MEN'S FRATERNITY

Knights of the 21st Century

Trail 7

KEITH: In a couple minutes, the guys are going to join us here and we're going to talk about principles and principles are really rooted into the core of our being about what do we believe. We're going to get together and we're going to talk about the 15 principles of a knight that stand deep inside of your armor, deep inside of your chain mail. It's what you believe to be absolutely true that you can stand on, that everybody behind you can feel safe and secure. So that everybody behind you feels like that they are valued and understand who you are and what you are.

What you and I understand about our belief is this, that somewhere along the line there are some things that you just can't be torn away. But what if I think it's a belief and what if I'm not sure. So we're going to kind of what do you absolutely believe and what do you hope is true is a big difference and so let's take a few minutes and just think about that.

Now for me, here's an absolute belief in my life. God is love. It's an absolute belief. It cannot be pulled apart. It is absolutely true. Now it doesn't have to be absolutely true for you. It's my absolute belief. But because of it, I can rest on just about everything. So a number of years ago in between our second and third child, we are pregnant really with – at that point our third child. And a child will die inside of my wife's womb several months before birth. She'll be at the hospital. The baby will be

being removed from her body and I'll go for a walk with God. And in that walk with God, I'll ask Him, hey what do I tell my wife and God says you just tell her this. And we had a really cool conversation. He said the first father that your two – at that point my two oldest sons had ever met was you. The first father this child will ever meet is me. I've out loved you for your child. Trust me. I remember being in the hospital parking lot and just having this amazing moment with God where the reality of my belief that He was in love was met with that kind of incredible comfort. Little did I know that many years later, probably at that point another 20 years later, my son would come down with cancer. He would be 18 years of age and all of a sudden that belief, can I trust God with my children. It's one thing to have that child I haven't met, and now it's a child I have met, I've done life with for 18 years. And that belief gets challenged at the core again. Guess what I found? God is love. He can't stop being in love. That's who He is. At the core of my belief, that truth exists. So it helps me. It helps me in defending everyone behind me. Now I know if you've been with us all 5 years, you've heard the story about the struggle with my loss of that baby years ago, and you probably have heard about my son's cancer. What you need to understand is what holds all of that together is the fact that God's incapable of not loving. My belief. What is yours?

What we're going to do is we're going to look at our beliefs. So what we're going to consider as you take trail number 7 is to look and say

what do I absolutely truly believe. Now we've just been looking at our moms and their influence on our chain mail. Now we're going to make some decisions about what is it that in the core of my being I believe. So take your books and open up to Trail No. 7 and look at this.

I. says you have beliefs that you have made on your own which you use regularly for guidance as you attempt to predict and respond to life. The reality is that you and I have certain beliefs, okay, that they're going to be our guiding factor. We're going to give you 15. The guys will come in in a little bit and they'll talk about those 15 things and they'll also add some of their own that are in addition to those 15. But what we want to make sure is that they're your beliefs. I can hand you a belief but is it yours? Alright, is it really yours and do you live in that belief? How does it guide your day?

Keeping that in mind, look at this. A. The development of beliefs is a natural result of a child's need to evaluate his world and developing coping mechanism for dealing with it. The internalization of other's beliefs does not necessarily mean that their beliefs are true, realistic or helpful. What we need to understand is, there could be some beliefs that happen to us that, that we've come upon that are not necessarily accurate. How in the world do I know if I have a belief that's right or not and whether somebody has handed it to me from my parents or from a teacher or from whatever source I've been given it. Is it true? How do I know.

Look at II. No one gets through life without dealing with the fact that some of their beliefs are not accurate. So what the whole chain mail thing is, some of our beliefs just aren't accurate. So what do we do?

Look at A. You must take responsibility for the beliefs that are foundational to your life. A knight needs to test of his beliefs. Guys, this is your moment for you to decide whether or not this next step you're going to take is your belief. Is it really true?

