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### DAY ONE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "The man of God was angry with him. He said, 'You should have struck the ground five or six times." 2 Kings 13:19 NIRV

In the movie *"The Karate Kid,"* the teacher Mr. Han and his student Dre Parker make a long and exhausting journey, scaling one of the Wudang Mountains deep within China. Upon reaching a monastery at the top, Mr. Han points out the Well of Kung Fu, and Dre's eyes look at it with longing.

"Drink this," Mr. Han explains, "and nothing will defeat you."

Worn out and thirsty, Dre does something unexpected: he throws his entire head into the fountain, dunking it in and drinking all he can.

It is a comical moment, but also a symbolic one: Dre is literally throwing all of himself into learning kung fu. He is showing complete resolve and utter commitment.

In your Bible, there is the story of a king who unfortunately did not have that sort of passion. His name was Jehoash, and he was king of Israel. Wanting wisdom on how to deal with an upcoming war with another country, the king went to see Elisha the prophet, who was gravely ill at the time.

Elisha said, "Get some

arrows." So the king did.

Elisha told him, "Strike the ground."

He struck it three times. Then he stopped. And Elisha became very angry with him! Unlike Dre, who dunked his whole head in the Well of Kung Fu, this King Jehoash was not committed. He just tapped his arrows three times on the ground. If he really believed what Elisha was saying, he would have struck the ground five or six times! Instead, he hit just three times, and as a result, he would only win three battles over that other country. It had to be a devastating moment! If only he had that commitment and passion!

The lesson is clear, and so are the rewards: when it comes to following God, what kind of student are you? Are you like King Jehoash, who just goes through the motions? Or are you like Dre Parker, who likes to get in over his head, and take in as much as he can?



### DAY TWO

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"My Father will honor the one who serves me." John 12:26 NIRV

Of all the virtues, the most important to the warrior is honor. Even before combat with opponents, it is tradition to show respect with a brief bow of honor before the match.

What is honor? It is showing great respect to others, through words and actions. We please God, and we honor Him when we show respect to others. As we walk through life, we represent Him as we encounter those around us. Are you representing Him well? Are you honoring God?

Who do you honor? In 1 Peter 2:7, the Bible tells us to honor *all* people. The list of those we must honor is very long: our soldiers fighting for our country, our teachers at school, our leaders in government, our leaders in the church and more. One of God's Ten Commandments even tells us to honor our parents. By doing so we can live a long, healthy life.

In the movie "*Mulan*," the title character goes through quite a bit to honor her father. He is weak and older, but someone from his family must go and join the Chinese army to bring honor to the family. If he goes, he will surely die. It is for this reason that Mulan herself bravely takes his place, risking her life and paying a great price.

Indeed, showing honor sometimes takes effort, and sometimes it takes sacrifice. But if we are to act with real honor, we must always do the right thing. Yes, there are frequent times that acting this way will have a cost. But God knows all about that: He showed us the greatest honor when He took our place, and paid the ultimate price for you and I.



### DAY THREE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. And hope will never let us down." Romans 5:3-5 NIRV

What is determination? Just ask Po, the main character from the movie "*Kung Fu Panda*." He's a panda bear with a whole lot of determination, and not a whole lot of talent when it comes to kung fu. In spite of his apparent lack of skills, he stays true to his dream: because a real warrior never quits.

Ask Po what determination is, and he would tell you something like this: It is never quitting, even in the face of adversity. A winner never quits and a quitter never wins. We've all been given an assignment by God, a task that only someone with our abilities can accomplish. What is your dream? Are you willing to go the distance to see it come true? Like Po, your wildest dreams can come true so long as you just keep going.

Don't let others discourage you. Earlier in the movie Po overhears the others talk of how awful he is with kung fu. He doesn't need reminding – his initial trainings are spectacularly bad. Though we sometimes get discouraged, like Po, we should remember that our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.

Just keep telling yourself the truth: A real warrior never quits. Po reminds himself of this each time he fails, as does his master Shifu.

In the movie *"The Karate Kid,"* the wise Mr. Han says it best: "Life will knock us down, but we can choose whether or not to stand back up." It will happen: we all fall from time to time. Will you get back up again? Remember that a real warrior never quits, especially when he has plenty of determination.



### DAY FOUR

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"A man who can't control himself is like a city whose walls are broken down." Proverbs 25:28 NIRV

The Great Wall of China is massive and formidable. It stretches 5,500 miles across China, cannot be scaled and cannot be penetrated. It is a national treasure that has lasted thousands of years, and has become a symbol of strength.

