

Basic Training Bible Conference



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Biblical Chivalry

Introduction

By Ryan Maguire

The need today for warrior-heroes parallels that of the Middle Ages. The torrents of hopelessness and loneliness run just as deep. The cry for help echoes from many mouths and many hearts. Regardless of culture or geography, there remains the deep need of every human being to behold a man like Christ. Every little boy needs to watch one. Every little girl needs to be protected by one. Every woman needs to be intimately acquainted with one. Every tradition needs to repeat the story of the proud father and mother admiring the son they brought into the world, and will launch like a flaming arrow to places far beyond their life's span. And every man, born with an unquenchable burning within and a mission from God Himself, needs to become the warrior-hero he was created to be.

In his book "Orthodoxy," G. K. Chesterton declares,

"Paganism declared that virtue was in balance; Christianity declared it was in a conflict: the collision of two passions apparently opposite. Of course they were not really inconsistent; but they were such that it was hard to hold simultaneously. Let us follow for a moment the clue of the martyr and the suicide; and take the case of courage. No quality has ever so much addled the brains and tangled the definitions of merely rational sages. Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means strong desire to live, taking the readiness to die. 'He that will lose his life, the same shall save it,' is not a piece of mysticism for saints and heroes. It is a piece of everyday advice for sailors or mountaineers. It might be printed in an Alpine guide or a drill book. This paradox is the whole principle of courage, even of quite earthly or quite brutal courage. A man cut off by the sea may save his life if he will risk it on the precipice. He can only get away from death by continually stepping within an inch of it. A soldier surrounded by enemies, if he is to cut his way out, needs to combine a strong desire for living with a strange carelessness about dying. He must not merely cling to life, for then he will be a coward, and will not escape. He must not merely wait for death, for then he will be a suicide, and will not escape. He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it; he must desire life like water and yet drink death like wine. No philosopher, I fancy, has ever expressed this romantic riddle with adequate lucidity, and I certainly have not done so. But Christianity has done more: it has marked the limits of it in the awful graves of the suicide and the hero, showing the distance between him who dies for the sake of living and him who dies for the sake of dying. And it has held up ever since above the European lances the banner of the mystery of chivalry: the Christian courage, which is a disdain of death; not the Chinese courage, which is a disdain of life."

It is evident that before one can act with chivalry, which is by all means a code of action, one must hold the clear understanding of the great conflicting passions of manhood; he must humble himself "at the feet of the grass" and take pride enough to subdue the earth, man's God-given mission. He must impose a boundary of self-discipline for the love of true

freedom. He must esteem life great enough to act with courage that would appear to esteem life too little. If we as men of God are to become warrior-heroes from God, we must turn understanding into “*standing*” (Eph 6:14). We must not only admire the warrior, we must ourselves wage war. We must care for the poor, and we must become “*poor in spirit.*” We must, like the great Christ and Savior we follow, represent “a huge and heroic sanity.” We must embody the controlled power of true meekness and, like Christ, wear garments of character “*without seam, woven from the top in one piece*” (Joh 19:23).

Let the men who read this be made warrior-heroes. Let the burning fire of God planted long ago within them be kindled with the expression of things told in so many fairy tales of youth. May a new age of biblical chivalry awaken the sleeping souls of the world to the Christ who came to earth long ago, yet lives today in all who will take seriously His absolute claim on our commitment. May the matchless glory of the One, true God be revealed by His grace through His servants because of the unique example and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“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.”

–Biography of Sir William Marshal

*You who long for the Knightly Order,
It is fitting you should lead a new life;
Devoutly keeping watch in prayer,
Fleeing from sin, pride and villainy;
The Church defending,
The widows and orphans succouring.*

*He should be humble of heart and always work,
And follow deeds of Chivalry;
Be loyal in war and travel greatly;
He should frequent tourneys and joust for his Lady Love;
He must keep honor with all,
So that he cannot be held to blame.
No cowardice should be found in his doings,
Above all, he should uphold the weak,
Thus should a Knight rule himself.”*

–Eustace Deschamps

The following is the Biblical Chivalry teaching by Gene Cunningham:

I. Chivalry Defined

“Though the practice of chivalry fell even more sadly short of its theoretic standard than practice generally falls below theory, it remains one of the most precious monuments of the moral history of our race, as a remarkable instance of concerted and organized attempt by a most disorganized and distracted society, to raise up and carry into practice a moral ideal greatly in advance of its social condition and institutions ...and which has left a most sensible, and for the most part highly valuable impress on the ideas and feelings of all subsequent times.”

–John Stuart Mill

*“If what seems afar so grand
Turns to nothing in your hand
On again, for virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize.”*

–Unknown Author

The Language of Chivalry

“More than a code of manners in war and love, Chivalry was a moral system, governing the whole of noble life.”

–Barbara W. Tuchman

The definition of “chivalry” takes us back into medieval history, coming from the French word “cheval,” for horse, and “chevalier,” meaning “a mounted knight.” It has several cognates including our word “cavalry,” meaning “a group of armed and mounted soldiers.” This in turn is related to “caballo” the Spanish word for “horse,” and a “caballero” is “a skilled horseman.” In all these words, from different cultures there is an idea of the gentleman of character, skill, and courage. These qualities are summed up in the word “courtesy,” or the conduct of one who is “courtly,” which is often connected with the knight, the caballero (or vaquero), and the cowboy. “Courtliness” spoke of manners that were fitting for the court of a noble or a king. A “courtier” was a royal attendant, trained to uphold the highest traditions of conduct. Courtliness was synonymous with the conduct of a gentleman. It is from courtliness that we get the word “courtship.” Courtship speaks of the wooing of a fair lady by a knight, who conducted himself with manners that would be acceptable in the king’s court. Thus, the “code of honor” that represents such noble conduct is called “chivalry.” This “code” held as its highest tenets courage, kindness, and the defence of the weak and helpless. The most common and well-known story of chivalry is the Arthurian story of the Knights of the Round Table.

The Code of Chivalry

“The legends of the Arthuriad had created an image of ideal knighthood ... an elaborate code of chivalry ... of gentleness ... tenderness ... mercy ... fidelity ... above all ... a feeling and conduct towards women which the pagan world had never known ... if a knight found a damsel or lorn maid alone and he cared for his fair name, he would no more treat her with dishonour than he would cut his own throat.”