In front of me are 10 stones. These 10 stones represent 10 steps towards making sure that you have a belief. If all 10 stones do not go in here and if all 10 stones do not fit, it's not a belief. And if this is your belief drawer, this is what you're going to say at the end. I believe what's here is true, you're going to have to measure it at 10 levels. So let's do that together and I think it's going to make a difference.

Look at No. 1. To see if any of his beliefs contradict any of his other beliefs. Do any of the beliefs that I have contradict any of my other beliefs? For example, if I was a loving God, would I let cancer exist in the world? Does it contradict? So I believe in God's love. Do I believe that the reality of cancer in a fallen world is a contradiction? Well, no, because you start to understand that God said, I'm going to remove my presence from part of this world. It's called the curse and it's going to happen. Cancer is going to happen. Babies are going to die. So, no my belief isn't going to be contradicted by something else, so you know what, that's good. I feel safe and secure with this part of my belief.

Look at the next one. To see if any of his beliefs impair his personal sense of reality, lack practical value, and are not relevant to his life. So, is this belief that I'm wresting with whether God has love or not, how practical is? How relevant is it? Well it's everything to me. Now maybe you're believing that there isn't a God or if He is a God, He's not very active with us. Maybe your view of God is different than mine. I actually because of my belief that God is, which is another one of my beliefs, right, because I believe that the God of the Bible is a knowable God and wants a relationship with me. Because I believe those things, well this is very relevant. It's very much a part of what I believe and who I am. So yeah, that fits. Is it relevant to the rest of my life?

Look at No. 3. To see if any of his beliefs are affirmed or rejected by the people he respects. To see if anything is rejected or hurt by the people that you have confidence of. When my son got cancer, there were a group of guys that were at the hospital before I arrived at the hospital or arrived shortly after. They got there before my son did for his surgery. You know what those guys belief was? That God is love. I respect those guys. Yeah, I sort of picked them, right. I mean, that's sort of what happens but they are people I respect, but more importantly, as I've done life, the people I respect find that the belief that I have is consistent. So you need to know, if there's some people that you really respect and let's just say that you believe something that, some people say it's okay and some people say it's not, and let's just say for example that a white lie is

okay. The people you respect say, you know what, white lies are okay. It will probably become a belief for you whether or not that's a true belief or not. However, make sure it's people you respect that do it because if a person you respect says, you know what, a white lie is a lie, then you can't put it in the jar. In my case, I can put it in the jar. And that understanding, that reality is, okay, those three things confirm it's a belief. But that's not all. There are 10 things necessary for me to be confident that this is truly a belief in my life.

Look at the next one. To see if any of his beliefs lead to negative consequences or destructive actions or hurt others. What is one of my beliefs do damage and instead of protecting, it wounds people. What if that's my belief. Well that's not consistent with a right belief. Your belief then is now what's involved in hurting and destroying and your belief then is the opposite of what a true belief is because you know where belief comes from? It's going to ultimately be founded in truth. Do you know where truth is founded in? God. And God's not out to hurt. He's out to heal. So we have to take a look at whether or not that one fits. So in my case, yeah, it definitely fits. I understand how God operates and what He's doing in a very positive way of loving, in a very, very, sometimes painful world.

Look at the next one. See if you can stand behind each of them and if you can share each of them proudly with others. This is a big one. This is a big one. If it's my belief and I share it with you, do you go, ohhh, or

do you go, yeah? Now I had a guy in my office the other day. He was struggling with a very, very difficult situation. His wife had been unfaithful. Not only had she been unfaithful, she got pregnant in the unfaithful action, not only was she pregnant, but she also had some permanent venereal diseases. STDs. Pretty tough. Pretty tough.