Yet early on, history tells us something troubling: even with this immense structure freshly in place, China was still invaded three times. This may seem staggering, considering the effort put into the wall. How could the invaders get by?

Here's how: They bribed the gatekeepers, and walked right in. The tragedy for China was not that the wall was broken or scaled. It was that they didn't have honor- able gatekeepers to protect their country and think of it first. A painful lesson was learned quickly: a great wall is only as secure as those who guard the gates.

Some time ago, our eyes and ears were called "gates" to our souls. It makes sense, as everything we see and hear comes through these gates. These are entrances we must guard, because these are points of entry, and can be a place the enemy sneaks in. What are you watching with your eyes? Is it something God would not be pleased with? What are you listening to? Is it something you shouldn't be hearing?

The Great Wall of China is huge and very impressive, but disasters came upon their nation early when they couldn't control their own gates. The moral of the story is clear: Guard your eyes and ears. Don't let the enemy through those gates.



### DAY FIVE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"Do you owe respect? Then give it. Do you owe honor? Then show it." Romans 13:7 NIRV

There are many colored belts a student of karate can earn, but the black belt is the ultimate goal. For all students, it starts out with a white belt. That's where the inexperienced novices begin, where everyone starts out on their long journey of learning.

Just how did this system of colors originate? The legend is that the original karate founders never washed their belts: they became dirtier and dirtier as time went on. A belt's darker color was the end result of years of sweat, bruises and experience with karate.

While certain aspects of this may be true, it was Japanese Judo that was the first to introduce the colored belt ranking system. It helped identify everyone, based on each student's progress. Soon, Karate schools were using this same system, with everyone on the path to earn a black belt.

No matter how that black belt is colored, there is nothing but respect for the person wearing it. A lot of sweat, bruises and experience stain that black belt, and when it is worn, others show respect and honor to the individual wearing it.

Our lesson for today has to do with respect: firstly, we must respect those who are older than us, and recognize how much more experience they have. You don't tangle with a black belt, and we should also always remember to respect those with more experience in life. The black belts may not be around their waists, but they have so much we can learn from.

You'll have that black belt some day too. Remember that each time you feel you're getting banged up by life. The years of sweat, bruises and experience will color your belt black too. Soon enough, you'll be a master!



### DAY **SIX**

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength." Philippians 4:13 NIRV

Our lesson begins today with a virtue that no one should be without: Confidence. Confidence is knowing the truth about what God says about you. There are those that may think otherwise, but what God says about you is absolutely true. That's why you need to choose to believe the One who created you. He knows what you're capable of, and when you draw close to Him, you too will know how far He'll take you.

In our Bible, a man named Gideon faced a very challenging opponent: himself. God had told him, "You are strong." And yet the very next thing Gideon did was tell God otherwise, explaining to Him how small and weak his family is, and how unimportant he himself was. Can you imagine arguing with God? Gideon had a terrible self-image. Gideon had zero confidence.

Unfortunately, we all get down from time to time. It happens. We all face times where we lack the self-respect or confidence it takes to be what God wants. That's why it is critical that we build each other up all the time.

One member of the Furious Five, Crane, had no one to remind him of his potential.

It was a sad situation for him, as his thoughts were always on what he thought he could never do. Fortunately, someone stepped forth to encourage him, and help lead him to his destiny. How tragic if we don't speak kindly to others, and cause them to miss out on God's promises! A real warrior recognizes the truth in others, lifting them up if they are down.

Gideon rose to the challenge, and overcame his fear and self-doubt. You too can rise up! Spend time in God's Word, studying His promises about you. It takes time and training to become the champion God wants you to be, but you've already got the greatness in you. You can fly higher than a crane, soaring to new heights. All it takes is you, rising up to the challenge. All it takes is a heart filled with confidence.



### DAY SEVEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "Our fight is not against human beings. It is against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world." Ephesians 6:12 NIRV

It's a cage match! God is your manager, and He's behind you, encouraging you and letting you know you can do it. Get your black belt of truth on, and know that He always has your back. But don't let your guard down! You've got some tough fighters against you who go by the names of Temptation, Distraction and Idleness. These guys can seem strong. They've conquered many a champion in the past. But not you!