–Arthur Bryant, “Age of Chivalry”

“Society expected men to aspire constantly to Chivalric behaviour; in return, they gave him an honourable place in the union of men.”

–Arno Borst, “Medieval Worlds”

It is commonly believed that the concept of chivalry began during the reign of Charlemagne (742–814 AD), and developed into full-flower in the dark ages of the 11th and 12th centuries. Whereas it is said that Charlemagne restored to Europe the “Pax Romana,” or the Peace of Rome, chivalry was later to bring the “Pax Dei,” the Peace of God. Feudalism brought about conditions similar to the book of Judges in the Bible, where “*might made right*” and “*every man did what was right in his own eyes.*”

Chivalry as a code of knighthood was the product of three of the prominent men of the age: The King, who sent knights into battle, and wanted them to be loyal to him. The knights, who did the fighting, and therefore recognized the perilous drift into anarchy. Finally, and foremost, the few priests, who were not “bought off” by power and pleasure, but who sought to teach the Word of God as it effectively met the needs of the age. It was the priests who

began to protest wanton slaughter, abuse of the weak and degrading treatment of the women. They did not invent chivalry; they rediscovered it, from the pages of the Bible.

According to the book “Chivalry–The Path of Love” (Aquarian Books–Italy) “*The clergy began to preach a set of chivalric principles, eventually known as Pax Dei, the Peace of God*” (p. 19). But this “cult of chivalry” had its roots far back in the biblical past. It was said that when Lancelot asked his mother—who taught him the code of chivalry—if such men actually ever existed, she pointed him to David and his mighty men (2Sa 23). Of these thirty warrior-heroes, it is said that three were greater than all the rest. But the greatest of all was David, whom God called “*a man after my own heart*” (1Sa 13:14). In David and his “knights,” we see one of many examples in Scripture of “biblical chivalry.”

The Practice of Chivalry

The following quote is from the website tayci.tripod.com/chivalry.html:

“There was more to being a knight than just fighting and hunting. A knight was expected to live by the code of chivalry ... By the eleventh century chivalry became a code of conduct that knights were supposed to follow at all times ... Knights were expected to treat their fellow knights and those socially inferior with respect. A knight could not attack an unarmed knight and a good knight fought for glory and Christian purposes and not for profit or gain. A new knight’s sword was laid on the altar of the Church and blessed, thus promising to defend the Church.”

“They are milder than lambs and fiercer than lions. They combine the meekness of monks with the fighting courage of knights so completely I do not know whether to call them knights or contemplatives.”

–St. Bernard

II. The Path to Chivalry

The Page

“Thus the castle of each feudal chieftain became a school of chivalry, into which any noble youth, whose parents were from poverty unable to educate him to the art of war, was readily received.”

–Horatio Alger

The path to knighthood began at around seven years of age, when a boy entered into the service of a nobleman as a page. This was a position of servitude with opportunity for advancement from the lowest duties to those of greater honor, as the page proved himself worthy. Martial training included exercising the noble’s horses, instruction with wooden weapons, and introduction to the game of chess. Stressed throughout this stage of training was the necessity of humility in service, honor of conduct, and aspiration for attaining to the status of the knight.

The Squire

“Because it was from such a brave knight that the boys imbibed their first lessons in chivalry, and, in his person and bravery, saw the standard of knightly virtue, they rendered him the greatest obedience during their education, and ever afterward, when their days of instruction were over, tendered it to him by following his banner to the wars of their own free will.”

–Walter Clifford Meller

At about fourteen years of age, if the page had been diligent, he might become a squire. At this point, he joined a group of young men who were personal attendants to a knight. The esquire was considered the shield-bearer of the knight. Training became much more intense, as the squires were not only to care for the needs of the knight, but to dress him in his armor for tournaments or war, to guard him as he slept, and even defend him from attack on the road, or when he fell in battle. The emphasis of this phase was in essence to develop the ability to “endure hardness” in all things. The squire learned to eat little, endure cold and discomfort, and engage in rough training sessions and competitions. He must first become a knight in his heart, and in his conduct, if he hoped one day to be openly recognized as one of the “brotherhood.”

The First Battle

*There is a battle to be fought,
Before the weapon is in hand,
Or the enemy is in distance to strike.*

*The battle is in the mind,
To take captive our fears and doubts,
To secure our thoughts and
Command our mental faculties.*

*To focus these moments of our life,
For a greater purpose than our own needs,
Our own wants, or even our own preservation.*

*To walk into the shadow of death,
Placing our destiny in the hands of God,
For Him, for Country, for family,
For the defense and well being of others,
For children yet to be born.*

*To remove all jealousy, envy, strife,
And hatred from our heart.
To forgive all who have wronged us.
To be thankful for all the beauty in the world,
And every voice and smile of friendship.
To pray for our families and loved ones,
To pray for our enemies as well,
That in this ensuing battle,
Whatever the outcome, the will of God be done.*

*To pray for courage that we might encourage others.
To pray for the forgiveness of others,
That we may be forgiven ourselves.
For if this be our last moments,
We want to be right with Him.*

*This is the heart of ancient Knighthood,
When every day was a battle in the mind.*

*This is the heart of true patriots, true soldiers.
For all who serve God,
In serving their country, and
In service to others.*
–Sir R. I. Tulak

The Knight

“The preparations for conferring chivalry upon the esquire were of the strictest and most solemn nature.”
–Walter Clifford Meller, “The Medieval Warrior”

“Some waited their whole lives, enduring the necessity of passing through the ranks of esquire, yearning for knighthood, yet never winning their spurs.”
–Ibid

As a rule, knighthood was attained around the age of twenty-one, but only if the squire had demonstrated both virtuous character and martial skill. Years of training and testing had given him opportunity to prove worthy of being dubbed a knight. Preparation for the dubbing ceremony, which usually fell on some Church holiday such as Christmas or Easter, often involved three days of fasting, with the last night spent in the Church in prayer. At the ceremony, a sermon was delivered on his Christian and knightly duties, he vowed to keep the code of conduct, and then was “dubbed” on the shoulders with a sword. This dubbing was done by his liege-lord, or sometimes even by a woman of noble birth and honored standing.

III. A Biblical Parallel, Romans 8:12-18

“Training was carefully undertaken for one purpose: to enable the youth, when he had attained the proper age, to receive the semi-sacred rite of knighthood.”
–Walter Clifford Meller, “The Medieval Warrior”

A careful reading of this passage, with special attention given to details and word usage, reveals a much different picture than is usually obtained. All too often, the meaning behind many of Paul’s exhortations is missed, and the thrust of his arguments is lost, due to casual reading or careless interpretation.

