

WRESTLING PRAYER

ERIC & LESLIE
LUDY



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A GENERATION OF LEGENDARY HEROES

discovering the epic adventure



My brother, Mark, just opened up the coolest coffee shop here in Windsor, Colorado. I'm not much of a coffee guy, but I do have an affinity for a classy coffee shop—the aromas, the people, the ambiance.

The routine so far is as follows: I order myself a skinny 16-ounce decaffeinated iced chai tea and claim for myself a small table in the cozy enclave behind the fireplace. With a little arm-twisting from my brother I did try a Thai tea the other day, and I did give the spiced hot chocolate a whirl last Wednesday—both were superb. However, I really like my chai tea—I have a propensity to find my ruts and bask in their predictability.

As of this morning, Loodles Coffee, Books, and Art has been open 14 days. So here's the problem: During those 14 days I have logged 23 visits. In other words, I really like this place. And my concern is, this place just might be too comfy of an environment in which to write a book on such a grand (and forgive me, girls), hairy-chested theme as this manuscript boasts. It's almost like writing about Shackelton's great adventure to cross Antarctica while sipping a pina colada on the beaches of San Martin.

Now, to be fair, it might prove difficult to find the correct habitat in which to write this book if it needs to perfectly match the gritty content contained herein. For instance, I probably should be dangling

from the side of a Moabian cliff crammed into a small tent, or possibly running with the bulls along the cobbled streets of Pamplona. But the idea of writing this book while hanging from a cliff or being chased by an angry bull leads me to one very problematic issue—where would I plug in my laptop?

This is a book for the hungry—it's for men and women of God who are ready to see things changed in the modern church, believers who ache over the loss of true living spirituality and are ready to do whatever it takes to get it back.

Windsor, Colorado, may not seem like the ideal location in which to write this book. After all, where is the danger in Windsor? Where are the angry bulls? Isn't Windsor just a little Norman Rockwell village in the heart of comfortable, self-absorbed America?

Yes, on the outside Windsor may appear a bit soft, but God is doing something right here in Windsor—something big, something gritty, something mighty. God is taking mousy men and women and transforming them into heroic champions of truth.

Now I realize that with my recent confession of 23 visits to Loodles in the past two weeks it would definitely seem as if I too am living the pampered life of sugary mochas and flavored lattes. However, during most of those 23 visits I was accompanied by a desperate young man in the throes of spiritual battle.

Loodles has become my Cave of Adullam (see 1 Samuel 22:1). It's my Arthurian Round Table, my general's tent. Over the past two weeks this coffee shop has entertained some of the most vigorous spiritual conversations, some of the most life-altering dialogues, as well as some of the most hallowed discussions on the sacred themes soon to be unfolded within this book.

I sat in Loodles just yesterday, across the table from a 28-year-old man named John, and I saw the fire of the Almighty blaze within his eyes. I saw him awaken to the vision of a heroic growling prayer life, I watched him respond to the call, and I listened to him plead with his heavenly King for a place among His most mighty and most valiant men.

Early last Saturday morning, I witnessed a young man named

Jeremy come strolling in for breakfast after spending nearly seven straight hours in wrestling prayer—his eyes full of fire, his gait marked by the confident stride of the freshly anointed.

Just this past Friday, it was a young buck named Bobby who stared me square in the eyes and said, “I’ve found it!” He had the treasure of God in his possession; he was holding in his spiritual grasp the blazing fire of the Spirit; and let me tell you, it was a sight to behold.

A week ago Thursday, it was a 23-year-old warrior-poet named Matt. A week ago, Wednesday, it was a modern-day Martin Luther named Ben. The list could go on and on. And that doesn’t even include all the valiant young women whom Leslie has interacted with. The battle is fierce, and these men and women are on the front lines. And, as strange as it might seem, the gathering place for these grand and gritty discussions is (ahem) a coffee shop with a rather cartoonish name strangely akin to my own.

So here’s our plan.

