MEN'S FRATERNITY

Knights of the 21st Century

Trail 9

ROBERT: I had something really cool happened to me recently. I was no my way to a film shoot and I got to the airport pretty early and I had some time to kill and I just sat there and sat right in front of my gate and I started thinking, wondering and I started praying. I asked the Lord, I said, I asked God, so what I'm doing with my life, different projects and the speaking engagements and the movies, are they making a difference? And I kind of just sat there and I pondered that for awhile, and it wasn't too long after where all of a sudden these two questions started to surface in my heart.

The first one was, when you speak, are you always making sure that what you do, what you say is the truth? So I was like, yeah, you know, I got to the scriptures, I verify things, yeah, absolutely. Question number 2 was do you always give God the glory for everything that happens in your life? So I was thinking about that and I said, yeah, I mean, I do. I'm always giving God the glory whether good or bad, He gets glorified for everything. And then I felt this like calmness in my heart really and I just felt like, you know what, that was enough. Knowing that was really enough. And for some strange reason it satisfied. I didn't need to know anything else. And just as I started to feel that way, suddenly a couple that had been sitting next to me came up to me and they were on their

way to Bermuda. They were going to have their first real honeymoon. They'd been married for just over a year and never got to go before. But they came to me and they said, aren't you that guy from that movie *Courageous*, and you know this has happened to me before, usually it will go with, yeah, pictures or whatever. But this time this lady, this wife started to really tear up and her eyes were welling up with tears and her husband also got really excited and they said, you don't know what that movie means to us. It changed everything in our lives. It made us love each other again. It changed my husband and there was her husband there and he started telling me, your character Javier and him walking down the alleyway was just such an inspiration and it changed the way I saw my wife and the way that I wanted to live and I just wanted to tell you. I couldn't believe you were here. I wanted to tell you that it made a difference in our lives.

I was like, wow, I mean, praise God for that and of course, you know, I had spent some time talking to them but in my heart I was saying, it's amazing God. Thank you. Thank you for allowing that to happen. Well I get on the plan, I land and right after I land I'm walking to get the baggage claim and another couple comes up to me. They had children and they're telling me, hey, aren't that guy from *Courageous*. I'm like, yeah, and they're telling me, you have no idea how that movie changed my life and our lives and again the story of restoration of what God had done because I did this part in a movie. You know, I was so thankful to

God and I was like, wow, okay that's twice, you know, in a span of just a few hours. This is great, you know, praise be to God.

Well the next day, see we traveled on a Saturday, the next day was Sunday and I decided to go to the local church where I was at and when I sat down on my seat, the guy next to me starts crying hysterically, I mean, like he's just weeping there. I'm like, are you okay, is everything alright and he looks at me and he's telling me I got to talk to you afterwards. So after the service he turns to me and he says I can't believe, you're the guy from Javier, from *Courageous*, Javier. And I was like, yeah. He says, that scene you did the alley without a job, that was me a week ago. I saw your movie again. It inspired me and I was praying to God. God gave me a job and I came today because I said, God, I'm going to church today. I just want to praise you and be thankful to you and then as I'm sitting here, you come and you sit next to me. I couldn't believe it. So I'm sitting here listening to him and I'm just like, now I'm starting to get all emotional with him and I couldn't believe what God had done and that was amazing.

Look, long story short, I'm going this whole week and I'm shooting this movie and people after people are coming to me. And I couldn't believe what God had just done for me, revealing to me that everything that I have been doing for the last three years in some way or another whether it was through a Facebook message for someone randomly or whether it was to somebody that I was seeing there on set, or somebody that just recognized me in public telling me how God had touched them,

had moved them through something that I was a part of. To tell you that I was on Cloud 9 could not even describe the emotional that I feel. What a high to know that God could take someone like me and use him for His glory.

It's kind of funny though how you can have such different emotions in just a span of a year. Early last year I was offered a movie to be an athlete, to be a baseball player. I was going to play catcher on the team for this movie and it was a pretty big budget movie and I was really excited about it. And they said we want you to go work out and do your thing, get trimmed up, get in shape and so I did. I started doing what I know to do. You know, I got a trainer, I started training, I started working out. Let me tell you guys something. I was working like I had never had before. I lost a whopping 55 pounds and I was on my way to the goal of losing 60 pounds. I was so thrilled. I was looking great. I was looking strong. I started training with some baseball coaches and stuff and about 2 and 1/2, 3 weeks before the film, after I'd been sweating so much, I get a phone call that financing had fallen through for the movie and it wasn't going to happen.