Don't let these guys take you down. Each one is well trained, and wants to knock you down or push you so far out of bounds you can't recover. But God will not put you in the same ring as anything you can't defeat. We all know what these opponents can do, but God knows what you yourself are capable of.

So step forward and go to work quickly. The best way to knock these guys out is to move fast, move with certainty and make sure you listen to your Manager. If you can do that, you'll be the king of the ring.



### DAY EIGHT

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "He picked up the coat that had fallen from Elijah. He went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan River." 2 Kings 2:13 NIRV

In *"Kung Fu Panda,"* Master Shifu says something that hits harder than a roundhouse kick to the gut: "Obeying your master is not weakness!"

He was accused of being weak, but the reality was that he was following his master's commands. And although that might not have been a popular thing to do, it was ultimately the wisest thing to do. It made him stronger!

Obedience can be a tricky thing for some of us, but if we are to go anywhere in life, we must have this virtue. The definition of obedience is submitting to God, or a person put in place by Him. God has put people over us with the heavy responsibility of leading us in the right direction. Look to the Bible: Joshua followed Moses. Elisha followed Elijah. In each case, both student and master went on to do amazing things for God.

In the movie, *"The Karate Kid,"* the student Dre Parker found himself a wise teacher as well: Mr. Han was there at the right time and place to teach and pass on all he could. It's a pattern we all experience: In our lives, God has put people in place for us to follow and learn from.

So obey, and learn from those God puts over you. And obey without whining! Whining is the opposite of winning. There are times we question authority and their judgment. If we complain too much, we may miss out on a chance to gain wisdom. Don't forget: when we obey leadership, we obey God Himself. Dre Parker didn't understand why Mr. Han kept asking him to keep taking his jacket off – and putting it on again. If only he trusted his master, things may have gone easier. He would have known that he was building up his flexibility and strength.

Quit questioning – and put the jacket on. Obedience will lead to unexpected rewards. Dre Parker put on the jacket one last time, and realized his dream was closer to reality. And many years ago, a student named Elisha put on a jacket. It was a mantle that was worn by his teacher, Elijah. Because of Elisha's faithful obedience over the years, he himself became a master.

Today's lesson is simple: You too can become a master, so long as you first master the virtue of obedience.



### DAY NINE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"Suppose someone stays away from what is not honorable. Then the Master will be able to use him for honorable purposes. He will be made holy. He will be ready to do any good work." 2 Timothy 2:21 NIRV

The meaning of the word "sensei" is simple: it is a teacher. In that respect, Jesus was the greatest sensei to ever walk the earth. He was a remarkable teacher. People came from all over just to hear him speak! Imagine his disciples seated around him, simply waiting for his incredible words of wisdom.

No wonder they also called him Master. He created everything and He created all of us, and the dictionary simply doesn't have enough words to describe how awesome He really is. For example, certain karate movies show characters moving so fast they run across water. That's cool, but Jesus does it better, and with style: He casually strolls across the waves, walking along and not even breaking a sweat.

Are you following Jesus? Whether you call Him Sensei, Teacher or Master, there is a call on your life to follow Him and learn from Him.

It's an exciting journey, but in order to be the best students, we must live a life of honor. We must keep away from those things that we know do not please God. Sin and temptation try to sneak in, but we must defeat them! We must stay away from what is not honorable, because the Master wants to use us to do good work.

Grasshopper, you have much to learn! Bow to your Sensei, your Teacher and Master, and get ready for a thrilling adventure!



### DAY TEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 NIV

Their shifu was gone. His battles were epic, and his victories legendary. In Chinese, the name shifu can mean teacher, or master. Moses certainly was both of these. He did so much for God's people, helping to deliver them from the might of an enslaving nation, and setting up a dynasty that would last for many years to come. Yet now, the master was gone.

The book of Joshua starts out with a tragedy: Moses was dead. And yet out of the ashes and grief of this great loss arose a hero, a man of courage and valor who would lead God's people to their ultimate destiny.

Joshua wasn't chosen because of his money or appearance. He was chosen because of his courage. Courage is being brave enough to act on what you believe, no matter what. In his case, he had a choice to make. It's the same one you have before you: who are you going to serve?

You cannot serve two masters. You have only one choice, and you'd better make it the right one. It may take courage to stand up for what you believe in, but you can be certain that God is watching. Joshua was ready to serve Him, and challenged all of the Israelites with this simple choice: who are you going to serve?