The Debt of the Believer, Romans 8:12–13

Carelessness today in the teaching of the grace of God has led to the erroneous idea that no personal responsibility or obligation is required of the child of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul has already introduced the idea of indebtedness in Rom 1:14. The believer is in fact under a “*life or death*” obligation to live by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom 8:5–11). Verse 13 is especially reminiscent of Moses’ words in Deu 11:26–27 and 30:14–15. Our options are spelled out by the two conditional “if” statements (v 13), which summarize vv 5–6. Only as we choose to “*live by the Spirit*” do we fulfil our spiritual debt to the grace of God. Remember we are not talking here of salvation but of spirituality (Eph 2:10; Jam 2:20–24).

The Aim of the Obligation, Romans 8:14

The “*for*” of this verse amplifies the second option of v 13, “*if by the Spirit ... you will live.*” The issue here is not eternal life, but rather abundant life. Initial salvation is “*by faith apart*

from works” (Eph 2:8–9). But once eternal life is entered, abundant life is dependant on “*faith working together with works, and by works faith [is] made perfect*” (Jam 2:22). Those believers who choose to be “*led by the Spirit*” as a habitual lifestyle, are by that decision and action, identified as “*sons of God.*” The masculine plural of the word *huios* speaks of mature, adult sons, who “bear a likeness to someone ... a disciple, follower” (UBS Greek dictionary). Spiritual maturity is not defined by how much you know, but by how much of what you know affects how you live! To be “*spiritual*” is to live “*by faith*” in the power of the Spirit of God.

The Option of Adoption, Romans 8:15–16

Our inherent ability to attain to spiritual adulthood is grounded in our spiritual birth. Since we “*received the Spirit of adoption*” (cf. 8:9–11), we have been liberated from the “*bondage*” of fear (cf. Heb 2:14–18). Adoption here is not speaking of the term as we use it today. In the culture of the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews, adoption meant “son-placement” as in the Jewish Bar Mitzvah. Up to this time, the child was in the position of a servant (cf. Gal 4:1–7) having no special rights or privileges. However, at the adoption, the child was entered into the *familia* as one who had access to the family’s assets. When we are born again, we do not wait for “son-placement,” but are given access to the Father’s wealth immediately (cf. Eph 1:3–6). These resources accompany the bestowal of the Spirit, providing each believer with all the provisions and power necessary to attain to spiritual maturity (cf. Eph 3:7, 20).

Pages, Squires, and Knights, Romans 8:17–18

Again in v 17, we find two conditional “if” clauses. If it is true that we are “*children of God*” (v 16), then we can be sure we are also “*heirs of God*” (cf. Gal 4:4–7). But since every child of God is “*adopted*” at the new birth, we have the option of becoming even more. What we choose to do with our adoption privileges determines what we will be, both in this life and the life to come. Every believer has a basic inheritance from God (cf. 1Pe 1:4–5). Every believer who chooses to “*live by ... be led by the Spirit*” will face persecution and suffering (Mat 5:10–12; 2Ti 3:10–12; 1Pe 4:12). The promise, then, is that “*if indeed we suffer with Him*” we can be sure “*we [will] also be glorified together.*” This is the “*reward of the inheritance*” (Col 3:23–24). In other words, “*If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.*” (2Ti 2:12, cf. Rev 3:21). Thus for the sake of analogy, at salvation we enter the status of page. By attaining maturity we become a squire. The squire was officially dubbed a knight when he had proven to be one. Our “*knighting*” will come, if at all, at the Bema Seat of Christ.

The Attainment of Knighthood

My point here is to suggest that we enter the family of God much as the page entered the feudal household. He was given a position in the family, and with it came a great opportunity. The potential and aspiration was to one day become a knight. Those believers who demonstrate due diligence in service and growth, will in time mature (2Pe 1:5–7; Heb 5:12–6:3). In spiritual maturity, we enter the status equivalent to the squire. We become a personal attendant to our noble, the Lord Jesus Christ. As such we are exposed to far greater difficulties and dangers, along with our increased duties. Faithfulness in this role will one day bring us to the coveted knighthood, which I do not see as a reality in this life. Just as the squire had to become “*a knight at heart,*” so the believer must “*deny himself, take up his*

cross daily, and follow” Christ, if he has hope of being “knighted” at the Judgment Seat of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note how Paul connects the “*sufferings of this present time*” (v 18) with the “*glory which shall be revealed in us.*” This glory I would compare to the “dubbing” ceremony of the knight, which was conferred on him by his liege-lord, or knight, whom he had faithfully served. By looking at the Christian life in this way, we are delivered from the “health, wealth, and prosperity” conception so common today, or even the “super-grace blessing” concept known to many of us—the idea that spiritual maturity is for self-promotion and personal prosperity. The prophets, apostles, and great ones through all the ages—not to mention our Lord Himself—have made it clear that to “*endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*” (2Ti 2:3) is the path which assures us of being able to “*please Him who enlisted [us] as a soldier*” (2Ti 2:4), so as to be “knighted” when we stand at the Bema Seat, the tribunal, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. The Origin of Biblical Chivalry

“We have to acknowledge that the age of chivalry was essentially one of faith, a faith that hallowed all the smallest vocations of life, and it is no wonder, therefore, that the free and individual chivalry which now arose was impregnated with it, and knighthood was essentially Christian.”

—Walter Clifford Meller, “A Knight’s Life in the Days of Chivalry”

“To the eyes of a medieval person, the churches blazed with Biblical history and were a living language.”

—Ibid, “The Medieval Warrior”

Chivalry at the Creation

The true beginnings of biblical chivalry are found at the very start of the story of man. Chivalry is God’s idea, not man’s. If we go to Gen 1:26–28, we see the creation of man in the image of God. At the very outset, relational responsibility is in view. “*Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion ... so God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion ...’*” Here God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, in united effort and concert with each other, make man in the image of God. Since God has relationship within the Godhead, man must have relationship within himself: male and female. It takes both man and woman to make up “mankind.” They are then given a charge to accomplish together, to take dominion over the earth. We know from the rest of Scripture that there is already a battle raging in the unseen realm due to Satan’s revolt, and it will soon enter into the Garden. So we see these three elements: a battle to fight, a beauty to win, and a blessing to share—as spoken of by G. K. Chesterton.

