

The background is a photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and a path covered in fallen leaves. A white banner with a black outline is stretched across the middle of the image, held up by two white arrows that cross each other. The word "CHIVALRY" is written on the banner in a stylized, outlined font.

# CHIVALRY

THE QUEST  
FOR A PERSONAL  
CODE OF HONOR  
IN AN UNJUST  
WORLD

ZACH  
HUNTER

AUTHOR OF *BE THE CHANGE*





THE QUEST  
FOR A PERSONAL  
CODE OF HONOR  
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*Chivalry: The Quest for a Personal Code of Honor in an Unjust World*

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*For love.*





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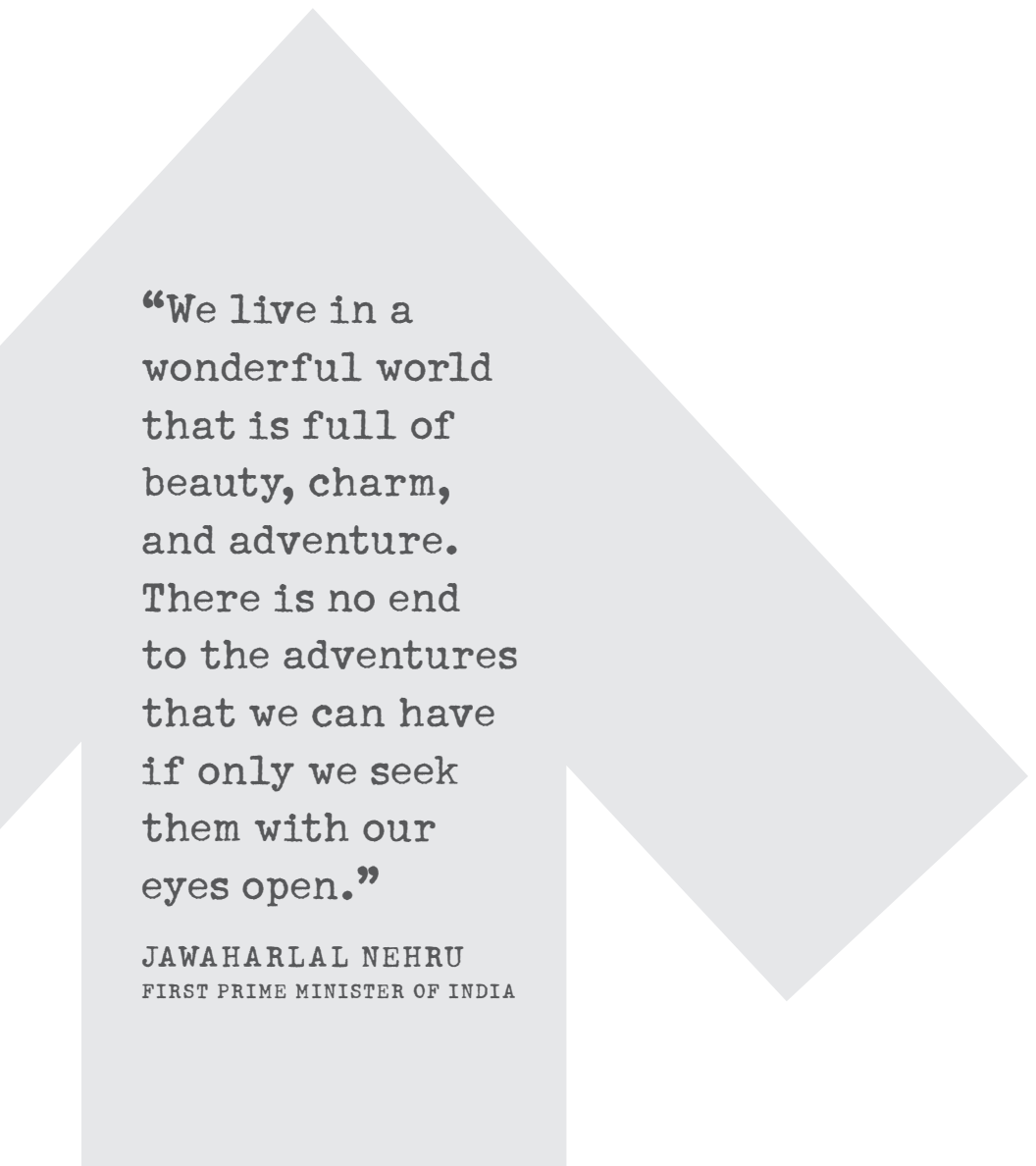
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“We live in a  
wonderful world  
that is full of  
beauty, charm,  
and adventure.  
There is no end  
to the adventures  
that we can have  
if only we seek  
them with our  
eyes open.”