Leslie and I have decided not to write this book while hanging from the side of a cliff or being gorged by an angry bull. We’ve decided that we will write it right here at Loodles, in between all the grand and glorious conversations swirling around us. But please note: A conversation held here in Loodles isn’t meant to stay in Loodles. It’s meant to pick us up by the keister and throw us into the raging battle of souls—it’s meant to move us to Uganda, Cambodia, East Timor, or even Brazil, to the darkest places on Earth to wrestle with the powers of darkness to see the little boy soldiers, the battered orphans, the hunted street children, and the five-year-old slave-prostitutes set free. I must forewarn you: A Loodles coffee shop conversation is far more dangerous than it actually sounds.

Dear reader, Leslie and I want you to feel the thrill of a gumption-packed conversation here at Loodles. It’s like pure adrenaline injected into the bloodstream, molten steel applied to the spine, and the lion-esque growl of the Spirit of God emanating from the human soul. Every believer must taste it to remind himself that he is still alive and there is a God who still sits firmly on the throne.

Leslie and I want you to join us. We don't want this to be a mere book, but a conversation—an epic, soul-stirring conversation between you and the two of us. If you are one of those characters who prefers a more formal invitation, then here it goes:

“Would you mind meeting up at Loodles in a couple minutes for some serious spiritual banter? We're buying!”

We've got our favorite table reserved by the fire while my skinny, 16-ounce iced chai and Leslie's 12-ounce piping hot peppermint tea are just waiting to be enjoyed. While you sip at your sugary mocha, we would like to share with you the vision God has for your life as a believer. We promise there will be moments of serious discomfort, moments when you will glance up at the exit sign and ponder running for the door. But if you hang in there with us, we promise, you will find more than just a new growl and gumption in your spiritual existence—you will find one of the most thrilling pictures of what your life on planet Earth can become.

If you are game, let's do it. And let's do it now.

While you are making your way over here to Loodles, let me give you a little more background that might prove important for our upcoming conversation. In the book world this is called an *introduction*, but in the coffee-shop-conversation-world it's kind of like looking at the menu.

I like to add a little bit of mystery to the books I write, but with a title like *Wrestling Prayer*, the cat's sort of already out of the bag as to what this book is about. It's about prayer, yes. But, the sort of prayer this book is about is nearly unheard of in our modern churches. And I can assure you, the way in which Leslie and I will address this topic will probably not be as you might expect.

This is a fun book. It's a book loaded with big thinking, big living, and big believing. It's a book that flows directly out of the most significant spiritual growth season of our lives. This book lets you into our prayer closet, where you will hear all the growing pains and all the hoots of victory—you will hear the sighs, the wonder, and the weeping right along with the jubilation of two people walking and

leaping and praising God in a real-life land flowing with milk and honey.

This book isn't tame—it's death-defying. It's the stuff that builds happy martyrs and heaven-minded mighty men and women.

And it all flows out of an experiment.

Leslie and I launched this experiment two years ago. It has forever altered our lives, and God's pile driver of grace has driven home the substance of this book into our souls.

I'm hesitant to call it an experiment, because the word *experiment* denotes the idea of uncertainty. And there hasn't been uncertainty, per se, in our experiment, any more than there is uncertainty in touching fire to dynamite. We knew what would happen. But we just didn't know how big the explosion would be.

Leslie and I covenanted with our heavenly King to dedicate ourselves to prayer in a manner far beyond that which we had ever done before in our lives. We said, "What will happen if we make prayer our daily job description? What would happen if we spent the same energy on praying as we do on our marriage, our family, and our ministry?"

You see, two years ago we were knocked off our proverbial spiritual feet. We found ourselves on our backsides with those cartoonish little birdies tweeting around our dizzied heads. We had been hit, and hit *hard*, by the enemy. At that time, we had been on the front lines of Christian ministry for nearly 12 years—so we knew intimately how the spiritual fur can fly when the gospel is in the ascendant. But through all our many spiritual battles, we had always come through intact. But this incident was different. It was that feeling in the pit of the stomach that comes when one realizes that, while he was asleep, a thief had entered his house and made off with all his best stuff. It was a sense of extreme violation.

As the story goes, Leslie was pregnant and then suddenly one day she wasn't. She had miscarried. Somehow our precious little child had been violently touched. And the sorrow was tremendous. The Thief had come, and he had stolen, killed, and destroyed.