Well I can look at the bright side, right. I mean I could say, okay, that didn't work out but you got to at least look at me, like I'm really working out and I've lost so much weight. Everything's great. That next day, I went to work out and I started feeling this pain in my feet and I couldn't explain it. It's not like anything I had ever felt before. By that

evening it was intense. I couldn't walk anymore. I thought I'd gotten some kind of weird arthritic attack or like gout or something. I went to a doctor the next day and he gave me some medication that controlled the pain, but after tests, lots of checkups, to this day nobody could figure out what was wrong with me. The truth is over the last year I've dealt with a lot of pain in my feet and obviously it's kept me from being able to be as active as I was already starting to be. It's pretty painful to achieve so much and to work so hard at something and to just have it slip right through your fingertips. I felt pretty lost. I'm not sure if I'll ever be able to do that again.

KEITH: Look at this, those stories, your stories, my stories, the stories that say I have this high and I hit this low. What happened? I have this ideal and I have the real and the difference between the two leaves me in this unbelievable place between two hard rocks, not sure where I'm going to go. The ideal and the real. We all got them. It's the difference.

I want you to take your books guys and open up to Trail No. 9. As we look at Trial No. 9, we're going to walk through this tension in the forest between our ideals and the real and how we're going to handle the difference that it brings, the difficulties, the disappointments. You're going to hear stories like Robert's throughout this particular trail as you and I take a look at some very, very important principles.

Grab your books and look at I. Many of us have negative filters which are the result of our struggle with various areas of the forest. We often are not prepared for the level of difficulty that these forest tasks present. Guys, you know we live in a forest, right? Now forest is our word for the world. You can change it. You can make a difference with it, but when you enter the forest just so you know, it's a difficult place between the ideal and the real and you got to navigate it. You got to figure out how you're going to handle it.

So what we're going to do is we're going to take a look at those things realistically and hear some stories scattered throughout of our highs and our low from each of the guys involved with us this week.

So, look at A. A man is strong enough to accept the fact that what he experiences in the here and now - that's the real – doesn't line up with his hopes and dreams. We all have hopes and dreams, right? That's the ideal. He can be unhappy with life in multiple ways. Here are some of the ways you and I can get unhappy.

1. The kind of body he's been given including his specific genetic history and health issues. I just went through a time period with our guys. I don't know whether you know this, but every year we go through what we're going to teach at Knights with a group of about 1,000 men, between 800 and 1,000 men at our church. And they're all kinds of guys from all different walks of life, guys who know Christ, guys who don't know Christ, guys who follow God, guys who don't follow God. We have an amazing

journey and this past year, within a week of each other, two of our guys in their late 40's early 50's died. One of them died in a marathon and another died just – he owned several businesses and just fell over dead. And in the middle of that – and they all happened within a couple – a week of each other, and one of the things that was interesting about that is that they found themselves struggling with the fact that – I mean we found ourselves struggling with the fact that they are suddenly gone and life doesn't seem like it's fair and their bodies changed and genetics happened and guys, the bottom line is when you and I start to look at our real and our dreams, things happen to us physically. Some, you can't even have them because you dream to be a great athlete and you're not or you dream to be a little bit smarter or a little bit whatever. Guys, we have to understand that these things are the difference between the real and the ideal and you have to learn to accept the differences.

Look at 2. The environmental opportunities that were available to him. Now, guys, the world in which you find yourself, you have to deal with it. You can't always pick where your born, the economic situation you're born in. You can't always pick what's happened to the world around you. You can't pick whether a mudslide is going to happen or some kind of tragedy is going to take place. You can't pick necessarily what you've been inherited, what you've been given or what you experience and so, ideal, that's my hopes and dreams and the real, the

world in which I live. Guys, learn to adjust. Learning the differences there is huge.

Look at 3. The gifts and skills that he has been given versus the things that he wishes could have been better. The gifts and skills that he's been given versus the things he wishes could have been better. You know what I do for a living? This, I love it. I have a blast. I love talking. I love sharing with guys, these people, all over the place in all kinds of environments and to be really honest with you, as I'm staring into a camera, I'm actually staring at you. In my mind, I see you, I get it. It's such a cool thing for me. It's what my gift is.

