

Adventuring Forth

by Kimberly Clarke

It was a record setting 72 degrees on Christmas Day, 1996 in Northern California. The kids were up early and even with “going slow” to make the fun stretch we were finished opening gifts by 10. My oldest, Jennifer, sat absorbed in a horse book. Emily was exploring the wonders of her Playschool farm. And David was getting outfitted in his sparkling, new, plastic sword and shield.

We lived at the end of a half-mile gravel road on an acre of grass and blackberry vines. The kids played outside all the time; even little Emily toddled out the door at will. I was kept busy peeking out the windows and doors every 5 minutes or so to count heads but it was well worth the bother to be able to give my children that kind of freedom. There were very few dangers and they never left the yard...

And so, David garbed in sword, shield, and pajamas headed outside to play. I hummed Christmas music and busied myself with preparations for our evening feast. I peeked out the window and saw David testing his sword, first in the air, then on some innocent bushes. When he went for my gladiolus I dashed out and sent him off in another direction to “vanquish” blackberry vines instead.

I must have gotten distracted a bit; visiting with Grandpa and chopping vegetables because the next thing I knew I couldn’t see David from the windows! I dashed out and called for him, checking the whole yard, knowing he would never leave it—he never had, so why would he start now?

I wasn’t really too panicked even when I realized he must have left the yard. There really wasn’t anywhere where he could get into serious trouble. But as I looked around at the tall forest that surrounded our house I recognized that finding the boy might be pretty difficult and that got me worried.

I hollered for Grandpa and we started looking and calling to no avail. I asked the neighbors to search, still nothing. Then Grandpa got a funny idea. He looked at our dog and said, “Lady, go get David!” The dog was off like a shot and led us straight to him. He was quite a ways off from the house and deep in a heap of blackberry vines. His pajamas had gotten tangled in the brambles and he was calmly trying to figure a way out.

When we had him untangled and were heading back toward the house I wanted to know why he had left the yard. His answer was simple, “I was adventuring, Mom. That’s what you do when you have a sword!”

Ephesians 6:13-17 says, “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

I would like to suggest that while the scripture does say to “stand”, there may be more to this passage than that. All too often we use it as a checklist. Got my “belt of truth”, check. Got my “breastplate of righteousness”, check. Feet outfitted, check. Shield, check. Helmet and sword, check. “Okay, I’m good to go.” But then we just stand there. What are we waiting for?

A soldier's uniform implies action. Even a child recognizes this. We shouldn't put on all these good things and then just stand around. We must adventure forth; sharing the truth, affirming righteousness, spreading the God News, practicing our faith, and searching the word.

A Christian's service is one of action. May the lord grant us wisdom, courage, and strength as we each adventure forth for Him.

Oh, and like my little boy, David, we may run into a bramble or two but we don't need to worry about that. The Lord is with us and will keep us safe, even if He has to use a dog to do it!