The Duties of Man

It is interesting to consider the original plan and purpose of God for mankind. Reading through Genesis 1–2, we see that together the man and woman were to have dominion over the earth (Gen 1:26). Therefore, they were to rule over the earth as King and Queen. In addition, Adam was given a message to convey to Eve (Gen 2:16, 17), placing him in the role of prophet. With this came the duty to lead her in obedience to God, thus the role of a priest. Because this obedience was sure to be tested, there was a battle to be fought, making man a

warrior. Finally, they were to tend to the garden (Gen 2:15), suggesting the husbandry of a servant. So the ideal of man from the beginning is that of servant-warrior-prophet-priest-king. This ideal is only realized in Jesus Christ. By application we can compare these to five stages of our spiritual growth. The believer who learns to serve God by faithful obedience becomes a warrior for the truth (Eph 4:1; 6:14). As such, he/she is able to bear the message of the Gospel to others, leading them into a right relation to God, fulfilling their role as ambassadors (prophet, in the non-technical sense) and believer-priests (compare 2Co 5:14 with 1Pe 2:5–9). Those who endure the trials and persecutions of continued faithfulness will one day reign with Christ, the kingly or, in our analogy, knightly role (2Ti 2:12).

The Chivalrous Man

“Frederick Barbarossa knighted peasants who had displayed personal bravery on the field of battle.”
—Walter Clifford Meller, “The Medieval Warrior”

“In fact, knights were frequently considered to be a species of Levite. ‘There was,’ says L’Ordene de Chevalerie, ‘a great resemblance between the duties of a knight and those of a priest.’”
—Ibid

Only when we have come to faith in Christ can we truly enter into the “School of Chivalry.” Only by new birth are we spiritually equipped to be “*conformed to His image*” (Rom 8:29, 12:2, 2Co 3:18). As we grow in grace, He works that conformity from the inside out, by His indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:1–11). It is only by increasing spiritual maturity that His glory is reflected in and through us. And as this amazing process takes place, we see God molding us into the person we always wanted, deep inside, to be. It is as if we are “coming home to our self.” And we discover, to our surprise, that we are “ready” for the battle of life. The Apostle Paul said, “*I am ready*” (Rom 1:15), the battle cry of the Seaforth Highlanders.

Every boy was created to become a hero-warrior. Every man—at some times in life—must face overwhelming odds, and needs courage to act valiantly. When a man takes his stand—as a believer—to become all that God intended, he has begun an exciting adventure. For as sure as he relies on God’s Word and Spirit to guide him, he will become a living reflection of our Lord in five areas: **servant, warrior, prophet, priest, king**. As a “**servant**,” he will learn to obey God in small things. As a “**warrior**,” he will take his stand and fight for the great things. As a “**prophet**,” he will proclaim the true things of the Word of God to those around him, and as a “**priest**,” he will focus on the precious things, interceding for others and pointing them to God. Finally, as a “**king**,” he will take dominion over the kingdom of his own heart, his own life, and his own home. He will wage war on three fronts: the spiritual, the social, and the cosmic—and he will win! Though he will lose many battles, he will not slink from the field, but through the dust, the blood, and the tears, he will rise up again and again to quench the thirst within him—to taste conformity to His risen victorious Lord. The enemy within, the enemy without, and the enemy above, will all taste the steel of his sword and know that they have met a MAN!

A Word to the Ladies

“Loyalty, courtesy, liberality, and justice were the virtues essential to the character of a woman warrior in the days of chivalry.”

—Walter Clifford Meller, “The Medieval Warrior”

“During the later Middle Ages, women were admitted as members of certain orders of chivalry ... Florine, the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, fought bravely in the crusades ... Certainly, too, there is Joan of Arc, France’s greatest heroine, whose bravery was legendary.” –Ibid

“It was, and has always been held, that every woman warrior, like a male knight, had in herself, whatever her social circumstances, the inherent power of creating others to her order.” –Ibid

In defining chivalry, I have put it into the masculine context. This does not mean that chivalry is not for the ladies—far from it! When God created “man,” He did it in stages. First He created the male (Adam) and brought the entire animal kingdom before him. They passed in review as Adam named them, and each came in pairs. God wanted Adam to know lack before he knew fulfilment. *“But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him”* (Gen 2:20). Thus Adam came to see what God already knew, *“It is not good that man should be alone,”* and so God said, *“I will make him a helper comparable to him”* (Gen 2:18). Now the fascinating thing is in the word “helper.” It is the Hebrew word *etzer*, which comes from a verb which is translated at least 80 times in the Old Testament indicating “military assistance” (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, p. 660).

In Ancient Viking and Celtic sagas, the warrior women were called “shield-maidens.” They were designed to be “combat backup” to their knight. While it is true, as far as standing, that in Christ *“there is neither male or female,”* we each have unique roles in life. In fact, the characteristics of Christ are reflected differently in believing men and women, so that only in the body of Christ as a whole is the full picture of His redeeming and conforming work seen. And I find it fascinating that “helper” is used for the woman in relation to the man, just as the Holy Spirit is the “helper” of Jesus Christ (Joh 14:16, 15:26).

*“As unto the bow the chord is, so unto man is woman.
Though she bends him, she obeys him.
Though she draws him, yet she follows,
Each useless without the other.”*

–Longfellow

The story of chivalry began in the mind of God. Its principles and tenets are an expression of His character. Chivalry is, until we sear our own consciences, wired into our DNA. Every boy imagines being the valiant knight. Every little girl dreams of being rescued by one. Chivalry is every man’s ideal (whether he realizes it or not), and is the flowering beauty of every woman. Take chivalry out of mankind, and we are reduced to beasts. Remove chivalry from legend and story, and we would lose our greatest epics and sagas, not to mention all our fairy tales. Ban chivalry from the movies and “Gladiator,” “Lord of the Rings,” “Tombstone,” “Star Wars,” “Rob Roy,” “Braveheart,” and a thousand other great films would disappear, not to mention “The Passion of the Christ.” And if chivalry were somehow dismissed from history, the story of mankind is not worth reading, and our lives are not worth living.