For most of my Christian life, whenever the enemy had attacked

me with darkness and confusion, I'd simply assumed that God was causing or allowing it. But in grappling with this situation, through much prayer and intensive study of God's Word, Leslie and I began to realize that this attack had not come from Him, but from the enemy of our souls. God gently opened our eyes to see areas of sin and compromise that we'd allowed into our lives that were opening an access point for the enemy to hit us. As we repented of these things, we recognized for the first time that God did not want us to simply resign ourselves to the enemy's attacks. Rather, He wanted us to put on the full armor of God—to seal up every breach that would allow the enemy to gain access into our lives. And He wanted us to call upon His name and allow Him to come to our rescue in time of need. James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil and He will flee from you." Leslie and I hadn't been resisting the enemy's blows because we had assumed they were coming from God—or at least being *allowed* by God for the purpose of discipline. And yet, when we really thought about it, we had to admit that the result in our spiritual lives wasn't the life-giving victory that God's loving discipline brings. Rather, it was the hopeless despair and discouragement that the enemy brings.

I had always thought the most God-pleasing thing I could do when bad things happened was to simply accept them and move on. But God was showing me that when the enemy attacked, He didn't want me to accept it. Yes, the Christian life meant yielding to my Lord, even in difficult circumstances, and even when it caused pain and sacrifice. But it also meant standing up and fighting (in the power of His Spirit) against the enemy's intentions for my life. I'd never really been taught how to discern what I should yield to and what I should fight. But now, God was beginning to open my eyes to see it clearly.¹

For better or worse, I've always been sort of an easygoing guy—a lover, never a fighter. But through this situation, something was awakened and kindled inside me. I'm embarrassed to say this, but in hindsight, I realize I was like one of those tame circus bears, groomed his entire life on steak dinners and dressed in a pink tutu for his circus act. And yet suddenly I was thrown into the Alaskan wilds, forced to

hunt for fish with nothing but my furry paw, sleeping outside in the wind, rain, sleet, and snow, and desperately needing to discover my bear growl before I died of exposure to the elements. This is exactly what happened. And it seemed that just in time, I threw off that pink tutu, forsook my steak dinners, and started hunting like a brown bear is supposed to hunt.

Through all the miscarriage drama, my soul started rumbling with a growl, a fight, a heavenly snarl that I never even knew existed. It was as if Eric Ludy stood up to the enemy for the first time and said, “That’s it! There will be no more of that! Do you hear me? I stand in the authority inherent in the mighty Name of Jesus and I say, ‘Get out of here!’”

It took 36 years for God to get sweet, kind, sensitive, gentlemanly Eric Ludy to start growling like a lion and swatting fish like a bear. I’m horrified with how long I wore that crazy pink tutu. I pranced around unwittingly with a postmodernesque pansy gloss to my spirituality and I just couldn’t figure out why it was so impotent and powerless to change this world. And then suddenly I was exposed to the harsh realities of the Alaskan wilds and I realized that my cozy little existence and my Home Depot-bought spiritual power tools wouldn’t work out here where the air is frigid, the wild animals are not separated from me with a ten-foot ditch and a pane of Plexiglas, and where the nearest suburban electrical outlet was 200 miles away. I needed something that worked; something that got real results.

“God!” Leslie and I cried. “What must we do? What can we do?”

“Pray!” was the soft yet firm response from our King.

“We do pray!” we answered.

“That’s not prayer,” God seemed to say, “that’s spiritual-sounding chitter chatter.”

Leslie and I built our entire ministry upon the notion, the idea of prayer. And suddenly, two years ago, we began to realize that our ministry had been built on “spiritual-sounding chitter chatter.” God’s concept of prayer was something wholly different, something so much more majestic, epic, and grand—something Leslie and I knew very little about. But it was something that worked where the air is frigid,

the carnivorous critters run wild, and where all other American-made plastic spiritual weaponry has no place to plug in.

