say that chivalry was so hard, and requires such a commitment to lofty, biblical, Christian ideals that the wicked dare not undertake it, but that another kind of person should not undertake it. Marshall uses the word "**low**." In his day, the word "low" sometimes pointed to a **vulgar** or **uncouth** person who was attracted to low or unworthy things. Another word for **low** was the word **base**. Both these words pointed to the kind of people in society oftentimes called **rabble**. Other words used in more modern times to describe a low person were **scoundrel**, **rogue**, **commoner**, and the most common – **rascal**. Such a person lacked integrity, loved to get into trouble, lacked maturity, and was constantly playing tricks on people. Now think about the maturity level in most of your friends and peers. Are they honest? Are they industrious with their spare time, or do they play around a lot? Do they get into mischief? How many are troublemakers? Is that the kind of thing you want to be known for? Is that what you want people to remember about your teenage years – that you were just a follower; just one of the gang; a goof off; part of the rabble? A rascal? A no-account?

Another word for a lowly person was **cowardly**, pointing to the refusal to courageously stand up for what he/she believed in. Folding when the going got hard; refusing to fight for what is right and for the weak and downtrodden; and, someone who was cowardly in the moral sense of the word. To be cowardly meant allowing one's moral price tag to be so low and so cheap that almost anybody could get them to cross their moral boundaries and give that which is precious away to another lowborn, base person. Is that the kind of person you want staring back at you from the mirror? If so, don't sign on for the knighthood process. The reason is simple: it is a process that will only be effective on behalf of those individuals who want the benefits and blessings it offers.

I have challenged low born young men, who were vulgar, ignoble, and cowardly many times, by out-and-out calling them a "moral coward." I explained this term, telling them that a real man rejects passivity, assumes personal responsibility for their lives, and leads by courageous example. I point out that young men like the, are a "dime-a-dozen", the cast-offs of a morally impotent society. I encourage them to watch the movie, *The Four Feathers*. The plot of the movie involves a young officer and his friends, all of whom get letters for active duty. But Harry Faversham, the hero of the story, is at first terrified of going, and tries to talk his more honorable friends out of it. This is where the movie gets its title *The Four Feathers* refers to three white feathers given to Harry by his friends, denoting cowardice. After telling his fiancé what had happened, she too, turns away from him in disgust, and soon he too, gets a white feather from her as well. The rest of the movie is how, shamed in to action, Harry sets out to rescue his friends who have either been imprisoned, or are leading troops in the desert, or claim the bodies of those who died. In the end, his courage and heroic rescue of his friends earns their respect, and he is able to return the four white feathers and clear his good name. It's one of the must see movie's in our program.

After telling these young men whom I have called "moral cowards the plot of the movie, I then challenge them by presenting them with a verbal, (or sometimes an actual white feather in a black card and envelope, and challenged them to live their lives in such a way that they prove me wrong, and are able to one day hand me the white feather back. The best way for the moral coward of today to become the moral leader or hero of tomorrow, is through training in the code of chivalry.

In the words of William Marshall, the results that chivalry produces in a worthy young man and woman come under the heading of **high honor**, and that can only be enjoyed by those who complete it's required education. Read Sir Marshall's comment again in this light,

***Whoso would enjoy high honor first must suitably display that he has well been schooled to such arts [the disciplines of chivalry].***

## **The Definition of *Chivalry***

The origin of the word 'chivalry' finds its roots in the French word for horse, which is *cheval*. The French word for knight was similar, being chevalier, which was an ambassador of la chevalerie (chivalry). As a matter of fact, knighthood and chivalry are so closely associated that many understood them to mean one and the same thing. The early (original) chevalier were simply horsemen equipped with lances and swords, and were probably barbarian descendants of the Germanic Goths who raided and later invaded the Roman Empire from the third to the fifth centuries. Knighthood gradually developed so that by the end of the eleventh century, a knight was a person of noble birth, who usually possessed property, and who was loyal to the teachings of the Christian church, biblical morality and the social systems of the day, which were usually aligned to the Church.

### **The Biblical Origins of Chivalry**

It is difficult to determine the precise time the first code of chivalry came to be. However, some historians have reported that the first official code of chivalry was created during the time of the Maccabean revolt. This happened during 162 B.C. An evil Syrian King by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes the IV sought to bring about a one-world religion throughout his kingdom, which included Palestine. His goal was to completely Hellenize the Jews, from their clothing to their diet. He even outlawed circumcision. Many Jews caved in under the pressure. One of the most blasphemous things Antiochus did was to declare the Temple at Jerusalem to be the Temple of the Greek God Zeus, which became known as an abomination, and desolation. It was an outright desecration of the sacred temple dedicated to God. Statues of Zeus were erected around the altar, bearing the likeness of the emperor himself, whose surname "Epiphanes" meant "God manifest." Epiphanes declared himself to be the very incarnation of God!

Can you imagine what kind of reaction this would have provoked in faithful Jews? In fact, somewhere in the neighborhood of 80,000 Jews who wouldn't tolerate Antiochus' desecration of their sacred things were martyred for their faith by this cruel king!

But the point is that Antiochus IV couldn't have gotten as far as he did in his attempts to compromise and later desecrate the Jewish faith if not for the faithlessness and neglect on the part of those less committed to the faith in the Jewish community. Many Jews desired to become more like the modern Greeks of their day, to fit in and be accepted by those who did not hold to their Jewish beliefs, and did not believe in the Bible. They allowed Antiochus's policies and customs to penetrate their culture little by little until it was almost too late to do something about it. Just as all seemed lost, and the faith that was handed down to them through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was totally compromised, a critical event took place that turned everything around.

