

## ***Knights of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

### **Trail 17**

There's something about Trail 17 that's important to me. I think it's because of some discovery that I made along the way because of it. Now I made a ton of discoveries throughout this whole journey that we've been on together, but this one was one of those that took me back to an experience I'd had years ago. I was being interviewed for a company, it was a rather medium sized company that was pretty exciting opportunity for me, pretty exciting opportunity I thought for them and so I was in the interview process and things were going pretty well when one of the Vice Presidents of the company leaned forward and he said, I noticed by your resume and by the things you've been saying that you for the most part up until this moment have been a big fish in some small ponds. So now you are going to become a little fish here in a big pond. How are you going to handle that? My reaction at the age of thirty-two was a pretty cocky reaction. It was, this is not a big pond and I will never be a little fish. Now I want you to know that when you're interviewing, probably the best thing to say is to not tell the guy who said his place was a big pond that it isn't and not to declare that in this big pond that it isn't a big pond, you're the big fish. But I did anyway. In fact, as a matter of fact, to be honest with you, it wasn't

just my inexperience being thirty-two, I actually was a fairly savvy interviewer at that particular point. The problem really was something had happened to me. Something had happened in this discussion that up until I was walking through this particular trail that I realized what exactly happened. That guy had taken a shot at me. He had taken a shot about how he was the big pond and I thought I was something special and he wanted to let me know that he was the stuff and when he took that shot at me, you know what it made me do? It made me need to protect myself. It made me to get my armor on so I could stand behind it and feel like I was secure from a guy attacking my character. Now I, I can't get away from the fact that it was still a pretty crappy response that I had to the guy. But I have to also tell you on the other side of it was that now I look back on it, I just jumped behind my armor and wanted to be protected. So when we get to Trail 17 and we call it Armor for All, it's that all of us have armor. We all have this thing that we put on to protect us, protect us from the battle. So when we start talking in terms of being a knight here of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and a warrior, we start talking about this area of life that comes with the armor that we're going to have that when you pull out your dog tags and you look, there's your core but on one side is your armor. So we're going to spend some time taking a look at what that means, why it is, how that works.

Catch this statement. Knowledge that the knight must attain regarding his need for armor. There is just knowledge that we as knights must obtain regarding our need, our personal need for armor. Guys, you are not going to make it without understanding your armor and how to use it and when to use it. Now if you were at Squire, we started in on this, but we're going to take this to a whole new level to give clarity as to how to function as better you possibly can in a world that's kind of different. Look at where the world is, number one. It says the forest is not completely safe. The forest in which we find ourselves, the world in which we find ourselves is not completely safe. Now that doesn't really surprise you. We've been talking about the danger of it, but I want you to know that we are guys that have been gravitating as spandex males towards womb living. We want to live in the comfortability, have everything taken care of and now suddenly I'm saying, I'm going to thrust you guys into the forest to make a difference and if you go out there, if I go out there without armor, we're going to run into trouble.

Jesus Christ was obviously a knight, through and through. He also was a knight who had to be aware of his armor. There was a guy by the name of Caiaphas. In your Knightly News, Caiaphas is the high priest. He's a spiritual leader and he's bent on killing Jesus. That's his job. That's his passion. So when Christ would do certain things, he said I can't go here and I can't go there because

this guy is trying to kill me, he had his armor on. Now understand that Christ is going to let this guy kill him. He's going to let this guy take a shot at him. He's going to let this guy hit him and be part of his death which will rescue you and I in bringing our spirit alive. Now what happens for Christ in this encounter in the passage you've been given is Christ has this ability, this moment where he is talking through or standing in front of this man who is accusing him. He's brought in all kinds of liars, everybody is shooting at him, remember now the forest isn't safe. It's shooting away at us. Christ is being shot at, falsely accused and Christ doesn't say a word. And then comes a moment when Christ carefully without anybody seeing it, takes off his armor and he says to Caiaphas who says, well what do you have to say about all this stuff. Are you the Messiah and Christ says, who has told you this, God, or who has told you that I am, because I am. You'll understand and you will see me seated at the right hand of God and all of a sudden Caiaphas goes, got yah. Well actually he didn't get him. Christ said, I'll remove that armor and I'll take that shot. It's at that moment that I realized that Christ says whenever you and I are behind armor, it's for a reason. Sometimes it's because we've been hurt and we just kind of protect ourselves but a lot of times it's because there are those out there trying to take us down. How do you understand how to function in this world? That's what this trail is about.

