

Stand Up

by Becky Stayton

Chapter One

It had been a good weekend retreat. Even though Camden hadn't wanted to go, he was glad he had. A few days before the retreat, he had yelled at his mother. She had taken away his game console and things had been tense between them ever since. The retreat had made him realize he needed to make things right with her.

When he got dropped off at home, he found his mom in the living room checking Facebook on her phone. "Hi, Mom," he said.

"Hi, Cam! Did you have a good time at the retreat?" she asked.

"Actually, I did," Camden replied. "I didn't think I would like it, but I learned a lot."

His mom looked up from her phone and said, "Really?"

"Yeah," he said. "And, umm — and I — well— I'm really sorry for being rude to you before I left."

She replied, "I forgive you, Camden," then she added with a grin, "but that doesn't mean I'm giving your console back to you yet."

Camden gave a little laugh and said, "Oh, I know. I don't even care. That's what I learned at the retreat. I want to try to use my talents for God instead of violent games."

His mom said, "Well, that's great, Camden. Wow! I'm excited to see what God can do with you." She gave him a little hug.

"Thanks, Mom. Me too," he said smiling and giving her a little hug back.

Over the next couple of weeks, Camden felt more focused, at least most of the time. And he felt, well — just better. But, it had been a bit rough, too. Camden had not played his favorite video game after school even though his mom gave it back to him about a week ago. It had been hard, but he was determined to use the Armor of God to fight real evil instead of imaginary foes. In order to have his Shield up and his Sword sharp, he was

trying to read his scriptures in the mornings. Lately, though, he was having trouble. He decided to talk to his mom about it before school.

Camden told her, “I was doing pretty good about getting up and reading my scriptures at first.”

His mom answered, “I know, Cam. I am so proud of you.”

Camden looked down and said sadly, “But, this week it has been harder. I just can’t seem to get out of bed when I should.”

His mom nodded. “I understand, I have trouble, too. It’s too easy to turn off the alarm and sleep just a bit more.”

Well, that wasn’t much help, he thought. She didn’t seem to have an answer for his dilemma either.

At school, Camden began having doubts whether deciding not to play the game was really that important. Many of his friends played video games. Was it really that big of a deal? Maybe it was his imagination that he’d had an experience at the retreat. Maybe playing the game was really good for him. Hadn’t he used his leadership skills during the games?

Camden was thinking about this while going to lunch when his buddy, Jayzon said, “Hey Camden! Wanna play World of Wrath after school? Oh that’s right. I forgot. You bailed on us.”

Camden tried to laugh it off. “Ha! Whatever! You guys don’t need me anyway.”

He joked about it on the outside, but it hurt on the inside.

Camden believed that God had shown him some of his gifts and talents, but what was he supposed to do with them? He wasn’t sure. He just knew that he missed the time after school on-line with his friends.

He sent up a quick prayer, “Lord, show me what I’m supposed to do!”

At that moment, he heard a crash and some laughter. He turned around and saw a kid picking himself off the floor with food all around him and a whole table of boys laughing at him. He heard a kid named Zeke say, “Ha! Did you see that? What a klutz! All I did

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was stick out my leg. He didn't have to trip on it!" The boys roared with more laughter and rude comments.

The boy stood there looking at the food on the floor. His face was red and angry looking. He looked close to tears. The boy kept his head down and began brushing the green beans and meatloaf pieces off his clothes. Camden felt bad for the kid, but he didn't want to get involved. Just as he was about to walk away, a song started playing in his head: ***Stand up, stand up, for what you believe in. Believe in God. He's the one to back you up.***

Wow, Veggie Tales? Really? That was weird, he thought. Camden stood there not knowing what to do and inside his heart, he asked, "God, are you talking to me?"

His next thought was a verse he had read last week that said, ***Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.***

Whoa, thought Camden. *I think that's my answer.*

Discussion :

How did Camden make things right with his mom?

Did Camden stay strong after the retreat?

What did Camden pray while getting his lunch?

How did God answer his prayer?

Do you talk to God throughout the day?

Chapter Two

Zeke saw Camden standing there and started teasing him, too. “Hey, Camden! I hear you’re a quitter!” The other boys joined in teasing.

Camden wasn’t used to being teased. He had always been one of the cool kids. He wanted to yell back at Zeke and the others, but he didn’t. He knew someone needed to stand up for this boy, but he didn’t think yelling back would help. He remembered his counselor at the retreat saying: *“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.”*

Camden realized that this was a real life situation, just like they had practiced at the retreat with the Armor of God. He knew he was not a quitter. In fact, he was quite the opposite. He decided to start with the Gospel of Peace. He’d deal with the bullies later. Without a word, he went over and started helping the kid pick up his tray and clean up the mess. Camden led the kid over to a table and asked him if he liked ham sandwiches.

