

Knights of the 21st Century

Trail 22

It occurs to me, here we are on Trail 22 and it's three weeks to go guys to get you ready, ready to be not only a Knight of the 21st Century but to have the clarity of a warrior. I know that some of you after this past week have been thinking, my world is kind of coming unglued. When I start looking deep into my past, there's a lot of junk. In fact, my chain mail looks like it does up here, kind of rusty and damaged and not necessarily strong good chain mail. What if I go into battle and I'm not ready? Well I want to take you the next three weeks beginning right now on the final part of our journey that will cause you to get your chain mail to look like it does over here. Take it from the rust to solid good chain mail that when the battles come and when your armor is breached, that sword will not penetrate and you'll be able to do what you were designed to do.

The reason this is so important and actually the reason why this actually feels heavier for me than actually the last three weeks is not because what you and I've been through isn't painful. We've been through a lot of stuff together. It isn't because some of you it's light and actually you had great memories and you wrote a letter to your dad and everything was cool. You had a wonderful mom. Your mom scored in the high one hundreds and your dad scored just

as high. But I'm thinking about you that are sitting there going, look at my armor. Look at my chain mail. I don't want a bad armor and I certainly can't afford bad chain mail. Am I really going to get ready in time? I have good news for you. Yeah you are.

For you that have been wounded by your parents, we're going to walk through some concepts. But not all of us have been wounded by our parents, but all of us have been wounded. Some of us more significantly than others. I thought through some of the most painful wounds of my life. I can tell you some of the wounds that I've given to other people and, and I think that that was significant because it would at least let us know that we're all sort of jerks but, but from a feeling of damaged chain mail, there probably was no greater pain than this. There was a guy that I trusted that was pursuing my wife. We were married. We had our first child was born and our second child had just come and this individual was in pursuit. Lynn was vulnerable but she's just an amazing lady and I was still very much a jerk, okay. I really was learning, desperately wanting to become a knight, but nobody would tell me how. Nobody would tell me what. I went to a particularly close friend of mine who knew the individual who was the pursuer. I had already talked to the pursuer and said back down buddy. And he actually indicated that he would back down. I shared with a very close friend of mine about the situation. The close friend of mine while treating me with respect

and dignity acting like he cared unbeknownst to me, I had hurt him. I didn't know I'd hurt him. It's pretty complicated to be honest with you. One of those unintentional hurts. I got a bunch of intentional ones. This was an unintentional one, very unintentional. And I had hurt him three years earlier, didn't know I had hurt him, certainly didn't know he was wounded with some pretty bad chain mail of his own. The problem was he put bad armor over top of his chain mail. And this guy that I went to to tell him about the situation, to ask join me in helping to protect my wife, actually went to the other guy and gave him a better path in to take a shot at my wife. I can't explain to you the depth of the wound of that sword. I got past what at that point was still some pretty weak damaged chain mail. My chain mail definitely looked like that.

You need to understand how close chain mail is to your core. Bad chain mail is bad. It will leave you gravely vulnerable. You are trusting that your beliefs can carry you through these moments. So guys, here's the problem. All of us have felt to one degree or another the trail at the hands of somebody who got in close and we just feel like, man, it's their fault. No it's not. All the things that happened in that trail, everything else that has happened, I want you to know I have no excuses. It's on me to have good chain mail. It's not on me to do, have him do the right thing. That's on him. But it's to have good chain mail so that when he hits, it's hitting on this

kind of chain mail and when it stabs, it doesn't wound deep into my soul but is stopped.

Trail No. 21, No. 22 is called No Excuses. Coming out of Trail 21 is the idea that we will stop and find ourselves free from what our dads did or in this case a friend might have done. You'll find that you are indeed to be a man from this point on with no excuses. You're going to have to make the decisions with God's help, with clarity of the guys with you around the campfire, with the principles that we've been working on to become a Knight of the 21st Century to be the kind of guy that is a warrior with such clarity that your chain mail will look like it does at the bottom of the screen, not at the top, that your chain mail will be that which is going to protect what it was designed to protect.

