

Fight With All Your Might

by Becky Stayton

Chapter One

Camden sat in class thinking about what he was going to do when he got home from school. He couldn't wait to play his favorite video game, World of Wrath. It was a great game with all of the challenges and secret levels that only the best players could unlock. He and his friends were on the final raid. He couldn't wait to use the weapons they had unlocked.

Then he heard his name, "Camden? Can you answer the question?"

Uh-oh, what was the question? Camden wondered. He looked around, blinking.

The room was silent. All eyes were turned on him. A kid next to him snickered.

The teacher asked again, "Camden, can you tell us the capital of Missouri?"

"Umm," he answered slowly, "I think the capital of Missouri is St. Louis? Wait--no--that's not it, it's--it's -- it's Jefferson City! Yeah, Jefferson City."

This time, the whole class exploded in a fit of giggles.

Miss Anderson kept talking but Camden was back to thinking about that video game.

He looked up in time to see the class lined up at the door, starting to leave for art class and one of his friends was trying to get his attention.

Miss Anderson came over to his desk. "Camden, are you feeling alright? You seem a little unfocused lately."

"Yes, I'm fine," he said as he got up to get in line. "I'm really sorry."

At home that afternoon, Camden ran over to the game console and turned it on even before getting a snack. Eventually, his friends joined him online and the raid began.

Camden sent a message to his comrades in arms, "Fight with all your might!" He was right in the middle of leading the raid party on the final boss and had the colossal wraith at 15% health. They were so close! He was so focused on the game that he didn't notice his mom had come into the room. Soon, she was asking him questions, talking and making so much noise that he couldn't concentrate on the game!

"Mom, be quiet!" Camden shouted.

"Excuse me?" she asked. "Did you really just tell me, your mother, to be quiet?"

"Yes!" he shouted at her. "I'm busy! Leave me alone!"

The next thing he knew, she had turned off the game just when he and his team were about to complete the raid.

Camden was angry! How could she have done such a thing? He shouted at his mother and slammed the controller down on the coffee table. Didn't she know how important it was to him and his friends? Didn't she know how much that game meant to him? He told her exactly that, plus a whole lot more.

Things did not get better. In fact, they got worse. Angry words on both sides poured out and in the end, he was banned from the game for a week. Maybe even a month, his mother had said. *Ouch! That was going to hurt.*

Camden ran to his room, flopped down on his bed and moaned. Tears came to his eyes. He brushed them away angrily but they kept coming. What was he going to do now? He couldn't even message his friends. He wondered if they had completed the raid without him. That wouldn't even be fair! He was the one who had solved the last challenge and led them close to victory! He must have zoned out again, because through his hazy mind he heard his mom calling him to come eat.

He shouted, "I'm not hungry! I don't want to eat!"

"You need to eat something. I ordered pizza. Your favorite kind," she called.

As he hesitantly came out of the bedroom door, the smell of pizza made him realize how hungry he really was. He was still upset, but the pizza helped ease the anger.

During dinner, his mom reminded him about the junior youth retreat happening that weekend. He hadn't wanted to go because he wanted to play World of Wrath, but now

that he couldn't, it would be a good distraction. It was better than being at home with nothing to do. But he still had a couple of days to be bored at home before that happened.

Discussion:

What caused Camden to be so distracted?

Do you think Camden usually yelled at his mom?

What would have been a better thing to do?

Activity:

Chapter Two

In the early morning hours, Camden woke up with a start. He was soaked with sweat and breathing very fast and hard. A wraith had been chasing him and he couldn't get away. His feet had felt like they were stuck deep in mud and he could barely move. He tried to use his weapon but it was out of ammunition. Just as the evil wraith reached out for him, he woke up.

All through school that day and the next, he could hardly keep his focus on school. Not only were his friends mad at him, but he kept having crazy dreams that kept him running all night. In his sleep he was chasing and getting chased so that he was tired when he woke up — like he had not slept at all. He was hoping he could get some sleep at the retreat. He was sure it would be boring.

On Friday afternoon, Camden arrived at the campgrounds where the retreat was being held. He was met by counselors in camouflage who pointed the way to the lodge. The

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lodge was decorated with military equipment: camouflage tents, nets, helmets and a big banner that said, “Fight With All Your Might!”

Whoa, thought Camden. This is not what I expected!

The kids were split up into cabins. There were six campers, a counselor and counselor-in-training in each cabin. Each cabin chose a team name and a guiding scripture. Camden’s cabin chose Mighty Warriors. Their scripture was “**In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**” Romans 8:37.

That evening they did some team building activities with obstacle courses and water balloon bombs. It was kind of fun, but Camden still wished he was home playing video games.

In the middle of the night, Camden was being chased by the wraith again in his dreams. This time it was wearing camo pants and an army hard hat. He woke up suddenly and looked around in the dark to get his bearings. It took a second to remember where he was. He thought he heard gunfire. As he lay in bed now fully awake, listening, he heard it again. It was just his counselor snoring.