Our personal version of prayer had always been very tepid, very pleasant, very sweet—the equivalent of a giggling little girl flitting about a living room dusting off the bookshelves with a feather duster. Ours were a maintenance sort of prayer, a house-cleaning kind of prayer. But God’s concept of prayer is far more like picking up Ulysses’s massive sword and swinging it with all the fire and ferocity of a desperately crazed warrior. God’s version of prayer takes territory. It doesn’t sit at home and clip spiritual coupons; it heads off into enemy territory to fight. Samson picked up the jawbone of a donkey and single-handedly slew a thousand Philistines, and we are supposed to pick up the jawbone of prayer and wreak untold spiritual havoc upon the enemy camp.

I’m guessing there are a few of you out there who don’t particularly care for my “spiritual-sounding chitter chatter” comment. And that’s probably due to the fact that you’ve been a spiritual chatterer your entire life and it ruffles your feathers a bit to think that you haven’t really been engaged in holy, heavenly prayer.

It’s not to say there has been no genuine spiritual engagement in our lives, for it’s very likely there has been. But just like the Israelites in the wilderness had genuine experiences with God (a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, daily manna from heaven, and their shoes not wearing out for 40 years), they still were falling short of the life, the power, and the grandeur of living that God had called them to.

So, please bear with me as I poke at all of us chatterers a little more.

Spiritual-sounding chitter chatter tends to be self-centric in its banter, begging for comforts to be protected, deadlines to be met, surgeon’s hands to be guided, tests to be passed, and food to be blessed. It’s always about us. And, whereas there is nothing wrong with praying about our own personal needs, prayer—real-life historic prayer—is otherworldly and built upon the notion of a *forgotten* self. It’s aggressive, growling, attacking, commanding, persevering, passionate, and feverishly unrelenting—it’s battlefield firing, as if every utterance is

chipping away at enemy strongholds and every petition is moving God's indomitable purposes forward in this natural realm.

Bona fide, heaven-inspired prayer—the kind that moves mountains and calms storms—is not something the modern church is used to. To be quite frank, it's not something Leslie and I were accustomed to either. And as a result, we (the modern church) often, with a dismissive wave of our hand, pass off this sort of wild-eyed praying as being “Old Testament” or “first century.” Few of us have ever seen such prayer power in our generation, and therefore, we surmise that such prayer power no longer exists.

But study the lives of John Hyde, Rees Howells, David Brainerd, George Muller, Andrew Murray, E.M. Bounds, William Booth, and Leonard Ravenhill (to name a few), and you suddenly realize there is so much more to be found—prayer is nuclear in its power and revolutionary in its effect.

I remember reading stories about John Hyde (also known as Praying Hyde). This man would spend days, even weeks at a time on his knees in prayer and intercession. He would weep, he would laugh, he would sing, he would be laid flat before the awesome Holy Presence—he would shout, he would whisper, he would wrestle, he would fight until the victory was achieved.

John Hyde died of a heart condition—his heart literally moved from one side of his chest cavity to the other due to a near-constant strain and physical taxation upon it. It was the strain of prayer, the burden of the lost that he carried. And he knew full and well that it was killing him, but he considered it the highest honor to participate with his Christ in the office of an intercessor and thus to watch with his Lord in Gethsemane.

Those who know me know my reticence to being lumped in among the more questionable fringe elements in Christendom. However, even at risk of sounding like I've thrown out my scruples for a little gospel magic-show routine, I'm going to say it like I see it:

The power of God has not in the least bit been diminished over the past 2000 years. Our Lord still sits on His great throne and His

train still fills the temple. He still walks on the wings of the wind, He still rides on the backs of the mighty cherubim, and He still is the Triumphant Champion from Calvary. All hell still bends to His will, and sin and death have lost their hold on all who rest in the shadow of His presence. And the God who calmed storms, raised up dead men to life, and multiplied fishes and loaves to feed thousands is the same God we have today.

And this is what Leslie and I believe with every fiber of our being. And we have believed this throughout our entire 15 years of ministry. But the two of us were missing something very important (for most of those 15 years) that takes this vast and epic reality and brings it home in our day and age—*the unrelenting givenness to wrestling prayer*.

Leslie and I haven't understood the purpose of prayer, the power of prayer, and the position of prayer, let alone the reality of what prayer does when engaged in according to God's design.

But two years ago, we began the "experiment" and, in doing so, have touched fire to dynamite. And as a result, there has been an explosion of spiritual growth within our lives.