It's interesting, he shared a belief. Do you know what the belief was? It was a belief about his commitment in marriage. At that very painful moment, he was still committed to trying to rescue, whether or not it can happen, whether or not he can really be involved and work his way all through all this, he still wanted to get involved in saying my vow is my vow. It's interesting, isn't it? It's a belief that makes all the difference. So is it consistent? Does it fit, even in the midst of your pain, does it work?

Look at No. 6. To see how well each of his beliefs integrates with his knightly values – honesty, generosity, kindness, peace and love. Now all of my beliefs are going to have to be understood in light of the principles of a knight that we believe to be true. Now, again, remember now, you're taking the Knights course because I think you're examining whether this is true or not. You'll decide whether you believe it to be true. We actually believe that our 15 principles are true. We actually believe they're good to be inside a human being. We also believe there are more than those. Obviously I'm talking about one more than what we suggest. In this belief, does it demonstrate the characteristics that have high

values, the moral value, the moral compass that God has? In my case, God is love. Man, it can't get much stronger than that, much clearer than that, so there it sits. It fits in.

Look at No. 7. To see how well each of his beliefs enhances his life by encouraging him to take responsibility for his actions. Does my belief cause me to be a better man? Think about it. God wants to seek the highest good of all people and I want to be involved in seeking the highest good of others. Where do you think I got that? Well it's consistent. It's consistent because it enhances what is part of who I am. I take responsibility for my life actions and this fits. So far, all the beliefs, all the steps are fitting into my belief. God is love.

Look at No. 8. To see if any of his beliefs can be used as a principle or permanent ground rule for his life. So, when you and I look at No. 8 to see if any of his beliefs can be used as a principle or permanent ground rule for his life, as I mentioned to you obviously, I'm in the process of losing one child and then have another child that has cancer and I got to find out whether or not God is who He says He is and I found out that He is. Then this becomes very permanent. It becomes a principle in my life that God is love. Now again, it's my principle. It doesn't have to be yours. It's my belief. It doesn't have to be yours but it is mine and it's confirmed because it fits.

So in your Knightly News, there's an interesting guy's name. His name is Joseph Arimathea. Joseph is a guy who secretly thinks Jesus is

the Messiah but he's secret because he doesn't think his friends will approve of his belief. He's a very interesting guy because the day Jesus is killed for the sins of the world on the cross, the day that takes place, Joseph Arimathea decides to come out of the closet, decides to tell everybody that I believe in him and he takes his body from the cross and buries it in the tomb which you can't get any more identified with a guy that's being declared on one sense to be a criminal who is the savior of the world and you're acting like you want to be associated with him, right? Very profound moment.

I'm putting this slide up for you. Joseph Arimathea was a quiet follower of Jesus but stood up for his beliefs after Jesus died. What do you think happened? I think Joseph Arimathea's jar was getting pretty full and he said, I can't deny what I've just seen and what I know.

So look at Principle No. 9. In order to be comfortable with his beliefs and how they are applied, he must authentically support them with his emotional passion and his intellectual prowess. That's Number 9 guys. If you're not passionate about it, it's not a belief guys. If it's not deep in your soul and your not, it rings with you in the toughest moments, it's probably not a belief.

One of the principles we talk about is a man does what's hard. That is so much a part of my life now. It didn't use to be but man, it's deep in. God is love. That's a deep belief to me.

Look at No. 10. It's the last one to measure. To see if each of his beliefs is consistent with what the Bible teaches regarding what God wants for him. You have to make sure that your belief is consistent with the standard. The standard is the absolute standard of the Word of God. And when you find that this is all together, this is what you have, you have a belief.