So look with me if you would to the first one, the first point under number one. Watch this. It says not only is the forest not completely safe but individuals have personal agendas that can hurt us. Individuals have personal reasons. Caiaphas had reasons for Jesus to be dead. People have reasons why they want you taken out. So when that happens, here's what you need to do. When you find yourself in that position, you need to step behind your armor. You need to find yourself in a position where for a moment you are safer. You have to step into it. You have to increase. Now you know armor has all kinds of flexibility to it, all kinds of levels. You have to do this so at that moment, you know that you're safe. I had a moment like that when I was in high school. I had a coach that had come to coach our basketball team. Now I don't understand basketball. You hand me a basketball and say dribble and I slobber. It does not click that it's a bouncing thing. I'm not very good at the sport. My whole basketball career I had scored two points. I was on the J.V. team. I was the eighth man in on the J.V. team, and I only scored two points my whole basketball career, so we're not talking about a big time basketball career. But I had a coach. I won't tell you what his name is because as far as I know he's still alive and I don't have permission to tell you but, this coach had an agenda. Do you know what the agenda was? He wanted to be taken care of. He wanted to be noticed. He wanted to be the center of attention and

this agenda meant that he would hurt high school guys. He would put them down for his own well being. It's hard when you're in eleventh grade to know how much armor to use, especially when you're trying to win the attention of a coach, especially when you're trying to win the respects of your teammates. And that coach did a lot of wounding in my life in that short year. Never did play basketball again. Actually to this day I really don't like basketball. I don't know how much he impacted it or not, but I do know this, his agenda included his willingness to wound others for his well being. He had armor. I needed more. I think sometimes you and I have to be very much aware of the fact that there are people with agendas.

Number two. Here's another area. Friends are imperfect so they can unintentionally or intentionally hurt the warrior. Friends are imperfect and so sometimes we can unintentionally and sometimes actually deliberately hurt the warrior. Most times with friends it's unintentional. When I, I actually put a friend of mine where he had to step behind here. I put a friend on mine in jeopardy. I was selling a business and in the course of selling the business, um, one of the people connected with this guy's business had contacted me about buying mine and I didn't feel comfortable about going to the guy, going to him and saying, hey, one of your employees has talked to me. I wanted that employee to go to him and so I had to wait. Now unintentionally what I did in that process was hurt this friend

because he felt like I was stealing or jeopardizing his business for my own well being. That wasn't my intent. Believe me, it was not my intent, but one day all of a sudden I get a phone call from him and I can tell you, he had fully stepped behind some very strong armor to protect himself and I had caused it. Now it wasn't my intent. There have been other times in my life when I've hurt people intentionally that might have called friends. In this case, it wasn't that way. Know that the forest is not always a safe place, sometimes because people have agendas against you, and sometimes because they hurt you unintentionally. They're friends.

There's a third are. The forest is not completely safe. Experiences exist that are detrimental to the knight if he were to become involved with him. There are certain circumstances that exist just naturally that if you get involved with them, they're going to become detrimental for you. Things like this, one of the things that, um, for me, I think I've told you guys this, I don't have friendships with people of the opposite sex, one-on-one friendships. Now I have a ton of people we know. Lynn and I have a number of couples we share in, because of some life experiences, I, I don't. There's some potential, serious situations. Let me give you a few that I see with guys all the time. It's that idea of texting. Texting one-on-one with somebody. Facebooking and we're even involved in some kind of Twitter experience or you're involved in some kind of

private phone conversations and those private meetings that you have at work and what you're doing is you're getting involved in situations, circumstances that exist that are ultimately detrimental. Guys, I'd rather you have too much armor on in those situations than not enough. I'd rather your armor be too thick than too thin. So when I say to you I don't have best friends that are females or friends that are females one-on-one, it's because my armor is on. It isn't because women are bad. Women are awesome. It's because sometimes I stop protecting and get on the edge of using and so I have armor on in certain circumstances. There's all kinds of circumstances. You might need to face yourself with that. Wherever it is where you find yourself in jeopardy in certain areas just by the normal circumstance.