So we're going to walk through that together. We're going to get some understanding of how that works. I want you to understand one of the principles of a knight, one of the principles that we've been talking about is this principle and I love it. The best way for a man to predict his future is to what? Create it. The best way for you to do it, you can imagine now, right. If you have bad armor, it's because you're protecting the shadow. Good armor protects you so that you can protect the things that are important, right. Bad chain mail is probably because something filtered into you, not that you desired, but you now have come to see those things are lies and

instead of you now saying, well I was just conned and oh wow is me. Now you're without excuse. Now you have to do something about it.

I want to read you a passage from the Book of James, the first chapter that talks about this. I'm going to read it from The Living Translation. James 21, 22-25: But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you're only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey it, it's like glancing at your face in the mirror. You see yourself. You walk away and you forget about what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. The best way for a man to change his future is to create it. You want to get your chain mail from looking like that to being healthy chain mail, then without excuses right now, guys, you're going to have to say, I have to come to truth as my beliefs as opposed to the stuff I was taught and the things that have come out of my experiences that have caused me to lose focus.

There's a warrior from history. His name is actually Horatio Hornblower. A tremendous naval leader for the British Navy. Fought against the American Revolution, the French Revolution, will actually die in a particularly powerful battle in the Straits of Trafalgar. This particular warrior, amazing admiral, in fact, he's one of the most amazing people in the annals of history within the

military of England. He was a man who cared greatly about his troops. He was very engaged with them. He was a guy who taught his men to practice over and over and over and over and over and over again so that if the situation changed, they would know each other so well that they would all be able to jump to whatever they need to do in the changing environment without even making an order given, without even a word spoken. They would just know each other. He was a man that when one of his men didn't have to courage to climb up a mast, he was a new young sailor, he said, I'll race you to the top and he raced that sailor to the top. And he said, see look at that, it's not so bad. You can do this. I believe in you. He was a man that would do the unexpected with the enemy. When in naval battles, at that time you never split your column. You stay together because that's the force of the broad side, and the most powerful victory in his naval career, the Straits of Trafalgar where he ends up getting his mortal wound, he will split his ships and change the polionic wars some history. This particular man was a man that was clear in his vision, clear in his desire to be a man of nobility dying with honor but he also had this problem. In his chain mail, he had a wife who was unfaithful and nothing he could seem to do to change that. Out of this comes this quote. Here's a quote from Horatio Nelson. My character and good name are in my own keeping. Life with disgrace is dreadful. A glorious death is to be

emptied. Here's a man who is struggling through his chain mail. His chain mail is saying this. On one sense, I know it's in my hands. It's in my responsibility and in the other sense, I know that there's a part that's sort of rotting that I have nothing to do with in the situation with my wife. I'm doing everything I know how to correct it. I'm trying to fix this thing. And then he says this. I realize that it's on me. My name and if I am disgraced which is dreadful, it's on me. He's a man that says, no excuses, no excuses. That's what we need to do now gentlemen. We need to be that kind of man, to learn to say, no excuse.

Now I'm going to walk you through some things that I think will be able to help you to be able to say I can bring my chain mail where it is to where it needs to be. Even if your chain mail is pretty good right now, we can make it stronger and better because your core is close to the surface of the chain mail and if you're going to be all that you can be, you're going to have to have clear beliefs even from things from the past. So here we go.

Final thoughts on these beliefs and filters are as follows. Number one. Early experiences do not create an irrevocable destiny for a man and his belief systems. It's going to not be the things that you've been through. You can't not undo. You can undo those. You can change the history, not the actual history, the events. They're the events. The pages of that book are closed. You can change its

impact. It's not that what's happened will define you. You get to move forward from here, so you have to understand what was, was. That's why it is a was. It isn't now. It's in the past. So what you do from the past forward, you have to work within that, but as you look at your chain mail, it's always moving forward. It's always saying, how do I get this so it's as pure and as clear and the beliefs are as right as possible. So, dealing with the past knowing that you can repair it, you can change it. You can change the impact going forward.

