

THROUGH THE VALLEY

by Dr. Roy Smith



THE CAMPFIRE GANG



BOOK #3



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Let's Think about It:

Questions for Discussion

*Dedicated to those who have great value
and God-given potential. (This means you!)
As you enjoy this series, may you discover
your greatness.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

*I am honored to be part of the journey of the following
young men. May you grow strong, have courage,
act wisely and change the world.*

*Silas, Jorah, Alexander, Nathan, Mason, William,
Lucas, Cody, Elijah, Kent, Colt, Ian, AJ, CJ, JJ, Gavin,
Ryder, Braxton*

*It is my privilege to be part of the lives of the following
amazingly gifted and powerful young women.*

May you make a difference in the world.

Remi, Reese, Alycea, Joy



CHAPTER 1

AN UNPLEASANT MEETING

Toby led the way out of the cave and down the tunnel. The rest of the gang followed behind, thinking about how much they had grown as a team.

Since entering these different underground worlds, they'd learned to rely on each other. Each crazy event had shown them how unpredictable life was and taught them to be prepared for anything.

With Pops' glowing toothpicks as their guide, the gang kept hiking through the unending maze of tunnels and cave rooms. They were determined to protect each other and dreamed of

the day they would finally be home.

Suddenly, the path became narrow and uneven, and the walls became jagged. Cliff tripped over a sharp stone and cut his knee. Kerry tore his shirt on the ragged wall. The boys were slowly getting beaten up—and they knew it.

Without a map, they had no idea when this painful part of their hike would end. They were getting impatient and just wanted to quit. Other than an occasional “watch out!” or complaint, the boys didn’t talk at all.

After what seemed like hours of walking, Toby finally spotted an opening ahead of them. The gang rushed forward, eager to end their painful journey.

“Woah,” they all said as they stepped through the entrance. They were standing in the biggest cave room they’d seen yet.

“This looks like the Grand Canyon!” Spencer exclaimed.

“I’ve never seen boulders this big,” BB said.

“This is awesome!” Cliff shouted.

“I don’t know...” Sammy said as he looked around nervously. “I feel like I keep seeing something move out of the corner of my eye.”

Suddenly, a giant shadow soared over the gang.

“Get down!” Pete cried, darting behind a boulder.

The gang gathered behind a giant rock and peered around the edge. Enormous flying creatures circled the valley in front of them. They looked like they were from the dinosaur age. They had faces like bats and mouths filled with sharp teeth. Sharp fangs stuck out from their beaks, and below their wings hung two huge claws.

From the shadows of nearby ledges, the birds swooped down to catch their prey. Then they let out a shrill scream that echoed throughout the cave as they returned to the ledges to feast.

Toby watched the birds' flight patterns, hoping to figure out when it would be safe for the gang to move under one of the ledges. They needed a safe place to talk without the birds swooping down at them. Toby motioned that the coast was clear, and one by one the guys darted to the ledge.

They huddled under it as BB scanned the giant cave.

“The tunnel must continue on the other side,” he pointed out.

Unfortunately, the only way to reach the other side was to travel down long, rocky paths.

“There’s no way those things won’t see us,” John whispered.

BB nodded. “I think we can make it though. We just need to go slowly and stay focused so we don’t become lunch for those Bat Birds.”

“We can break up into small groups,” Cliff suggested. “If we all go as one big group, one of us will most likely get caught. Toby and Kerry could

go first as scouts. BB, Sammy and I could go next, and then John, Pete and Spencer could go last.”

“That sounds good,” Toby said.

Before they began, Sammy took the rock they’d been carrying since the beginning of their journey. He placed it on the ground and stepped on top. Like usual, it let out a loud groan and began to vibrate. They heard a voice say,

*“With people, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible.” **

“I don’t know, guys,” John grumbled. “This does seem impossible.”

“Yeah,” Pete agreed. “We’re already tired and cut up from our hike. I just want to rest.”

“We need to stick together,” Spencer stated. “If the Bat Birds catch anyone, we’ll have to work together to save him. Their claws look pretty scary—and pretty sharp—and they’re huge. If

* Matthew 19:26

we can cut the claws off, then maybe we can get it to release whoever it has in its grasp.”

“I can’t figure out who looks uglier—a Bat Bird or a Striker,” Cliff chuckled.

“Well, neither of them is going to win a beauty contest or get elected favorite animal of the year,” Spencer added.

BB looked serious. He was thinking about how risky this plan was.

“We need to stop and think through every move we’re about to make,” he said. “They watch their prey carefully from that ledge before they swoop in. They time their movements just right in order to catch their prey. That means we need to be unpredictable in the way we move.”

They all nodded in agreement and prepared to go down into the canyon.

Toby and Kerry slowly led the way down the side of the canyon. When a Bat Bird came into the area, everyone froze. Despite being tired,

scraped up and uncomfortable, they had to focus on staying safe.