So there they are. All these principles, I mean all these parts going into what your belief is, when all of them fit in the jar, when they're all there, you got all of them, then you can be sure that's a belief. It becomes a principle. It becomes something you live by. It becomes something that will hold you through darkness. It holds you through tough times. It holds you those behind you safe and secure because you've gotten them. Now we, over the years, handed you 15 principles. These 15 principles are the principles of a knight, of a man. And we're going to go over those again as the guys come and share them. The guys are going to come from all parts of the castle and they're going to walk you through these. Now for you guys that were part of Knights a few years ago when we did Oracle, we did a principle a week. And we did a principle a week. The purpose of doing a principle a week was to say, man, we got to make sure these are part of your belief structures. We were actually saying, help get it in the jar. But you're going to find that each of the guys are not just going to share one of the 15 principles. They're also going to share with you in addition to the principles they're

already living by, one of their own principles. It will be a principle that fits in this jar. They've been able to measure it, so you want to know whether you got a belief or not, always open up your trail, number 7 and look at these 10 things and say, if they're all true then it's a belief in my life.

We're going to hand you now 15 more as the guys walk through it and then in turn, they're going to add one of their own to each of them.

Consider this, B. A knight knows the 15 principles of manhood and uses them to develop his core. So I'm going to ask the guys if they would just go ahead and just share and talk about these principles.

CLAIR: Let me take you through the first 4. The first principle is, males are born while men are forged. Manhood only occurs as a result of intentional effort. It is not by accident.

Let's move on to Principle No. 2. No. 2 says a man is responsible for all of his choices. Manhood is incompatible with the victim viewpoint.

Principle No. 3. A man's world is constantly in motion. Authentic manhood requires a man to constantly evaluate his choices to see if any change is necessary.

And Principle 4 states this. It says that men are amazing and every man is of infinite worth. Manhood affirms God's definition of what a man is and a knight attempts to live up to this definition. I'd like to expand on this one just a little bit if I can. Guys, if you're questioning if you're amazing, if you're of infinite worth, think about what the Bible teaches. It tells us that we are made in God's image. You start putting yourself down

and you're doing a pretty gutsy move here. You're putting the Almighty God down, cutting Him down as well. And if you're questioning again, if you're still amazing and if you're of infinite worth, think about this. God had a plan for you. He – you were not by accident. He designed you with a specific purpose in mind.

One of my favorite verses, Jeremiah 29:11 says that God says, for I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper and to keep you, plans not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. What a cool thing is that. How can you question if you are amazing and if you are of infinite worth?

Well we've each going to be sharing one of our own personal principles that we've added in addition to the 15 and one that I've integrated in my life actually at a pretty early age, I decided along time ago, I would never build myself up by tearing someone else down or build myself up at someone else's expense. Every interaction I have with another human being as closely as I can, I try to honor this, that they are better off having met me. And I saw a quote awhile ago. It said that every time a friend succeeds, a part of me dies. There's a challenge to what I do. I try to build people up. I got to learn to celebrate their successes as well. But there's a real sad part to that as we envy and look at each other's lives that we're jealous of it. So guys, I just want to challenge you. As you meet other people, don't tear them down, pick them up. Here's been my experience. I heard a quote a little while ago.

It said very simply, you cannot illuminate another one's path without shedding some light on your own. Every time I try to build someone up, somehow I'm blessed and I just want to encourage you to do that as well.

T.C.: Alright, Clair, that's awesome brother. Thank you for that. Now we're going to go through the next ones. Okay, we're going with No. 5. It says, men do whatever it takes. Manhood does not allow for excuses. A man works hard and faces the challenges of life. Man if that doesn't speak to being a man, I don't know what does.

Let's go to the next one, No.6. It says a man is dedicated to continuous learning. Manhood is about continual growth as each life stage offers new opportunities to learn life's lessons. It's pretty clear, man, we never stop learning, never stop learning, never stop growing.

No. 7. Only the true you will get you through. Manhood demands authenticity and a deep understanding of the self which cannot be faked. And I just want to expand on that one just a little bit. Listen, if you're not willing to be transparent and just really self-examine and be you, the one that God Himself will come out and say, here's who T.C. is. Here's who you are. That's what you want to build on. That's the only way you start building up. You can't – you'll be building on a fake person. You're not building the real you and when that fake person crumbles, the whole thing just falls apart. Being real with yourself. That's what these studies are all about, is the beginning to becoming what God made you to be. So I'm encouraging you to really be transparent and real with yourself and start

building on that foundation.

