

EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR
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SCOUTMASTER MOMENT

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Todd Beamer boarded United Airlines flight 93 a year ago September the 11th not knowing before hand what would soon be required of him. The flight would terminate in a crash in a rural Pennsylvania field caused by hijackers, and Todd would perish along with everyone else onboard. Yet, ultimately, he knew he had nothing to fear. Todd's final conversation with an Airfone operator, named Lisa Jefferson, revealed that his trust rested firmly in Jesus Christ.

The feature article in this month's Focus on the Family magazine is entitled "Let's Roll" for the now-famous phrase Todd spoke just before joining others in an attempt to rest the airplane's control away from the three hijackers onboard the flight. In this article, Todd's wife, Lisa Beamer, tells of her late husband's faith and how his actions that day were consistent with the way he lived his life. Quoting from the article:

"Todd lived every day trying to make little decisions that were in line with the big goals he had for his life," Lisa says. "The actions he took on Sept. 11 were just one more example of that. Obviously, these were some of the hardest and most courageous decisions he made, but he was able to make them because he was practicing every day before Sept. 11."

Did you catch that? Todd was able to take bold action aboard flight 93, in the face of certain danger, because he had lived each day of his life trying to make "little" decisions that were in line with the big goals for his life.

This is what Scouting is all about, being prepared – being prepared to act based upon a foundation of decisions we make each day that are consistent with the ultimate goal of Scouting.

As Scouts, we learn and practice many personal skills in areas, such as camping, orienteering, first aid, and cooking. We develop teamwork, leadership, citizenship, patriotism, and personal faith. To put these skills into practice, or in other words, to "be prepared" to use our scouting skills appropriately, we must be willing to live as did Todd Beamer, by making little decisions each day that are in keeping with the big goals of Scouting. What are these goals? We know them as the Scout Law, and as the Scout Promise – which we recited earlier.

Garrick, we are here tonight to honor you for your achievements in becoming an Eagle Scout. But more especially, we are here to charge you with the responsibility of being an Eagle Scout, to challenge you to attend to your duty of practicing the art of being an Eagle Scout through the "little" decisions you make on a daily basis.

You may recall me telling a story about a man who was to travel to a certain town for a visit. Before leaving on his trip, this man called ahead for instructions on how to find

his destination. He was told, "Upon entering the town on main street, turn right at the first light; then go two blocks and turn left one block; the building will be on your left." The instructions worked perfectly. So, the next time this man was to travel to a new town, he thought he would just follow these same instructions. They had worked so well the first trip that the man thought they would work just as well on this second trip to a different town. Upon arriving in the new town, the man turned right at the first light, and proceeded two blocks. But after turning left and going one block, it became readily apparent that he was in the wrong part of town. What was this man's problem? He assumed every town was the same. They are not.

The same is true of the situations we face each day as Scouts. Every situation is different and must be addressed thoughtfully. To do so, we must practice our scouting skills and exercise the knowledge we gain in order to be prepared to respond appropriately to the needs we meet in life. Scouting is not intended to provide us with a set of simple instructions, a sort of canned, one-size-fits-all solution to life. Quite the opposite is true. It is to equip us with skills and knowledge that can be applied through well-trained thought.

On your journey to Eagle, Garrick, you have been equipped with many skills. Only by using them, and being well practiced through daily decision-making and follow-through, can you expect to be prepared for the unexpected. Attending to this duty, when faced with circumstances that would strike fear in the unprepared, you will be able to say with Todd Beamer, "Let's Roll."

But understand this: Todd's strength was not founded in his own skills or knowledge. After praying with the Airfone operator, named Lisa Jefferson, and reciting the 23rd Psalm, Todd said, "Jesus, help me." Then the Airfone operator heard those now famous words: "Are you guys ready? Let's roll."

Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the Way, the Truth and the Life; the only way to our Father in heaven. He is the source to which Todd Beamer resorted for help in time of need, to take that bold step of courage on flight 93. And Jesus Christ is the source to which you must look to find your way safely through this life and on into an eternal home with your Lord.

This court of honor is not the climax of your career as a Scout. It's the beginning of a great journey, one for which you have been preparing yourself. So, Garrick, Are you ready? Let's roll. Wear your new badge with confidence. Practice the virtues you were introduced to along the way here. And most of all, seek counsel from above.