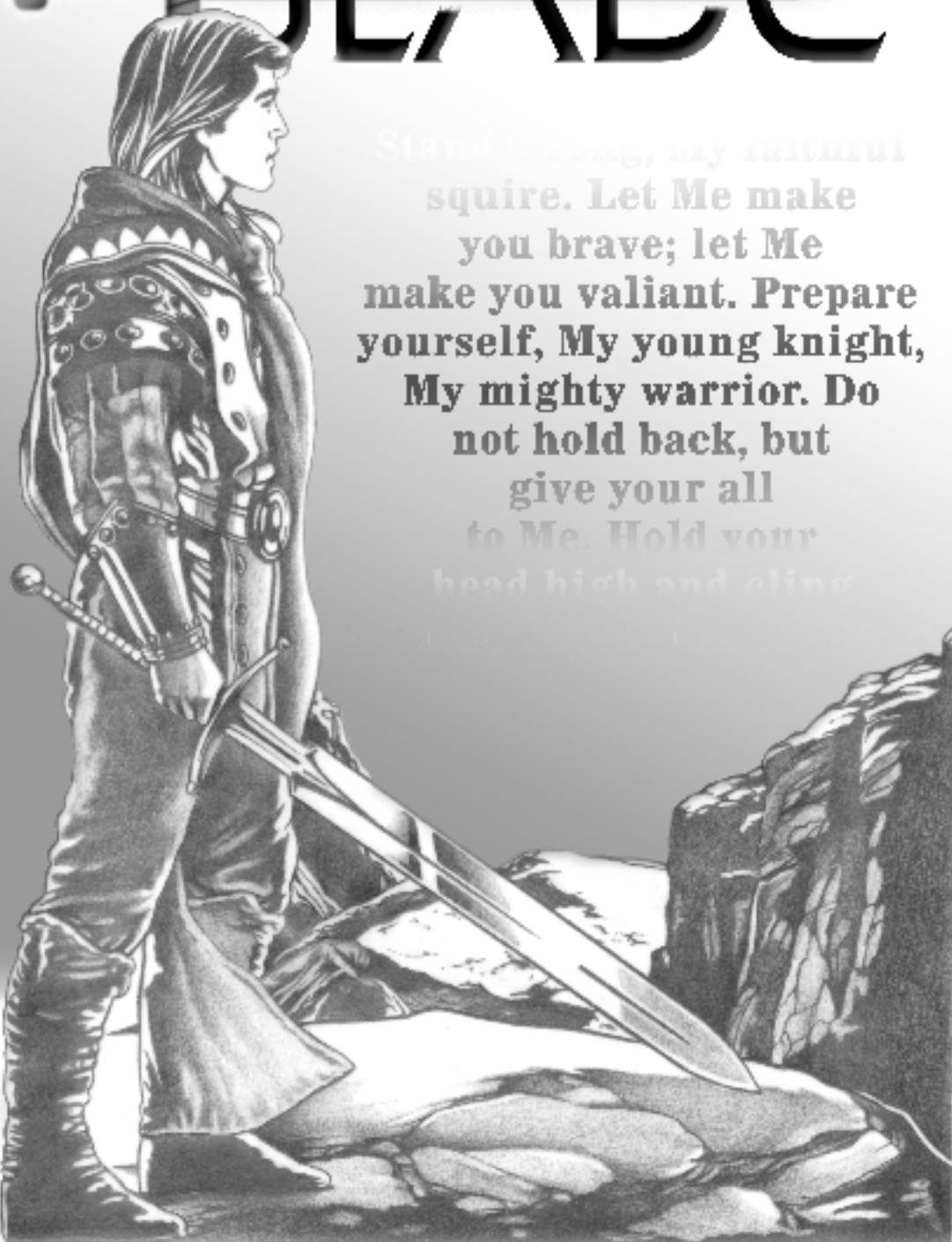


ISSUE 7

BLADE

Stand strong, my faithful
squire. Let Me make
you brave; let Me
make you valiant. Prepare
yourself, My young knight,
My mighty warrior. Do
not hold back, but
give your all
to Me. Hold your
head high and cling





The Difference Within

Wanna be *rad*? Wanna be *different*? Wanna make a unique footprint in the sands of life? Tired of being just like everyone else? Sick of trying to live up to someone else's expectations? Wanna be the "one and only"? That's just fine with Me! I *like* people that are different and things that are different. That's why I didn't make any two things exactly alike. There are no two snowflakes that are exactly alike, no two eyes in the world that are exactly alike, and there are no two fingerprints that are exactly alike. Everything I've created is different and unique, and that's because I *like* differences.