Let's go to No. 8. A man shapes the forest more than the forest shapes the man. Man, I like that. The manhood journey sends the man into the forest with a quest of making a specific difference in the lives of others. Man that's as you dictate and what happens, not life in the world dictating things to you, and again, we're going to share one of our own principles and I love Clair's and I love the ones I heard. Mine is simply this. It's think eternally. You know, a lot of times we hear that, we hear that as living each day like it's the last time you'll ever, ever live. So I wake up and I ask myself, man, if I knew I was going to die tomorrow, what would I do differently? And what that does, that helps you shape what's important. What are you going to accomplish today? Do I want to yell at my wife today? Do I want to not spend time with my kids today? Do I, do I, do I want to just waste time? Because you never know which day is going to be the last time you live. So when I leave my house, even if it's a trip to the store, man, I'm telling my wife I love them, I'm telling my kids I love them, because I don't take for granted that I'll see them again. So that's just, it's called just that eternal perspective. This could be it. What kind of impact and I leaving? What kind of legacy am I leaving? Because you never if you're going to see another day or get another opportunity so this way you don't waste time.

ROBERT: Gentlemen, let's keep going with the next principle. No. 9 says, the best way for a man to predict his future is to create it.

Manhood changes the trajectory of the male's life from one future endpoint to the nobler destination of knighthood. Can't be any clearer than that. That's pretty inspiring.

Look at the next one. Talk about inspiring. A man accepts that to live is to be challenged through crisis and hardship. Manhood does not make false promises of a life of ease, but within the man, strength is created from weakness, courage from fear, new skills from difficulty, stronger love from imperfection, confidence from failure, depth from pain, opportunity from crisis, deeper friendships from conflict, perseverance from hardship. Wow, I mean dude if that does not describe a man. You cannot keep a good man down. Guys, never forget that principle.

Look at the next one. A man never stands alone unless he is taking a stand. Manhood is a team sport. No one can fully understand himself without the feedback and support of others. Thus, regular attendance at a campfire is essential. Listen guys, God said it himself. It is not good for man to be alone. Now yes, He was referring to his perfect companion, but let me tell you something, a guy is designed to have other men around him. Life is a team sport. That's why He called the church to congregate, to come together. Men, you need to have these campfires, these groups, your close friends, people that you put your life into who will also be there to support you in your most desperate need or in your most desperate hour.

I also want to say this, one of my favorite principles that I have in my own life is the one where everything has a purpose. Romans 8:28 tells us that all things come together for good for those that love the Lord. Now here's the thing. We have this saying in my house and we joke around about it. If anything bad happens, we just look at ourselves and we say you know what, sovereignty of God. We say that half jokingly but also in a way for kind of like self-therapy because we read – we want to realize that everything that occurs whether it's good or whether it's bad, there is an actual specific purpose for it. Nothing just happens because it's supposed to – just because it happens at a chance, but rather because it's supposed to happen. God tells us that He has every hair counted, He knows every detail about our lives. We should never think that there isn't a greater purpose behind everything that occurs.

Guys, a man knows when to say I was wrong and humbly faces his errors. Manhood demands that you admit your imperfections and move toward positive change, positive change.

ROY: A man does not always get it right the first time but keeps on trying until he does. Manhood does not create perfection within a man, but it does create resiliency, perseverance and strength. You and I have to get knocked down once and awhile by life. It's just going to happen. What has to happen in our minds is we got to rely upon God to get back up.

A man lives by his principles and to do this, he must carefully choose them. Because of this process, many of his choices have been predetermined, making his response either I can or I can't. When we have these principles in our life, they act like guidelines which immediately cause us to know certain things are no longer an option.