Consider number four with us because that's one that makes a big difference on how this forest operates. Forces, number four, both spiritual and environmental compete against his well being. We have talked about this over and over again is that the world, the flesh, the devil are against us. In other words, there's this part of the universe that we live in that fights against us. In the movie "Ladder 49", "Ladder 49" is an interesting movie. It's a movie about a Baltimore Fire Department team, about one particular guy in there. His name is Jack Morrison and it's played by Phoenix if you know him as one of those guys that's just an amazingly gifted actor. Jack



Morrison is in a fire in Baltimore in a grain elevator, in a rather large facility where people are being trapped and they're trying to rescue him. He's on that search and rescue team. As we pick up the scene, here we go as you think about what's happening here, just gives us some thought. Fire is everywhere. Men whose job is not to carry a hose, but rather men whose job is to find people in need are searching, climbing upstairs. The fire is now below them on multiple levels. They ultimately find a guy choking and then another guy and they help him and they tell, they say is there anybody else and they go, yeah, there's another guy up there and so Jack Morrison and another firefighter go up and help this guy. And Jack gets to a certain place and they get separated and an explosion takes place as they find this guy and Jack then has to get him to a place where he's going to lower him down from this big huge open door. The fire truck has reached its ladder as high as it possibly can and its cherry picker has gone to the height it can and he has to lower him down the wall. So as he's carefully lowering him down and buildings exploding, fires everywhere, the environment is obviously a hostile environment to a human being. As Jack works tirelessly to rescue a man, that's his job, and he just about has him into the cherry picker, the building blows up right underneath him. The floor caves in. He slides while holding the rope. He lets go of the rope. The man drops into the cherry picker, now rescued and he

falls down several floors breaking his leg. The remaining portion of the movie will be the rescue of Jack Morrison or the rescue attempt. Now as that scene kind of comes to the end, you're very much aware of the fact that here's a guy who is in trouble. He's in trouble not for anything he's done, just because the environment around him is not a healthy environment. You need armor in certain environments. A lot of times we try to avoid them. We don't run into burning buildings. We run away from them, but sometimes we have, we found ourselves caught in those environments. For some of you guys, I know that you're kind of right now in circumstances at work and other situations which are environments like that, be careful. You have to walk over and put on the right armor.

Look at the next one. As we consider the fact that this world around us isn't safe, advertising distorts values and pushes the ownership of material possessions. One of the things that's interesting is, is we live in this world that because we got to push things in an advertising world that maybe are necessarily helpful for us. There are things that it keeps recommending that we get. You love toys. One more toy. That's all you need. If I could just somehow get this one more item, I'll be successful. If I get this one more position, if I can get this one more economic freedom and guys, sometimes you have to take a look at your core and say, you know what, my core is in jeopardy. I need to put my armor on. I

need to find myself in a safe place because the world around me is selling stuff and you know what, sometimes even though I'm fighting against it, my core tends to buy into it. I think, I think this armor when you understand it is your friend. Now it can get in the way. We'll talk about that, but you need to understand there are times you have to just get behind it and decide the thickness depending on the strength of your core, depending on the strength of the moment.

Look at the next one, number six. Unhealthy leaders use their power and attempt to negatively influence or dominate him. Unhealthy leaders are always unhealthy leaders. It might be a boss. It might be any kind of person in your life that's trying to influence you in an unhealthy way. Um, I was, I had an experience. I was a pastor in Vermont and there was a guy who was part of the leadership team before I arrived at that church. I had been in a role of keeping him from getting back on that leadership team because of some of his habits that were not that which you would consider being wise for a church leader. And this guy began to fight me on every level. I'll never forget a phone call I got from him in the middle of the night. It actually was late at night. It wasn't the middle of the night, but actually that conversation went into the night. It was one of the most damaging conversations and I can tell you, here's how the conversation went. It starts off we're talking and I'm okay and

little bit, by little bit, by little bit, by little bit, by little bit, I slide into the armor. He is shooting at level you can possibly imagine and I found my core was weakening and I needed more and more armor and so I found myself stepping in. I will tell you that man worked with a group of people to get rid of me from that church. The pain I went through, through that attack was an unhealthy leader doing all he could to attack. Was I innocent? Were there things that I could have done better? Oh, absolutely. But was he an unhealthy leader? Yes. And there are some and you need armor regarding that. That's part of the forest in which we live.