I've got to tell you, though, if you *really* want to be different—not just *kidding* yourself that you're being different when you're really just being like everybody else—you've got to be different in ways that *mean* something. The differences that count the most don't have anything to do with the clothes you wear or the way you cut your hair. *Anyone* can change their outward appearance; it's a cinch. But it takes a lot of courage to be willing to let Me change you *inside* and make you different in your heart and in your spirit.

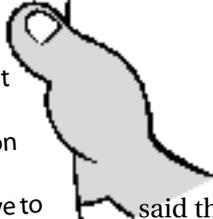
Your appearance is just an outer shell; what's inside is the *real* you. One day that outer shell of your physical body will be no more, and you'll see that when all is said and done, the differences *within* are what really count and will keep you grooving for eternity.

Misunderstandings



Arguments can be a real drag, can't they? It's like that saying about war: "Nobody wins!" When you find yourself caught in the middle of a misunderstanding, it's hard to go about things the right way and not blow it. I know it can be pretty rough, but next time it happens, why not try the following tips:

- Be calm, and don't get upset. If you need to, that old saying about counting to ten before saying anything works pretty well.
- Communicate. Talk it out, and express what you feel.
- Be honest. Explain your side of the situation the best you can without freaking out.
- Try really hard to listen to what others have to say, without cutting them off or interrupting them.
- Put yourself in their shoes, and try to understand how they feel.
- Once you've talked it out, put your feelings aside. Pray together and ask the Lord to help you. Give them a big hug, and then put the incident behind you.
- Make sure you go out of your way to show them you're still friends.



Sound easier said than done? If you'll give it a try, I promise to help you. Next time you find yourself caught up in a disagreement or misunderstanding with your brother or sister, a friend, your parents, or anyone else, remember this list. Shoot up a word to Me, call on Me for help, then take a deep breath and follow these tips. If you ask Me for help, I won't let you down. I'll help you right through it, and you'll walk away feeling great.



JAIQUES

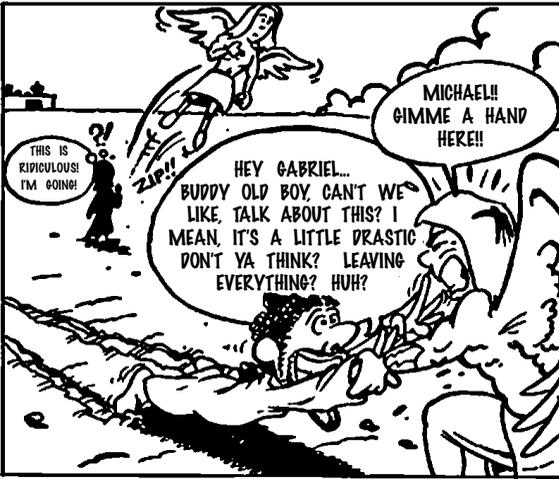
Don't Be Duped!

(Dad:) Hollywood and the media are making billions of dollars off the public. So when anyone tries to say that a lot of their movies and music have a bad effect on people and influence them in the wrong way, they try to defend themselves by saying that only people who are already messed up are negatively affected, and that people who are mentally normal and strong aren't influenced at all. But if you think *that's* right, then take a lesson from dear old Lot.