Look at number two. Knights choose when to allow the past experiences to affect them, Knights choose when to allow their past to affect them so you and I have the freedom to decide when we're going to let our past dominate us. Lynn and I will tell you that obviously in thirty-five, almost thirty-six years of marriage, we have history. There have been days when I've been a huge jerk. There have been days when she's really hurt me. Are we going to be defined by those moments or are we going to now continue to become all that we need to be together? I think there's choices that are made and what if I choose to but she doesn't? It's still my choice. I'm without excuse. I can't say well I'm trying but she's not helping me. Guys, without excuse. Knights are men with no excuses. So what we do is we say I can now choose to move my chain mail from here to here. I can move it from a rusty rotting

vulnerable to a shiny strong skill level of chain mail that will allow you to advance and become all the knight you're supposed to be. So wherever you come from, there's kind of hope for the future. So if you sit around your campfire and yours is the worst story. Nobody has a worst past than you, there's hope. There's hope. Don't sit there and say, if I had story like his, I could be okay. You can now create a new story. You can now create a new direction from whatever you start with. Chain mail word is move it to where it needs to go.

Look at number three together. Number three says this. Again, understanding our beliefs and filters. History proves that a good early childhood does not insure good future choices. It's interesting that if you think about history and you sit around your campfire and you realize there's a bunch of guys that, man have had a lot of advantages that I don't have. They're going to tell you if they're going to be honest that they've done a lot of stupid things too and good chain mail doesn't assume that we're going to continue to do it. You're going to have to work at this chain mail all the time. What are the beliefs? What are the things you came to understand?

Now when I hurt somebody and I still hurt people. Here's what I need to do. This will keep my chain mail functioning. It's well worth just thinking these things through. The first thing I do is I got to confess. I got to confess that I was wrong. I confess that I was

wrong to me. I confess that I was wrong to God who made me and I confess sometimes before some friends. I also then need to correct it if it has been a wrong against somebody else. So I confess it. I correct it. I go to that individual that I wronged, that they know that I wronged them and I tell them I'm sorry. I correct it. If you've stolen something they don't know you've done it, you still need to go back and correct it. Correcting is what shows that I'm serious about my confession. So you want to get this moving in the right direction at any time guys. Confess, correct. Now I would recommend you not tell it to a whole ton of people, you don't confess to a whole bunch of people. You certainly don't have to run around and tell people that are not involved in it, but if you've wronged somebody you need to go and correct it. Correcting means a couple things. You're going to ask for forgiveness. You're going to say you're sorry and you're going to make restitution. I, please forgive me. I am sorry for what I've done. Here's restitution as best I can make it. Some things you can actually give restitution for. Some things you can't.

We're going to talk about in a few minutes forgiveness which is the next step and then ultimately confrontation. But I want you to know that these are the steps that we start to move through guys, because a warrior is one that is constantly reeducating himself to have truth and beliefs that are clear and focused and as you see on the chain mail, shiny, alright.

Look at the next one. History proves that poor early role models do not always lead to bad choices. So for you that are sitting here and you're saying, hey man I've had some rough beginnings. I've had some difficult things in my life. I have good news for you. It doesn't mean that you end up repeating what your parents have done, what your friends have done, what your history is.