And my favorite principle is Principle 15. A man submits to an authority beyond himself. Manhood is bigger than any one individual. There are manhood principles that must be followed, cultural rules which a man lives by, values which a man must establish and spiritual decisions which determine a man's destiny. You and I submit to something. The best person to submit to is the authority of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit acting as a constant guidance mechanism within our lives.

So many times in life I am struck with how I am trying to control things and make things kind of go my way and one of my principles comes from the Bible where it says, he who tries to save his life shall lose it and he who is willing to give up his life shall find it. So many times I cling to my way of looking at life when what God is saying to me is, Roy, open up your hand and receive what I have for you.

KEITH: Thanks Roy. One of the things that's so amazing is as we each share our principles, they each have one. Not just the 15 we've given you. We're now at the advanced level guys. Year 4 takes us in when we were doing Roundtable and saying, let's figure out what guys we're going to do life with. Year 5 is what principles are you really going

to live by in such a level that those behind you are always safe? What are your beliefs? Not what are the Knights of the 21st Century's beliefs, not what are the beliefs that I find in the Bible, what are your beliefs as a result of those truths? That's really the issue. What do I have that I'm going to hold onto. So we're going to go up to our roundtable room and just kind of take through this at a campfire, but I want you guys to think about this. You should be at a place where you have a series of beliefs that you can rest in, you can be confident. They're your beliefs and you will live in that environment. That's our challenge. That's our desire.

We do these video shoots and some of them go really smooth and some don't. This one did not go real smooth for us. It was really a pretty long drawn out experience and I want you to know that because sometimes there's opposition that comes to belief. It's a very important trial and there's opposition for you to start having truth and living in it, that's very, very scary to a world that has both that which is good, God and that which is evil, Satan. And so we sometimes find that opposition. I want to make sure you have your strong beliefs because there are people that are counting on you to stand strong in your principles. Go to your campfires and spend some time talking. Join us in ours. See you in a few minutes.

CLAIR: So we're talking about principles and not every principle you have is a healthy one or even the good ones if exercised improperly can cause problems. I remember, Keith, a time in your life, I was trying to

be a great friend to you. You were in the middle of a tough time. You were down clearly and I came in and this encouraging part of me, wanting to build you up came in and the timing was wrong. I remember it didn't take me more than probably two days, - it should have been quicker. It should have been a couple minutes into it to realize that the proper role at that moment was to grieve with you. Trying to pick you up was completely inappropriate and I kept thinking back to Joe. Those guys didn't come in and create a party. They came in and sat their in silence and grieved with him and so I'm just curious. As I talk about my principle, are there other ways I've got to watch out for or is he encouraging of other men a great principle to try to live my life by?

KEITH: Yeah, that's a tricky thing. I love what you are saying. There are times when laughter just isn't available or feeling valued isn't something that a person needs at that particular point. But I don't think it engaged your principle. It just means that when do I apply it, you know.

T.C.: I would say encouragement is never, is never out of order. It's just all in how you do it. Maybe I don't want to laugh, but certainly if you tell me, hey man, I just think at the end of the day everything is going to be alright, and I'm here for you if you need me. That's, that's always appropriate to say that. You know I think encouragement, there's not enough people who know how to do that. I think that's a blessing. It's a skill. It's a talent and to be an encourager, we need more encouragers.

CLAIR: And how about, have you bumped into people that the only way they know to build themselves up is to put you down.

T.C.: Exactly. And there are a lot of people that are good at doing that, you know. We need more encouraging people.

ROBERT: Right. Absolutely. There are times when you get, you know, something can happen and they think – other people may think that the way to encourage you by putting the other people down that are around you. You know, principles for me are like tools. You got to know which ones to use at the right time. You know, so like the jar where we have our principles, right, it's like the toolbox. It's the way I look at it.

