

## A Charge to Young Men

By Bryan Davis

Whether you love books or broadswords, as a young man you are wired for greatness. You want to take a step above the norm and rise high above mediocrity. You desire excellence in all things. From head to heart, you want to be a knight in shining armor.

As a knight, your weapons and armor are many and varied—wisdom from above, unblinking courage, a rock-like steadfastness of spirit, unshakable faith, and swords both physical and spiritual. No matter which weapon you choose, make sure you are battle-ready, trained for the conflicts that lie ahead. This training requires discipline of body, mind, and soul, so that your righteousness through Jesus Christ will shine and never fade.

If you embrace this passion and put it into practice, you will be a bright light in a culture that prefers dimness. Some will be drawn to your light, to your high standards, because they feel within themselves a calling to be more than they are now. Others will be repelled, because they cannot stand the thought that someone is mounting the summit while they have chosen a lower path. These might try to drag you down.

In either case, your example will stand firm. You will lift up those who reach out for help, and you will resist those who try to pull you into their mire. You will be a hero to those needing a champion, and you will be unblemished though detractors hurl invectives.

God is the power behind your steadfastness, and His standards are the code that guides your behavior. Many have marched this path before you. Your foundation has been built with the bricks of men who are unafraid to flex their muscles and is held together by the mortar of masculine courage. With faith in God's promises, you can follow that code. You can change the world.

How? By living the standard. You will tell the truth in a world of lies, remain loyal in a land of betrayal, and work faithfully in a culture of excuses. Even your friends might think you

are overzealous, and in this zeal you might stand alone. Yet your peculiar faithfulness makes you trustworthy, even in the eyes of pretenders. Your loyalty is unquestioned, even among the unfaithful. If a lie of expediency whispers its desire to be told, a horde of lesser men will stampede to tell it. Not you. To speak a falsehood is to spew poison, and you will not allow a drop of venom to leave your tongue, even if offered the treasure of Solomon or threatened with death.

Our culture celebrates the lie. It laughs at the deceptive antics of bumbling fools on television. It elects politicians who tell the most convincing fables. It winks at “white lies” that allow a man to skip an annoying meeting or avoid a tiresome caller by saying, “Oh, I can’t talk to him right now. Tell him I’m out to lunch.”

And with one shady statement, this man falls from being a knight to being a knave. He thinks he’s running with the big dogs, but he’s really wallowing with the pigs.

Although there will always be someone willing to accuse you of wrongdoing, you must be careful never to give your enemies a real reason to question your character. You are called to be a beacon fueled by true purity. You are to reflect to the world what you really are in your heart—holy and pure. Your ability to remain unstained in this culture is the light that will draw other people to the same standard by which you live. Your duty is to keep yourself spotless by abstaining from anything that would soil your reputation. Why? Because the light you shine is easily dimmed in the eyes of others.

Men of lesser nobility fear this standard, yet not because of a specific portion of its grand design or a particular rule of conduct. They fear the specter of a man who actually follows these precepts, for once you prove that such a standard is attainable, those who prefer mediocrity no longer have an excuse for their behavior, and your light exposes them for what they are.

Many of you will choose a young maiden to help you in this quest, someone who will support you with strength of her own, someone who will bind your wounds and whisper words

of encouragement as she sends you charging back into battle. Choose carefully—not the woman who attracts with smiles and skin, but rather the woman who proves her heart through service, discernment, and integrity. If she finds joy in worship and hard work, peace in the midst of persecution, and contentment even when her pockets are empty, then she will be the soul mate you need to endure the long and difficult road ahead. Since she embraces the same standard you hold dear, she will lift your arms should they sag in weariness and infuse you with assurance should your confidence falter. Face and form will change through the years, but a saintly woman's heart will last forever.

So as you go forward as a living example of this standard, pay heed to the counsel of those who have blazed the trail. It is a long journey, filled with potential hazards, but it is one that a young man who lives by the sword of the Spirit will be able to complete, and you will find applause at the end of the road, not only from those who have cheered you along the way, but from God, Himself, who created the code of conduct and fashioned you into the exemplary model He hoped you would be.