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

**S**o, maybe you picked up this book, and despite the subtitle, thought it would be a how-to book teaching guys how to treat girls.

Or maybe you thought it would be a book about sexual abstinence or manliness.

We're actually going to go on a much more difficult journey together—a quest to be chivalrous people. Not just guys. Not just girls. But chivalrous, civil *people*. People who live by a code of honor.

My generation is tired of talk—I believe we will be known as a generation of action. We want to see real answers and be a part of the solution to some of the biggest problems facing the globe. I have spent much of the past eight years talking about social justice and the call to demonstrate sacrificial Love to the world by relieving the suffering of the poor and oppressed—specifically, helping in the fight to end modern-day slavery.

As I've pursued this goal, I've noticed a double standard in many people's lives, including my own. And I've become concerned. Concerned that . . .

while great progress is being made in the fight against  
poverty;

while more and more people are getting involved in helping their fellow humans who are hungry, sick, oppressed, or uneducated; while social justice is once again becoming a common outworking of the Christian faith . . .

I'm seeing less civil and kind behavior in many people's personal lives.

Basically, I think we're a generation in conflict. Conflicted in ourselves. We often think we have crystal-clear vision about the problems "out there," but I'm concerned that we are forgetting to look "in here"—inside our hearts and minds where real character is revealed. Could it be that we're a generation of activists who are spiritual anorexics? Could it be that we're spending a lot of time being busy with our world-changing projects and forgetting about the spiritual transformation that may take even more time, more dedication, and more discipline? And that in the process, our personal lives don't reflect the world-changer, compassion-driven labels our social media pages may declare?

I've noticed that there is a meanness and lack of respect being demonstrated in close personal relationships by those of us who are concentrating on living out our faith farther from home, among those we don't know well. And all we have to do is look at the Halls of Power to see daily demonstrations of uncivilized arguing and name-calling.

If "justice is what love looks like in public,"<sup>1</sup> as Princeton professor Dr. Cornel West puts it, then I wonder if chivalry and civility are what justice looks like in private. Private justice as opposed to social justice.

This brand of justice goes beyond caring about what is trendy, to caring about who we are as people and how we treat others.

So why should we care about this idea of chivalry?

While we are caring for the poor, loving our neighbors, and fighting to right wrongs committed against each other, we want our lives up close to be consistent with that life marked by compassion and chivalry.

Knights in shining armor are scarce these days. But heroes are all around us—and maybe even inside us.

We're going to turn this old notion of chivalry upside down and make it about men *and* women. We're going to tear down old ideas about only men having the responsibility to be chivalrous and instead imagine a society that is civil—both male and female.

Make no mistake, chivalry is not about learning how to be nice. Too many Christians are taught to focus on being pleasant and polite rather than being chivalrous. Young women are often under pressure to “act ladylike,” while young men are ordered to “be gentlemen.” At times, the pursuit of being more like Jesus can even take a backseat to being proper and nice. That's a problem, since being “nice” is just external behavior. True kindness is of the Spirit, it's internal, and it's lasting. It's not just Southern politeness (bless your heart!), but enduring and transcendent love.

That means actually being civil to people because you *want* to be, not because they can do something for you or because you are supposed to be.

