



## **Courage to Overcome a Broken Heart**

Adapted from “Courageous” series by Wayne Murray

Every man will set priorities that will become the line of demarcation in their home. These priorities will shape the outcome of their home. The depth of the priorities set is in direct proportion to the love the father has for their home. However, every home will experience setbacks no matter how deep the love.

The following story illustrates just how deep a love a father can have.

The salmon nearly leaped onto their hooks! That was a far cry from the day before when the four anglers couldn't even seem to catch an old boot. Disappointed but not discouraged, they had climbed aboard their small seaplane and skimmed over the Alaskan mountains to a pristine, secluded bay where the fish were sure to bite.

They parked their aircraft and waded upstream, where the water teemed with ready-to-catch salmon. Later that afternoon, when they returned to their camp, they were surprised to find the seaplane high and dry. The tides fluctuated twenty-three feet in that particular bay, and the pontoons rested on a bed of gravel. Since they couldn't fly out till morning, they settled in for the night and enjoyed some of their catch for dinner, then slept in the plane.

In the morning the seaplane was adrift, so they promptly cranked the engine and started to take off. Too late, they discovered one of the pontoons had been punctured and was filled with water. The extra weight threw the plane into a circular pattern. Within moments from liftoff the seaplane careened into the sea and capsized.

Dr. Phil Littleford determined that everyone was alive, including his twelve-year-old son, Mark. He suggested they pray, which the other two men quickly endorsed. No safety equipment could be found on board—no life vests, no flares, nothing. The plane gurgled and submerged into the blackness of the icy morning sea. Fortunately, they all had waders which they inflated. The frigid Alaskan water chilled their breath.

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They all began to swim for shore, but the riptide countered every stroke. The two men alongside Phil and Mark were strong swimmers and they both made shore, one just catching the tip of land as the tides pulled them out toward sea. Their two companions last saw Phil and Mark as a disappearing dot on the horizon, swept arm-in-arm out to sea.

The Coast Guard reported they probably lasted no more than an hour in the freezing waters - hypothermia would chill the body functions and they would go to sleep. Mark with a smaller body mass, would fall asleep first in his father's arms. Phil could have made the shoreline, too, but that would have meant abandoning his son. Their bodies were never found.

What father wouldn't be willing to die for his son? My question is different. If we are willing to go so far as to die for our children, why is it that we often don't seem willing to live for them?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pat Morley, *Encourage Your Men on Father's Day: A Great Illustration*, <http://www.maninthemirror.org/weekly-briefing/encourage-your-men-on-fathers-day-a-great-illustration> (accessed September 6, 2017).

## COURAGE

**C1:** Describe a time in your life when you found yourself grieving. Make sure to include how you felt during this time of grief.

**C2:** Read and answer the following.

**2 Samuel 18:29–33 (ESV)** And the king said, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent the king’s servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was.” And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still. And behold, the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, “Good news for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you.” The king said to the Cushite, “Is it well with the young man Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.” And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

- Do a study on how battles were fought in ancient Israel. What did you conclude?
- From these verses, what thoughts do you have about grief?
- Do you think David deserved the grief he was feeling? Why or why not?

**C3:** Is there a time in your life when you **deserved** some of the grief you were facing? Explain.

## STRENGTH

**S1:** Read and answer the following.

### **2 Samuel 18:33 (ESV)**

- What can you discover from this verse about grief?
- Has there ever been a time when you wished you could have experienced the pain your children were going through rather than them? Explain.

**S2:** As a dad, you set priorities in your lifetime that will shape the results of your children. For the next twenty-one days, spend thirty minutes of your lunch praying and writing what attributes you desire to forge into your children or grandchildren. Discuss these attributes with your spouse or a trusted friend. What did you learn from this conversation?

**S3:** Does unrepented sin cause us to miss out on the blessings of God? How? What ramifications does unrepented sin cause?

**S4:** When King David was younger, he married a princess from the Northern Kingdom for the purpose of bringing unity in the land. As a result of this marriage, Absalom was born of royal blood. He grew up with his father busy building a kingdom but not spending time with him. What type of impact do you think the absence of a father or male role model has on children?

**S5:** On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well. Rate yourself on how well you spend time with your children or those without a father. How can you improve?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Read and answer the following.

### **2 Samuel 13: 10-22 (ESV)**

- From these verses, what legacy should we leave?
- According to verse 15, what happens when desires are sinfully met? Why?
- From these verses, what was David's response to tragedy? What can you learn?

**E2:** Read and answer the following.

### **Matthew 6:25 (ESV)**

### **Luke 12: 22 (ESV)**

- From these verses, what can you gather about life's priorities?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you live out these verses. Write out a plan to improve.

**E4:** In the next thirty days, meet with three men and discuss this question. If you are willing to die for your children, are you also willing to live for them? How will you begin to live for your children?