As men and women, we are made for adventure, designed to achieve great conquests (both within and without), created to overcome. Our true part in the battle of the Universe begins with our submission to the “King of kings” (Rev 19:16). Once we have pledged allegiance to Him by faith, we are enlisted in His mighty conquering army. And in time, when the battles

are all won, we will share His kingdom. And what will we be doing in Heaven? Playing harps and singing? No! We will be sharing in the reign of His kingdom, with new heavens and a new earth to explore. The Bible describes Heaven as a place where we will meet loved ones, feast together, build and grow and learn and advance in skills—all in perfect, glorified bodies, in a world without sin and evil, or any form of sorrow or suffering. Heaven is the place where the wonder of fairy tales will become reality, a place where chivalry will continue to develop, in a Kingdom more mystical and fair than any of myth or legend!

V. **A Call to Chivalry, 1 Corinthians 16:13–14**

“The yearning after something beyond ordinary intercourse seems to have often been felt in the Middle Ages, and led to various characteristic practices, among which one of the most remarkable was that of sworn Brotherhood.”

—Walter Clifford Meller, “A Knight’s Life in the Days of Chivalry”

The Apostle Paul was a spiritual warrior of unparalleled devotion, courage and discipline. A partial list of his adventures and afflictions is given in 2Co 11:23–33, and he was yet to experience the epic sea journey and shipwreck related in Acts 27–28. Paul knew his God, and he knew men. He had seen the degradation of his age, and he knew that the only solution was the regeneration of men and women through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul called men to Christ, and then he called Christians to biblical chivalry. In these two short verses (1Co 16:13, 14), we see the five elements of his code:

Vigilance

The word “*watch*” is a command to be spiritually awake at your post. Victory in the battle of life begins with understanding the hostile yet subtle designs of the great enemy of the souls of men. The first great danger is not that of furious assault, but rather of being lulled by a false sense of security into spiritual stupor (Mat 26:40–45 with Rom 13:11 and Eph 5:14). Complacency kills more than the sword. Daily vigilance is required against the soul-numbing effects of life’s distractions and the slow drift away from the vital communion of the Spirit and the Word of God.

Steadfastness

When Paul commands us to “*stand fast in the faith*,” he means we are to take our stand once for all in the trust of our heavenly Father and in the truths of His Word (Eph 6:10–17). We can only stand our ground if we daily put on the full armor of God. The battle cry of the elite Roman soldiers is the “*Stand!*” of Eph 6:14. Each soldier knew that for the army to be victorious, each soldier had to claim and hold his own square of ground. Then, it was “death or glory,” for there was no retreat. How we need warriors today who will stand fast in the teachings of God’s Word!

Bravery

The words “*be brave*” come from the word *andrizo*, which is the root of our name “Andrew.” This noun means, “to be a man” in the sense of nobility and character. It takes courage to be a man, and it cannot be achieved by a single effort. It is a life-long pursuit. Again, if you aspire to be the “prince” in the play, realize that you will face many defeats and disappointments. The key is to have the courage—the manliness—to rise up, dust yourself off, and charge on again. The Romans thought of courage as the foundation of all virtues.

Paul tells us this is wrong, it is love (v 14). Yet love without courage is worthless sentiment, for he who loves will fight and, if necessary, die for what he loves.

Endurance

The “*strength*,” Paul endorses here is the strength to “never quit!” It is tenacity over the long haul. The word used here is the same used of Moses in Heb 11:27, who “*endured as seeing Him who is invisible*.” It is the persistence of one who has caught a vision of what he is meant to be, and can be, by God’s grace. And once having “tasted” the ideal, will not settle for anything less than fulfillment. Biblical chivalry implants the ideal of what you and I can be, as a true reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The rest of our lives are to be devoted to the pursuit of that prize.

Love

Paul is not talking about sentimental or emotional love. Neither is he speaking of romantic love, though the basis of all true romance is found in the love he speaks of here. He is speaking of spiritual love—that which originates with the Father (1Jo 4:7–8), is manifested in Christ (Joh 3:16, Rom 5:8), and is produced in us by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22). This love is selfless and sacrificial in nature. It is interesting to note that “chivalry” in the Middle Ages combined the ideas of a warrior’s code and a lover’s code. The warrior fought for one he loved, his “fair maiden.” The imagery of the gallant knight on a white charger rescuing the fair damsel in distress developed from this. Paul’s concept is higher still, for it is “*the love of Christ compels us*” (2Co 5:14). However, this ought not to be divorced from the role of the husband in marriage in regard to his own fair damsel! In fact the word “*husband*” used as a verb means “to protect, nurture, nourish, care for” which is precisely Paul’s point in Ephesians 5:25–29.

Applications:

1. It is clear that chivalry required a “code of honor” to aspire to.
2. If you were asked, “what is your code of honor?” what would you say?
3. The Bible is filled with many passages, which read like such a code. Consider a few examples of challenging texts such as: Mat 5:3–12; Act 12:28–35; Rom 12:1–3; 13:11–14; 1Co 16:13–14; 2Co 4:7–13; Gal 2:20–21; Eph 4:1–6; 4:20–24; Phi 1:27–30; 4:8–9; Col 3:1–4; 3:12–17, 23–24; 1Th 1:3–10; 1Ti 2:1–5; 4:14–16; 6:11–16; 2Ti 2:1–4; 2:11–13; Tit 2:11–13; Heb 12:1–3; Jam 3:13–17; 1Pe 1:13–16; 2:21–23; 3:10–12, 15; 2Pe 1:5–8; 1Jo 2:15–17; Rev 12:11.
4. Biblical examples of chivalry include the roster of spiritual “knights” of Hebrews 11, men and women who “*by faith*” lived lives of victory and honor.

The Vows of Knighthood (Meller, “The Medieval Warrior,” condensed)

1. To never lay down his arms, except to sleep.
2. To never turn aside, or go out of his way, for fear of meeting powerful enemies.
3. To always defend a lady; to die rather than desert her, or allow her to be shamed.
4. To be punctual to every challenge to contend in arms with another knight.
5. To give a faithful account of his actions, even if they are to his dishonor.
6. To submit, on being taken prisoner, and to render his arms to the victor.