When I mention civility, I'm not talking about rules like men opening doors for women or the how-to's of courting or dating or “keeping yourself pure.” I don't know about you, but I'm tired

of hearing lists of what I should and shouldn't do. What I should and shouldn't eat or drink. What I should and shouldn't watch, touch, or say. This book isn't about those rules.

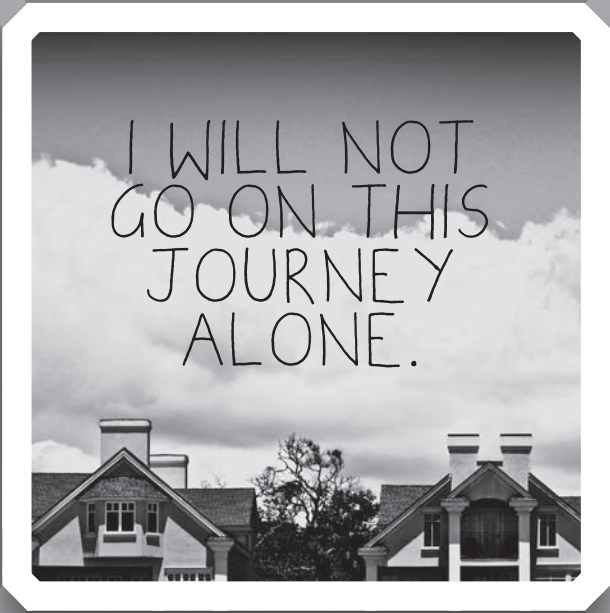
Instead, this book is built around a code I've crafted from ten of the principles the knights lived by. If lived out today, this code would change us so dramatically that those around us would have to take notice. *Chivalry* is about how we should *be*—the transformation that takes place internally as we open up every area of our lives to be conformed to something that is not of this world: the image of an amazing, terrifying, all-consuming, and all-loving God who gives without limit and sacrifices without end. This is where we will lose ourselves and find a code that is higher and longer lasting than any pledge we may make.

I hope you'll set off on this journey with me. It won't be easy. I have not even come close to living out all of these principles. But I am dedicating my life to the process. And something I've discovered is that the closer we get to people and the more willing we are to be transformed, the more we uncover about becoming more chivalrous and civil.

Let the quest begin.

*Zach Hunter*

JANUARY 2013



“DEEP  
ROOTS  
ARE NOT  
REACHED  
BY THE  
FROST.”

J. R. R. TOLKIEN





A TALE  
ROOTED

**CARLOS HAS LOVED TREES** since the time he tried to grow one when he was in grade school. He had seen the tiny tree breaking through the cracks in the asphalt in front of his school bus stop. That afternoon he took the little tree home and planted it in the sandy vacant lot next to his apartment building. He had visions of it growing into a big tree like the ones he had seen in a textbook—trees with faucets stuck into the bark by people who would draw out syrup for pancakes. Carlos’s sapling died within days.

Even so, trees fascinated him. He grew up in Los Angeles, however, and never even visited a forest until he was seventeen. By then he had saved up enough money flipping burgers to buy his uncle’s old Dodge Dart. He bought a map at the corner market and charted his course to the Angeles National Forest by tracing the lines with a black ballpoint pen. The width of his thumbnail, according to the key on the map, was roughly five miles. Using this as a gauge, he was able to determine that the forest was about twenty miles away.

He couldn’t believe the new world he saw as he drove the Angeles Crest Highway. Green grasses and brilliantly colored wildflowers. Mountains taller than any buildings, stabbing into the sky, silhouetted, looking almost like dark rips in the light-blue sky. Animals walking around like they owned the place.

And trees! Trees whispering to one another. Carlos wished he could understand them. That was when he fell in love with trees. If he had been infatuated before, now he was in love. The honeymoon never ended.

Several years later Carlos met a girl named Graciela. She was one of the few people who didn't find it strange that Carlos lit up inside when he talked about hearing trees talk to each other, about how people are like trees with roots that don't take so long to move. She shared his glow when he dreamed of owning a nice little cottage where their children and grandchildren could play beneath the lovely shade trees.