There have been times in my life when I wish there was certain things that I could do that I wasn't gifted in. One of them is I wanted to be an entrepreneur running a business. Now I've run several businesses but I'm not sure I've been an entrepreneur and one of the things I wanted to be in doing that is I just wanted to be – and I'll explain this later on in one of the other trails – I wanted to be somebody that was significant and be able to control my own destiny. My gifts did not lend itself to that. My idea versus the real. That's what we have to understand. We wish that things could be better, but you know what guys, we're okay with who we are. We have to adjust to that.

Look at the next one. He desires to develop his potential without putting much effort into it. Now, guys, we're guys. Effort just sounds like effort. It's so much more comfortable to stay on the sofa, staying in the

Lazy Boy chair, turning the channel and you and I can develop what we need to do. Well, this is something guys that his desire to develop it is going to require that we're going to put effort into it. So are you willing to do that? Are you willing to do what it costs? Even as you get older and your body doesn't respond quite as quickly, are you willing to do that? It takes a lot of energy, a lot of focus. Real – ideal, right?

Look at 5. His ability to make fewer mistakes. His inability to make fewer mistakes. You know what's interesting is we want, we can desperately say I just got a limited amount of time, limited amount of whatever have available, I don't want to miss the opportunities, and yet, our inability to just not always make – we're going to make mistakes guys. And those mistakes are going to cost. That's different by the way than deliberately choosing to hurt somebody. This is the kind of thing where you go, this just wounds me because I just didn't think it through. I can't tell you how many times we had to stop rolling as we've been shooting this video because of a stupid mistake on my part of someone else, probably somebody else. And what happens in that is those inabilities to not have mistakes happen. And sometimes they get us so frustrated between the real and the ideal and you have to learn to handle those moments.

Look at 6. His goal to show more self-control, self-discipline and self-awareness. His goal to show more of these things. You realize that if you could maximize your life, you could somehow or another prevent the

real and the ideal from colliding. Now the reality is it will always make you better if you focus and think through being disciplined in all those things, but even there, you don't always control the real and the idea. So keep this in mind as we look at the conclusion.

A knight learns to accept the differences between his real self and his ideal self. We're going to learn to understand the guy we want to be versus the guy that we are and we can change the guy that we are to some degree. We can make a difference. That's what this is all about, but understand you'll always have that tension between what you wish was happening – that tension here between where you'd like to be and where you are, and that work in that tension is everything.

The Knightly News that's in your box there is about a guy by the name of Barnabas. Barnabas is an interesting guy. Barnabas found himself saying I want to be this guy to you Paul - Paul was an apostle and wrote a lot of the New Testament – and Barnabas wanted to be the guy to him. Barnabas had a cousin who was making some bad choices and at one pointed deserted Paul and Barnabas and just took off. And as a result of that Paul and Barnabas ended up separating. When they wanted to get back together, Barnabas wanted to give John Mark a second chance and Paul didn't. John Mark wanted to say, hey, I know he wasn't ideal but let's take where we are and let's go and you know what happened? They ended up splitting up over this. These two guys who

were making a huge impact split up because the ideal didn't happen and the real took over and it make a huge difference.

Consider this statement on your Knightly News. Relationships have risks and can be difficult when each partner shares honestly. Barnabas says I got to go with this relative. Paul says I can't do that anymore and they lost their relationship. The ideal having the great stay together – real, happens all the time.

Let's consider another story.

CLAIR: I shared with you earlier that God blessed me with two sons and trusted me to raise them. And that's been one of the – probably the most challenging things I've done in my life but also one that's brought the most joy. And I asked for a lot of good advice along the way from friends of mine who I thought were great fathers and one of the pieces of advice they gave me is make sure your sons understand that teaching them principles and the skills to get through life come first; friendship comes second. So I remember having a conversation with both of them at some point. I love you guys, I want to be your friend, but this is going to come first. First we're going to learn everything we need to learn about you, how what you need to live your life and if we're still friends at the end, that would be really cool. Well I'm blessed to tell you, I've got a 21 year old and an 18 year old and they're still some of my best friends in the world. So hopefully it wouldn't surprise you that time

together with them is important to me and that the high point of my year I'd love to share involves my sons, particularly my oldest.