Prayer in our modern day has been diminished and, as a direct result, the power of the church of Jesus Christ has seemingly vanished. We are not a triumphant lot anymore, but rather, a weak, sin-stained, defeated one. We've lost our strength, our confidence, our absolute assurance that our God is with us in battle. So many amongst our ranks are literally scared to fight because they honestly don't know if they are going to win if they do.

We've ventured a long way from our historic roots, and it's high time that we returned.

Unfortunately, books have limitations. As authors, Leslie and I long for this book to pin you down on God's operating table, inject you with whatever anesthesia is necessary to keep your arms from flailing about, and then do heart-transplant surgery on you—taking out your mousy heart and planting a lion's roar within your chest. It's a bummer, but this book can't do that. But it *can* lead you to the One who can pull off such an operation.

Lion-hearts are rare these days. Men and women with wild and holy abandon are so few nowadays as to be confused with being non-existent. But there is a reason that you, my friend, are holding this book in your hand and why you are hearing this message. Could it be that you are the stuff of legends and God is saying to you right now, “It’s time, My son, My daughter. Rise up and live this life like you really mean it!”



I know a young man named Chad who is in desperate need of tagging along with you and listening in on our conversation. But it seems Chad is still not yet ready for what’s in this book.

Chad is searching for something—a sense of meaning, a conquest, a cause. Ironically, he’s searching for what is inside this book and simply doesn’t realize it yet.

Chad is 26 years old, single, and completely self-absorbed. He spent the entirety of this past weekend in San Diego at a Star Wars convention. But there is something stirring within Chad that all of us can relate to. We want to be a part of something bigger than us. We want to feel strong, powerful, effective, and honorable.

But for lack of a better outlet for this deep longing within Chad, he has turned to a stormtrooper costume and a world of imaginary play-acting. And when he dons his Imperial armor, he feels, even if it is just momentarily, that he is a player in a vast and significant drama—he feels a sense of power, a sense of purpose, and a sense of importance.

Monica, a 24-year-old fantasy-gamer, is good friends with Chad. The two share a common angst for the boredom of life and a common love for the imaginary realm. Listening to the two of them talk would be absolutely hilarious if the evident emptiness of their lives wasn’t so palpable. Monica thinks Chad’s love for dressing up like a stormtrooper is ridiculous. “Goofy idiocy” are, I believe, her actual words. But, here’s the irony. While Monica chides her buddy Chad for the whole stormtrooper gig, she thinks spending nearly 18 hours of every given

day playing *Everquest* online and living out the heroics of a digital warrior is a completely valid way to spend her existence.

My heart aches for Chad and Monica, and I desperately long for them to enter into this discussion. Because Chad and Monica, if they only knew, could become players in a vast and significant drama that is actually *real*.

The first thing I want you to know before you arrive here at Loodles is that this book is not metaphor, hyperbole, or tantalizing fiction. This book is about real life—a version of real life that most of us long ago gave up believing really existed. This isn't about play-acting knights, samurais, or Jedis. This is about being made mighty, courageous, important, and noble *in actuality*.

The second thing I want you to understand is that it will take guts to read this book and follow its prescription. And I'm not talking the kind of guts that leads a person to parachute out of an airplane, bungee-dive off a cliff, or ride a mechanical bull. This is the kind of guts that goes beyond the human macho variety. This book will stare you in the face and say, "If you want this, which I know you do, you are going to have to relinquish life as you now know it...and choose to never return."

To enter this conversation, I want you to first grab ahold of your God and plead for heavenly guts—a strength that is not your own, a muscle that comes from a different realm, a steel of soul that the everyday version of humanity around you simply doesn't possess. *Because you will need it.*

If you want what is packaged inside this book, then you can't coddle self anymore. You can't get weepy with self-pity and mushy-hearted with self-defensiveness. When truth speaks you are going to need to let it speak and let it change and alter you into something new and different. Great men and women are not made great by chiding truth and attempting to reconstruct it so that it is more appealing to their selfish sensibilities. Rather, they are made great by bowing down before the God of the universe and yielding to His commands and His methods for changing this world.