Carlos married Graciela at Angeles National Forest in the autumn beneath a big tree that was shedding its colorful tissue-paper leaves. It was nestled in an evergreen stand where the giants towered over and protected it.

The couple shared many good years. Carlos worked a steady job at the local fertilizer plant. He and Graciela raised their twins, Aspen and Abeto, in the white cottage that they built.

Now Carlos lived there alone. The twins had their own families. Graciela had passed long ago. He missed her, but the whisper of the trees they had planted together in the yard brought him happy memories. Carlos knew he had learned more about life from Graciela and from trees than he had learned from any book.

One day Aspen brought her family to visit. Her son Ash was nearly the same age Carlos had been when he first stepped into the forest so many years before. Carlos listened as his grandson boasted about the city and his plans to make it big there. He couldn't wait to leave home.

Carlos led Ash outside and pointed to the tree he and Graciela had planted the spring after the boy had been born.

"When a young tree is planted, it is at risk of being whipped about by the wind," Carlos explained, pointing to the sturdy

trunk. “If the sapling is tied to a single stake and pulled in one direction, it will grow up leaning hard to that side. It will be uprooted by a storm or grow crooked. That’s why it’s important to stake a tree from multiple directions. The tension on three different sides helps a tree grow straight and true. Its roots will deepen, its trunk will strengthen, and it will bear much fruit. With the right support, a tree will grow to be a glorious thing.”

Carlos looked at his grandson. “Trees and humans are not so different from each other.”



I have a friend named Stayko (pronounced *STY-coe*). Almost every time I see him, he’s wearing a bow tie and a mile-wide grin. In conversation, he acts like you are the most important person he has ever met.

Once when I was in the car with him, I overheard him conducting a Russian oil deal. That was interesting. He’s one of those guys who could be in his home in Washington, DC, one day and the next pop in for a meeting in New York, Chicago, or London. He could live anywhere, but before he was married, Stayko chose to live in an apartment with some other guys. He didn’t have to, but he decided to live in community because he felt that this is where boys become men and where humanity takes form.

It was from Stayko that I learned about this concept of being a young sapling staked in many directions. He gave me this advice at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC, when I was sixteen. Stayko told me about his mentors and about the young men he had invited into his life to walk closely with him. They were all from unique backgrounds, had

various political opinions, and were experts in different areas. He explained how much he needed these diverse influences, just like a growing tree needs multiple stakes to grow tall and

straight. He warned of trying to go it alone.

If you are very interested in one thing, Stayko told me, it is easy to try to find a single mentor who is very good at that one thing. In fact, it can be tempting to surround yourself with people who also share that same interest. But that is a mistake that many people make—it pulls them away from being well rounded and makes them vulnerable to tough times. With a variety of people providing the stakes in the ground, holding

***“We stand, many minds, backgrounds, and voices—but one heart. Accepting the charge to lead, to follow, to influence, to build community. We want to do more than succeed. We want to be significant.”***

AMENA BROWN, “BE THE ONE”

us in tension and securing us from swaying one way or another, we will flourish.

## **FRIENDS FOR THE JOURNEY**

We were all born with relational needs. Science backs this idea. Babies who don't get enough human contact may grow up having to overcome serious emotional issues.

But we like to pretend we're self-sufficient. It's pretty easy to think we're set in life, that we have it all together in many areas, that we really don't need anyone else. I've seen communities of people where nobody encourages anyone else to grow or change for the better. When I've been involved in those communities,

I just felt really stuck—not moving forward, not finding adventure and joy. If you're in that situation now, it may be time for you to branch out, to seek companionship with a group of people who will lift you up when you are down.