Choose God. He will not desert you. Draw close to Him, and He'll draw close to you. When you serve God, He will serve you. And when you know that God is near, you'll know that you do not have a spirit of fear, but of power and a sound mind.

Others may lack the courage to stand up for what they believe. You are not like that though. You may face difficult situations in life, things that bring fear to many people. But if you choose to serve God, He will give you the bravery to face life's challenges head on. He'll give you courage!



### DAY ELEVEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "The prophet answered, 'I serve the Lord. You can be sure that He lives. And you can be just as sure that I won't accept a gift from you.' Even though Naaman begged him to take it, Elisha wouldn't." 2 Kings 5:16 NIRV

"There is no charge for awesomeness." This hilarious quote from "Kung Fu Panda" sets up the legend of the dragon warrior, a legendary warrior whose kung fu skills were the stuff of legend. Although he wasn't quite the dragon warrior yet, it was apparent the panda Po had a lot of self-confidence, didn't he? He hadn't even earned it yet!

Many years ago, there was another warrior whose name was Naaman. Unlike Po, he *had* earned the confidence of many. He was a commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a very important man in the eyes of his master. And he was highly respected. That's because the Lord had helped him win the battle over Aram's enemies. He was a brave soldier.

But he had a skin disease. This warrior Naaman went to see Elisha the prophet, taking his horse and chariots with him. But a message came forth from Elisha's house: "Go. Wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed. You will be pure and clean again."

Naaman was pretty let down. He complained, "I was sure he would come out to me. I thought he would stand there and pray to the Lord his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my skin. Then I would be healed."

Still, Naaman was convinced to at least give the Jordan River bath a try. And to his utter amazement, he was healed, just as Elisha said. For Naaman to be healed, all that was required was simple obedience, and no more complaining. Imagine all that would be lost if he had too big of an ego to do what he was told: Naaman would never have been healed. And, he would have never known the power of the one true God.

Overjoyed, he returned to Elisha. "Now I know that there is no God anywhere in the whole world except in Israel," he explained. "Please accept a gift from me."

But Elisha was quick to give him an answer. "Naaman," he said. "There is no charge for awesomeness."



### DAY TWELVE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "None of you should look out just for your own good. You should also look out for the good of others." Philippians 2:4 NIRV

Four green vigilantes band together to fight crime and dispense justice on the city streets, using their expertise in martial arts. Many know the names of Leonardo, Michelangelo, Donatello, and Raphael as classical artists from years ago. But a whole lot of other fans know these guys as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Despite their drastically different personalities, and different colored masks, these four work together as a team. Their master, Splinter, warned them if they tried otherwise. "You cannot fight unless you fight as one," he told them on one fateful day. Sure enough, he was right. The team was facing disunity, and as a result facing serious trouble. Splinter wisely reminded them, "You cannot fight evil when you are fighting each other."

His words ring true even for us. Sometimes we spend so much time arguing or talking about each other that we fail to realize that we are falling into a trap! By spending so much time fighting each other, we can't use that time to fight for God's kingdom. By bickering and attacking one another, we become losers instead of winners.

Think about it a moment: are you a team player, or are you a team breaker? Work together as a team: Cowabunga, dudes!



### DAY THIRTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "So don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34 NIRV

In the movie *"Kung Fu Panda,"* Po has failed miserably in his first day of training. He doesn't want to give up, but he knows inside that his attempts to become a master of kung fu are not going so well. Fortunately, the wise turtle Oogway is nearby to give him some very good advice, and easily the best quote of the movie. He tells him, "There is a saying: yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the 'present.'"

It all comes down to this: your past is history. Nothing can change what happened then, and we shouldn't be so concerned about tomorrow that we miss out on today. This moment right now, as Master Oogway tells us, is a gift. That is why we must do all we can in the here and now.

Don't obsess too much about the past. If you're feeling guilty about it, God will forgive you if you ask and repent. If you're longing for the good old days, don't spend too much time dwelling on it, You've got great days ahead of you. Your future begins right now! Just do the best you can in the present, and allow God to work in you so that you'll become the best warrior you can be from now on.



### DAY FOURTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"Saul paid attention to Jonathan. He took an oath and made a promise. He said, 'You can be sure that the Lord lives. And you can be just as sure that David will not be put to death."" 1 Samuel 19:6 NIRV

Looking for a dojo to start training at? Why not consider Rex Kwon Do? What other dojo can offer you the strength of a grizzly, the reflexes of a puma, and the wisdom of a man?