So Shane is my oldest son. He's 21 years old and grew up in near York, Pennsylvania which is where they produce the Harley Davidsons. I love motorcycles. You don't really have a choice. So I grew up riding Harleys. My son also loves bikes but he's into the crotch rockets. So it's a passion we share. We also have learned to enjoy scuba diving over the years. Both my sons dive with me and the happiest times of my life had to be looking in the rearview mirror of my bike and seeing Shane behind me or diving, which we all enjoy together – just turn around and see both my sons and some of the most beautiful parts of the world, - 50, 80, 100 feet under water, just enjoying the time together.

So highlight of the year – Shane and I found some time, I guess it was over his college break this past January – and decided to spend a few days in Florida and started talking about what we love to do together. So what we decided to do was fly down and rent a couple of motorcycles. I love the Key West area and wanted to take him down there at some point anyway. So I think we rented the bikes in West Palm Beach, picked up one Harley and one crotch rocket and rode down through the Florida Keys. We had about a 24 hour window in the middle of our trip to pull all this adventure off and decided to do a dive within that 24 hours as well. So we got on the bikes, drove down to Key West, beautiful ride down through the bridges, watching the water get progressively cooler and more

beautiful as you get there, did the scuba dive. It was a wreck dive off of Key West and that part, just so you know, sometimes high points always positive but it was amazing memories. Somewhere around 60 to 80 feet, we got stuck in a school of Portuguese man-of-wars. They're very difficult to see the currents flowing and we started getting stung, very disorienting, instant fire, the sting of 1,000 bees is the best way I could describe it. It became kind of dangerous at that moment. They can put you in the hospital, a lot of venom, you get a little bit disoriented, but we stuck it out. I think both of us were scared to shoot to the surface, because the other one would never live it down. But it was the first time we've ever been diving together and I thought, man, things aren't going to turn out so well, but they did. We finished out the dive, had a great time together, rode down to Key West to see the sunset, the southern most point and then turned around and headed back. And I think if I recall it was somewhere around 640 miles we did in 24 hours on those bikes and got a scuba dive in the middle of it. The two things we absolutely loved and got to experience it together. So memories with my son at 21, the last couple pages of our lives together, as he's about ready to leave our home, just precious to me. So highlight of my year.

I just told you how much I love my son. If you can't tell, if it's not coming out how proud I am of him, and that was one of the highlights of my year was spending that time with him on that trip. Would it surprise you for me to tell you that the low point of my year also involved my 21

year old so, Shane. I'll never forget it. I have a boat in the back of my property. I was out working on the boat and my wife came out and you know you have the sense, I think she was 30 feet away and I knew something was wrong, the way she was walking or something, and her disposition just told me this was not going to be a good moment. She walked up and she could barely talk. She handed me a letter. It was a legal document, had a court name on the top. It had a date and it had my son's name. And I read through some of the details and I was crushed. My son, Shane, who I believed and trusted had walked into something he shouldn't have been a part of and got caught and was about ready to face some legal ramifications.

We have a principle with our sons and that principle is if you get in trouble, we will never stop loving you, we will come to your aid. There may be a penalty to pay, but you'll never lose our love and we trusted that and always told our sons, you come to us first when you're in trouble. Well it took a few days before we got in a conversation. I think we were nearing the end of his summer break in our home and I think it was a Saturday morning, my wife came up and say hey Shane came home. I think he was hanging with some friends for a few days. She said Shane is home and he has to talk to us. I walked in the living room and sat down and I was still thinking about the letter, still hoping that what I suspected wasn't true, that he was innocent and that this was just a mistake. I gave all that hope up when Shane looked at both of us and said I messed up.

And he went on to describe a story of how he was hanging out with some friends, peer pressure, you name it, whatever it was, walked down a path he should have never walked down and got in some trouble. Our hearts were broken but he also told us a positive side of how he tried to pull his friends up and how he was somewhat innocent and we were a little bit encouraged by that.

The next day Shane came to us again, and if the first day wasn't bad enough, he looked at us and he goes I need to tell you the whole story. Yesterday wasn't completely accurate. The innocence wasn't there and he was as guilty as the rest of his friends. And it was a tough time. Good or bad, we've walked through it. Since that time, I've been telling Shane for years, we've been watching the friends he's been making. He's a very independent thinker and anytime I push, he pushes back harder, so very difficult to parent during that time with him. Whatever call was as he went on to describe it as he's making these friends, and we're getting concerned about the friends. I remember our pastor taught a message a long time ago and the premise of the message very simply was, if you run with dogs, you're going to get flees. I remember telling Shane, Shane look at the guys you're hanging out with. They got flees all over them. How are you going to avoid it? But I trusted him and kind of with the kids, you got to give them a little bit of room, a little bit of rope and he convinced me that he was strong enough to resist them.