CLAIR: There's – scripture talks quite a bit about jealousy and envy and it's pretty strong language. Those are powerful emotions that can destroy relationships especially between men. I used a quote earlier. Every time a friend succeeds a part of me dies. I read that and I was so sad, but I see it. I've felt it in myself at times. I see it in other men. What's been your experience?

KEITH: You do that better than anybody I know. You do not. You celebrate people's vacations. You celebrate people's victories, probably better than most people I know. So it's interesting, because so you're consistent with the belief inside of you. And I think that's what makes it work. It is a belief that you have and you kind of, you live it out. I don't know if all of us have that as one of our beliefs.

One of the weird parts about this journey is that it might be a belief that I've locked into my soul but I have a good friend, for example, I was talking about that God is love. That is not his belief at all. He's absolutely convinced that God is not love and so it doesn't negate my belief but it also means I got to be careful how I throw my belief at him.

CLAIR: I think we all got to add a belief or a principle that we had out there. But Keith, we didn't hear from you. What would you like...

KEITH: Yeah, it's funny. One of the ones that was kind of born out of 6 years ago when we started talking about knights was until you learn to protect the heart of every woman, you'll never learn to protect the heart of your woman. That belief is huge to me. Now that's sort of born out of pornography, it's sort of born out of a couple of emotional affairs, it's sort of born out of hurting my wife in not protecting her heart over the years. So it's born out of a lot of things, but it's actually born out of the understanding of scripture where Adam was given a direction from God and said, there's going to be an enemy. He's going to go after this woman. You got to protect her because the vulnerability that she will then have, Paul will talk about in the New Testament and he'll say that vulnerability meant that she needed a man to be an authority over her protector so that she could flourish within her world.

I spend a lot of time now protecting my wife. And so I think that that's very real. I teach it like it's an absolute total principle that every man should live by. Many men do. Not all do though and not all

necessarily would agree with it, but it is a belief – mine happens to be rooted – like I said the last principle is can the Bible verify it? Yeah, the Bible can verify my belief. So as a result of that, that's pretty solid in my life. But you guys might see that a little differently, but it's really funny because that belief changes actually how I interact one-on-one with a female.

T.C.: I agree with you. My, with me it was just learning that, you know, I was a hugger. You know, and I one time learned that my wife was a little bit uncomfortable if I hugged a woman for too long. When she is not feeling safe and valued and that, then nothing is going right anyway and so like you say, I spent some time not protecting her heart either. And when I learned how to do that, it made my marriage what it is, so I see it one hundred percent the way you see it.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. All of your beliefs, each one of the ones, you might have other ones besides what you have, but each one that you shared earlier, we state them again just so that everybody can think about them and let's see if its ours, you know, if it's ours as well. It's not always going to be that way.

ROBERT: Yeah, absolutely. Well you know, I shared Romans 8:28. I have this real deep belief that everything has a purpose, that God allows things to happen and He'll use them for our good whether it's for growth or whether it's just for the pure act of blessing or for it to be an

example to others. Somehow or another it's going to be for our good and definitely for the good of those around us.

KEITH: What do you do with a person who just had a good friend get killed by a drunk driver?

ROBERT: Yeah, you know, it's actually not too far off. I've had situations like that in my own life as well as some friends that have passed away, you know, through the years. Um, you know, there's a verse in the Bible that talks about how even in death we want to glorify God and the thing is that being exposed to those circumstances sent these huge shockwaves in my own life that really resulted in pushing me even closer to Christ. And I'll tell you what, there's no greater good than that. If that friend of mine who I know was a believer, but even if they weren't, God allowed certain things to come into place to ultimately result into good in my life, in the life of my wife, definitely in the life of that family which ran immediately and over the years has been getting closer to Christ. Now that's one example, and now you know, a variable like that, there can be so many variables in so many different ways, but that's the beauty of it. I don't have to figure all the variables out. I believe what the scripture says that all things will come together. Somehow He will work them together for good.