This martial arts dojo from the popular movie "*Napoleon Dynamite*" may be a bit over the top, but there are actually a few good nuggets of wisdom we can learn from Rex.

For example, at Rex Kwon Do, they use the buddy system. No more flying solo. You need somebody watching your back *...at all times!* 

Remember King David? Early in his career, he had a buddy system going on himself. He wasn't fighting in the Octagon, but he did have a very angry King Saul out to get him. Fortunately, a good buddy by the name of Jonathan helped keep David safe from harm, watching his back ... at all times! You think David was ungrateful? Forget about it!

God has put people in your life, just so you can work together and help one another. You don't have to go through fighting alone when you've got God's buddy system in place. Find yourself a sparring partner. That's a friend that you can count on ...at all times! When trouble swings your way, you'll block it every time!



### DAY FIFTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

*"My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy."* James 1:2 NIRV

The Wuxi Finger Hold. Oh, you know this hold? Developed by Master Wuxi in the 3rd dynasty, it is said that the hardest part of it is cleaning up the mess afterwards!

Anyone can recognize it: the user holds an opponent's finger between his or her own index finger and thumb, and most importantly, with a pinky held upright.

Only a few can do it. It is the most feared and secretive technique in the Valley of Peace. Just a flex of that pinky, and the huge path of destruction explodes across the landscape!

Imagine being able to deal with all your problems that easily. Do you have a bully that's bothering you at school? Wuxi Finger Hold! How about a teacher that gets on your nerves? Wuxi Finger Hold! Your parents are being unreasonable? Wuxi Finger Hold!

On second thought, it's a good thing that not many of us know how to use the Wuxi Finger Hold. There'd be explosions all over the place!

Here's the deal: God puts people and situations in our lives so that we can learn from them, and improve upon our own character. If there were a quick-fix button, we'd never learn anything. We'd never become better people.

It may be hard to rejoice when we endure trying situations, but it may help to think of how much stronger we all can be once the trial is over. After all, what does not defeat you can make you stronger. Skadoosh!



### DAY SIXTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully." 1 Peter 4:10 NIRV

Early masters studied the movements of animals and began to use some of these with their martial arts style. There are quite a lot of different styles to learn from: the crane, the viper, the tiger, the mantis, the monkey, the swallow, and even the chicken! There's even the fighting style of an ant!

It would take a lot of effort trying to memorize all the fighting styles, so most attempt to master just one and make it their own. The end result is essentially a zoo of martial artists out there, using moves that mimic all sorts of different animals.

Listen to the description given for the tiger's fighting style: "It features lunging with open-handed clawing attacks, similar to the pounce of a tiger." Now here's a description of the chicken's fighting style: "It copies the pecking movement of a chicken. This form also adapts the quick and aggressive combat style of the rooster."

Quite a bit different, aren't they? But that's just the way God created all the animals. And that's the way God created each of us. We all have been given different gifts, talents, and abilities. We've all been given different styles.

We're all made different, but we're all made in His image. What is your gift? It probably isn't using the crane's fighting method. More than likely, it is a gift of speaking or singing. Perhaps it is an artistic skill, or gift of being helpful to others. Or maybe it is a gift of writing, or a gift of leading. Whatever your style, God wants you to practice at it and become the best you can be. With His help, you can be a master of style!



### DAY SEVENTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "So prepare your minds for action. Control yourselves." 1 Peter 1:13 NIRV

There is yet another virtue you cannot do without: Self-control. Do you have power over your emotions and actions? It can be a constant battle. One of the biggest obstacles to our becoming a true champion is a lack of control. Tigress is a part of the Furious Five, but could not fulfill her destiny until she learned to control her emotions and actions. It took a while, but you'll never learn if you don't try: just look at the sad case of Samson in the book of Judges. How easily we can all fall when we lack self -control!

Train each day. It takes time to become better at anything, and it takes practice. With self-control, it is a life-long training. We must renew our minds each day just as a warrior spends so much time with exercises at the dojo. Our darker nature would like nothing more than victory, so we must be ready each day to defeat those temptations that try to sneak in.

One final tip from the Master: get help. Tigress got help from Shifu, who showed real love and concern for her. He stayed by her and helped her through her issues, seeing her through good times and bad.

God puts other people in our lives to help us deal with challenges, but we must find people of the right influence. Samson failed at this when he chose Delilah. As a result, he found himself without vision and going in circles. Ask God to help you find a real friend who can help you fight your battles.