On the other hand, you may be like me in another way. For much of my life, I've had a hard time making friends. It's probably because I'm an introvert. I like being around people—but I don't get my energy from that. Sometimes I feel like my thought processes are different from those of most people, and that others just don't get me. In fact, from talking with a coach and counselor who has helped me a lot, I've learned that I may have always dealt with a kind of social anxiety or social awkwardness. And it has actually been reassuring, because it helps me make sense of my occasional challenges in building relationships. People act surprised when I say that I'm an introvert, since I seem outgoing and my work as a speaker requires that I be. Connecting with people is easier now than it used to be, but it can still be a struggle.

If you can relate to feeling awkward or like you don't fit in, it's really important that you practice being yourself with people. That may sound hard and scary, and it can be. You will mess up and probably make a fool of yourself. At least, I have. But I can tell you that finding meaningful community is *worth it*. Now I have a great group of friends who bring valuable perspective to my life. From the outside looking in, they can help me see things that are in my blind spots. Friends like that can help you avoid heartaches they've already been through. And after you've been friends with them long enough, they can interpret life's challenges for you in a way you can understand, because they *know you*. They know what you've been through, they know what your weaknesses are, and they care about you.

I'm grateful for these close friends God has given me. Our relationships have been carved out of tough times, unusual circumstances, and unlikely places. Some of them I call "brother" or "sister," because they really do feel like family. These are people who know me well enough to tell me the truth about myself; to provide support and encouragement when they know I need it. I value the time I get to spend with them. By now, I know that if my phone rings and I'm hoping their names don't show up on my caller ID, I'm probably going through something that I really need them for.

## **MENTORS FOR THE JOURNEY**

In addition to having a group of authentic friends, it is important to seek wise mentors—people to whom we can be accountable, people who can serve as guides, people who've been where we're going and have made it out alive. Having someone who's older than you who can serve as a mentor is beneficial in a variety of ways. Mentors can still be your friends, but the relationship has a different dynamic. They should be willing to tell you the truth without fear of losing your friendship, because they care about you and your personal growth. They can give perspective and sage advice that comes from their own mistakes and experiences.

I have a group of mentors I call my "personal advisory board." I recommend having one of your own, even if you aren't working in the business world. No matter what your goals are, mentors can help you stay on track.

My goal is to meet with my advisory board once a quarter. Trust me, this isn't easy. I have to intentionally schedule this time, or it won't happen. These guys are all busy people with

full calendars, and it takes some effort to coordinate everyone's schedules. But these meetings are so important, it's worth the trouble.

Because my mentors are there for accountability, I don't try to limit their influence. They can ask me anything they want. They're in my life for my own protection and to provide advice.

The key to having helpful mentoring relationships is to think about it like the story of the stakes and the tree. I purposefully chose a diverse group so I would get balanced advice from multiple angles. All of my mentors are from different walks of life and have unique areas of expertise. Leighton is a graphic designer; Charles is a businessman; Randy is a pastor; and Mark is a lot of things (illusionist, executive director, author, and home chef). Mentors from various backgrounds can speak to you and guide you on specific issues, helping you develop and grow. Like the artist mentor, the business mentor, the spiritual mentor—together, their knowledge rounds out your areas of interest.

My dad has always been one of my key mentors. He's the chairman of my advisory board, and he's always available when I need him. I rely heavily on his advice and guidance in my life.

## **WHEN THE NEED IS GREATEST**

On your quest for chivalry, there will be struggles. When you're physically weak, tired, or not feeling well; when you've suffered a loss or setback; when you're going through something difficult or feeling like a failure, your tendency might be to hide or run from your friends and mentors. Or when you've had a major success, you may feel like you don't need them. But you do. In these situations, you need to let in the people who care about

you. Don't try to do it on your own—even when you feel strong. This is why I've made a commitment not to travel alone when I go to speak at different events. I always bring someone with me because these events can bring emotional highs and lows.

Chivalrous people aren't foolishly confident, believing they don't need anyone else on this journey. They realize they are human, weak, and vulnerable. They know that strength comes from conditioning and from wise counsel. They want to grow in their faith and be transformed, and they know that this process often requires the messiness of relationships. You have to allow others to get close to you—close enough that they can see your flaws.

A chivalrous person makes a commitment not to go on this quest alone.