7. To never fight in company against a solitary enemy, or fear to accept the challenge of two opponents at a time.
8. Underlying all was the commitment to *“be clothed with honesty, with courtesy, and with goodness, and make itself (the Knighthood) beloved by all.”*

VI. A Biblical Example: Biblical Chivalry in the Book of Ruth

Ruth Chapter One: The Times That Try Men’s Souls

Elimelech: Mirror of the Modern Man, Ruth 1:1-3

We have in Elimelech, a reflection of the modern man. He is a product of his generation, *“in the days when the judges ruled,”* (v 1), a time when *“everyone did what was right in his own eyes”* (Jdg 21:25). The famine in the land was due to the disobedience of Israel (Deu 11:16–21, 26–27), to which this man contributed. By his departure, he betrayed the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1–3, 7–10; Exo 3:15), and failed in his spiritual duties to his family (Deu 6:4–14). He even repudiates his own name, *“Elimelech,”* which means, *“My God is King.”*

What a parallel to men today, who have forsaken all our forefathers fought and died for. Does *“In God we trust”* or, *“One nation under God”* mean anything to you men today? The so-called *“modern man”* is a pitiful product of this decadent time.

Naomi: Profile of a Wife Under an Apathetic, Neglectful Husband, Ruth 1:4–14

In Naomi we also see the typical woman of today, her great potential hindered by her spineless husband. Her name means *“pleasant/winsome,”* yet she will become *“Mara,”* meaning *“bitter”* (v 20) due to her experience. Her sons show the failure of their father as a man: *“Mahlon”* (*“wimpy, sickly”*) and *“Chilion”* (*“weepy, pining”*) dumbly follow in their dad’s path. Once proud members of *“Bethlehem, Judah”* (*“house of bread and praise”*), they enter the cursed land of Moab (Gen 19:36–38; Deu 23:3) and remain, entering into marriages condemned by God (Deu 7:3; Ezr 9:12). Surely the warning of Exo 20:5 proves true here, as the sons continue in the sins of the father, so the judgment visited on the father comes to them. This cycle of rebellion and misery is only stopped by regeneration and obedience to the Word of God (1Pe 1:18–19). We see in America today the curse of absent fathers and spineless men.

Ruth: A Candle of Light in a Dark, Dangerous Time (Cinderella lives!), Ruth 1:15–18

Here shines the one light in this dark and dismal tale thus far. All it takes is one soul—ignited by the light of truth—to change any story. *“Ruth”* proves to be true to her name, which means *“beauty/friend/nourisher.”* She has come to faith in the God of Israel, and her greatness unfolds through the book. Unlike *“Orpah”* (*“youthful vigor”*), she will stay with Naomi, making a five-fold declaration of dependence on God to be loyal, devoted, united, faithful, and steadfast. What a statement of feminine chivalry! While Naomi’s hopelessness and willingness to blame God for her plight strikes a chord in Orpah, Ruth has found true life through faith and will not be turned back. She would be a fitting voice to sing the song of praise in dark times recorded in Hab 3:17–19! How we need believers of this strength and stamina in our own dismal time.

Applications:

1. Just as chivalry was rediscovered in the Dark Ages, even so in Israel's dark ages we find in the story of Ruth and Boaz, a romance of biblical chivalry.
2. Biblical chivalry exalts the roles of men and women in the story of the ages.
3. The central figure and Hero of the story is always the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. The great question posed by biblical chivalry is this: "How great a role will the Hero of history be allowed to play in my life?"
5. Read Eph 1:15–23. How does this influence your life in this present generation?

Ruth Chapter Two: The Entrance of Braveheart

The Hidden Hand of Divine Providence, Ruth 2:1-3

*"Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,
that He may exalt you in due time,
casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you." 1Pe 5:6–7*

The Providence of God sets the stage in every life for a romance of chivalry. The two phrases, "Now it came to pass" (Rut 1:1), "and it happened" (Rut 1:19) reveal the hand of God at work. Not by chance is "Boaz" ("he is strong") a kinsman of Elimelech, and also in the lineage of the Savior. In her humble role as willing servant, Ruth goes to glean in the fields, "and she happened," by God's unseen direction, to come into the field of the hero of the story. When we entrust our souls and lives into the heavenly Father's hands, it is inevitable that we "just so happen" to see His guidance and blessings in our lives (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11–12).

Boaz: Profile of a Spiritual Knight, Ruth 2:4–16

*"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
Let all that you do be done with love." 1Co 16:13–14*

In Boaz we have a fitting profile of biblical chivalry at work in a man, just as Ruth is the portrayal of the feminine aspect. He enters the saga, announcing blessing on his workers, and receives the same in return. He is cheerful, compassionate, and strong. His position (v 1) suggests that he may be the "guardian" over Bethlehem, and he displays great concern for the downtrodden Ruth (vv 5–10). As a man of spiritual virtue, he is able to lift and encourage others (vv 11–13). He is also a man of valiant action, a champion of those less fortunate (vv 14–17). An example of right relation to God and men, Boaz illustrates the fruits of the new nature seen in Eph 2:1–10.

The Shield that Shelters Wounded Souls, Ruth 2:17–23

*"We then who are strong ought to bear with ... the weak." Rom 15:1
"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal 6:2*

Boaz has presented Ruth with life's three greatest gifts: an example of faith, a helping hand, and an opportunity for self-improvement. The first is great, the second is small, but the third is up to her. Yet see how she rises to the occasion! She works hard, and shares both the food and the encouragement with Naomi. She humbly accepts the "shield" of Boaz, and by her

diligence brings Naomi into its protective embrace. A heroic soul not only rises to the challenge, but also pulls others along. What parallels and challenges, or “code of honor” can we find in Paul’s words in Eph 3:8–21?

Principles and Applications:

1. If Jesus Christ is my example, and eternal life is the gift of His grace, then how great is my opportunity to claim a destiny far greater than I have done thus far?
2. Consider that neither Ruth in her allegiance to Naomi, nor Boaz in his courtesy to Ruth, had any thought of personal gain. Their motives were selfless and Christ-like.
3. Who of our generation will answer the call to “*stand in the gap*” (Eze 22:30) for the chivalry of Christ? How we need disciplined and devoted men and women today!

Ruth Chapter Three: Honorable Knight, Virtuous Maiden

When Strange Scriptures Begin to Make Sense, Ruth 3:1–5

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...” 2Ti 3:16

The emphasis on Naomi as Ruth’s “*mother-in-law*” establishes a relational authority. In that role Naomi seeks to find “*security*” or “*rest*” for Ruth, coming from the root for “*Noah*” (see Gen 5:29; Rut 1:9). To do so, Naomi reaches back to a seemingly arcane provision of the Law (Deu 25:5–10), called “*Levirate marriage*,” from the Latin *levir* (“*brother-in-law*”). Had God not made this provision, there would have been no way for Ruth to enter into the lineage of Jesus Christ (Mat 1:5). Ruth is instructed in this provision, and encouraged to display some “*feminine aggression*,” all within the bounds of Scripture and feminine chivalry.