Rex Kwon Do's "buddy system" is the real deal! We must be willing to help one another conquer those things that keep us from becoming what God wants us to be: a victorious warrior with absolute self-control.



### DAY EIGHTEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 NIRV

What is a dojo? The name dojo in Japanese literally means, "place of the way." With martial arts, a dojo is a training facility, where students of Japanese martial arts can become better with their skills. It's a place you simply have to go to, a place where everyone wants to go to.

Think about this a moment: your church is very similar to a dojo. You read that right! Church is a place where Christians go to become better with their skills. All throughout our lives, we head there to study the word, encourage, and train with one another. And yes, spend time with the Master. Even the name "dojo" fits perfectly: your church is a "place of The Way."

Some time ago, Jesus told all of us, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

So, do you want to become a better Christian? There's only one way: You head to God's dojo, the place of The Way.



### DAY NINETEEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

# "Then David picked up his wooden staff. He went down to a stream and chose five smooth stones. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd's bag. Then he took his sling in his hand and approached Goliath." 1 Samuel 17:40 NIRV

A good warrior is always resourceful. That's using what you've been given to answer life's challenges. We've all been given gifts, but these gifts are not just physical items or natural abilities. Sometimes our gifts come from training, or our history. In our Bibles, a young David was resourceful when stepping up to Goliath, thanks to his training in the wilderness, watching after and protecting his flock. Though King Saul told him Goliath had been a fighting man ever since he was a boy, the truth was that David had been training with God all his life!

Many may look down on your abilities, and maybe that includes even you yourself. But you should never underestimate your talent. Viper, a member of the Furious Five, saw that her father had not valued her gift of dance. How surprised he was to see her use it to take down a giant that threatened the whole village! Similarly, we all know the story of David defeating Goliath. But how many remembered how unappreciated he himself was? The prophet Samuel didn't at first recognize the greatness in David. Even King Saul thought he was too young. In man's eyes, he was certainly the youthful, most unlikely warrior of all. Yet he was the only one who would stop the threat of the giant!

The lesson for us all is easy: use your God-given gifts to save the day. God has given us all resources to help others. We're given these gifts to become great warriors, and to help rescue God's people.

There are those out there in trouble. Call forth your courage and step forth to battle! It's time to step forward with the resourcefulness of a true warrior!



### DAY TWENTY

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"So put on all of God's armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything." Ephesians 6:13 NIRV

Wendy Wu is a warrior - she just doesn't know it yet! In the movie "Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior," the main character has to come to grip with something quite unexpected: that she is a warrior destined to bring down an evil force that threatens all the land.

The problem with Wendy is this: she doesn't want to be a warrior. She just wants to live a normal life. She just wants to go to the prom. She has enough problems dealing with all of her teachers in school and she just wants to think of her own needs!

We face a similar balance, don't we? There are so many things we want to do in life, but like it or not, we too are warriors. We must not forget that we are not living for this life alone, but rather another future in heaven. It's a heavy responsibility, especially when you consider all the people that need to know about God's love.

Fortunately, Wendy Wu begins to think of others more than herself. It takes sacrifice, giving up some things that she really wants to do. But in the end, the day is saved and she begins to understand what life is really all about: saving the world, one person at a time.



### DAY TWENTY ONE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

### *"Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has." Luke 12:15 NIRV*

The Terracotta Warriors are a famous national treasure located in the land of China. Early in the spring of 1974, they were discovered by farmers who were digging a water well, and discovered something that was beyond amazing.

It was a huge army of clay soldiers, estimated at 8,000 warriors strong. Each one was hand sculpted and different in appearance, but all look ready for battle. These soldiers weren't alone: It was a tomb! Also unearthed were 130 chariots and 670 horses. In addition to all of this, historian Sima Qian wrote that the First Emperor was buried with scale models of palaces, scenic towers, important people who worked with him, valuable utensils and plenty of other "wonderful objects," including 100 rivers made from mercury.

What on earth are all of these soldiers doing in the dirt like that? And what's up with all of these items buried underground with this man? The answer: the soldiers were there to protect the Emperor after he died, and all of the other things were for him to enjoy in the afterlife.

If this seems strange, it should. The Bible tells us the Emperor got it all wrong. It all boils down to this: don't focus on stuff. Even if it is cool stuff! You can't take it to heaven with you, so why bother being so obsessed with it? The truth of the matter is this: the only thing you can take with you to heaven are other people. And no, you can't take terracotta people. We're talking real people, the ones you share God's love with.