I heard a principle a little while later that I shared with him over the phone while he was in college and it simply said, if you want to see who you're becoming, look at the five people you spend the most time with and you're going to be somewhere at the average of those five. So if you have some great people, you have some average people, you're going to end up somewhere in the middle. I challenged him one more time. Shane, the five people I see you hanging out with aren't who you are, who I want you to become. I don't think they're who you want to become.

So we learned a valuable lesson. Shane has given up some of those friendships. It's been a painful time for all of us. I clearly was disappointed in him but we walked with him through it. And the low point of my year. Life isn't always easy. These kids have brought me the greatest joy. They also brought me the greatest pain this year.

KEITH: So there you have it guys – high, low. We all have stories like that. As a matter of fact in your campfires, you're going to share later on about your highs and your lows. In Clair's case it has everything to do with the next point in your trail.

Look at B. A man learns to accept the differences between what he wants another person to be like and who they are. He described the difference between the joy of his relationship with his son as you and I have all known that over a period of time, those relationships, and then sometimes they don't go exactly the way we want them to go.

Let's take a look at 9 things about that, so you understand the differences and where the tension lives between the real and the ideal in this understanding.

Look at 1. In some aspects of his life, he had the mother and father that he didn't want while in other aspects of his life he had a mother and a father that he did want. So guys, you had a relationship, you started with it from word one. You know my story – the first 12 years of my life with my dad, it was everything you wanted and then my dad changed as he stopped trusting God. My mom actually remained pretty consistent and so I had the relationship with them for the most part early on that I wanted and then with my mom, afterwards and my dad less so. It wasn't ideal. There's differences in people and you start with your families. It's pretty obvious.

Look at 2. He wishes his wife would want him sexually less or more often. Now I know a lot of you guys are sitting there going, that more often thing, what was that about? Well, guys, wherever you are, sometimes sexually your desires, your goals aren't happening. Lynn and I went through a time period not too long ago, a couple years ago now that I look back on it. She was working through some pain from her abuse as a child and we were not as sexually active during that particular time period. And one of the things that was interesting is it doesn't mean that all of a sudden everything that I am turns off but it does mean that I need to control it because the ideal and the real is very different at that

particular point. So guys, you have to understand, it doesn't always go as it looks like in the commercials if you just take the right pill it all happens.

Look at 3. He would like others to be more supportive of him, relatives, teachers, adults and peers. You need people in your life being supportive of you. Come on, it's hard hanging between the rocks, right. It's hard to be involved in this environment where you can't say, you know, am I going to make it. So when you're hanging there guys, you say, man I hope people are supportive. Well people aren't always supportive. Sometimes they let you down. Sometimes they say things that really are cruel. I had a coach in 11th grade that just said something that really to this day I don't' even remember what he said. I just remember the pain of what he said. Alright, so real, ideal.

Look at 4. He would like his work team to produce more with less conflict. He would like the team that he works with to produce more. Don't you know that's how you go to work, you want those around you to work at the same level you do or those who work for you or those who work above you, guys, jobs don't always work exactly the way we want it. We're dealing in a real world when we really want the ideal and people are the key in that.

Look at 5. He would like his children to be more agreeable with his wishes. He wants his children to be more agreeable with his wishes. You want to come home at night, have them say, oh my goodness, Daddy's home. Let's take care of him. Please put your feet up. What can we get

you? How can we take care of you? We just want them not to have poopy diapers, we don't' want them to have crises in their lives. We want them to stay within the guidelines that we provide. Guess what – they're kids. They get dirty. Every once in awhile I watch my boys putting their other brother's head in the toilet and flushing it and I'm going, I didn't plan on that. That wasn't what I wanted. Guys, they're kids. You need to understand ideal and real, the tension. And it's okay with that because you have learned as a knight to live understanding where the ideal is and the real and what we need to deal with.

