

Battles are waged anywhere anytime – be ready!

Mrs. Tappin was just finishing the dishes, watching her flower box pansies soaking up the orange afternoon sun. She was startled seeing her husband of 48 years walking toward the garage side door with Monte, a neighborhood teen right behind him. She wanted to chuckle seeing Ross with his metal war helmet in place and wearing an old army shirt with arm stripes and three war ribbons proudly in their rightful spots.

The pair entered the garage door and closed behind them. Seconds later a bright red rag was hung in the garage window that Mrs. Tappin could clearly see from hers. It was a clear and bold signal, she had learned many years ago, “DO NOT DISTURB! GOD’S BLESSING NEEDED!”

Hope finished the last of the dishes, dried her hands, and took a seat at the kitchen table. With the same determination as an army officer, she folded her hands, bowed her head, and began, “Dear Lord. A battle is about to be waged out in our garage, between Satan and two men you shed your blood for.” That prayer in earnest, continued for some time.

Ross unfolded a lawn chair gestured for Monte to have a seat. The silver-haired gentleman in metal helmet slid a wooden box opposite the chair and sat down. “Monte, I asked you to be sure and bring your cell phone with you. I hope you did. Well, I’d like for you to turn it off for a little while.” Monte did as he was asked and returned it to his shirt pocket.

Ross began, “Wearing this old brain bucket looks pretty silly, I’m sure. But I was digging through some old W.W. Two memorabilia.” With a grin, “I wanted to see if the helmet fit any better than this old Army shirt does. The silver-haired veteran slid an old suitcase over where both could see inside. It was opened and pictures were removed with some shown to Monte. Occasional short explanations about many of them were made.

“Monte, my job in the Army was to calculate coordinates that another soldier entered in the mortar weapon to get the shells on target. See. Here’s what a mortar looks like. It looks pretty simple, I know. Not much more than a piece of stove chimney pipe with one end sitting on the ground at an angle toward the enemy. Long before computers we were doing all our calculations with printed data charts. You might be interested to know the first programmable computer filled a whole room. But its first jobs were making firing coordinates tables for the military and also computing for the hydrogen bomb. That computer had a funny name ENIAC.” The teen was given a few moments to look at a couple more pictures, as Gramps (that’s Ross) glanced at Monte to see if he understood.

“The job of calculating the trajectory, wind, and other things was a deadly job for several reasons. If I miscalculated or didn’t stay focused on my purpose, we could actually drop a mortar round right on our own guys. We had to do our very best, every minute, or we could kill some of our own American soldiers. Do you see how important it was?” Ross paused his description for a moment and then continued, “and then a spotter with binoculars would see where the round landed. He’d then tell me to recalculate using slightly different coordinates to assure the following shots would find their enemy target.”

“Monte. Will you hand me your cell phone, but don’t turn it on?” Ross was careful to not touch any of the buttons. Those buttons were so small he wondered how anyone could push them without using a pencil or a stick. He made sure the teen’s eyes were directly on him. In one hand the cell phone was held up in front of Monte. Next to it was held up a clear picture of Ross’s mortar weapon.

With the serious tone of a drill sergeant, the old soldier said, “Both of these are weapons and can be used to kill people, both on purpose and by accident.” In the same tone, “If you don’t remember anything else I say here today, remember this. Both of these are weapons and can be used to kill people; maybe even those we love.”

The teen wanted to tell Ross that he thought the comparison was rather overstated; it was

exaggerated for sure. He didn't have to say to the old soldier what a youthful look of doubt was already saying.

Ross quickly began an explanation of the comparison. "I see youth playing thumb games and texting while walking across streets, driving cars, and even riding bikes." Ross just tapped the teen's leg to emphasize the statement. He continued, "and another thing. When sending messages to others, we must be super careful the words and directions we give. Once said... or texted, they can never be taken back. This becomes even more critical because of the short statements and abbreviations you use."

"Monte, my wife Hope and I care a great deal about you and your safety. But also we want you to be the best teacher you can be. See, others are watching you. They are learning to do things by what they see you doing. Social networking and this ability for texting is actually a gift from God. That's very clear in the Bible. But this technology gift is meant give Him the glory He deserves. He wants us to praise Him and network with Him throughout each and every day. He has wonderful blessings and purposes for us to do our best at. But we need to let Him text us with His directions. Because His texting is far more important, it is written down for us to learn from each day, here in the Bible."

"We'll talk more another time about that purpose, that target; that goal God has for each of us to keep our sights set on." The garage battle against Satan was closed in prayer. In a lighthearted manner Monte tried on the metal brain bucket and decided he'd do his fighting with buttons and prayer.

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