### DAY TWENTY TWO

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"If you are proud, you will fall." Proverbs 16:18 NIRV

Tai Lung was a champion, and a master with the skills of the dragon warrior. Jen Yu had an incredible gift and talent with martial arts. Both had abilities beyond any of us. And yet, both lacked one thing that made them the ultimate warriors they longed to be. Both lacked the very thing that could have saved them a lot of grief: humility.

Humility is being modest, not arrogant. Humility is having a realistic opinion of yourself. Being prideful is a terrible thing. God certainly doesn't like it. In fact, the Bible tells us, "If you are prideful, you will fall."

In the movie *"Kung Fu Panda,"* that's exactly what happened to Tai Lung. He refused to accept any more teaching from those he learned from. He thought he knew it all already. And when told otherwise, he threw an epic temper tantrum that hurt a lot of people around him. He didn't care though, because he was too prideful to see the truth about his actions.

There are many lessons to learn from Tai Lung. One is to remain teachable: the moment we think we know it all is the moment we stop learning altogether. Another is to resist the urge to be prideful. When we begin to think of ourselves as something greater than what we really are, we find ourselves destined for a very hard fall.

And no, I'm not bluffing.



### DAY TWENTY THREE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with his wonderful riches that come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 NIRV

Through the entire story of *"Kung Fu Panda,"* the dragon scroll rests perched atop the temple, waiting to empower the first person who reads from it. Said to offer limitless power, it is no wonder that every warrior wants a chance to see what is on this scroll.

When the time comes, it is the panda Po that gets the honor. And when it is taken down and opened up, he discovers that the scroll says... nothing!

It was a shocking moment to say the least. And yet, there really was a message within that scroll – for much later, Po realizes he can see his own reflection in the scroll. And at that very moment, he realizes that there is no secret ingredient or special power to make a warrior special. Po himself had all he'd ever need already. That's what the reflection told him, and that's the message of the Dragon Scroll: the secret ingredient is you!

Many times we long for something more. Many times we want to be better than we are, and many times we feel envious of what others may have. But God designed us perfectly for what we are, when we are. We have all we'll ever need inside. We just need to trust Him and walk with Him, and then we'll see ourselves becoming that greater thing we long to become.

Sure, we can train and make ourselves better. And yes, over time we will grow to see success if we work hard at what we do. But we should never become obsessed with what we do not have, when right now at this very moment, each of us has limitless power when we walk with God.



### DAY TWENTY FOUR

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "My friends, don't try to get even." Romans 12:19 NIRV

In many martial arts movies, there is some wrong done to the main character that serves as the reason for the rest of the film. That reason would be revenge, which is also a popular theme in modern life. The world will teach you that when somebody wrongs you, go after them with the sword of justice!

What does God's word say about it? Well, the teachings of Jesus tell us to love our enemies and forgive those who wrong us. Everyone has had or will have that one event in their life where you believe you have a right to be angry and hurt. You were wronged and there is no other way to explain it. You have been given a bitter pill to swallow, one that causes hurt and tears. What do you do?

You can take a cue from the world and try to get back at whomever caused your hurt, but in the end, what have you accomplished? You have reduced yourself to their level and turned your back on the voice of your Heavenly Father. Where is the honor in that?

The second choice you have is to fall to pieces and let that one event rule the rest of your life. Every day you can dwell on it until it steals the rest of your joy and becomes the ending of a promising life. Not much glory in that either.

So what's the final answer? Listen to Jesus and forgive. It is not easy to let it go.

In fact, it is very painful to our hearts, minds and flesh. But it is still the only real answer: let it go!

Don't become a victim of your past, instead be a victor of your present!



### DAY TWENTY FIVE

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10 NIRV

Students, if there is one virtue you cannot do without, it is ... *wait for it* ... patience. This virtue is clearly shown in the story of one member of the Furious Five: the Mantis.

What is patience? Simply put, it is enduring through delays, trouble or suffering without getting upset. The Mantis symbolizes patience, and prayer. If you've ever studied a praying mantis, you can see his careful movements, not at all quick and impulsive. Great thought goes into each step. And notice as well the arms of the mantis, bent as if in perpetual prayer: In the Bible, Paul tells us to pray without ceasing, right after asking us to be patient and put up with one another.