Look at 6. He would like his employer to pay him more and be more appreciative of his work. Now we all kind of get this one. Here's what we love to do. We're living in the tension between the real and the ideal and we'd like our boss to come in and say, listen, you are the best of the best. As a matter of fact, not only are you the best of the best, we actually are going to have a whole day where all the company is just going to come and listen to you _____ eloquent about the excellence in which you do it. And if that's not enough, we'd love to give you another month's salary just as a – well no, that's probably not – how about two months. Well come on, you know what you long for. You know what the real reality is, is you're not enough, not doing enough, not accomplishing, not enough no matter how hard you try and you don't ever seem to get above where you need to be economically, right. You know the pressure – real, ideal. It's what happens and people are involved in those.

Look at 7. He would like the government to make better decisions. When we're filming this, one of the things that's going on is that we're trying to figure out how to be a nation that can have healthcare and so we want the government to make all the right decisions in all the things and what they're doing in that whole thing, and guys, they're human beings running the government. Good or bad, evil, wise, somewhere in the middle, and guys, it's not going to go the way you hoped it was going to go all the time.

Look at 8. He would like people to respect each other and treat each other better than they do. He would like people to respect each other. Wouldn't it be awesome if nobody would ever cut you off on the road, ever? Wouldn't it be nice if everybody was always polite and caring? Those are the things we long for. Those are the things we wish were happening. Guys – real, ideal. Know the tension and be okay with the difference because when you can learn to live there you can guard those you're supposed to guard.

Look at 9. At times he would like God to do what he wants rather than what God chooses to do. If I were to share with you guys my high and low, it's – the low is going to involve my son and his battle with cancer. But there's actually a lower point in my son's life than that this year, and I wish that God would somehow or another change somebody's mind or fix his cancer or do whatever He would do. We have that tension between our relationship with this God of what we'd love Him to do if we

were in charge of telling God what to do and what is real and the highest good and the best.

Keeping all that in mind, let's look at this conclusion. A knight learns to accept the differences between what he wants from others and what he gets. What we want to do, guys, is this. Here's what we love to have people do. We think we can seek their highest good and they get better if they just do it, but what they do, what they choose to do is not always the same. What we want and what we get. Learning to live in that tension will make all the difference in how we impact the world around us.

Another story for you.

ROY: Do you remember? Do you remember last year when I talked about my son, Nick? Yes, I'm going to talk to you about something really, really great and it's about my son, Nick. You know, Nick who's 27 years old, non-verbal, autistic with Down Syndrome. See despite some of the things we talked about last year regarding my grief, one of my best days recently has been about Nick. A lot of good days are occurring this last year as people talk with us regarding Knights of the 21st Century and how lives are being changed and marriages are being transformed and individuals are meeting Jesus Christ for the first time. And recognizing that transforming power of what Jesus can do in their life. Well as a result of this and Knight's belief that men need to meet very regularly with one another, in fact, my preference is that men need to meet 48 weeks out of the year because we need each other.

We created a Real Men series. Real Men is going to be on DVD and that's where this story with my son, Nick, begins. In that lesson that I was teaching in that series, I decided to include Nick on the stage with me and I thought, this ought to be interesting. And as we started, as I started to talk and talked about Job and some of the challenges, and some of the things we don't like, we let loose Nick on the stage. Balls were flying around as I talked. At one particular point, he backed into me and I put my arms around him and then used them like, like parallel bars and because I was on a high chair, I fell over and at another point I thought he was going to take off his shirt. At one point I had to yell cut because I wasn't sure if he wasn't going to pull down his pants right there on the stage. But what makes that good? I had fun with my son. The guy that did all that grieving last year, and continues periodically to grieve with his limitations, at that very moment when he and I were on the stage together, talking on the set about who Jesus Christ is and the power of God to help us through the difficult times of our life, I felt like for that moment Nick and I were working together. Nick and I were telling people like you across the country that despite what happens in life that's not planned for, and despite sometimes the pain that comes with it, there's rejoicing that God gives us a chance to become strong as a result. And Nick could be there with me in a Knight's message. Man, that was so cool and I had a great time.

Defender

We all want to live with confidence. We all would like to not think about what's going to happen in the next moment. We like to go through the day and we don't like to ask ourselves the question, gee, am I going to even live through the next day. Several times this year I've had a low point and I've had a tough lesson and I've asked God at times why. See periodically a small physical problem but it affects me is my heart gets out of rhythm. I've had several procedures for this and things seem to go well and I've been walking periodically, sometimes up to 6 and 8 miles, just trying to build up my strength so that I could wake up in the morning, take off in life, have energy and not worry.