Sometimes there were plenty of rocks to hide behind. At other times, the path was wide open, which made it easier for the Bat Birds to attack. The gang often had to wait more than an hour to move to the next boulder.

Each boy knew he was responsible not just for his own safety but also for the safety of the other guys. They knew being caught by a Bat Bird was a possibility, but each boy trusted that his friends would have his back.

So far no Bat Bird had tried to attack them. Toby and Kerry were well ahead of the group, constantly scanning the sky for diving Bat Birds.

As they crawled through the rocks, they occasionally saw a long green tail disappear behind a rock. They wondered if it was what the Bat Birds had been catching in their claws.

Toby snuck around the next corner. Just when he thought he was safe to move, he saw a pair of wings flutter above him. He quickly darted back behind a rock.

With a giant thud, a pair of claws landed right in front of him. Toby swung his sword and pierced the claw of the Bat Bird. The giant creature flew upward and squawked wildly as it shook its injured claw in pain.

Great, Toby thought. These Bat Birds are definitely out to get us. The good news is they aren't happy with a good sword shot.

The question still remained—what else was down there with them?

“Help!” someone yelled.

Toby whipped around to see a Bat Bird dive toward Kerry and snatch him up. The second he yelled, all the guys came running and sprang into action.



THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

Good questions help us learn.

• • •

1. In [Chapter 1](#), the gang is afraid of being caught by the Bat Birds. What are three things you're afraid of?
2. Draw a picture of what you think a Bat Bird or Lizard looks like.
3. Throughout this book, the guys in the gang learn to appreciate how they're different from each other. What are some of these differences?
4. When the gang first meets the Lizards, BB thinks they need to learn how to have a positive attitude (page 22). Describe someone you know who is cheerful and positive.
5. One thing Tripfart has learned about humans is that they don't always take care of the earth (page 30). Do you think it's your responsibility to take care of the environment?
6. The rock tells the gang and the Lizards to "get rid of all hard feelings, anger and rage" (page 49). What creates anger within you?

7. Look back at the list of teammate skills on the illustration on page 51. How does each teammate trait apply to you?
8. On page 54, the rock says, “Do everything without complaining or arguing.” What do you complain about?
9. We don’t have healing bark tree sap like the Lizards do, but we do have doctors who can help us stay healthy. What’s your doctor’s name? How do you feel about going to the doctor?
10. In Chapter 5, BB teaches a group of Lizards some leadership skills. Which of the following skills are important to you, and why?
 - Learn to be a servant.
 - Practice what you preach.
 - Learn from your failures.
 - Confront those making negative choices.
11. How would you feel about giving a speech to a crowd, like BB did in Chapter 6? What would you talk about?

12. In Chapter 6, the gang battles the Bat Birds and shows the Lizlards what can be done with God's help. What would you like God's help with? Does it seem impossible?
13. Can you think of five funny names for Lizlards?
14. Name some of your friends. How can you be a good teammate and help them succeed?
15. The Lizlards want to have a Feast of Blessings to remember what they're thankful for. What are you thankful for?
16. What's the weirdest thing you ever ate? Did you like it?
17. What are two things the rock said in this book that were helpful?
17. What's something you're good at?
18. In Chapter 7, the gang helps the Lizlards clean up after the battle. How good are you at cleaning up the messes you make?
19. By the end of this book, Sammy and Spencer have become really good friends. How can you be a good friend to others?
20. What do you believe about God?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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After becoming a grandfather, Dr. Roy Smith was inspired to write a book series for his grandsons and boys and men of all ages—so he embarked on a journey to creatively teach character development. Being a psychologist and counselor for more than 35 years, Roy understands how important it is for young men to develop and use their full

potential. Roy's goal is to help young men become mentally strong, address their emotions and develop social skills so they can have a powerful impact on the world. They need to meet God and integrate who He is and His Word into their daily decision-making. Another goal of Roy's is to help men grow and learn how to lead more effectively, contributing to the overarching goal of positively changing our culture. This goal led him to develop Knights of the 21st Century (www.K21.men), a ministry that produces books and DVD series for men. Roy has written and cowritten several books in the area of men's issues, including *Bull*, *Being God's Man*, *Basic Warrior Training*, *Manhood Journey* (Volumes 1-5), *Why Not Try to Hit the Real Target—Men* and *You're Not Dead Yet*. He has also consulted on and written several women's DVD series (www.realwomen21.com).

TEAMWORK IS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE!

As the campfire gang journeys through more and more dangerous underground worlds, they soon find themselves in a village that will change their lives. With the help of new creatures, they learn more about themselves and step up in ways they never thought they could.

Through it all, the boys learn lessons about life and about God. They never stop fighting for each other—and sometimes for their own lives!

*FIND ALL OF THE CAMPFIRE GANG ADVENTURES AT
www.TheCampfireGang.com*