Now, there is one more thing I feel is imperative to communicate before you arrive and settle in for our conversation. I guess you could call this my battle speech. It might not move you quite like William Wallace shouting, “All men die, but few men ever live!” but I hope it strikes that one nerve in your soul that is desperately longing to be plucked. I want to let you in, from the beginning, on my vision for this generation of mousy men and women.

Nearly 6000 years have passed since Adam was first fashioned in Eden’s garden. If a generation is defined as 40 years, that would mean *many* generations have come and gone since the genesis of creation.

Every age of history has boasted heroes—great and mighty men and women. Every generation is measured by the quality, the durability, the strength, and the character of these heroes. As the heroes and the mighty in a generation go, so goes the generation.

There have been some extraordinary generations of heroes. In fact, the list of these generations would make up a who’s-who in mighty humanity throughout history. And the men and women in these hallowed generations were real, and the battles they fought were real. They didn’t need to imagine the conflict stirring about them. They didn’t need to shimmy into a stormtrooper costume, or pick up a battery-powered lightsaber to feel alive. All they had to do was open their eyes and breathe in the real world about them to feel the electricity of being an honest-to-goodness hero with a real-life cause.

If all the generations since creation were congregated together before the bar of heaven and before its divine scribes, there would be little debate over which of the generations would rank as chief and captain over the rest. There have been seasons of history when mighty heroes arose, devastated the powers of hell, and flexed the muscles of the mighty King of heaven. However, even the most illustrious of generations must hush and bow in humble veneration when the two mightiest of the mighty generations stand up and take their places in their seats of antiquated honor.

For there are two generations that stand regally apart from the entire host of generations whenever the topic of the *most mighty* enters

the conversation. There are two generations that boast the strongest of the strong, the mightiest of the mighty, the bravest of the brave.

I must admit—as a man, I am transfixed with admiration when I behold these two generations, and you will soon discover that this book will, consequently, spend its vocal chords in singing the praises of these two glorious ages of mighties. For these two generations hold the architectural blueprint for what is known in history as the Holy Gibborim, or the Company of Heroes. These two generations boast the sacred pattern for the construct of *Wrestling Prayer*.

What's amazing is these two generations are mirrors of each other even though they are separated by over 1000 years. And as a result of their uncanny similarities to one another, I refer to them by the same name, and I am moved to speak of both with hushed tones and reverential deference. To me, they are simply called the Times of the Mighties, for they represent the greatest seasons in history when the most mighty heroes of history roamed the Earth and performed the most amazing and inexplicable exploits. These were the seasons of greatest valor, greatest honor, and greatest glory. These were the centuries when the kingdom of God was established and the Earth shook with wonder and awe at the devotion of the few who performed supernatural feats and literally accomplished the impossible before the onlooking world.

As a man I long to participate in the Times of the Mighties. I yearn to be transported back in time and have the Almighty integrate me into the rich, death-defying, world-altering drama of history.

But here's the war cry of this book:

Leslie and I yearn to see *our* generation become a mirror of these two most heroic ages. We want today's generation to gain a name amongst these two most mighty generations of heroes. I wish for the bar of heaven and the divine scribes to hold this current unfolding generation in the highest esteem and declare, "It truly became one of the most mighty!"

And yet here is the grave dilemma. Too many of the men today are mice, not men. Too many of the women of our age are vain, not

valiant. We are paranoid of battle, not productive in it. We are soft where we should be solid, and hard where we should be soft.

Every voice within us may declare that such a generation of men and women cannot emerge out of this current congregation of lambs. Every indicator in this natural realm may mock the ambition of this book, but Leslie and I have fire in our souls; we have an unquenchable longing to see the fame of our Jesus restored and the power of His gospel reinvigorated in His limp-wristed people.

God desires to call forth out of this generation a mighty battalion of ready and eager soldiers. We beg you, as you prepare to sit down and enter this discussion, to ask yourself this question: “Am I willing to be counted among the mighties?”

Up to this point, our generation has offered very little substance with which the Great Cloud of Witnesses can stand and cheer. Where are the men? Where are the women? Where are the heroes? Where are the blood covenanters? What happened to the Company of the Mighty? Please, someone tell us that the Holy Gibborim will rise again out of the polluted ashes of this current generation.

