

**Theme:** Heroes  
**Question:** Who is your hero, the person you value most in your life?

Teens and parents in conversation

# HomeWord



Volume 8, Number 1



## Teen Talk

by Brandon Bykowski

What are *heroes*? “Brave men or women who save lives” is the most widely used definition today. A hero doesn’t have to be someone who saves your life; instead he or she could be someone who changes it. My hero is someone who has great power and kindness. This person can’t be seen but is always with me. My hero is my Creator. My hero is God.

God has always been with me. God has never left my side and never will. When I feel sad, God heals my sorrows. I know that many people would prefer to get help with their problems from their friends, but God is usually the best solution for me. God guides me to do the right thing when I make important decisions. God supports me in many ways, and not just me; God supports everyone else who has faith in him. God helps me get better

when I’m sick, he keeps my family safe, and he keeps my faith alive.

My faith is very important to me because sometimes I worry about what will happen to me when I die. Will I go to heaven or hell? Will I cease to exist, which is even scarier than going to hell? Because God is always with me, I know I will not cease to exist when I die.

God always listens to me and answers my prayers. God may not answer the prayers that he thinks I don’t need answered, or he may respond in ways I can’t immediately see or understand, but I know God never turns his back on me and always forgives me when I’m truly sorry. God helps me understand certain things, like other peoples’ problems, and that helps me get along with my parents and friends. God is very reliable. ▼

**No one else in the whole universe could do so many kind and wonderful deeds for me.**

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## Adult Talk

by Barbara Poole

It seems that the news media is saturated with stories of national heroes and their achievements, especially since the devastation of September 11, 2001. So many individuals have been honored, and rightly so, for their actions and deeds, many of which went far beyond the call of duty and even pushed the limits of human effort.

As in other situations in which we’ve received an overload of input, we sometimes think to ourselves, “What’s on the news today? Oh, another hero story,” and we blank it out. Perhaps a child is clamoring for attention, or pots on the stove need watching, or the phone is ringing.

Unwittingly, we’ve missed an opportunity to give thanks to the Creator for that hero whose story we tuned out. We’ve failed to ask God’s blessing for those who

benefited from a hero’s actions, and we’ve neglected to ask for a chance to do good for others ourselves.

True heroes don’t seek the limelight. They don’t ask for thanks, and they couldn’t care less where the credit goes. But don’t we all remember being children, when an unexpected word of praise made us feel wonderful?

I have my own hero at home: my husband, Steve, who is the commander of his Air Guard unit in Dothan, Alabama. One drill weekend shortly after September 11, 2001, Steve and I were returning home from Dothan and stopped rather late at night for gas and a soda. Steve, still wearing his fatigues from doing drills, went inside the store to pay. A woman at the counter looked closely at him in his military uniform and offered this unexpected tribute: “Thank you for ▼

**True heroes don’t seek the limelight.**

## Teen Talk *continued*

God has been good to me all my life. No one else in the whole universe could do so many kind and wonderful deeds for me. I used to think that I could never repay God for all I have received, but one night I found out that I could. One Wednesday night in religion class, I read in the Bible that you could do kind things for God by doing kind things for other people and animals, no matter how unimportant those things may seem. For this reason, I decided to change. Instead of hating my enemies, I prayed for them. Instead of ignoring bullies,

I tried to make friends with them. It was very hard, but I slowly changed the way I look at the world.

God has been a hero to me because he saved my life and keeps me safe, and even more so because he has changed my life for the better. God has truly been a great hero who shines infinite light on me!

*Brandon Bykowski wrote this article as a seventh grader. He is now a ninth grader at West Bend East High School in West Bend, Wisconsin.*



## Trophies

In our basement we have a shelf with all the trophies my brothers and I have won. One day my dad and one of his friends were looking at the trophies, and his friend asked where my dad's trophies were. My father took the man to our den, where the pictures of all the family are on the wall. My dad said to this friend as he pointed to the wall, "These are my trophies." Tonight was the first time I ever heard this story, and it really made me think about how proud my parents are of my brothers and sister and me.

What do you value as most important in your life? For what are you willing to spend time and effort? Do your children, parents, siblings, or spouse know how important they are to you?

*In Ronald Stegman, Family Memories (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1997), page 90.*

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## Parent Talk *continued*

what you are doing." Stunned at first, Steve replied, "Thank you." As we continued our journey, the implications of the woman's message sank in.

She didn't know Steve and probably had no idea which branch of the military he belonged to. All she knew was that right in front of her was one of the men who serves our country. She offered her praise quietly, without fanfare or hoopla, and straight from the heart. It meant more to Steve, and to me, than a parade complete with marching band and elephants.

Perhaps the next time you hear a real-life hero's story, you will take the time to listen and to think of that person as someone you know. Give the story your full attention, and put a personal slant on it: he or she is someone's child, someone's spouse, someone's sibling.

And, if you are lucky enough to know a hero, thank that person.

*Barbara Poole writes and works at home in rural Tennessee, where she lives with her husband, Steve, and a beloved cat.*



## "Mother Teresa"

There once lived a woman who was known in her town as "The Mother Teresa of Neola, Iowa." I would like to tell you of a moment involving this woman that I believe may have counted for a small miracle. It hadn't rained for months. The crops on the farm weren't nourished. If this dry period went on, she and her husband didn't know what they would do. So, she prayed. She prayed for three months that rain would come and bring life to their farm. Still, it did not rain. Then, on April 27, 1996, this "Mother Teresa" left this world—and it rained all day. The rain poured down as if it hadn't rained for years. It was a gift from God—a miracle for an angel's prayers. This angel was my grandmother.

*H. J. C. in Listen for a Whisper: Prayers, Poems, and Reflections by Girls, edited by Janet Claussen and Marilyn Kielbasa (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2001), page 68.*