Consider the next one, number seven. Because the forest is not completely safe, there are philosophies, false belief and ideas that exist that diminish a man's true value. There's philosophies, there's things that exist that are going to diminish your true value. If you would consider this. You say I need to get ahead. I need to be successful. I need to accomplish certain things. I need to get out of the financial crisis I'm in. I need to do something. And you know what you decide to do? You decide to buy a lottery ticket. Nothing wrong with buying a lottery ticket except for in your mind's eye as the culture sells it, that's your solution. So you buy the first ticket and it doesn't give you anything so you buy the second and the third and before you know it, doing a little off track betting and you're checking on this and checking on that. All of a sudden you find

yourself living in a world and this world has changed an awful lot. In just the fifty years or so, plus years that I've been alive, we as a culture have allowed this area of chance winning to be what drives much of our culture. That somehow if we can just get ahead. And guys, you need to get back to your armor when it comes to this stuff. I'm not telling you whether you should buy a lottery ticket or whether you should play Texas Hold Em. I'm telling you whether or not you are careful about what is putting you in jeopardy. Those areas are just one of them. There's many philosophies, many beliefs that we have that sell us that somehow that thing will satisfy us, when it doesn't. It isn't designed to. See the world in which we live in has these kind of problem.

If you would consider this one. Some tasks, number eight, distract the warrior from taking care of himself and his family. Some tasks distract the warrior from taking care of himself and his family. Let me give you an example of that in my own life. Um, for years I traveled and spoke. I love speaking. It's one of my favorite things to do. You know that. It's actually part of the call, part of the inner voice in my life. It's the trail that God's taking me on that He's lighting it as we go along the way. But as I was traveling, I was traveling a lot. Three hundred times a year I'd speak around the world, mostly in the continental U.S. and the surrounding countries around us, but in order for me to travel at that level, I'm away from

home a lot. Now there's some certain things that are in jeopardy for me, but actually what was happening was, my career was detracting from what was good for my family. You know I was missing important events in my kids' lives. I was on the upward mobile way, whatever that was, and I found myself doing good things that were detracting from the health of others around me. And so while I was running around, I really should have been moving towards my armor. What I should have been doing was going this way and saying, you know what, I need to say no a little more often. What I should be doing is spending more time saying, I better protect my family more than elevate my career. You have to be careful because there are things being sold all the time that the armor is designed to protect and if you just ignore it, even though you might want it. You might feel like it's going to solve something, your armor protects you sometimes from yourself and from the things that are being offered that distract from the world around us.

I think one of the things that I've always appreciated and about Harry Truman, Harry Truman was the thirty-third President of the United States. He was actually Vice President for I think it was eighty-two days before Roosevelt died. Truman was a Senator, because a Vice President, became a President. He actually did some amazing things. Truman was one of those guys that started NATO. He, as you know, he dropped the, ended the Second World

War, did it by dropping the bomb. He was involved in the beginning of the end of social injustice. Truman did a lot of things that were pretty fascinating under his watch. He got us into the Korean War. What he was trying to do, he was trying to somehow or another do the right things, get involved in certain areas. He was always battling between the two things. If I do one thing, drop a bomb, it will end the war, but if I don't, if I end the war by dropping the bomb, I will kill so many innocents. Do you know the pressure that he's under? Harry Truman had an interesting wit about him. Let me give you a couple quotes and I'm going to put one up on the screen a minute, but let me give you a couple first. Here's one. Always be sincere even if you don't mean it. That's a Harry Truman quote. I love that. Another one. If you can't convince them, confuse them. But the one I want to show you, here's the one on the screen. The reward of suffering is experience. The reward of suffering is experience. I think sometimes you need to understand that part of what we go through is that we learn when to get behind the armor. You know when to take it. When I was younger, I thought I could take everything. I thought I could handle everything. As I'm getting older, I'm realizing that as I'm getting more experience that when I suffered through some consequences of not being armored at the time, um, I've learned to take advantage of the armor.