Lot was someone who was mentally normal and strong. He was a good man, too, and his righteous soul was vexed by "seeing and hearing" the ungodliness of the wicked. You can read it for yourself in 2 Peter 2:4-9. But although Lot was bothered by the filthy world around him, and though he didn't agree with the wickedness and violence that he saw and heard from day to day, it did affect him negatively. When it came time for Lot to leave Sodom, the Lord, in His mercy, had to





deliver him by actually sending angels to physically pull him out. And remember Lot's wife? She'd become so influenced and poisoned by the world around her that she didn't want to leave it behind. In the end, she disobeyed and looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

The Enemy is pumping his thoughts, feelings and ideas into the souls of millions of

unsuspecting victims through much of what Hollywood and the media are feeding the world today. It's become just like Sodom and Gomorrah all over again—only more violent and wicked, exactly the way the Lord said it would in the day of His coming. Don't be duped by what you see and hear,



thinking that none of those things are going to affect you negatively. Pray and keep close to the Lord, and don't view or listen to things you shouldn't, or you could be singed by that fiery old Serpent. From the beginning, he was more subtle than any beast of the field, so don't let him snake his way into *your* heart and mind through unprayerful viewing or listening.

How to Help

Got a special friend who means a whole lot to you, someone you want to be around all the time, someone you know so well that you know exactly what that person is thinking and how they feel about things? That's the way I feel about you! I love being around you, and I like being in on everything you do!

Of course, sometimes I notice things about you that concern Me, and that I'd like to help you to change in. Don't you feel that way about your friends sometimes, too? You love them just the way they are, and their little quirks and bad habits don't make you stop liking them. But because you care about them and you want to make life easier for them as well as for everybody else, there are some things about them you'd like to see improved.

But how to help? Sometimes, you can be so familiar with your friends that if one of you says anything at all deep or spiritual—or worse yet, anything that remotely resembles “correction”—it can be like, “What's with you, man?!” It can seem real weird. But it doesn't *have* to be that way.

For starters, make sure to remind your friends that you love them tons, and that if you make any suggestions or comments about things you think aren't right, it doesn't mean that they're not your friends anymore. Sometimes people can be sensitive and interpret things the wrong way, but you can avoid a lot of hurt feelings by being gentle, careful and loving.

Once they know for sure that you really love them, that's the time for some good open and honest communication. Real friendship, deep friendship—the kind that's based on honesty and trust, where you aren't afraid to just be yourself, and where you don't have to put on a show—is a valuable treasure. So don't hold back. If you really love your friends, you'll help them.

An Ocean of Emotion

Sometimes you might feel like you're experiencing more moods and emotions than you ever felt before! Well, I don't want to scare you, but things could get even worse! As you go through this period in life, you might often find yourself swimming in an ocean of emotion—if not almost drowning in one, spitting and spluttering, with water rising over your head.

You're going through a lot of changes, and things are happening to you and all around you that you've never experienced quite this way before. So don't be surprised if out of the blue, you suddenly get hit with a huge wave of emotion and you find yourself feeling angry or upset or discouraged about almost nothing. It's just part of the fiery trials of life, which all end up working together to teach you and temper you and make you strong.

But never fear—your Lifeguard is here! If you shout out My name and wave your hands high, I'll be right there in the water with you before you ever go under. Just like Isaiah 43:2 says: "When you pass through the waters, I'll be with you; they won't overflow you." Don't struggle or resist; just grab hold of Me and hang on tight. I'll help you and teach you how to stay afloat, and before you know it, you'll be swimming peacefully along through the waters of life.

And when a big unexpected surge of emotion hits, don't worry. I'll be right there at your side to teach you how to ride the waves! When you're being tossed about by so many unexpected feelings, the waves can look pretty scary, but once you learn how to stay on top and ride the crest, you'll find that this part of your life can be one of the greatest.





Simple, Sincere, Spontaneous

You appreciate it when people compliment you, don't you? It doesn't matter much who it is, if they say something about how

nice you look, how well you did something, or how much they like you or a certain quality about you, doesn't it make you feel good?