Just recently I went through a really hard time. See when I get out of rhythm, the first couple of days I'm just tired. But the second week and the third week I can really feel not just the drag physically but the drag emotionally. Things were going to good with Knights and my family, excited that my daughter moved back to town and that we are able to work together as therapists on some situations and everything's going so great and I just see God blessing everywhere and then suddenly I put the blood pressure cuff on because I just don't feel right. And then I realize I'm out of rhythm. I say to God, God can't we ever get done with this? I want to follow your will. When have I learned enough of a lesson? Things were going so good. Why now? In a couple of weeks I have a Knights shoot coming up. I can't be out of rhythm. I can't afford this. And then the next

day I put the blood pressure cuff on and you're right, I'm out of rhythm again.

You know, I'm never going to have that confidence. I'm never going to wake up everyday fully believing that everything is going to work exactly the way I want it to work. During those time, I'm going to feel low. It's nice to know that Jesus is with me.

KEITH: So guys, highs – lows, idea – real, stories. Some of them are about having people change and some of them are about physical things. We all have them. So in your campfire, in a few minutes you're going to go and you're going to share your highs and lows.

There's one more area I want you to kind of look at real quickly under the categories of differences. So look at C. A man accepts the differences between what he wants out of life and the hand that life has dealt him. So we're going to fly now, guys, so just watch.

No. 1. There are more risky situations and violence than he would like. So the world in which we live is violence, the world we find ourselves is risky.

No. 2. There are more people in need that he would like. Never an end of people that need something from us.

No. 3. Things tend to cost more than he would like. It's always amazing when you go to buy something, you go well that got a lot more expensive than I remember it last time. Things are going to cost more.

Look at No. 4. Food that tastes the best is often not nutritious or healthy. That's really one of the most incredible things. Celery apparently is really good for you and there is nothing about it, nothing that is going to draw you to it. And apparently there are other things that are a little bit sweeter that are not good for you. That's the way it works.

No. 5. Many tasks are not as easy as he would like. Many tasks you find yourself doing just are not as easy because you know what, the world has been cursed. God has removed himself from aspects of it and it's just difficult. It has thorns now, right.

Look at No. 6. Many natural resources are not as easy to harness as he would like. Wouldn't it be easy if we could just harness the wind and never have to worry about energy anymore?

Look at No. 7. He experiences a sense of community with others is less than he would like to. He experiences his sense of community with other far less than he would like to. He wishes that everybody was just getting along, we were all Kumbaya and it was the 70s and we were all sitting around going, love dude, man… Hey guys, the community isn't happening the way we'd like it to at the levels we'd like it to.

Look at No. 8. The speed limit and all the other rules of the daily life do not allow him to be the exception. That is such a pain, isn't it? Now I love – I mentioned the other day, driving is a sport, guys and if you can't have fun with it, what good is that, right? Rules, we live within.

Look at No. 9. There are more environmental disasters, earthquakes, floods, fires, hurricanes than we would like. The simple fact is we don't want to see those things happening. It's the way it is.

Look at No. 10. Negative consequences occur when he makes poor choices. He makes poor choices more often than he would like. Guys, if we made choices and they're negative and they have impact. And we wish we weren't but we keep doing it.

Look at No. 11. Spiritual values are not portrayed by others as much as he would like, especially in the church. Sometimes the people who don't get it the most are people who said they get it the most right, and we get so frustrated with all that. So it leads us to this conclusion. Look at this. A knight learns to live with the differences between life as he wants it to be and life as it is. That's what our stories are about. Let me share with you just one more story.