Let me backtrack for a moment. Remember the setting of this event: Antiochus demanded that all his subjects, including the Jews, worship the Greek gods and adopt the Greek way of life. He demanded that the Jews come and bow

down before the statue of Zeus and worship him, followed by eating 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, while others had become so compromised in their faith they didn't see why there was any hassle at all. But not all of the Jews bowed their knee. Many faithful Jews refused to compromise their faith, nor would they allow Antiochus' desecrations to continue without being challenged. So they decided to finally fight back.

The fighting began in Modlin, a village near Jerusalem. I often remark that the unfolding of this revolt reminds me of the one led by the Scottish hero William Wallace, made popular by Mel Gibson's classic film "BraveHeart." It so happened that on a certain day a Greek officer and his soldiers assembled some villagers in Modlin and commanded them to bow down to an idol of Zeus, and then eat the flesh of a pig. When the officer came to Mattathias, the well-respected Jewish High Priest, he boldly steadfastly refused. When another Jewish villager standing in back of Mattathias, then voluntarily stepped forward and proceeded to eat the pork, Mattathias became outraged and, taking out his sword, killed the man. Not stopping there, He then turned and killed the Syrian/Greek officer as well! Now Mattathias had five sons and, along with others who believed as he did, attacked the rest of the soldiers and killed them as well. 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. Judah, one of Mattathias' sons, named the guerrilla army after his own families surname of ***Maccabaeus***, which means hammer or *hammerer*.

These men, united in their faith in God and obedience to His commandments, mounted a successful resistance of the Syrian army and their anti-Christ king's tyranny. Using a type of hit and hide tactic, they ambushed and destroyed Greek battalions whenever possible, bringing about heavy casualties. About a year after the Maccabaen revolt started, Mattathias died. But before his death he put his brave son, Judah, in charge of the Maccabaeus. It is very possible that the origins of what we know today as chivalry was first developed by Judah 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 have traced the origins of chivalry and knighthood to the Maccabaen revolt.

Now when the city of Jerusalem was again in the hands of the faithful, the Jews first priority was to cleanse the Temple of the defilement of idolatry practiced in it by the accursed Antiochus. The great golden Menorah (seven branched candelabrum) was returned to its rightful place. But when the people

attempted to re-light the perpetual flame of this sacred golden lamp, it was discovered that only one bowl of consecrated oil was left (all the others had been desecrated). This meant that they only had one days worth of oil. This posed a problem since it would take eight days to consecrate more oil. It was the sacred law that once the golden Lamp was lit, it would need to burn perpetually, and never be allowed to go out. What were they to do? Now here's the miracle in this story. When the seven golden lamps were lit, the sacred oil burned for a total of eight full days, which was the exact number of days needed to replenish the supply of oil needed to keep the perpetual light burning! So in honor of this miracle of divine favor, Judas Maccabaeus proclaimed an eight-day festival in order to keep the Jewish people always mindful of the miracle of lights. The name Hanukkah for The Feast of Lights, (aka: Feast of Dedication), was chosen, referring to the context in which the miracle occurred. So chivalry's origins are rooted in a movement that cleansed Jerusalem of pagan desecration and defilement, and called the compromised Jewish people to rededicate themselves to a pure and undefiled faith.

One of the important things you need to know about chivalry is it's antagonism with anything that smells of compromise, mediocrity (especially in matters of faith), immorality and that which is dishonorable or ignoble. For instance, below are some of the values and ideals that made up the knight's code of chivalry (from A Code of Chivalry: Modern, based on the "Old Code" Brian R. Price).

**Prowess:** To seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a knight, martial and otherwise, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than in personal aggrandizement.

**Justice:** Seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy. If the 'right' you see agrees with others, and you seek it out without bending to the temptation for expediency, then you will earn renown beyond measure.

**Loyalty:** Be known for unwavering commitment to the people and ideals you choose to live by. There are many places where compromise is expected; loyalty is not amongst them.

**Defense:** A knight is sworn by oath to defend those civil authorities placed over him and those who depend upon him. A Knight must seek always to defend his nation, his family, and those to whom he believes worthy of loyalty.

**Courage:** Being a knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one. Be prepared to make personal sacrifices in service of the precepts and people you value. At the same

time, a knight should seek wisdom to see that stupidity and courage are cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief.

**Faith:** A knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives hope against the despair that human failings create.

**Humility:** Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds. In this way the office of knighthood is well done and glorified, helping not only the gentle spoken of but also all who call themselves knights.

**Largesse:** Be generous in so far as your resources allow; largesse used in this way counters gluttony. It also makes the path of mercy easier to discern when a difficult decision of justice is required.

**Nobility:** Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and duties of a knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennobles the spirit, growing the character from dust towards the heavens. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

**Franchise:** Seek to emulate everything you have spoken of as sincerely as possible, not for the reason of personal gain but because it is right. Do not restrict your exploration to a small world, but seek to infuse every aspect of your life with these qualities. Should you succeed in even a tiny measure then you will be well remembered for your quality and virtue.

And so, a knight gives himself to code of conduct that bespeaks of Biblical living and behavior, codified into that which is chivalrous and which is based on a covenant of faith, hope and love in Almighty God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a way of life that has surrendered in love to an ideal life of devotion toward God, defense of the true and orthodox Christian faith, and protection of the flock of God, the Church. It is an esteemed life, because it, like the Lord it serves and loves, was Himself meek and lowly of heart, though He be very God and very man. It is a life honored by souls who themselves have been given sufficient light to hold in awe that which in the eyes of mortal man appears

to be lowly and meek, but in the eyes of devils is a thing to be wholly terrified of, for God resists the proud, but gives much grace to the humble (James 4:6).