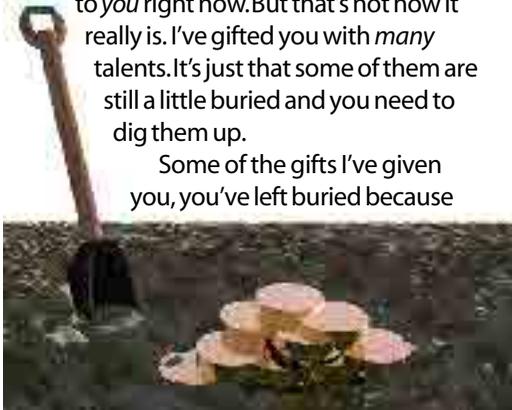
Maybe you haven't thought much about it, but as nice as compliments are, they don't seem to flow out of *your* mouth very easily, do they? Although you know appreciation is a good thing, you kind of get stuck when it comes to saying nice things to others. You think

BURIED TALENTS

Some people seem to be so gifted, or at least good at one thing or another, but you don't feel like you can do *anything* very special. You think there's nothing that you're super good at that stands out and makes you unique, or something that others would look up to you for.

Believe it or not, *most* people feel the same way at one time or another, and I understand how it might look that way to you right now. But that's not how it really is. I've gifted you with *many* talents. It's just that some of them are still a little buried and you need to dig them up.

Some of the gifts I've given you, you've left buried because



you haven't even recognized them as *being* gifts. You think they aren't showy enough or nice enough. But if you'll just dig them up and clean them off and put them to good use, you'll find out that they're pretty good talents after all—talents that others will admire you for.

You've got other talents too—talents you're afraid to step out by faith and try to use, because you think you won't be as good at them as some other people are, so you don't want to use them at all.

Maybe it's time to start doing a little excavating. It's going to take lots of time, practice and hard work, so if things don't go the way you think they *should* go right off the bat, please don't go back and bury them again. Just keep digging.

But if you pray and ask Me to show you what things I've gifted you to do, and *believe* that you can do them, I promise, I'll give you lots of help to develop all the things that you're especially suited for.

it's going to sound corny or that your compliment won't be appreciated.

Think about the times when people have said something nice to you. How often have you felt that they were being corny? Didn't it make you feel good to know that they noticed you and that they liked

something about you? Don't worry. It'll be the same for others when you compliment *them*. It'll make *them* feel good too.

You don't have to think up far-out or spectacular or poetic things to say. "Simple, sincere, and spontaneous," is a good motto to

remember when giving compliments. *Spontaneous* means "on the spot." It means that if you notice something special about someone or something they did, go ahead and tell them—right then and there. "I saw what you did, and I think it was real nice of you." If someone looks

particularly good that day, tell that person so. Don't wait. If you feel like telling your friend, or your dad or mom, or whoever, how much you enjoy being with them or how much fun they are, just go ahead and do it—right then! Try it; you'll like it! And so will they.

LET ME DO THE TALKING

A lot of people feel a little nervous and shy when it comes to going out witnessing; it's just natural. So please don't worry if you're not feeling very bold or brave. I understand. No matter *how* you feel, though, I need you to share My love and the message of salvation with the world, and if you'll just do your part, I'll help you.

You may feel that you don't really know what to say or *how* to witness. Don't worry, you don't *have* to be a good speaker in order to be a good witness. It doesn't even matter that much what kind of personality you have. Whether you're bold or shy, the main thing that people need to see is My love shining through you.

If you don't know what to say, just look them in the eyes and smile, give them a tract or a poster, and let *Me* do the talking. When you give them My Words, something written down that they can take with them, it'll go far, and it'll keep working in their hearts long after you're gone. If they seem interested and want to talk, then listen to what they have to say, and let them know that you really care about them.

You don't have to worry or feel bad, thinking that you're not a good witness. If you're faithful to give out the messages of My love, like the tracts and posters that I've given you to share with others, you'll be giving them a *wonderful* witness and a chance to know all about Me and My gift of salvation for them.



PODUNK TECH



I look down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any that do understand and seek Me. But they have all gone aside; they have all together turned to their technology to save them. I look down from Heaven and see men drool over their 450-megahertz Pentium computers, their Internet and all of their fancy games and gadgets—and it makes Me laugh! I laugh and hold all of their so-called advances in derision, because compared to the technology of My spirit world, these are only primitive tools.