Do you ever remember the movie "Hoosiers", Hackman, when Gene Hackman had hair and he was young? Remember that movie? It's basically a movie about a guy who comes to this small town in a part of the country where everybody is excited about basketball. Nobody wants him to come as a coach though. There's all kinds of controversy around his coming, both from his past and really from the town's history and in Indiana, it's small and it's little so when you arrive, everybody knows everything about you. He does something very, very interesting however. He goes to a guy named Shooter who is the town drunk. He used to play for the team years ago as a high school student and has been a disappointment to everybody and he has this scene. Now I want you to imagine, if you would, think through this particular scene in the movie "Hoosiers". He goes to Shooter's house. When he arrives in his car, Shooter comes out. It's an old shambles shack kind of thing in the middle of the woods and as soon as he gets out of the car he hears a shotgun

fire off in the distance and it's Shooter saying, who is it? Maybe that's why he was called Shooter. I thought it was because of basketball. Gene Hackman looks up at him and his last name is Dale, Norman Dale and he says to him, Shooter can I come talk to you? Hey it's you coach, yeah, come on up. He comes in and see this kind of pretty poor living condition, sits down with him and says, Shooter the other day you gave me some good advice about a basketball game and he names one of the other coaches. He's gone down. He can't coach right now. I'm going to need another coach. I'm going to need some help. And Shooter goes, just ask man. I'll be there. It's a dream come true for him and he goes, fine. There's a couple things I need to ask you to do. Name it, he goes. I'm going to need you to clean yourself up a little bit. I'm going to need you to dress nicely in front of the guys. And I'm going to need you to be sober. And Shooter looks down at his flask and he looks up and says, what does it have to do with this? He goes, I can't have you drinking around these boys. Shooter, you're going to have to be sober if you're going to do this. Shooter goes, man, it'll be awful hard. He goes, you can't come. If I smell alcohol on your breath, it's over, practice, game, anytime. And Shooter goes, you can't talk to me like this. He goes, not only that and he refers to his son that's on the team and he says, your son is embarrassed by you. This is your chance to clean yourself up and Shooter goes, get out. You have no

right to talk to me like this. And so Norman Dale graciously walks out, but in the middle of a basketball game, in the middle of a very tense moment as Dale is talking to his players in walks Shooter in the suit that he got married in, his hair slicked back, no smell of alcohol on his breath and everybody in the crowd is stunned and is talking because nobody saw it coming, especially his son And there's this moment of redemption that's made available. Now as that scene fades, I think you have to understand that Shooter knows this is his chance to take his chain mail from here to here. The rest of the town is skeptical but Norman Dale is doing more than just winning a basketball game. He's trying to change some people's lives.

I want you to understand that what we're asking you to do is to be a different man, not a sum total of your past but from here on. You're Shooter. You get another chance. Whether your chance is to get free from alcohol, whether your chance is to get free from the internet or your chance is to get free from thinking you're better than other people, this is your chance as a Knight of the 21st Century to be a warrior with clarity, clarity.

So let's look at the next one. As you consider the possibility here, one of the things that happens in number five is that changing any negative filter begins with the courageous choice to take responsibility for it. Changing any negative filter begins with the

courageous choice to take responsibility for it. I want you to do what you have to do the hard work of looking at your chain mail and going, oh my goodness, this is going to take a lot of work to fix this. Yeah it is. Yeah it really is. You're going to have to do the hard work, courageous work of grieving your past.

Next year at Oracle, guys you are going to be blown away by Oracle. It's going to take you to such levels of depth that you will amaze yourself at the kind of warrior you'll become. Next year we're going to look at stages of grief. You're going to have to grieve though certain things that are past. I'm fifty-seven years old. There are certain things that are past for me and I have to grieve those things both good and bad, healthy and unhealthy. There are things I could do nothing about. Guys, you have to give yourself permission to let go of the past and not the responsibility and not the consequences. Courage to say, I'm going to now move forward. Letting go some of the dreams. And if you're my age, you're probably not going to play in the NFL, just get over it, just get over it. Unless you play for the Cowboys, and then there's a possibility, but apart from that, you're not going to have any shot, so you got to let it go. As you're finding your inner voice, you have to let some things go as you move towards it. When I became a father, I let certain things go. When I became a husband, I let certain things go.