The Test of Chivalry is Obedience in Fine Print, Ruth 3:6–13

*“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts ...
For who has despised the day of small things?” Zec 4:6, 10*

Ruth acts in humble obedience, both to Naomi and to the Scriptures she has come to trust. No doubt she also acted with eager anticipation. Boaz is at the threshing floor with all his workers, and families. In effect she “*proposes*” to him, but modestly and in accord with the customs of the time. The appeal to be taken under his wing is an expression of humble dependence (cf. 2:12), a plea to her “*kinsman-redeemer*” (Hebrew: *Goel*) to take her as his wife. God uses the same love-language of Israel in Eze 16:8. The chivalry of Boaz here is classic! He first commends her for her virtue and submission, and then informs her of the fine points of the law. According to Lev 25:23–34, the “*closer relative*” would be Elimelech’s brother, making Boaz either a third brother, or a nephew. The wisdom of Boaz here is a fine balance of honor, courtesy, and self-control, in keeping with the highest biblical standards (cf. Jam 3:13, 17–18).

Discernment is the Cutting-Edge of Chivalry, Ruth 3:14–18

*“To everything there is a season ... a time to keep silence and a time to speak ...
He has made everything beautiful in its time.” Ecc 3:1, 7, 11*

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God ... Let us therefore be diligent [labor] to enter that rest ...” Heb 4:9, 11

Boaz is careful to protect the honor of Ruth to the highest degree, Rut 3:14. The command given here, *“Do not let it be known ...”* is apparently to the field workers present. His large gift of barley is a final act of provision, before he determines, or relinquishes, his redemption rights. Naomi’s query, *“Is that you, my daughter?”* (Rut 3:16), is an idiom, in effect saying, *“Are you now the betrothed of Boaz?”* There is a neat play on words here, as Naomi instructs Ruth to *“sit still”* (rest), knowing that Boaz will not *“rest,”* or more literally, *“sit still”* or *“be idle,”* until the matter is settled. Naomi has observed the growing interest of Boaz and Ruth for each other over the harvest time, and knows Boaz will waste no time in his suit for Ruth. In fact, some Hebrew manuscripts have *“He went into the city”* in v 15, instead of *“She went into the city.”*

Application:

Read Eph.4:1–6, 20–24. How diligent are we in the fine points of truth?

Ruth Chapter Four: Chivalry and the Eternal Roster of Heroes

The Page Who Never Attained to Knighthood, Ruth 4:1–8

“He who does the will of God abides forever ... and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” 1Jo 2:17 and Rev 3:5

In this section, we have a beautiful illustration of why some names are memorialized in the Bible while others are not. It also helps to amplify the meaning of the above verses. Boaz goes to the city gate—place of justice and transactions—and catches the closer relative leaving for his fields. This *“friend”* is unnamed, the Hebrew saying, *peloni almoni*, in essence, *“so and so,”* where the Septuagint uses *kuphie* in Greek, meaning, *“hidden one.”* This *“so and so”* had an obligation to fulfil, both on the basis of *“levirate marriage”* (Deu 25:5–6), and by the law of land redemption (Lev 25:23–34).

Boaz slyly presents the issue of the land first, and when *“so and so”* takes the bait, presents the need to marry *“Ruth, the Moabitess”* to raise up seed to Chilion (1:4–5). The curse on marriage to a Moabite (Neh 13:1–3, 23–27) is removed because she is already a relative, and by her *“redemption”* she will enter the tribe of Judah and the lineage of Jesus Christ. By the refusal of *“so and so”* to fulfil his Scriptural obligations, he not only misses out on being in the lineage of Jesus, but his name is blotted out of the record. The act of removing the sandal (v 8, cf. Deu 25:7–10) was a shameful humiliation. In this way *“so and so”* illustrates the page who never attained to the coveted knighthood, and is a good example of how any believer today may forfeit that eternal knighthood. The heavenly roster of heroes (Hebrews 11) is still being written. This life is our opportunity to enter into that eternal brotherhood, of which, the Knights of the Round Table are but a feeble glimmer.

The Knight and Fair Damsel Whose Renown Will Shine Forever, Ruth 4:9–21

Boaz is now free to claim his prize—the beautiful and virtuous Ruth. The response of the elders and witnesses (vv 11–12) is actually quite amazing. It is astonishing enough to

compare Ruth to Rachel and Leah, who built the house of Israel. But the reference to Perez (cf. Genesis 38) suggests that they knew who was in the line of the Messiah! It also reveals that they knew how God was working, even through sinful people and sordid situations, to bring the Savior into the world. Tamar and Ruth, along with Rahab (Boaz' mother) and Bathsheba (cf. Mat 1:3-5) illustrate the wondrous and gracious providential working of God (Rom 8:28) in the lives of ordinary men and women. Not only are Boaz and Ruth's names inscribed forever in the eternal Word of God, but they stand as a reminder to us that God's story is still being written, and we have "today" (cf. Heb 3:7-15) to determine how our life-story will read.

Applications:

1. Read Eph 5:1-5, and compare Gal 5:19-21. Consider how these compare to the experience of "so and so," and what they might mean for us in eternity.
2. Read Eph 5:14-21. How true it is that "What we do in time echoes in eternity"!
3. If your life seems insignificant to you, it is only because you have not believed in what God has promised and His power to make your life eternally significant.
4. May this study challenge many to answer the call of biblical chivalry, and LIVE!

VII. The Ideal and Standard of Knighthood, John 8:1-12

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Joh 8:12

Introduction:

1. In this incident, we see all the elements of the chivalry of redemption; the helpless woman, the villainous Pharisees doing the dragon's bidding, and Jesus, the Hero of the story.
2. Here our Lord takes up the glittering "*sword of the Spirit*" to defend the helpless, scatter the wicked, and to draw a line in the sand for all mankind.
3. His closing statement is too often seen in a very limited light, a problem we will seek to rectify.
4. It is a firm rule of interpretation that we must know who is speaking, and who is being spoken to.
5. It is also an infallible and quintessential law of application to know that He is speaking directly to me!