T.C.: Guys, I'm going to share a pretty high point with you in my life. I'm excited to share this story. I'm in Louisville, Kentucky about three years ago. I had just finished playing professional football. I had a good career but it was time to move on and see what I was going to do next with my life and so I decided to start a personal training business in the City of Louisville because it would be – it was an upstart business but people knew me so I knew that it would take off or at least I hoped it would. And that's exactly what happened. It took off pretty fast. I was helping people out and making great money and I was happy, taking care

of my wife and my children. But I was at a spiritual unrest. I pretty much couldn't go t sleep at night. And I knew it was weird because life was going so well and I couldn't sleep at night. And basically it was because I felt like I wasn't doing what God wanted me to do. Even though I was doing something good, it was great, but I wasn't sure if this is what God wanted me to do because I couldn't even enjoy the success. I just kept feeling like there was something else. And so I began to pray about it and had my wife pray about it and had people from the church that I knew pray about it and it came to me that the answer was for me to go and do ministry about 3,000 miles away in Southern California. Now, _____ see maybe wondering how did I come to that. Well if I tried to explain all of that, that would make this a very, very long story. The most important thing that I want you to know is that through a series of events and wise counsel, I did realize that this was what God wanted me to do. Although it was scary and I didn't have all the answers I went on ahead and I did move to Southern California to do ministry. I didn't even know where I was going to do ministry. So I get to Southern California and I just started praying about where He wanted me to do this ministry and how it was going to look and all I knew is I was carrying the message of Jesus Christ and being real in that state, you know, so far away, didn't quite know where I was going to live, didn't quite know what I was going to do. And again, a series of events led to all of that working out. But here's the point. I ended up finding out exactly where God wanted me to do

ministry. It was in the church in Southern California. Now in the interview process, this is where it gets really cool. During the interview process, I come here to begin doing the Knights series and the DVDs and things to get ready and speak and be with you guys and I was sharing with my brothers, the same brothers that have been talking to you about the different trails, I shared with them that I was interviewing for a position to be able to do ministry to over 1200 youths and do college ministry and I asked them to pray with me, my brothers at my campfire, real life stuff. Pray for me that I would get this if it's the Lord's will. I end up getting this position at this church so not only with I travel in a country to the ministry but when I wasn't traveling, I was able to worship at a great church but lead 1200 youth and then, and minister to them and I did it day in and day out and created programs and saw so many people come to Christ, baptized so many people, saw people return to their fathers, people returning to their mothers, people returning to their brothers, all these broken relationships, I was able to be directly responsible. Obviously God is directly responsible, but He was using me to work with this kids and I was doing it for an entire year and it was just so cool how God had answered my prayer and I was able to see so many fulfilling things happen. So that was a very, very, very high point for me in my life. But you may find it very interesting that there was a very, very low point and it deals with my same campfire family which I'm here with today in this same exact church. A year later, I'm back in the very same place, the

very same spot, the very same campfire with the very same guys and this time they're basically consoling me, being there for me because the college ministry that I ran ended. The church ended the ministry. After a whole year of seeing all those victories, one day before I came here to be with my guys and get ready to be with you guys, they let me know that when I come back there will be no more ministry and it just broke my heart. And then I started getting letters and emails from all the college students saying they don't know what they're going to do. They don't know who they're going to be led by and this is so upsetting that we don't have this ministry and I'm saying the same things, and man, it just doesn't seem fair. It jus doesn't seem right and I get here I share with my guys, man, and they just – they pray for me, they talk with me about it and it's just ironic how that happened. But I don't believe in spiritual irony. I believe that this was God's plan and purpose.

So here's what I want to say to you. In life, things aren't always fair, right. But the way I looked at it, what gave me peace, Jesus Christ died on the cross, was it fair or was it unfair? You would agree with me and say it was unfair. The Bible says it was unfair. But it still had to happen, didn't it? And then look at how Jesus came out on the other side. So it may not have been fair for me to lose the position that I had, and it won't be fair for you sometimes when you do all you can and the rules of life don't seem to add up in your favor, but just like Jesus had to die, it was unfair. He rose again to save millions. I lost a position with the

church. I was unfair but it had to happen because it was the purpose of God and I'm going to come out on the other side doing amazing things. Unfair things may happen to you in your life but maybe they have to happen. You be everything you need to be and trust God, you'll come out on the other side better than you went in.

KEITH: So there you have it, guys. Four stories, high – lows. T.C. takes us right into D. Look at your books. A knight adjusts to what is, while also applying his manhood to making the forest better for all. You know what's so amazing about these guys' stories? None of these guys have given up. All of them are still fighting. They've done Principle D. They've lived by it and as a result of that, their highs and their lows have not taken them off their game to change the world in which they find themselves for the glory of God. That's our job. Go to your campfires. Talk it through. Highs, lows, start to share with each other. Week 9 is about time for us to really open up. Great to have you with us. We'll see you next week in Trail No. 10. See you.