Patience and prayer: The two go together hand in hand, and bring peace and serenity to one's heart. Your lesson today is this: with patience and prayer you will find the most powerful tools of a warrior.

But *not* having patience can lead to trouble. Look to the Bible once more: in the Old Testament, King Saul was an impatient man. He ignored God's instructions when he chose to do things on his own. He tried to rush God, which is not a good idea. God's timing is perfect, and as King Saul learned, our timing is *not*. Learn from his mistake, and learn to listen to God's word. We must *not* rush out impatiently, even if everything around us is screaming to run into action. If we are not ready, the results can be tragic.

So wait for it. This is the good advice of the Mantis. We must be patient, and we must be still. In the movie, *"The Karate Kid,"* the wise teacher Mr. Han said that, "Being still and doing nothing are two very different things." In our Bibles, the Author of the universe tells us to "Be still and know that I am God." Trust Him, talk to Him, and know Him. Then you will know God's perfect timing for your life. The more you pray, the more you will have one of the most powerful tools of the warrior: patience.



### DAY TWENTY SIX

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "Treat others as you want them to treat you." Luke 6:31 NIRV

Today, we speak of compassion, a virtue no warrior should be without. Compassion is understanding someone else's situation, and doing something to help. As Christians, our job is to see the world with this same compassion. It is how God Himself looked upon we ourselves, despite all of our ugly imperfections. In our final story from the Furious Five, Monkey's tale shows us true compassion: in defeat, he is shown true grace, and shown how we must treat others: "...as you want them to treat you."

An extremely wise man once told us, "Blessed are the peacemakers." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said these words to us as a challenge to work hard to make peace here on earth. But it is something we all must do, even those who know kung fu. This is clearly explained in *"The Karate Kid,"* when Mr. Han tells his student, "Kung Fu is not about fighting. It is about making peace with your enemies." This is the way we must think if we are to please God. It takes much effort, but as Mr. Han also put it, "The best kind of fight is the one you walk away from."

Be quick to listen, and slow to action! This may seem difficult, but real compassion begins when we start to sympathize with even our enemies. Monkey had an ugly past, which was a bad influence on him: he was hurting, and wanted to bring that same hurt to others. Something had to be done! Fortunately, a wise master came and saw his life with compassion, rather than raining down fury! Through his story, we learn that true compassion is understanding everyone, even those who you might be tempted to call "enemy."

One of the most difficult lessons of all maybe this very one. But with God's help, you can show those who you feel do not deserve it some true compassion, the very kind that God has extended to you.



### DAY TWENTY SEVEN

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

"*My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak.*" 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIRV

A 10-year-old boy felt as though he had lost his identity when he lost his left arm in a devastating car accident. After six months of adjusting to his handicap, he decided to study judo despite the fact that he had only one arm. The boy began lessons with an old Japanese judo master. The boy was doing well, so he couldn't understand why, after three months of training, the master had taught him only one move.

"Sensei," the boy finally said, "Shouldn't I be learning more moves?"

"This is the only move you know, but this is the only move you'll ever need to know," the sensei replied.

Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training. Several months later, the sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged; the boy deftly used his one move to win the match.

Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals. This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger, and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be overmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the sensei intervened.

"No," the sensei insisted, "Let him continue."

Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake: he dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion.

On the way home, the boy and the sensei reviewed every move in each and every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind: "Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?"

"You won for two reasons," the sense answered. "First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm."

The boy's biggest weakness had become his biggest strength!



### DAY TWENTY EIGHT

### PATH OF THE WARRIOR

#### "They take over the houses of widows. They say long prayers to show off. God will punish those men very much." Mark 12:40 NIRV

Do you want to be a ninja? These are covert agents who work undercover, sneaking in and accomplishing their goals without ever being seen.

Jesus spoke of certain people who were clearly not ninjas: they were Pharisees and they loved to be seen. Jesus said they made showy prayers, and walked about in long flowing robes, and sat in the most important seats at church.

He didn't think too much of this sort of behavior. In fact, Jesus warned us not to be like them at all. You could say he wanted us to be more like a ninja, working behind the scenes to get the job done.

Your assignment is simple: do something good without getting caught. Doing something anonymously means doing it without getting credit for it. Some people give money or toys anonymously. You could leave an encouraging message for someone without signing your name to the bottom. Whatever you do, don't do it with the goal of getting seen and getting glory for some great deed. Be like a ninja, go undercover and let God get all the glory!



## **NOTES**