Now you know there's all different kinds. There's all different strengths. Obviously I use one type of armor with my grandson than I would with my wife, different with her than I would with an enemy, different one with her than I might with a boss, you know. We have different types and different levels of armor. But understanding that where we fight is in world that is constantly requiring that armor gets involved.

Look at Roman numeral two. We're going to walk through a couple things regarding that. These are the negative pressures of the forest that can be defeated. These are when you get the armor on. When you have the armor on the right spot, you can defeat it. Number one. The knight utilizes his beliefs to analyze what the forest is presenting to him. The knight utilizes what he has available to understand what the forest is hitting with. Well guess what I need to do that? I need to step over into the armor. I need to find myself now here safe so I can analyze. I might not have to stay here very long. Just give me a chance to filter, to think through what I believe in light of what's experiencing me. This buys time. The battle is coming. This allows me for a few minutes to know how to handle that battle. I think so often we don't take advantage of this. See the world is throwing stuff at us. This is designed to give us time to think it through, to decide, do I need all this. What's my next step? I have to go through, pull out my core, work through all the



assets of my core and make a choice. Armor buys you some time. It also helps you understand whether or not you're buying into a lie or not.

Look at the next one. He destroys and emotional regulatory system that assists him in remaining calm and intuitively understanding the feeling world. He develops, not destroys, he develops an emotional regulatory system. What happens while, in here is I take a few moments when I get inside my armor to decide, alright, what am I going to do here? What is it that I now need to take as an action? Now I'm making a decision and while I'm in here, I'm going to decide what direction, where I need to take, what steps I need to take. For example, if I talk about who we are as guys, I, I find that men are in one or two directions when it comes to their view of the opposite sex. We are either in the direction and this is the one that scares me, where I'm a predator like a lion roaring, looking to whom I can devour, looking at whom I can get and kill for my pleasure, who I can use. That is a predator. Now he's a predator because lions are carnivore. They're going to have to eat meat, alright. They're carnivores. The problem is, if I function where everything out there is my prey, I start to use women. I think armor gives you an opportunity for instead of us running around like crazy guys, take a few minutes and put armor on and decide regarding the opposite sex, am I living right now more like a predator or am I

living more like something else? Now see it's a predator to carnivore. Well I think we enjoy sexuality. The question is, I'm a meat eater. I'm involved in that process. Where do I go with it? Do I go upwards in a negative and become a predator like the lion or do I go down and become the positive like a protector? Predator, protector. Predator, protector. Now both are carnivores. Which way do I go? I was talking to my son the other day and asked him where he's at in his spiritual, his sexual journey and he's about twenty, and he said, you know what's really interesting? He said I can remember a phase in my life when I was a predator. He said I'm definitely not there anymore. He said I sometimes act more like carnivore than I should, um, but he said I'm really growing into being a protector. Man, I admire him. He's me so much in that area.

I was talking to my other son who loves music about a Christina Perry song. The song is called "Jar of Heart". It's come out in the last ten months or so here in the U.S. I want to read for you, I don't do this very often, I want to read for you the words of this song. I was thinking about singing it for you, but that would be the last time you ever hung out with us, so I thought that wouldn't be wise, and I thought I'd just let you experience it and hear it. There's an unbelievable video that demonstrates this. The music I'm sure you've heard if you do any listening at all to what's on the top ten. But this song "Jars of Hearts", I want to read it for you and so listen

to it as I just kind of, I'm not going to put it up anywhere on the screen. I'm just going to read the words. I know I can't take one more step towards you because all that's waiting is regret. She is singing this song to a predator. That's what she's talking about. Everything about this guy is a predator carnivore guy. He's not a carnivore protector. Don't you know that I'm not your ghost anymore? You lost the love I loved the most. I've learned to live as a result of you, half alive and now you want me one more time. I just want you to imagine. This guy has wounded her, taken something from her that is precious and important, and she says, and now you want me one more time. You're tracking me. You're following the wound. Then she says this: Who do you think you are running around leaving scars, collecting a jar of hearts, tearing love apart. I love this line. You're going to catch a cold from the ice inside your soul. Don't come back for me. Who do you think you are? I hear you're asking all around if I'm anywhere to be found but I have grown too strong. I'll never fall back into your arms. I have learned to live half alive and now you want me one more time. Who do you think you are running around leaving scars, collecting your jar of hearts, tearing love apart? You're going to catch a cold from the ice inside your soul. Don't come back for me. Who do you think you are? Now this line, if you miss everything I'm saying, don't miss this guys. This is huge. It took so long just to feel alright. Remember