When I made certain choices and directions for the career of my life, I let certain things go. That's part of it.

Look at the next one, number six. Grieving and forgiving yourself for the ways your early childhood filters negatively control your life is necessary. You will grieve things you've done, but you'll also grieve things that have been done to you. Letting yourself forgive. Grieve, certain things from the past are going to be absolutely necessary. So, you have to let go of some things that you control. You have to let go of some things that you couldn't control. You never if you had a bad mom, you're not going to get a good one. It doesn't mean that she might not change. It's not, guys, don't give me an excuse that you have a bad mom. Don't give me the excuse you have a bad day. Don't give me the excuse you had a bad economic situation. Don't give me the excuse because when you give me the excuse, I'm going to see through it. You want to know why? Because I've given them all. Men. God wants us to be men without excuses. No excuses. God I come before you. I know I'm bad. In you I can become something. You can take my shadow, get it dealt with, and my spirit can come alive and I can start making choices that make all the difference. That's what good chain mail, good armor are going to give you a chance to make good choices. So here we go.

Now, how do you forgive? What's that process like? Look at number seven. Forgiving people who provided you with bad experience is absolutely essential. People who have provided you with bad experience, you have to learn to forgive them. It's absolutely essential that you do. It would be like this. If you don't forgive them, I want you to imagine that's what you're doing to them. It would be like if you were to take poison and you would drink it to teach them a lesson. You want them to hurt. You want them to die. When you don't forgive, you're looking at a person that you want to pay and all you're doing is drinking poison and killing you. Forgiveness is absolutely essential for your growth and development. So I'm going to give you a couple principles and a couple ideas about forgiveness because this is going to free you up as a knight. It's going to change your chain mail from here to here. It's going to take it to a place where you can trust it and be strong. I've had to forgive the guy I referred to earlier. In fact both the men that were involved in that particular part of our story. You have to forgive people from your past. Maybe like mine with my dad, maybe with you with your dad. Here they are.

Forgiveness is not about forgetting but about freedom. It's not about forgetting. It's about freedom. Just so you know guys, you're getting out of the way of something so you have freedom to become. It's what you're longing for. This is the opportunity for you not to

forget. Don't every try. It's there. It's in your memory. It's in your experience, but it's the freedom to say it doesn't control me anymore, right.

Look at the next one. Forgiveness may mean writing a letter that you do or do not intend to send to an individual. I absolutely love that. You might be writing a letter to a person that you can't send it to because they've died. You might be writing a letter to a person that when you first write the letter it had such venom in it, you realize, oh my goodness. I'm going to damage their chain mail, so you rewrite the letter several times, but you may or may not send the letter. But you write a letter just saying, you know what? This is what's happening. This is where it is. I want to let you know, it's forgiven. They might not even have asked for forgiveness. You just simply need to sort of separate yourself, speak into it and sort of release certain things in your life. And I, to be honest with you guys, before you send the letter, do me a favor. Go to the guys in your campfire, look them in the eye and say can I read you this letter. Go to somebody in your life your trust, a mentor whoever it is, read them the letter and say should I send this. Let them check it. It's good to see whether or not you're just going to be spreading around poison or whether or not you have the opportunity to be released from certain things inside of you. That's part of forgiveness. God loves forgiveness. By the way, just so you know, God thinks this is

so important that he says, unless you learn the art of forgiveness, I'm not going to forgive you. That doesn't mean God is cruel. He actually says it is so essential to good chain mail in your system, that I need you to learn to forgive. God's not waiting for you to do so He will do, He's just telling you how absolutely important forgiveness is.