Oh brother! And I thought I would be able to get rest at this retreat! he complained quietly to himself.

Saturday morning, bright and early, they woke up to the sound of a bugle outside their cabin. The counselor, dressed like a drill sergeant yelled, “On your feet!” He shouted that they had to dress quickly and report for morning exercises. As the “sergeant” shouted the directions, each time they had to answer, “SIR, YES, SIR!”

After breakfast, a leader stood up and yelled, “Attention!” All of the campers stopped talking to listen.

“You are in a war! We are all in a war! The minute you became a Christian you entered a battle that does not end until the moment you leave this earth. But God has not left you without protection or weapons.”

Awesome! thought Camden. *I can’t wait to see our weapons.*

The leader read from the Battle Handbook : **For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.**

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What in the world does that mean? thought Camden.

The leader explained that the weapons we use in this life are not physical, but spiritual. We can't see them, but we put them on by our beliefs and letting God work in our lives.

Then the leader read : **Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

Oh, I get it, thought Camden. *So in real life, our enemy is the devil and we have to fight him off.*

The leader asked for a man named Captain Joe to come forward. Captain Joe was dressed in full tactical gear, with a super soaker gun instead of a real one.

"Who knows why I have this belt around my waist?" Captain Joe asked.

Some kid yelled out, "To keep your pants up!" All of the kids giggled.

"Good answer," said Captain Joe. "What else?"

"To hold all of your extra gear?" asked another kid.

"Yes!" said Captain Joe. Then the captain went on to explain that in the spiritual armor, there is also a belt. It was called the Belt of Truth. As each part of Captain Joe's armor was explained, so was the spiritual armor.

Camden thought, *This is great! I didn't know life could be as cool as a video game.*

He wondered what spiritual armor would fend off that wraith the next time it came for him in his dreams.

Discussion:

Chapter 3

All morning, the kids went from challenge to challenge, facing the foes and conquering each one with the Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit and all the rest of the armor.

During one challenge they were “locked” in a cabin and had to figure out how to escape using all of the pieces of the Armor of God. There were clues around the cabin to help them. Most of the boys were just standing in the middle of the room talking about being hungry.

Camden realized that someone needed to step up and it might as well be him. He remembered their cabin motto and said, “Ok, Mighty Warriors, we can do this! Remember, ‘We are more than conquerors!’”

The boys groaned and rolled their eyes. But, Camden kept his focus. Looking around the room, Camden started giving suggestions, “Hey, Jacob and Alex, maybe you could look over by the door to see if you can find a clue.”

Jacob reported, “The door has a combination lock and a sign that says, ‘You are doomed. Give up. There is no way out.’”

Camden said, “What? That can’t be right. Ethan, I see something over in that corner. What is it?”

Ethan said, “It’s a Bible. I see some bookmarks in it. Maybe there is a clue in it!” Ethan opened the Bible to a verse that was marked. The bookmarked verse said, *For with God nothing can be impossible.* Luke 1:37.

“That works! It proves the sign on the door is wrong!!” Ethan exclaimed.

Camden gave Ethan a high five and then said, “Hey, isn’t that like the Belt of Truth? Or is it the Sword of the Spirit? Anyway, that scripture proves that the sign on the door is wrong! Hmmm. I wonder if the number of the verse could be a number for the combination lock?”

They saved the number 37 to try on the lock. As they worked together, they were able to solve each clue, find the rest of the numbers for the combination and break out of the cabin. As the next challenges were mastered, Camden felt like he was understanding more and more about the spiritual armor and how it worked.

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Camden also realized that the other kids looked up to him as a leader. In fact, the younger boys in his group had started calling him “Captain Camden” and asked to eat lunch with him. He had never really thought about it before, but he always seemed to end up taking the lead in a group. He didn’t really know why.

During devotions that night, their counselor talked about all of the strengths and gifts he had seen in each of the boys of his cabin during the challenges of the day.

“Camden, I saw you taking charge today in many of the challenges. You kept a level head and led the way, but you let everyone have a part in working out the answers. The younger boys really looked up to you.”

Camden beamed with pride.

Then the counselor continued, “With gifts and talents come responsibility. God gives us gifts to use to build up His kingdom here on earth. If we waste those gifts, sometimes we lose them. But if we use them for good, God gives us more.”

As the counselor prayed and asked the Lord to help the lessons of the day become a reality in the boys’ lives, Camden felt a warm happy feeling that he had not felt before. The challenges of the video games seemed to pale in comparison to the real challenges and battles to fight in life. He wanted to use the gifts and talents God had given him to build up God’s kingdom. He wanted to be a good example for the younger boys and fight against real evil instead of imaginary. He knew that with God’s help, this was a battle he **could** fight with all his might.

Discussion:

Activities: