

## **THE 4<sup>TH</sup> MUSKETEER**



Henk Stoorvogel and Theo van den Heuvel

# THE 4<sup>TH</sup>

LIVING IN SERVICE FOR THE KING

# MUSKETEER





[www.the4thmusketeer.com](http://www.the4thmusketeer.com)

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For Manuel, Chris and Luca – our three musketeers.  
You are loved.  
For who you are.

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# Preface

The 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer is a men's movement that organizes the Xtreme Character Challenges or XCC events. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, a group of around 100 men – in teams of eight – embark on a journey into the wilderness in mountain ranges across the United States. From Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon, these men are part of an adventure. The teams are given assignments that will test their ingenuity, courage, team spirit, stamina and character. Each assignment is based on an idea. Thinking exercises are linked to the physical challenges, reflecting the principle that life lessons travel the longest distance possible... the distance from the mind to the heart.

In 2008, I (Henk), asked three of my best friends, Theo van den Heuvel, Jan Stoorvogel and Pieter Cnossen to spend an evening together. In the past, we had worked together with Athletes in Action in the Netherlands and had many unique experiences together. However, at that time, each of us lived in a different city and we didn't see each other very often. When you desire to maintain friendships, it is important to build a history together, continuously enriching your shared past and increasing your prospects of a shared future. I asked my friends how they felt about establishing a men's movement; the 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer. Our sports background taught us that physical challenges can also have a mental dimension, and together we designed the concept of the Xtreme Character Challenge.

In 2012, I (Henk) called my close friend in America, Kent Susud, who is the founder of SportQuest Ministries, and asked him to lead the charge... to bring this movement to America. Today, thousands of European and American men live in the spirit of the Musketeer. They have received their



crimson red polo shirt imprinted with the white ‘four’. We have seen God work in a personal and intense way. God has touched the hearts of men and their lives will never be the same. The wives of Musketeers frequently tell us how much their husbands have changed because of these weekends. This fills our hearts with gratitude and gives us the energy to further expand the 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer not only inspires men but we also call them to action. Through the Muskathlon, we currently have three strategic partnerships. We sponsor many fatherless children in Africa through Compassion International, we support the persecuted church in the Middle East with Open Doors and we battle against human trafficking in Eastern Europe with A21. We believe that God doesn’t entrust men with wealth and a nice family just to live in peace. Men have a responsibility that reaches beyond their small family. As stewards of the King, we may, can, and must give our lives for His purpose for our generation.

## **The three musketeers**

The name of the men’s movement The 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer is inspired by the book “*The Three Musketeers*”, written by Alexandre Dumas (1802). The story takes place in early 17<sup>th</sup> century France. The 18-year old nobleman d’Artagnan leaves his childhood home and moves to Paris, determined to become a musketeer. The musketeers were the elite troops of the French king, Louis XIII. The French king, married to Queen Anna, is a weak monarch, heavily influenced by Cardinal Richelieu, head of the Catholic Church. Through trickery and deceit, Cardinal Richelieu tries to discredit the king to such an extent that he is able to depose him and rule over France. He is assisted in this by *femme fatale* Milady de Winter.

Athos, Aramis and Porthos, the three musketeers, join forces with d’Artagnan to do everything in their power to prevent the cardinal from executing his plans and to protect the king. D’Artagnan is initially appointed guard, but is later promoted to musketeer as a reward of his heroic actions. He falls in love with the beautiful Constance, maid of honor of Queen Anna, but also falls for the charms of the deceptive Milady.

The voluminous book – our Dutch version had 672 pages – is a delightful

read. The four friends have the craziest adventures and engage in the most insane antics. In writing his book, Alexandre Dumas was himself inspired by the stories of musketeers from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **The 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer, the book**

The famous phrase from the Dumas classic, 'All for one and one for all', articulates how Jesus has dealt with us and how we wish to deal with each other. In fact, *The Three Musketeers* mainly revolves around the fourth musketeer, d'Artagnan. He is the protagonist, the true hero of the story. We join him on his journey from his childhood home into the world, from boy to man, from guard to musketeer.

In a sense, we are all the fourth musketeer. Each of us is on a journey through life, from boy to man.

The idea for this book was born from a desire to shape and substantiate exactly that: it is all for one and one for all, and *you* are the true hero in the journey from boy to man, in the story of your life, at the service of the King.

Each chapter begins with a brief quote from *The Three Musketeers*. The quote will not be explained, but it is most definitely connected to the contents of the chapter. To discover the connection, reading *The 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer* is not enough; you'll have to read *The Three Musketeers* as well.

Should you want more information on the 4<sup>th</sup> Musketeer or to join one of our Xtreme Character Challenges in America or the Muskathlon, please visit our website at [www.the4thmusketeer.org](http://www.the4thmusketeer.org).

We wish you many blessings in reading this book.

For the king!

Henk and Theo

# Do Musketeers still exist?

The outside temperature was 38 degrees Fahrenheit and the water... considerably colder. I stripped down to my running tights and a windbreaker. I asked God to strengthen my bum knee and together with 88 exhausted and cold Dutch brothers, we entered the river.

Theo had just read Genesis 32 where Jacob wrestled with God. And oh man, I wanted to meet God in this moment! I moved toward the middle of the river; slipping on moss covered rocks, the rapids bursting against my chest, I asked God to break my pride, that self-determination that had embodied so much of my life. Several years prior, Henk gave me a birthday gift. A rugged model tractor that still sits on my desk to this day. A constant reminder of the sheer will that God hard-wired into my DNA. A reminder of my struggle with God. So, Bible in hand, relentless current sweeping me under, I fought to regain my footing. One step forward, 20 feet back.

In our generation, too many men have forgotten how to fight. We are too busy dealing with a “false crisis” in our workplace, attending countless meetings, spending our best years confined to our office... trying to attain the life that culture endlessly flashes before us with brilliant displays of color. I know. I found myself floating into this abyss.

As the founder of SportQuest Ministries, I was trailblazing and bushwhacking in America while at the same time, Henk was establishing a sport ministry in the Netherlands. This is where Henk and I first met. In 2000, SportQuest sent a team of American high school athletes to partner

with Henk for a sport project in the Netherlands and continued to do so for the following six years. During this time, SportQuest carried the good news of Jesus Christ into ten countries while reaching thousands of high school athletes through our “Playing with Purpose” Scholarship program. In 2004, SportQuest joined Henk and Theo for a project in Greece where I met Theo for the first time.

Whenever you build something, you experience both the sweet flavor of success and the bitter taste of disappointment and failure. When Henk called me in 2008 and invited me to lead a team of Dutch men for the first 4th Musketeer Character Weekend in the south of Belgium, I knew I had to say yes. If Henk and Theo were “in charge”, I knew it would be a weekend of adventure, challenge and inspiration! Little did they know, I needed all three!

You see, I had forgotten how to fight. I mean, really fight. When you experience fatigue and get knocked down, you lose confidence and perspective. Though never slowing down, always busy, always moving, and wondering if my efforts were storing up treasures in heaven or only “hay” and “stubble”. Financial security and an easier life were uncharacteristically on my mind. I was leading a ministry and I was sitting in my office.

After one hour, determined to keep my Bible dry, I became weak and couldn't stay above the swift moving and frigid water. My right bum knee began to buckle under the pressure of the current. I couldn't stand up. I was losing this battle but was determined to either push through to the end or get swept down the river. I prayed for the second option. As the safety and rescue crews followed me along the bank, they watched closely, telling me to move into the shallow water. Seriously? There was no way!

How does a man fight? What does he fight for? Henk and Theo will lead the way. These guys are amazing examples... men of faith! I love their passion to inspire men. I love their teaching style. I love their families. And I love them as a friend and brother. In this book and on every Xtreme Character Challenge, they show you a better way to live, the only way to really live. And they remind you how to fight and what to fight for.

When you read the words in this book, the truth of who you were created to

be and how you were created to live will awaken your heart. God is looking for men who are willing to go all out for Him. Who, motivated by love, are willing to give everything they have to live their life in honor and service to the King... then stumble into eternity in exhaustion, to hear their Lord say, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s joy.”

Get ready for some gut-wrenching, reality check moments. Henk and Theo will leave you inspired to say goodbye to your old patterns as you read the stories of other men, and boys, who also asked the question: “Do Musketeers still exist?”

For the King!

Kent Susud

CEO The 4th Musketeer USA

Founder and President SportQuest Ministries

# Prologue:

## The boy with the burlap sack

A little boy and his old father set out to climb a tall mountain. They were accompanied by a bull and a raven. The small group struggled to find their way up the steep slope. A few trees offered them some shelter and something to grip, but otherwise, this was a place for gods, not for men. The boy was carrying a heavy burlap sack. His father was a potato farmer and – if nothing else – they had to be able to eat on top of the mountain. So, his father told him to bring the burlap sack, packed with potatoes.

The boy had insisted on taking the bull with them on their adventure. The father thought it was strange. Who climbs a mountain with a bull? But the son was adamant, and so, the bull tagged along. Although the bull itself didn't understand it either.

The raven had joined of its own initiative. The raven was often found sitting on the fence that separated the potato field from the small farm where the father and his son lived. When the raven saw that the old man and his son were about to travel, he had jumped up from his fence and flew with them.

The climb was heavy and slow. The path had transitioned first into gravel and then into hard, smooth rock miles ago. The higher they climbed, the steeper the mountain was. Before long, there wouldn't be any trees around them, and beyond that, there would be perpetual snow and treacherous ice.

'I need to rest for a while', the old man gasped, and he squatted down against the last tree before the endless void of the mountain summit. The

bull seemed happy and tried to stand still on a large slippery rock. The raven perched upon a low-hanging branch. The boy placed his heavy burlap sack on the ground and started massaging his painful shoulder, as he felt the sweat dripping from his forehead.

‘There’s a storm coming’, the old man said as he pointed his crooked finger upward. ‘We need to head back.’ ‘But father’, the boy answered, ‘I don’t want to go back. I want to climb this mountain.’ ‘If we proceed, this mountain will be the death of us’, the father said, and he closed his eyes. ‘We are going back.’ ‘Please, have a potato, Father. You’ll feel much better.’ The old man didn’t answer. He simply shook his head gently. It was silent for a moment. The father opened his eyes, looked at his boy and said: ‘Son, we’re heading back. This mountain is too dangerous. Too steep. Too high. You are too small to climb this mountain, and I am too old. And a storm is coming.’

The boy bit his lip. A tear formed in his eyes, crawled over the edge of his eyelid, and slowly rolled down. ‘Father, I’m going to keep on climbing. I want to climb this mountain. It has been my dream from the very moment I saw it for the first time.’ The boy lifted the burlap sack back onto his shoulder, walked towards the bull, grabbed his rope and wrapped it around his right wrist, twice. Then he started climbing alone, leaving his father behind. The raven jumped up from his branch and flew with the boy, with the bull following closely behind. He started to feel a cold wind blowing, with no shrubs or shelter anywhere around to protect him. Clouds gathered at the top, resembling the line of defense of a besieged city, ready to throw any attacker into the abyss, as deeply as possible. Nobody saw the tears of the boy. Nobody saw the tears of the old man.

As he kept on climbing, the boy noticed his burlap sack starting to feel lighter. How was that possible? He decided that the bull probably stole a meal. He bravely continued on, towards the clouds that kept growing wilder and darker.

The storm swallowed him up. Devoured him as if he were a potato in the mouth of a bull. The boy dropped to his knees to prevent himself from being blown off of the mountain, and then started crawling, holding on to pinnacles and ledges. The howling of the storm drowned out the howling

of his scared bull. The bull started to slip more and more. The foolish battle of the small boy with his burlap sack and bull was getting increasingly precarious. If the boy wanted to save his bull, there was only one solution. Climb back down.

Determined, the boy kept climbing upward. This time, the mountain was his. The inevitable happened in a blink. The bull had slipped again, but this time, he failed to find his grip. The rope cut into the hand of the boy, and the burlap sack with potatoes had almost fallen. Since the rope was wrapped around the wrist of the boy, he was unable to let go even if he wanted to. The falling bull started to drag the boy with him into the abyss. The small boy struggled with all of his strength, braced himself, and screamed with effort. The tightly stretched rope scraped across a sharp ledge, and suddenly the boy bounced back. The sudden impact made burlap sack hit the rock, and along with the bull, several pounds of precious potatoes fell into the fathomless depth.

Dazed, the boy stayed on the ground as the storm attempted to blow him into the abyss as well. After half an hour, or perhaps three whole hours, he didn't know, the boy carefully got back onto his hands and knees. He swung the burlap sack with the remaining potatoes across his shoulder, and continued to crawl. Was he seeing things? Or did the storm seem less evil than it did before? He kept crawling on autopilot. Right hand, left knee. Left hand, right knee. Inch by inch, he approached the top.

Suddenly, all was silent. The clouds had disappeared. The wind had gone home. The small boy with the burlap sack looked up, and about 30 feet above him, he saw the last bit of mountain that passed into endless sky. He got onto his feet and walked the last few yards to the top. Minutes later, he had reached the place that he had always dreamed of. The rooftop of his world. Everywhere around him, he saw the snow-covered majestic mountaintops. There he was, alone, between heaven and earth. Alone? The boy looked again. Above him, below him, next to him... the raven was nowhere to be found. Probably blown away by the lashing storm, just like the bull. And so many of his costly potatoes. Potatoes! Suddenly, the boy realized that he felt like eating a potato. He had most certainly earned one. He pulled the strangely lightweight sack from his shoulder and looked into it. Empty. During his final climb, the sack had gotten stuck behind a sharp



rock and been torn open. All of the potatoes were gone. Food for the ravens and the bulls. The boy looked up. With the purest smile possible. Who cares about potatoes when you're at the top of a mountain?

The boy sat down, allowing himself to enjoy the magnificent view to the fullest. He drank in the splendor of the creation like the sweetest nectar. Gradually, the setting sun turned the blue sky, snow-covered mountain tops and green forests into a pink and golden angelic jubilation, formed to sing about the greatness of God. And as the boy was sitting there, he saw it appear, right before the setting sun. Graciously gliding in the glorious ocean of light. The eagle.

The boy got up and stretched his stiffened muscles. It was time to go home. He carefully climbed down, leaving the torn burlap sack at the top.



# PART 1: OUR STORY



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This book is not a random sequence of unrelated chapters. This book is a whole, and it tells a story. It is the story of the boy with the burlap sack, en route to becoming a man with a mission.

Similarly, our lives are not a random sequence of unrelated encounters and situations. Each of our lives is a cohesive book. Every chapter builds on the last one and affects the next one. Our lives tell a story. We are a story. More often than we realize, where we come from affects our future and shapes what drives us.


What is your story? For whom do you live?

The answers to these questions are vital. They make us receptive to the healing Voice from Heaven. They expose our deepest motives and biggest dreams, which are often less related to God than we'd like to admit. And they open our lives to beauty and friendship in a surprising way.



No, I mean Mr. de Tréville, who used to live next to us, and who had the honor to play with our King Louis XIII as a child, God bless him! ( ) In spite of all sentences and ordinances, he decided to become captain of the musketeers after all. Or that is: the head of a legion of Caesars for whom the King has great respect and whom the Cardinal fears, and as everybody will tell you, he is not easily scared. Moreover, Mr. de Tréville makes ten thousand ducats a year: meaning that he is a great lord. He started exactly like you. Please see him with this letter and stick with him to achieve as much as he did.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS



# ONE

## Why Alexander Supertramp died

In the spring of 1990, Chris McCandless disappeared from the lives of his parents. The 22-year old recent college graduate refused to settle for a life of career hunting and materialism. ‘Working on a career’, Chris condescendingly told his parents, ‘is nothing but an inferior invention of the twentieth century. It’s more of a burden than an advantage.’ He gave all of his savings, about \$20,000, to a charity, to benefit the poor. He climbed into his old yellow Datsun and off he went, chasing his dreams. To symbolize his new lifestyle, he assumed a new name: Alexander Supertramp. After he lost his car, due to a sudden flood in a riverbed in the desert, he hitchhiked across the US to the southwest. Using a canoe, he paddled to Mexico. Later, he worked in the endless grain fields of South Dakota. He survived in the most remote areas with minimal food and water. Chris had a dream. He wanted to live. With a capital L. And he was sure about one thing: his parents didn’t understand what living was all about.

His father, Walt, played a major role in Chris’ decision to radically turn his life around. It’s not that Walt was a bad or violent father. Walt was a brilliant NASA scientist. Chris’ mother was the love of Walt’s life, but she was his second wife. Although Walt invested a lot into his relationship with Chris (“I never played and did as much with the other children.”), Chris became disillusioned. During a previous trip, in his student days, he discovered that his father had not divorced his first wife until well after he had already been comfortably living with Chris’ mother. Walt had secretly led two lives for quite some time. That was years ago, but Chris

couldn't forgive his father for his betrayal. He compared all of his father's statements and actions to the period of infidelity he had discovered. Chris didn't want to be like his father, so he started searching. Initiated a quest in search of meaning... of himself. Or, was he simply running?

## Quest

To Franz, an old man Chris met during his journeys, he wrote:

The most basic of human mental strength is the desire for adventure. Our joy of living is the result of our encounters with what's new, meaning that there is no greater pleasure than constantly seeing a changing horizon, and walking under a new and different sun every single day.

Chris' struggle with his father led him to seek out the ruggedness of Alaska. He wanted to survive by himself in unspoiled nature. In April 1992, Chris followed his heart, hitchhiked, and journeyed into the Alaskan wilderness. In Denali National Park, he found an old green city bus... an International Harvester from the 1940s. A mining company left the bus there when they discovered that it wasn't possible to build a road into the heart of the wilderness, and it was now serving as a shelter for hunters and adventurers. Chris took up residence in the bus and hunted ducks, squirrels, and porcupines. He even managed to shoot a moose!

As the weather improved, the food became scarcer, and Chris decided to return to the inhabited world. However, his path was cut off by the roughly flowing Teklanika River, fed by melting mountain ice water. The adventurer was forced to return to the bus, and he became weaker and weaker.

On September 6<sup>th</sup> 1994, six people happened to hike past the antique green bus. The hunters and hikers found a letter, stating:

S.O.S. I need your help. I am hurt, nearly dead, and too weak to leave this place. I am all by myself. This isn't a joke., Please stay here and save me. I am nearby, trying to find berries, and I will be back tonight. Thank you, Chris McCandless. August?

Strikingly, the letter was signed Chris McCandless. Apparently, he had

decided to reassume his true name. In addition, it was clear that the letter had been written at least a week earlier, on some day in August. Where had Chris gone?

## **David, the hobbit**

Deep inside, Chris' adventurous journey was related to his complex relationship with his father. We have also seen other well-known men from the Bible struggle with a crisis with their fathers at a young age. Moses, for instance, was forced to grow up without his biological father. Joseph was spoiled so much by his father that his brothers began hating him. And of course, there is David. The man. The man after God's heart. In 1 Samuel 16:1-13, we encounter him for the first time. Samuel is traveling to the little town of Bethlehem to anoint a new king. Nowadays, everyone knows Bethlehem as the place where Jesus was born, adjacent to the spiritual capital of the world, Jerusalem. But, in Samuel's time, Bethlehem was an insignificant mountain village, somewhat like Lost Springs, Wyoming. The great Samuel travels from the big city to Bethlehem to anoint a new king. In today's world, it would be the equivalent of U2 lead singer Bono landing in Lost Springs. The entire village is in turmoil.

Is this positive or negative? A little bit of both. From the negative viewpoint, Israel is facing a crisis. In a moral sense, the people are being increasingly eroded. Everyone simply does whatever they want. There is no unity, no holiness. There is no perspective. There is a king, Saul, but his personality is unfit for his crown. And that's just the internal side of the story. Externally, there are some significant challenges as well...primarily with the Philistines. The Philistines are the elephants and the Israelites are the mice. The Philistines have a monopoly on iron, live in cities, and race around in tank-like chariots. The Israelites have hardly any iron weapons, live mostly in tents, and run across the battlefield with wooden pitchforks. And the worst thing is: The Philistines produce giants.

In the midst of this crisis, Samuel must anoint a new king. God has told Samuel that He has chosen a son of Jesse to become the new king. He arrives in Bethlehem and invites the village elders, along with Jesse and all of his sons, for a feast. During this meal, we witness the infliction of a painful father wound. As each of Jesse's sons is introduced to Samuel, the

answer of God is consistently clear: ‘This is not him’. All seven sons that came to the dinner with Jesse have been reviewed, and the chosen one is not among them. Samuel didn’t get it. Did he misunderstand God? Are there more people named Jesse in Bethlehem? Confused, he asks Jesse whether these are all of his sons. The old man turns red and somewhat nervously plucks at his beard. ‘Eh, well, I don’t know how to say this. I have another son, the *haqqaton*. He is outside with the sheep.’

Excuse me? Jesse had eight sons. Not seven, but eight! And on the most important day of the year in the sleepy town of Bethlehem... the day that every young man has dreamed of: the day of the *choice*, the possibilities, *life*... Jesse simply did not invite one of his sons. The history of Bethlehem can be subdivided into the period prior to the visit of Samuel and the period thereafter, and at that supreme moment, Jesse doesn’t even bother calling in his son.

Amidst all of his brothers, Samuel, and the village elders, Jesse presents his son as the *haqqaton*. It is not a nice word. It means the “little one”, the “runt”, the “hobbit”. They are the first words a person uses describe David in the Bible: ‘The *hobbit*’. A name used by his father. The *hobbit* for a sixteen year old boy, in a society where you reach manhood at the age of twelve. The *hobbit* for a boy who had conquered both a lion and a bear.

Some scholars believe that David wasn’t summoned because he was far away, in the fields with the sheep, and that it was impossible to call him. However, David wasn’t far away at all. Samuel says: ‘All well and good, but we won’t start eating before David has arrived.’ Within seconds, David is brought in, together with a trace of sheep smell. That is the beginning of David’s story. Belittled, humiliated, skipped during the supreme moment, by his very own father.

That scars a man.

## **Cinderella**

There may be more to this story, though. There is a chance that David may have been the product of an affair of his father. Twice, the Bible explicitly states that David has ‘reddish’ hair. Apparently, he didn’t look like his



brothers. We repeatedly read that David's brothers hate their (step)brother, even though David is good and brave. The name of David's mother is never mentioned once, whereas it is mentioned for the other Kings of Judah. The army commanders of David are not – as you would expect – his brothers, but Abishai, Joab and Asahel, his nephews. Isaiah speaks prophetically about the birth of Jesus as if he is talking about a shoot that will come out of the severed trunk of Jesse, a 'sprout from his roots'. A 'sprout' is a wild offshoot that shoots from the root next to the trunk. It has the same roots, but it is still of different origin.

On the other hand, the name *David* means 'beloved', 'dear'. So somewhere deep inside, David must also be wanted by his father and/or mother.

Be that as it may, in the first scene we read about him, David is presented as the Cinderella of Jesse's family. A (step)son with seven older brothers who clearly don't like him and a father who doesn't defend him at all. On the contrary, Jesse consistently seems to present David as *the hobbit*. Good for nothing but sheepherding.

## **Speaking is living, silence is death**

How does one deal with so much hostility? How do you process a trauma in such a way that it makes you stronger in the end? How do you prevent yourself from getting paralyzed, eventually missing all of your life's goals?

Daniel P. McAdam, a renowned psychologist, claims that two things are important to help you to process your trauma in a way that makes your personal story stronger. The first is your ability to *honestly face and name your wound*. The second is your ability to *share the wound with others*, through prayer, conversation or other forms. McAdams' findings are no different than what David did. In Psalm 27:10, David prays:

Even though my father and mother have left me, the Lord still accepts me.

It contains both elements. How did David feel about the way that he was treated by his father and mother? He felt abandoned. Alone. Betrayed. He faces his pain. And he shapes it into a prayer, so that he doesn't have to keep it to himself, but is able to share it with God. In Psalm 69, he

expresses his inner pain about his relationship with his brothers:

I have become a stranger to my brothers, an unknown person to the sons of my mother.

Facing, naming and sharing. That is the road to life. Remember the note from Chris that was found by the hunters on September 6<sup>th</sup>, attached to the green van in the Alaskan wilderness? They had noticed a strange smell in the vicinity of the bus. When they looked inside the bus, they found Chris. In his sleeping bag. Dead.

The people who got to know Chris McCandless during his 2-year quest all tell the same story: Chris didn't want to say anything about his family or his deepest motives. Chris had decided to resolve his pain by himself. This decision tragically led to his death. The road to life involves true communication. If you decide to keep your pain and your problems to yourself, you will die. Literally. Figuratively.

David's honesty and open communication about his past allowed God to work in his life in such a way that his potential weakness turned into his strength. When David, years after being anointed, is on the run from King Saul, he seeks shelter in a cave in the dessert of Adullam. Before long, hundreds of other refugees arrive to keep him company, among them his parents and brothers. They have now turned to him for help and protection. The attackers have now become the persecuted; the tyrants have become the refugees. *It's payback time.* How will David respond?

David takes his parents to safety with a befriended king, and takes his brothers under his wing.

He cares.

Forgives.

## **My story**

Maybe it's about time I told you a little more about the role of my father in my life.