Look at the next area. I think it will help you and me in our journey of getting clear of this stuff. Forgiveness is not the same as restoration. Restoration requires that the person presently be safe. If they are safe, they'll do the following. Now just understand, forgiveness is not the same as restoration. It's not the same thing. It doesn't mean that we reenter in the relationship. Forgiveness means I am separating from your control in my life. I'm separating from your beliefs becoming my beliefs. I'm separating from that. That doesn't necessarily mean you're going to walk back into the same situation, because if you are, the same situation can take place. Let's say every time you walk up to a person that you just punched and every single time you walk up, they punch you in the face. Bang, alright. You decide to forgive them. That's key. However, it doesn't necessarily mean you keep walking up and letting them punch you in the face. So, how do you know if it's safe? How do you know? Here they are. We'll walk through these really quickly.

If they are safe, they will hear the ways they have hurt you. First thing. They will hear the ways they hurt you. So he said in the letter where you give them the word, they'll hear it. Two, if they're safe, they will say they are sorry. Safe people say they're sorry. If they don't say they're sorry, they argue about it, they don't acknowledge it, they're not safe. They will attempt not to repeat the same painful errors. They won't be in the same patterns. If you hurt me because that when you get drunk you get rough and you hurt people, then you're going to come to the place where you're going to say you're going to stop drinking, right? You're not going to do that, because that's going to bring the same pain involved.

Next one. If they are safe, they will be willing to hear immediately if you feel harmed in any way in the future. There's certain triggers that that person will have. In fact, here, let me take a second and explain that to you. Um, a person that is safe will have to understand that they've hurt you in ways that they don't know they've hurt you. They don't completely realize that they've hurt you so that when you say, by the way you just did something that reminded me of how much you hurt me and they go, well I don't remember. They have to believe you. So in other words when you tell them that it's harmful, when you tell them that it bothers them, they don't argue and say you're making a big thing out of it. They say, okay got it, alright? That's part of it, so as you're finding

somebody that's safe, especially you guys with your dads, but even your moms, guys, even some people that you've hung around with, brothers and sisters and good friends, bosses. Man there's people, as a matter of fact there are some religious leaders involved in this category unfortunately. There's some people that you trusted carefully and clearly with your lives. They have to be able to say, you know what? Okay, I got it. I'll back off.

Look at the next one. If they are safe, they will be willing to talk with you and a third party if that would be helpful. If they are safe, they would be willing to go with you with another person and talk this out. They're not afraid of somebody knowing the story if they're safe because they're trying to help. They don't want to give poison anymore. They don't want to do damage anymore so how do we know we're dealing with somebody safe? This is so key by the way. A lot of guys go to get their chain mail in order. They start forgiving and then they end up right back in the situation. They created all the beliefs in the first place and then their chain mail goes backwards. What you want to do is you want to make sure that you're moving in a direction that allows you to go, okay, this person is safe. I can continue to build a relationship with them. Now by the way, you do not have to build a relationship with somebody that you forgive, right? Restoration is not a requirement. Forgetting is not a

requirement. Releasing it to God and letting God handle it is the only requirement of forgiveness.

A couple more. If they are safe, they will be willing to continue a sober self-controlled lifestyle in order to be more responsible for their actions. They will be willing to be disciplined. They'll be willing to do certain things that will cause them not to continue in the same pattern. They're willing to make life change on your behalf. If they're not willing to make life change on your behalf, it's not a reflection of you, but it also says, be careful. You can't get close here. They're only safe when these things are all happening.

One more to consider. If they are safe, they'll be willing to accept the consequences of any future acts and recognize that there may come a time when you have to end the relationship. They fully understand that if it continues, or if you continue to have the same feelings, you might have to pull away. Some of you have such wounds from the past. Let me give you an example. Say that you had an older brother who physically abused you. Um, in fact, let's say it's even worse. He sexually abused you. He's older. He's like eight, nine years older. You need to forgive him. You need to. It's part of your chain mail. You probably can't forget. It's going to be there. You probably will struggle with restoration unless he can follow through this list. Let's say he does everything on the list and

he gets to the last one and every time you're around him, you just get sick to your stomach or you're afraid for your children or whatever else there is and it goes into that and you say I got to end this, even though he's done everything you've asked him to. A safe guy, a safe individual will say I understand. I get it. So guys, forgiveness is so important in this process. It can go along way.