The Attack on the Weak, Ruth 4:1-6a

"There is a deep, natural obligation in men who are really men to be chivalrous to any woman in a way they need not be chivalrous to one another." —Laurens van der Post

1. The empathy and authenticity of Jesus, Ruth 4:1-2.
When we connect the last verse of John chapter seven with the first verse of John chapter eight (Joh 7:53 and 8:1), we see why the people instinctively trusted Jesus, why His message was so compelling. He shared their poverty, isolation, and loneliness. Some 2,300 years ago, Aristotle recognized that an effective message (*logos*) must be backed by a speaker of authentic character (*ethos*), who identified

with the sufferings and needs of the audience (*pathos*). People today long for, not only a true message, but also one that comes from a true-to-life messenger.

2. The envy and hypocrisy of the religious leaders, Ruth 4:3–6a.
Their hypocrisy is seen in that the woman was “*caught in the act ... the very act,*” but where was the man? Their envy is seen in that they use the Law of Moses, not because they love truth, but “*testing Him, that they might ... accuse Him.*” Their cowardly use and abuse of this woman is a far worse sin than the adultery itself!

Principle: There is nothing under Heaven that is more contrary to chivalry, and true manliness than this combination of cowardice, hypocrisy, and envy.

The Defending Sword-Thrust of Truth, Ruth 4:6b–9

“Some say that the age of chivalry is past, that the spirit of romance is dead. The age of chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth, or a man or woman left to say, ‘I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt.’”

—Charles Kingsley

1. The divine indifference to the willful ignorance of arrogance, Ruth 4:6b, 8.
How exquisite and noble is Jesus’ contempt to these religious clowns! What He wrote in the dirt we cannot know, but whatever it was, it reinforced the challenge of Joh 8:7. Perhaps it was along the lines of Deu 5:20 (“*false witness*”) or Deu 19:16–19 (the penalty). Whatever it was, it cut through the withered rind of their calloused consciences. Imagine the eternal shame of these buffoons, to challenge their God regarding His inspired and infallible Word! Beware lest we fall into the same trap.
2. The sword of the Spirit is alive and powerful, Ruth 4:9.
Literally Jesus said, “*the one sinless among you,*” of which there was none! How His words confirm what was said in Joh 7:46. In Pro 26:4 we read, “*Do not answer a fool according to his folly.*” These men knew passages such as Ecc 7:20 and had probably heard Jesus speak in Mat 7:1–5. Here Jesus proves Jer 23:29–31 to be true. See how they flee from the piercing eye and the exposing light of God’s Word!

The Call into the Brotherhood, Ruth 4:10–12

“The world’s male chivalry has perished out, but women are knights-errant to the last; and, if Cervantes had been greater still, he had made his Don a Donna.”

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1. His word of healing to the woman, Ruth 4:9–11.
The prophet declared that “*the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings*” (Mal 4:2), and so He was to this woman. The address, “*woman,*” is a term of respect and courtesy, as Jesus used it toward His own mother (Joh 2:4; 19:26). No one condemned her because, “*all have sinned*” (Rom 3:23). Jesus does not condemn her because, “*God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*” (Joh 3:17). His parting words, “*Go and sin no more*” are not a command to sinlessness (which no one could do), but rather a focus on her “*entangling sin*” (Heb 12:1). As in any warfare, the battle against sin is won by annihilating one enemy—one sin—at a time. In so saying, He has called this

woman into training, into following Him, into the holy pursuit of true feminine knighthood!

2. The invitation extended to “whosoever will,” Ruth 4:12.

Here Jesus addresses the crowd. He had been teaching when He was rudely interrupted (vv 2–3). Now He speaks to “them” again. First, He identifies Himself as “the light of the world,” or as Malachi said, “the Sun of Righteousness.” Secondly, He sets the standard for those who will follow Him. We are to walk in “the light of life,” which is the light of Himself (Joh 1:4, 9). Only as we “walk in the light” (1Jo 1:7) do we have fellowship with Him. That is, we join Him in His mission, answering His call to knighthood training. As we are conformed to His image, we reflect His light, and expose the darkness (Eph.5:8–14).

In keeping with our analogy, the child of God who passes through the servitude of the page, and the intense training of the squire, in the spiritual realm, will one day stand before Him who is our Ideal. Then, we may anticipate the honor of being dubbed with His sword, a Knight of the Royal Order of the King of Kings.

“Every knight remembers his dubbing as the finest day of his existence.” –George Duby

“We acknowledge a King men did not crown and cannot dethrone, as we are citizens of a city of God they did not build and cannot destroy.” –Malcolm Muggeridge

Biblical Chivalry Summarized

The development of chivalry—the code of knighthood—in the Middle Ages was merely a rediscovery of the elements of the Biblical story. History is an epic romance involving a hero, a dragon, and a maiden. Jesus Christ is the great Warrior who invades the kingdom of the enemy of mankind, engaging the dragon in mortal combat, and in the end who gives His life for His bride. His death on the cross is not the end, but rather the beginning. For by His resurrection, Christ and His bride will “live happily (for)ever after.”

The essential elements of this story are found in every romance, legend, or fairy tale, simply because they are so true to life. Every little boy dreams of becoming a hero, every little girl of becoming a princess. And each fears the dark, for we know instinctively that “here there be dragons.” The most amazing thing about myths and legends is not that they are so fantastic, but rather that they illustrate things that are true to life.

The study of biblical chivalry is designed to awaken us to the true significance of our own life in the epic of the ages, that we might be challenged to dare boldly, to live heroically, and to “dream with our eyes open,” for, as T. E. Lawrence said, “All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds awake in the day to find it was vanity. But the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible. This I did.”

“There were young knights among them who had never been present at a stricken field. Some could not look upon it and some could not speak, and they held themselves apart from the others who were cutting down the prisoners at My Lord’s orders, for the prisoners were a body too numerous to be guarded by those of us who were left.

“Then, Jean de Rye, an aged knight of Burgundy who had been sore wounded in the battle, rode up to the group of young knights and said: ‘Are ye maidens with your downcast eyes? Look well upon it. See all of it. Close your eyes to nothing. For a battle is fought to be won. And it is this that happens if you lose.’”

—Froissart’s Chronicles, 14th century



How we need, in these dark and perilous days, to awaken from our spiritual slumber, to break free of the shackles of earthly pursuits and possessions, and answer the timeless call into the fellowship of knights-in-training! Let us heed the words of Paul, one of our greatest forerunners, and strive valiantly, so as to be worthy of promotion on that day.

“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep;

for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore

let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness,

not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.”

Rom 13:11–14