

Hitting the Target in Your Journey Toward Godly Manhood

Along the masculine journey to becoming a good king, there are many opportunities for ceremonies of initiation/validation and for graduations—hundreds of such moments. Most men miss them, because most men aren't looking. Nor are they seeing the bigger picture. God is growing you up as a man and wants you to engage, cooperate and let Him.

When I was young, my dad taught me how to shoot a basketball.

“Look at the back of the rim. See that hook the net is looped on? That's your target. Hit that hook on the back of the rim, and the ball goes in.” He used to say, “Never up, never in. With the right arch, hit the back of the rim, and it will go in every time. Aim for the front, and you're short even an inch, and you'll miss every time. Never up, never in.”

End of lesson.

Brothers, what you aim at determines what you will hit. Though we might aim to “be a man,” becoming a man is to be far more intentional than accidental. Becoming a man is made up of thousands of moments that need to be seen and interpreted well. The vast majority of men are suffering from *fatherlessness*—having no guide to show them how, no model to inspire them and therefore no target on which to practice. With no one to show us the way, it's no wonder so many of us experience our false selves getting in the way. Years of uninitiated and invalidated moments create that “If it is to be, it's up to me,” false-self tyrant. Every man has one, and every man suffers under its influence. It was Thoreau who famously wrote, “Most men live lives of quiet desperation and go to their graves with a song still in them.” Brothers of the kingdom, you are not “most men!”

The film *Kingdom of Heaven* is a story about restoration, one man's journey through initiation and validation—becoming *more*. It is a story thick with the battle of good versus evil, and a man's inevitable steps to discovering the consequences of compromise—and the painful reward of developing convictions which all too often lie on the other side of such compromise. Balian must come to experience who he is and what his life is all about. In a single moment, he moves from a small story, one centered on himself, to a very large one. His is the journey from that of a man who is just trying to survive to that of a man who concerns himself with the survival of others. Another character, called Hospitaller, serves as a Holy Spirit-type character. He is the templar priest who travels with Sir Godfrey (Balian's father), and fights for the people and the king of Jerusalem. Hospitaller tells Balian during a crossroads moment in his journey:

"I put no stock in religion. By the word 'religion,' I have seen the lunacy of fanatics of every denomination be called the will of God. Holiness is in right action, and courage on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves and goodness. What God desires is here [points to Balian's head] and here [points to Balian's heart] and what you decide to do every day will make you a good man ... or not."

Brothers, your masculine heart *is* on a *journey*. A long and treacherous journey; a glorious and beautiful one. Do you know the targets you are shooting at and how your heart will be trained? Do you know what the destination is and the many graduations it will take to get you there? If you don't, then how will you know when you arrive? How will you know what you are missing? How will you know what to offer your wife, your sons or daughters, your friends along the way?

The story your masculine heart is in is a very large one, and it is unfolding day to day, chapter by chapter. The journey is what is ahead of you; your story is what lies behind, what has happened to you. Not every man's journey starts in the same

place. Not every boy will take the same sequence of steps to become a good king. And yet we share a common journey with specific and certain mile markers. Each and every step inviting us to hit our target—which is? Becoming more and more like Jesus. We all live in the same larger story; it is dangerous and glorious to say the least. What are the odds we have interpreted all of our lives accurately? Guaranteed, every scene and chapter of your life has not been interpreted correctly.

What if you could walk with the Father back to the moments when you were impacted badly or significantly wronged? There will need to be some reflection, redemption and restoration in every man's story if we are going to move forward well and recover from our past and become like Jesus, our shepherd, Savior and King. This is what is necessary to become a good king: to love well, listen well and rule well as a son of God, adopted and dearly loved by a good, good Father. Balian's father initiates him and brings him to the place of graduation when he says to his son, "You are not what you were born, but what you have it in yourself to be."

I invite you to experience an audio series—*Two Realms and Two Kingdoms*— free of charge, designed to give a man a fighting chance, to be trained in how the larger story works and take some of the critical next steps in becoming who you were born to be. Aim at nothing less than becoming who you are in the kingdom, who God created you to be. I promise you, the more you partner with God for your becoming, the more you will hit it as you walk with Him and allow His love to transform you into the image that you bear.

For more teaching to help deepen your relationship with God and hit your target, [click here](#) to listen to this episode of the *Exploring More* podcast. {eoa}