Look at number eight. Part of the restoration of our chain mail, no excuse. Being held accountable to others is needed in your effort to change your old filters. I want you to think this through guys. I think you look in the campfire. I think you look in the, I have the big four. You look at mentors, think whose going to tie a rope around my waist because chain mail repair is tricky business. To go from here to here in your chain mail is not easy. These are beliefs. You kind of feel almost naked and vulnerable without them. They have been comforting you for a long time period and now we're saying, change them and trust that they'll keep you safer. You're going to need some guys to encourage you. I always talk about like you're climbing a mountain and you have ropes tied around your waist and you're going to places you've never gone before but you're willing to try it because there's other guys with ropes that will help you. Some guys have climbed the mountain ahead of you. Some of them are just saying I'll climb with you. But these are safe guys who will fight on your behalf. Remember I told you about the

guy who sort of betrayed me on the betrayal of another guy when I, in the very beginning of this whole thing? I thought up until that moment his rope was safe. When I realized it wasn't I had to cut that rope. You guys need to find safe ropes and I think you know, even in your campfire, I think you know some mentors in your life that are guys that are safe. However, the only one that is always safe, never failing, is God. So know that. So as you help guys hold you accountable, the biggest rope you're going to have around your waist is connected to go and you have to ask Him and let Him lead you and follow Him because He cannot bail, He won't let you down. He'll never leave you. He won't forsake you. The God of the universe wants to get to healthy chain mail. This is the journey that we're on. It will take you in that great place.

Look at number nine because I think number nine will take this one step deeper in getting that chain mail where it needs to go. New behaviors which are the opposite of the negative filter link must be practiced. Must be practiced. You want to become a skilled swordsman, you're going to have to practice with this. I would hurt people with this. We knight our guys at graduation. If you're a year one graduate whether you came in at Squire or whether you come in at Warrior or Oracle, wherever you come in it, year one guys always get knighted. And it's myself, royal knight, I mean in our group we have to have three different guys knighting because we have many,

many hundreds graduate. Um, I'm not a skilled swordsman, alright. These guys are always wondering if I'm going to take off their ears when I knight them. If you're going to be a skilled swordsman, you're going to have to practice. You want to get good chain mail, you're going to have to work at it. You're going to have to practice new truth in your life, new beliefs, right. New understandings. You're going to have to work it. You're going to have the same old feelings. You're going to have the same old tendency. Maybe the easiest way to think about it is this. Say you've been struggling with watching TV late at night. You just got to sit, and you know what, watching TV late at night, you're just veggin. You're just turning. You end up watching crap, you know. You do all that stuff. You're just sitting there doing the stuff that we do. Let me tell you that it's going to take some practice to get out of that habit. You know it's wrong. You know it's hurting your chain mail. You know it's not good for you and I'm not talking about whether you watch TV or not. I'm talking about you know when you've walked into an area like that and what you need to do is you need to start practicing, pick it up, work it, think about it, work on it over and over again, because if you practice it long enough the habit will change, the belief will become part of what you and your chain mail will slide from here to here and one day you'll look at it and go, woo, that looks like it's brand new and for the most part it probably is.

Look at number ten. Number ten says, celebrate any courageous act when adding a new positive link to your chain mail. Celebrate any courageous act when adding new positive link to your chain mail. Guys, get excited about change. Celebrate it in some form or another. Um, there's all kinds of things that are worth celebrating. The birth of my grandson, you know my son getting over cancer and getting done chemo. Those are things worth celebrating. Anniversaries are worth celebrating. Gentlemen, new links in your chain mail worth celebrating. Get a couple friends man, a couple guys that helped you through it and kind of mark it as, you know what, we've come along way. We've done what we're supposed to do. I think when you learn to do that, you're going to become pretty impressive in who you are. Um, otherwise, you're going to keep sliding in to the same old patterns over and over and over again.