As they shared Camden’s lunch, Camden asked, “What’s your name?”

The boy answered, “I’m Harold. I was named after my grandpa. Some kids tease me and call me Hair Old. I know your name. I’ve heard your name lots of times.”

Camden didn’t know what to say about that, so he said, “Well, I’ve seen you around school, too. What do you like to do for fun?”

Harold said, “I love to read and play video games!”

“Really?” asked Camden. “Me too! Well, not the reading part as much as the video game part. Except, not anymore, I guess. But, I used to.”

Harold looked up from his half of the sandwich and said, “You’re not making much sense.”

“Yeah, I guess I’m not,” admitted Camden. Then Camden told Harold a little bit about what happened at the retreat and since then.

“That’s interesting,” Harold said. “I have a game you might like. It’s called Swords and Shields and it uses the Armor of God. Do you want me to send you the link?”

Camden answered hesitantly, “Maybe.... Yeah, I guess so.”

The bell rang for the end of lunch and after exchanging contact information, Camden headed for class. “Well, that was interesting, God,” he prayed as he walked. “Thanks for helping me to stand up and do what was right.”

Discussion:

What part of the Armor of God did Camden use in this situation?

Did he make the right choice? Would you have handled it differently?

Do you think Camden should play Swords and Shields?

What would you do?

Chapter Three

After getting the link from Harold, Camden got on line to check out the new game when he got home from school. He was a bit worried about it. He didn't want to break his promise to God. Swords and Shields looked kind of fun. It had challenges and levels to beat, but the weapons were parts of the Armor of God. You had to know certain scriptures to beat the challenges.

His mom came into the room and asked, “What's going on? I thought you stopped playing World of Wrath.”

Camden replied, “I did. This is a different game. It uses Bible verses to beat the challenges. My new friend, Harold, told me about it. It's kind of hard.”

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His mom said, “That sounds fun and it might help you learn scriptures.”

Camden clicked on a note in the game that said, “You need \$2.00 more for a new Lego set. You think about taking it from your mom’s purse.”

Then, there were 2 choices:

Take it, she’ll never even miss it

OR

Use the Armor of God

Camden clicked:

“Use the Armor of God”

His mom was watching and said, “Good choice, Buddy!”

Camden laughed, “Yeah, I figured that one out all by myself.”

The next screen gave a choice of the pieces of armor to use. Camden was unsure. His mom suggested the Belt of Truth.

Camden clicked it. The next screen gave a scripture reference and part of the verse. He had to fill in the missing words but he didn’t know the scripture.

Teach me thy way, O Lord: I will

_____ **Psalms** _____ :

Camden said, “Hey, mom. Do you know this one?”

She looked at it and said, “I’m not sure of that one either. Maybe you should ask your new friend.”

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“That’s a good idea. I think I will,” said Camden.

Camden sent a message to Harold and the link to join him on the game. Together, they solved the challenge which said:

Teach me thy way, O Lord: I will walk in thy truth. Psalms 86:11a

Completing that challenge gave them strength for the next challenge.

After playing for a bit longer, they stopped for the day. Harold said he was only allowed to play on the computer for one hour each day. Camden thought that was a good rule to follow.

He talked to his mom about it later.

“Mom, do you think I would be breaking my promise if I played this game?” asked Camden.

His mom replied, “Well, didn’t you decide not to play violent games? World of Wrath gave you bad dreams. Do you think this one is like that?”

Camden thought about it and said, “No, it gives real life choices and helps me learn scripture. But it’s also fun and challenging.”

“And, you can play it with Harold,” His mom said. “Maybe this is a God thing. The best way to know is to pray about it. The Lord will give you peace if it’s the right thing to do.”

Camden decided to do that. After a week of playing the game a little bit each day with Harold, Camden was seeing more and more situations in real life to use the Armor of God. He also seemed to have that peace his mom talked about. Not only that, Camden realized that the Armor wasn’t really on the the outside, but it was on the inside and all around. It was the Holy Spirit of God living in Him and helping Him.

At school, Camden invited Harold to sit with him and his friends at lunch time. Even though it was awkward at first, they had started to accept Harold as a friend.

One night after saying his prayers Camden had a thought. He wondered if any of the kids from his cabin at the retreat knew about this game. He also wondered about Jayzon and his other school friends. Maybe he could organize a group of guys to play this game with him. Maybe they could start a Stand Up for Good Club. Maybe there

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were other kids that needed a friend. He went to sleep that night with a plan forming in his mind and excitement in his heart. Maybe this was something he could do to use his gifts and talents for God's Kingdom on earth. Maybe.

Discussion:

Discussion:

Do you think it is healthy to play violent video games?

Have you ever stood up for someone getting bullied? Was it hard?

If you were going to start a Stand Up for Good club, what would it be like?

What is something you could do to use your talents for God's Kingdom?

Activity