how to put back the light in my eyes. I wish I had missed the first time that we kissed because you broke all your promises and now you're back and you don't get me back. Who do you think you are running around leaving scars, collecting a jar of hearts, tearing love apart? You're going to catch a cold from the ice inside of your soul, so don't come back for me. Don't come back at all. Who do you think you are? Guys I believe that if you don't take advantage of the armor that's available to you, you'll become more of a predator than you will a protector. I believe we get inside of this so that we become safe enough so that we're not the enemy and safe enough so that we can protect. I think there's something very powerful about what armor provides.

Let's look at the next area, number three. Negative pressure of the forest can be defeated if three, he understands and maximizes that self-protection is often necessary. It's okay to self-protect in a forest, even if it's not necessarily a desirable concept. Sometimes we feel guys like we're men and we don't need to self-protect. How selfish that sounds. You self-protect for a moment, for a season, for the encounter, so that you can come and do what you need to do and sometimes you have to keep the armor on and advance. Sometimes you have to keep the armor on and stand. Sometimes you can keep it on when you flee. Sometimes, guys, you

can reduce some of the armor, but this gives you time. It buys time to reflect.

Number four. He uses his flexibility to keep others protected. Everything about this, just so you know, what makes armor most effective is when you and I understand that always behind knights that are wearing their armor properly are other people who are longing for protection as well. So when I have my armor on right, you can feel safe to come behind. My wife, my kids, those I have behind me. This is about protection. It's always about protection. First protect you. You need to live. If you're going to be a warrior, be alive. Dead warriors don't help. You need to protect. You protect by buying time. You don't buy in, you give yourself a few minutes to think things through before you react, understanding that people are behind you that need you. Understand too guys, this is so important. We tend to give quick answers. Slow it down. Realize that you have enemies out there. You need to take the advantage of just saying I'm thinking this through. I'm not reacting but I don't feel like I have to act right away either. I don't feel like I have to respond immediately. Things go a long, long way in the process.

If we understand that one, look at number five. He realizes the availability of a large amount of support may assist him in choosing a more vulnerable approach. He realizes that a large

amount of support, a large amount of protection, others helping fight with you will allow you to have a more vulnerable approach.

In the movie “Ladder 49”, Jack Morrison is being searched for by firefighters, trying to get to a place in the building where they can extract him. The fire is surrounding him. It’s getting more and more tension and so he’s reliving memories. One of the memories he relives in this process as he’s waiting for the guys to get to him, is a memory that he has with his son when one of Jack’s partners, Alex, had been badly burned by some steam. I want you to kind of imagine this scene with me as you think this through. This little boy is looking at his dad who is coming in with burned hands from the steam that Alice’s father had just been hurt with. Um, there, he’s concerned because this partner of his didn’t just get burnt in the hands, but when the steam gave loose, it burned his face and this little boy said, they told me that it burned his face off, that it burned his face off. He says, no he has some burns, but he has skin and it will grow back and it is grotesque what his partner had gone through. And his little boy said, daddy I don’t want you to get hurt. Daddy I don’t want you to go through this. I don’t want to lose you daddy. Jack says to him, that’s why we train and that’s why we have guys to help us, that’s why when we’re in trouble, I’ll help and they’ll help and we’ll protect each other. And then he talks about certain guys that are just important to him and then he says to his

little boy, he says you tell your friends who wonder about Alex's dad, you tell them that Alex's dad got burnt because he was trying to rescue people. Sometimes it's a little dangerous to do that, but it's worth it, isn't it and his little boy nodded yeah. As that scene fades, I want you to understand the tension that little boy is feeling. He's saying, dad I need you to be safe because I'm behind you. I need you to be okay. I don't want to lose you dad. And so as that building is burning all around, Jack Morrison and they're reliving those memories. Guys, I want you to understand. Armor is important because people behind you don't want to lose you. We make a lot of bad choices because we ignore our armor.

Let's look at a few more that will help us understand the journey that we're on regarding armor. Number six. He knows what fuels him emotionally and seeks it during times of stress. He knows what fuels him emotionally and seeks it during times of stress. What we have to think in terms of is using armor to refresh. Um, I can tell you that the tension I feel in some events are different than the tension I feel in others. I, when I go to see my grandson, armor comes way off. When I do certain things in my line of work or in certain areas of my life, my armor goes way up. Cancer in my one son, seeing my grandson. You understand? Armor buys you refuel time. You say, okay Keith. I'm trying to understand this. I'm trying to wrap my head around this because I don't have one of these.

What in the world are you talking about? What is the suit of armor you're talking about? I'm talking about this, the need to first protect yourself before you protect everyone else. I want you to be a warrior. I want you to be a knight. I want you out there, but I want you to understand that you're the only one I got. If you fall, those who need your protection will be in bad shape, So what I want you to do is I'd rather you over protect and hold yourself back a little bit than make yourself too vulnerable and get picked off. It is all about decision making. It's all about buying time. It's all about understanding.

Look at the last one in this series. He utilizes various ways to take care of himself when the forest delivers a wounding blow. One of the coolest parts about the fact that you and I have armor is that when we get hurt, when we get wounded, when we get shot at, when this horrible stuff happens in our life, the armor actually protects us, while all the other things are whizzing around us for a season. Um, if you're going through an illness right now and you're used to taking care of a whole lot of people, get behind your armor a little bit. You got to deal with your own issues. You got to deal with your own struggles and you got to ball up for a little while, heal up for a little while, figure this thing out. You can, you need to be a giver. Please be a giver, but not always. Sometimes you need to take a few minutes to get refreshed. We can't lose you.



Armor for all is what God's given us to give us a chance to just kind of cocoon with Him. Jesus Christ did this many times. The battle was on, everything was raging all around him and he would go off alone and just spend time with God, armored up, seeing God in a world that's fighting him on every level, armored up, listening to God, following God's direction. You need to do that guys, You need to do that in a lot of different levels, a lot of different ways. One of the best ways for me to do this is just to spend time alone. Every once in a while I'll grab twenty-four hours and I'll just spend time with God. Armor. You need it as a way of life.

Okay, let's look at number, Roman numeral number three. The shadow provokes and desires to destroy those whom he has the closest relationships. He desires to destroy those with whom he has the closest relationships. The issue is, you know when you and I get involved in this process of becoming a Knight of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the place where I've discovered with guys that we tend to take off our armor the quickest and I've mentioned this before, is when you come home. Home is where you need the most armor, not because their the biggest enemies. It's because the shadow fights against those relationships the most. The world fights against those relationships the most. Here's a typical way that I think guys come home. We come home, we're exhausted. The armor is off. I've been fighting all day. The boss has been giving me a hard time. The cops

are giving me a rough time with all their speed traps on the road, all the tension of those other poor drivers. I'm exhausted. I'm hungry. I want to be taken care of and when I arrive in the house, it's almost like out in the garage, you can hear the clanging of metal as it all comes off and I come walking in and it's all about me. And all I do is sit and watch TV and all I do is order people around and get annoyed. There is no smile. All the weaponry that I have, all the tools that I have are not being used and I come crashing into that world and I watch. You know what happens when I take off my armor and walk into my house? I watch everybody else start putting it on. My wife, my kids, the dog, the neighbor who is not even there, everybody, you know how it is guys when we get this way. Everybody else starts putting it on. I want to teach you how not to do that at the end of your day.

So here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to walk you through a couple of these. Here's number one. This one will help you understand. The knight's shadow tends to wound those he loves the most, thus undercutting his chief support system. It's kind of obvious, right? It's where we're going to hurt.

Number two. The amount of time spent with others magnifies his imperfections. This is where we feel pretty vulnerable. If anybody is going to see our imperfections, anybody is going to magnify them, it's going to be at these moments. So we tend to be a

little bit more edgy. Guys, keep your armor on a little bit, you know, because when somebody says something to us that annoys us, give yourself a chance to breathe. Don't react. Reaction, men change the mood of a room every time they enter it. How are you going to deal with it?