The world today is lost. They have chosen to worship *things* and the men who designed them. If only man had made the right choices from

the beginning, the right decisions in worshipping Me and acknowledging Me, I would have unlocked for them the secrets of the whole universe. The Earth would be a wonderful place, and everyone in it. But because they've turned aside from Me, I can't show them the *real* secrets of these things—they would only use them *against* each other to hurt and kill and destroy.

When I come back and cleanse the Earth of unrighteousness, man's filthy cities of smog and pollution will all be gone, along with every one of his destructive inventions. In their place will be My technology, which will far surpass anything that primitive man can imagine. My Heavenly information centers will be many times more awesome than the most powerful computer. My transporters will be far better and more thrilling than any of man's transportation systems. In that day, nothing that pollutes and destroys will be left on Earth—only that which helps and heals and creates life.

I LOVE PRAISE TIMES



I just love it when you lift up your arms to Me and tell Me words of love and appreciation. The more you do it, the more I can see that you really mean it! When you do it faithfully, then I know that you really *are* thankful for what I've been doing for you.

Maybe you feel kind of shy about praising Me in front of others. You might be tempted to think, "I hope people don't think that I'm just trying to be 'spiritual.'" But if you really love Me, you'll just open your mouth and praise Me. That's what I like—people that love Me and show that they love Me by praising Me and thanking Me.

The more you praise Me, the more you're showing Me and others around you that you love Me and that you're thankful. I love you and hope you don't ever take Me and the things I do for you for granted. Keep loving Me and thanking Me.

Who Are You Gonna Believe?

The Devil is the father of lies, and he's been at it for a long time, so he really knows how to twist things around.

For instance, I tell you that you're incredibly privileged and special,

but he wants to make you think that you're inferior.

I tell you that the fate of the whole world revolves around you and others like you,

but the Evil One wants to convince you that what you're doing isn't important.

I say that you're making progress, growing and gaining victories;

the Punk lies to you that you're not—that you'll never change, and that you're just not good enough.

I promise you that with My help, you'll learn to use the new weapons of My Spirit,

but your sworn Enemy accuses you of not being spiritual enough to learn to use them.

I tell you that I've ordained you from the beginning,

but the Liar wants you to believe that your life is just a mistake.

I tell you that I love you and that I'll do anything for you;

the Enemy of your soul is determined to make you feel that you're too bad for Me to love and that I won't answer your prayers.

It's up to *you* to decide whom you're going to listen to.

Will you believe what I have to tell you,

or will you believe the Enemy?

You might think that it's not all that easy to be able to recognize when it's the Enemy speaking to you and when it's not. But it's really very simple if you'll just remember this:

Anything that's full of love, faith and encouragement and makes you want to keep going and growing and doing good—that's Me talking to you.

But if there's anything that causes you to feel bad or discouraged or makes you feel like quitting and giving up—that's the Devil!

If you want to feel good about yourself and about the life I've given you, then don't listen to *him*. Listen to Me.

What to Do?

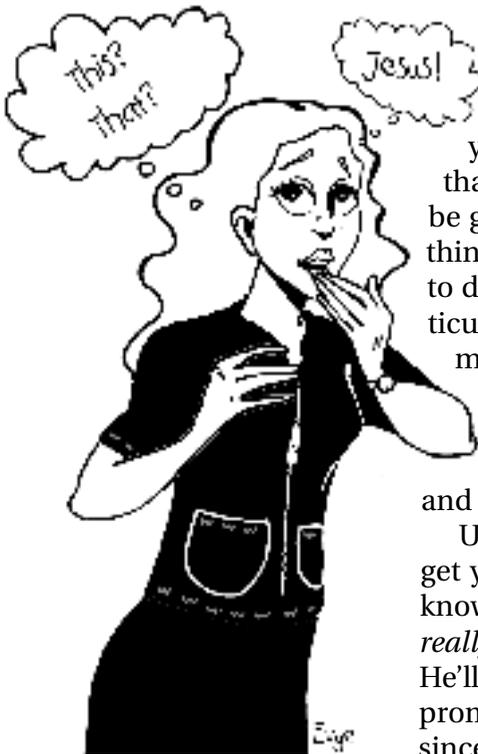
(Dad:) Learning to handle your feelings is a tricky thing. Like when there's something that you really want to do, but it doesn't work out, because your parents or others tell you that you shouldn't do it. Maybe you don't agree with their reasoning, and you think that sometimes they're just a little too restrictive.