ROY: I have a different version of that verse. I one hundred percent agree with everything you said, but I think sometimes in the midst of just the emotional thud of life hitting somebody that that verse is really

at times for the listener more than it's for the guy going through it. It takes a while after I'm going through trauma and my head's spinning to kind of get back to that verse. The verse is true the whole time. My ability to believe it, because of my emotional reaction, becomes in question.

KEITH: What you just said might mean that if I'm a guy who is right now hurt by that, I don't feel like God is working to my highest good, I will actually avoid you and your belief for a season because it just stings a little bit and I think there's part of that that's really interesting about our beliefs. And that is that there are times when our beliefs actually make a person make a decision about interaction.

ROBERT: Well I'll avoid my beliefs sometimes. I mean if something bad happens, you know, I didn't get the part that I wanted, or whatever, you know the last thing I want to hear is somebody tell me, hey, you know what, it's going to be good for you. You know, there's a time to grieve, there's a time for everything. But I think in the long scheme of things and as you work things out, and emotionally you talk them out, you get your campfires, you have people who are supportive, other beliefs fall into play, and stuff. When all those things come together, there comes a point when hearing, you know what, that wasn't in vain. There was a purpose. It's...

ROY: Yeah, I agree, but like you were talking about encouraging, you know, when, when and at one point in Job, it says, Job

says my friends can't stand me because they don't want to experience what I'm experiencing, okay. And I think that that's a natural reaction. People will tell you that when something bad happens to them, people kind of step away because they don't want to experience it and they don't know what to say. But at that moment, all things work together for good, allow me to enter into a friend's experience versus go with my natural reaction which is to avoid to it because my faith, for my friend knows all things work together for good. So I don't have to take care of me. I don't have to mobilize cheap answers which in essence are distancing. I can sit with them where they're at because when you forget that verse in the middle of your pain, I'll hold the verse for you as your brother.

KEITH: And I like the idea that sometimes we get together as guys and we're not all going to hold the exact same belief. You know, all of us have to have them verified by people we respect. But there are times when I can defend – I'm okay with the fact that it's my belief and it's not yours. That's true for a person that is connected to Christ and not connected to Christ. It's true for guys in your campfire. One of the joys of learning to be able to speak clearly our beliefs one with another is there's a risk, because, you know if you take a vote, it might not win, the vote at the table. It doesn't mean it's not true. It's doesn't mean it's not true for you. Because I so – I love that verse. That verse is so powerful for me and that understanding that God is incapable of not seeking the highest good. He's incapable. It gets back to my God is love thing. But I

think it's really cool. Sometimes when you get together in our campfire, I don't have to always agree.

One of the cool things about your incident you were talking about with us a couple years ago, man, you came back at it in other ways. Some guy just stepped in and really met me at that moment ...

CLAIR: I think it was the fourth approach I finally got it right. (laughter)

KEITH: But you did. Remember how you just said, you know what I missed that moment.

CLAIR: It was a learning experience.

KEITH: Because you so hurt to see me grieve that you wanted me to stop grieving, but then you said, you know what, he's not going to stop grieving, I go manner it with him. You know and so.

ROY: Yeah one of the things I like about Clair is, you know, there's at least two things.

KEITH: Really?

ROY: Yeah, at least two things. (laughter). Is Clair, if you notice has a lot of quotes in his mind. He remembers a lot of quotes and I love – one of the ways he helps me is he'll share with me a quote at the right time. But you know, if you laid out all these quotes on this table, all these quotes of beliefs, you know because a quote states a belief, and we laid them all over the table, and we'd go, okay pick one. You know some of the ones that would resonate with you wouldn't resonate with me. And

that's – and some of that would change. Maybe a circumstance changes and then suddenly I want the one you have, you know, because it becomes ours. So we relate our passion and our intellect to these different beliefs in different points in our life experience because life is constantly moving and at one moment the quote, okay that's cool and the next minute, I really needed that quote.