Look at the next one, number three. When the warrior is the weakest feeling low, sick or defeated, it is most evident to those closest to him. Underline the word weakest. I think one of the things that happens is at this moment we want to be taken care of. That sort of mother wound kicks in and we want to get involved in just somebody taking care of us. Be very, very careful about that. There's actually a much better way to handle coming home and just dropping our armor and saying, here, jump in and help.

Look at the next one. Four, his guard and work ethic tends to drop with those he knows well. That's true not just with your family but it's with other people.

Look at the next one, number five. His negative early childhood memories come out most often when he's in his present family setting. I need to take just a minute to talk about this one. You, what's going to be here is triggers that get set off that remind you of your childhood. You can't even understand what they are. They're just certain things that people say, certain things that kind of hit into wounds from your past. In a few weeks, we're going to

start looking at some interesting trails as we consider our moms and our dads and our chain mail. And as we walk through that concept over the next several weeks, you're going to understand there's some certain things from my past that will flair up. Your family inadvertently lands on those triggers and boy does that set you off. You got to be careful how quickly you remove your armor. You got to be wise in how you handle the situation at home.

Number six. The knight's desire to fix problems causes him to be more judgmental, critical and demanding. We tend to listen a little bit less. When we have this desire to come in and fix everything, we are judgmental, you know we're snapping and all that, what we don't do is we don't take a few minutes just to listen to what's being said. We just tend to react. We tend to get things solved because we just want everything out of our way, because we're sort of tunnel visioned. We're tunnel visioned about dealing with whatever it is that we're feeling without saying, you know what? I'm wounded. I'm working through some things.

Look at the next one, number seven. He expects those around him to intuitively know how to take care of him. He expects those around him to intuitively know how to take care of him and I have to tell you that they don't. They don't know what to do with you. You're this knight that's supposed to walk in and make them feel good and instead, you're making them feel unprotected. So instead of you

being in your armor, you walk out without your armor and you're just like this crazy guy. Now guys, here's what I'm saying. Don't use a tone of armor at home but don't take your armor off either. When you've had a rough day and things aren't working right in your life, I want you to think in terms of the armor that's available. As you're driving home, don't take off armor. Understand that you need some. When you arrive home, let me give you a whole other way to do this. As you get home, you just identify to everybody, hey I got to honest with you. I have had just this unbelievable day. So right now I feel so much on edge and so what I'm doing is I just feel like I got to be careful here. Would you do me a favor? Give me a few moments to kind of figure out all the stuff I'm feeling. Get in your armor. Just take a minute and sit in your armor. Give me a few minutes, um, because I've got to work through some things. Identify right away the battle and why your armor feels thicker and why you're all of a sudden the way you are at that point. Just identify it. Don't say, you all take care of me. Just say, give me a few minutes. You know what I've found as my sons have gotten older? You know what I found from Lynn who for years had to take care of this weak man coming home? When I come home that way and I say, this is, I'm just a little bit more on edge right now, give me a few minutes. I'm saying, I'm staying in my armor. I'm staying guarded and you know what I've watched? I've watched my family put on armor not against

me but for me. I've watched them say, how can we protect you?

One of the coolest things is to watch one of my sons literally stand up, walk over to me, give me a hit on the shoulder and say, I got you buddy. I gave him the opportunity to man up and he manned up.

You know why? Because I had the courage to man up and say, hey, here's where I am with my armor today. Guys, you're going to wear armor. You're going to need armor. You're going to hurt people with it if you're not careful. So what you want to do is put that armor on, know when to use it, buy yourself some time so that you can be the knight you're supposed to be. Remember, the world is shooting at you all the time.

So what we're going to look at over the next couple weeks, the next couple of trails as we get together is the chain mail that sits underneath that armor. So for this week, just think through your armor and how well you're using it and how well you're biding time and growing and healing as a man to get about the work that you've been called to do, to hit that life map to make all the difference in the world. So get ready because we got some cool trails that we're going to deal with. I'll see you next time we're together.