If something like that comes up—where you're confused and don't understand why you're not allowed to do something—what you should do is just ask the Lord about it. He can help you to understand what's going on and why. It doesn't have to be a *big* prayer, but it does have to be sincere, and you have to be open to whatever He has to say. Get in a place where there aren't too many distractions, and ask the Lord for a verse or some kind of explanation. Then take what He gives you to heart. Talk with

your parents or overseers about it, and share with them what the Lord showed you.

The Lord loves to give you things that make you feel good and that you enjoy. However there are things that might *feel* good, but not necessarily be good for you. And there are *other* things that *are* okay and good and alright to do, but just not the best for that particular situation. On the other hand, maybe it *is* something that's okay for you to do, and the Lord just wanted to get you to pray about it and communicate openly with your parents and others.

Unless you test it through prayer and get your directions from Him, you won't know whether what you want to do is *really* good and right, or not. If you ask, He'll clear things up for you—that's a promise. The condition is simply to ask sincerely, with all your heart.



Home Run Hitter

Just like in baseball when you take a swing, and sometimes you hit the ball and other times you miss, it can be the same with the things you say. If you're not careful with the words you use, you can really miss the mark. Why not step back for a moment and review some of the things that have come out of your mouth recently. How many times have you just blurted out everything you were feeling, without even thinking about what you were saying or what the outcome was going to be?

When you lash out in anger or frustration, it's just like you're swinging away without even taking time to aim, and you end up either hitting a foul ball or even striking out completely. Although you're bound to miss the ball once in a while, when you do, you'll learn from it, and it'll help you by giving you more experience. But if you *don't* progress and learn how to swing that bat of yours the right way, you're bound to have some pretty big losses. The opposing team—the Enemy and his imps—are going to win that game and cause you and your teammates to be very discouraged.

With the words you say, you can either leave people feeling like dirt and like they might as well give up and quit, or you can lift them up and inspire them to want to keep playing and win. Please, don't throw the game away. Instead of just striking out, won't it feel good to be hitting home runs? Do your best to take careful aim before you swing, and before you know it, you'll be hitting the ball right out of the park and winning every game.



Brave Squire

I've called you and chosen you from the beginning, and I see within you to the very depths of your soul. I know you might sometimes feel a little lost and discouraged when you think about yourself and the life that I've called you to live. The questions you have about your future and what lies ahead leave you feeling overwhelmed and confused. I know how you feel, and I pray for you that your faith will not fail. I ask you to let Me speak to you now and show you a glimpse of the glorious future I've prepared to give you, if you'll only believe.

I promise that as you yield yourself completely to Me as My squire, My knight in training, and as you prepare yourself by filling your heart and mind with My Words, you'll be given a new heart, a golden heart of faith and valor, a heart of courage and true strength. I give to you the fierce and mighty sword of My Word. Take it and keep it always ready for the day of battle. In the spirit, you will be as a mighty warrior, armored and girded—an awesome sight!

If you could only see yourself the way I have planned for you to be in the future: standing tall on the firm rock of truth; clothed with the robes of My righteousness and My humility; your feet ever ready to do My will, and sandaled with the firmness of your conviction to serve Me; strong legs that are prepared to march, to climb, to make war; and in your firm and faithful hand, the magnificent, unbeatable sword of My Spirit.

Stand strong, My faithful squire. Let Me make you brave; let Me make you valiant. Prepare yourself, My young knight, My mighty warrior. Do not hold back, but give your all to Me. Hold your head high and cling to these, My promises to you. Pledge your life to Me and I will swear by My oath to give you all the joy, grace, strength, and love that you will need to face the future. Give yourself to Me in love and in loyalty, and the light of My Word will brighten your way.