You know whose a guy who I thought was going to break through of his chain mail is a guy by the name of Felix. Felix is a guy in the Bible who was a leader, a guy in authority who had power. In his prison below him was a guy by the name of Paul and Paul was a guy who was a good man, a follower of Christ who could speak well. And he would talk before Felix about Christ. Talk about before Felix about good chain mail and about new opportunities and Felix would look like he was interested. Felix would look like he wanted to be engaged. Actually if you read the passage in your

Knightly News, Felix really just was hoping Paul would pay him a bribe. But Felix time and time and time again will be exposed to truth, getting real close to putting a brand new link in but never will so never will celebrate it. As a matter of fact, if you read the story, Felix was a fool. He's real close from going here to here in his chain mail. He's on his way but he, he screws it up because all he really wants is the same old patterns, guys in prison fried me to get out instead of guys in prison give me truth to allow me to think differently which will give me freedom beyond anything I could possibly imagine. Felix was an interesting example of a guy whose chain mail just keeps going back the wrong way.

You want to see your chain mail going the right way? Look at number eleven. It will help us do that. Chain mail going the right way reads this way. Build up the core, refuel emotionally and develop strong thinking skills. Develop a pattern. Remember I said there was pattern? You want to build up your core. Remember the core? Body, your mind, your soul, your spirit, check the shadow, know about it and make good decisions through the self. Know that you have good armor on not bad armor on and as you start to redo these patterns, start getting built up emotionally, refuel, doing all those things, you're going to be amazed at how quickly your chain mail is going to become what you hoped it would be. What you longed for it to be.

Finally, number twelve. Regular reflection on your life is a continual process and any new negative links that are discovered must be addressed and handled appropriately. You're going to find new junk. From time to time, you're going to find that you're going to go back or you're going to go, whoa, I didn't see that one. See I think that's one of two ways the chain mail comes down. You either miss something and you realize I have a bad link here and I got to solve it or you revert back. Either way don't tolerate it. No excuses. Deal with it.

In the movie "Hoosiers" getting near the end of the movie and you know it's a basketball movie. You know it's a sports movie. You know that even though it's pretty loosely connected to a true story, you know it's going to have that sort of happy sports ending. Well let me give you a scene right near the end of the movie. Everett's dad, Everett is the basketball player whose dad's name is Shooter. Shooter is the alcoholic who is now helping to coach the team. In one of the final games of the season, Shooter comes in drunk, fell off the wagon, disgraced his son and the son has gone to the hospital to see his dad who is now in a detox center drying out. Shooter is just trying to see if he still has any worth and his son comes in and Shooter asks for forgiveness and his son gives it to him and while, by the way you have to be careful of fathers that struggle with alcohol that you get sucked in and the same patterns

get done over and over again. Everett who is giving no signs of being addictive in his behavior, hangs out with his dad, talks to him about how he wishes he was at the game. His dad wishes he was there too and tells him how glad he is that he's fighting this area of his life. Tells him that even though he went back in, put some back junk in his chain mail again, he's making good steps and he says, maybe sometime you and I will get a house together dad and I'll help you. And then he says, hey dad, I love you. As the scene fades, Shooter is, you can tell he's uncomfortable. He doesn't know what to do with that. His son walks out. He's just told him what he's always longed to hear. Because sometimes fathers need to hear it as much as sons do. Dad I love you. I know you've blown it. I know your chain mail has had some problems. But dad I believe in you. I believe in the effort you're making. I believe in where you're going. Just so you know gentlemen, I believe in you. I believe in the effort you're making. I believe in where you're going. Let's stop making excuses together. Let's decide from now on we'll build good chain mail, good filters, good beliefs so we can be the Knights of the 21st Century, the warriors with clarity for men to make. Two more weeks. Enjoy it together.