Are we to be termed the Generation of Mice, or is it possible that we might rise to such a title as the Generation of Legendary Heroes? If it is even a remote possibility, then we need a greater cause, a greater purpose, a greater drama with which to fill our lives.

Yes, we realize that our passion may sound a bit overdramatic for such a pathetically boring age as ours. But our energies to write this book are not stimulated by culture, but by Christ. We are transfixed upon the glory and the majesty of our King Jesus, and we fully expect to spend our bodies and blood in seeing the rightful King of Earth be honored as such. And until His sacred beautiful feet touch down on Mount Olivet and the mountain splits in half—until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord, until He takes His seat upon the throne in the New Jerusalem here on Earth, His heavenly robe fills the temple, and the River of Life gushes forth from beneath His Kingly seat—until that day, our swords will not rest, our prayers will not cease, our passion cannot and will not dim.

You may not feel very mighty right at this moment, but we pray that our conversation will prove to be a genesis of newfound strength and purpose within your soul. For the very essence of wrestling prayer is a mighty disposition.

Please feel free to take a sip from your frothy concoction, for once we start talking you may forget that you are in a coffee shop with a mocha in hand. It is our prayer that you will feel transported into a different age, a grittier time, and that you will feel the ancient winds of Judea rush through your hair, the dust of Bethlehem between your toes, and the scent of a fire from heaven in your nostrils.

For Leslie and me, the content of this book is a living coal from the altar. It has dramatically altered our lives and has ushered forth a new power, energy, and confidence to our daily walk with our Lord. It's more than a book about *how* to pray; it's a book about how to live the Christ-infused existence and how that causes one to become a spiritual wrestler. It's not a how-to book about prayer, per se, but more one to mightily move you to pray.

You may wish to buckle your seat belt, because it's quite possible that what you are about to read may shake you to the bedrock of your existence.

As I said in the beginning, a conversation at Loodles is not what you'd expect. It's serious business. For we are headed to the rolling pasturelands of Judea, where amongst the sheep, the boasting giants, and the hurling rocks we are going to learn wrestling prayer from the very best to ever walk this earth.

Leslie and I wish you Godspeed.

a moment for prayer

BEGINNINGS

❧ LESLIE ❧

As I mentioned in the introduction, at the end of each chapter we are going to take a brief interlude from all the exciting manly stuff that Eric's been dishing out and get practical with all these grand thoughts. After all, what good is truth if it isn't liveable? If you can't put epic ideas into practice in normal everyday life, then it really doesn't matter how nice they sound—they aren't very useful.

Eric and I are committed to ideas that actually work in this real world. We are after a Christianity that isn't just triumphant in word, but in action. And that is what this book is really all about. It's about being triumphant in action.

God has commissioned us to fight for the truth of the gospel, the pattern of the kingdom, and the glory of the King—but most of us stare blankly back at God and shrug our shoulders, saying, “But I don't know how to fight!”

Soldiers fight with bullets and bombs, boxers fight with punches, talk show hosts fight with words, and politicians fight with power and social leverage. But we are supposed to be of a different manner than this world—our fight is a different one and our method of fighting is very unique: it's prayer. And that is why we must know how to wield this nuclear weapon. For when prayer is used properly and in accordance with the heavenly pattern, then storms are calmed at our command, mighty empires fall to the ground in a heap of rubble,

powerful giants thud to the Earth, lame men rise up and walk, fire thunders down out of heaven to consume the altar, water turns to concrete beneath our feet, food is multiplied, and the heavenly chariots of fire become visible to the naked human eye.

In these first few chapters you may wonder to yourself, *Isn't this supposed to be a book about prayer?* But soon you will see that to know how to fight, we must first know what it is we are fighting.

We'll start to get more practical at the end of the next chapter. But I do have one practical piece of advice at this point in the journey: pray. Take a few moments and dedicate this experience to God. Ask Him to speak to you through the pages of this book, to awaken you to truths from His Word, and to infuse you with the supernatural ability to become a mighty warrior for His kingdom. And if you pray that prayer in sincerity, watch out! You are in for one amazing adventure.

So let the battle begin...