

The Ten Survivor Rangers

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There once was a group of ten Rangers who were setting out to earn their Wilderness Survival Badge. This was not just any badge to be earned. It was reserved for only the elite Rangers who wanted to achieve higher than the Gold Medal of Honor. To have this award meant that you were ready and able to overcome any obstacle that you could encounter throughout the rest of your life. It meant you were ready to advance in your life at a moment's notice, without any hesitance. To do whatever was necessary to follow the Master Ranger and his plans.

All ten Rangers had agreed to put their survival skills to the test and together they would achieve their goal. To make things a little less complicated, they decided to split into two patrols, the Eagles and the Raccoons. They had 24 hours to prepare before the great adventure began.

Now, the Eagle patrol rose to the challenge very seriously. They were preparing themselves for anything that could possibly happen. All was taken into consideration when they planned out their rescue. Carefully they mapped out their course and planned for the ultimate goal. For one whole week they had to survive off the land, using what they had learned from the Master Ranger and their guide book. They had already in their minds could see themselves being rescued by the chopper. Their hearts, minds, and eyes were set on the day they would receive the badge.

The Eagles carefully packed all they thought they might need as well as items that would come in handy should they encounter a situation that could arise that they were not aware of. They secured all the gear they could think of. Ropes, Mountain climbing and repelling gear, flint and steel kits, wax coated matches, water purification pills, and just enough food to survive on without weighing them down making it difficult to carry. They had followed all the rules and took careful

precautions to be prepared for anything. They were ready to go and confident that they would be just fine.

On the other hand, the Raccoons were not so concerned about things. They were easily distracted with playing video games, watching television and movies staying up all hours of the night and sleeping late in the mornings. They ate so much chips and candy and junk food that when it was time to really fill up on the food that would give them strength and energy, there wasn't room.

There were only two out of the five that began packing what they would need for the trip. That meant that they only had enough for two of them and there were five in the group that would have to be taken care of. When it was suggested that they get ready, they just shrugged it off. No one was making any plans at all as to how they were going to get from the drop off, to meet up with the other team for the pickup. They decided that they had plenty of time to grab their gear right before they leave. Having fun was more important, after all, they would be gone for one whole week without any of the conveniences of home. They should eat and have fun while they could.

All of a sudden, in the middle of the night, off in the distance the sound of a chopper was heard. It was getting louder and louder when all at once a bright light shined right down in their faces. A loud voice from inside the chopper shouted out, "Now...let's go! ... 15 seconds...14...13...12...get your gear...10...let's go, let's go, let's go!" The time had come for the adventure to begin. The Eagles had all of their gear outside at the landing pod, ready to load. The Raccoons? well, they grabbed what they could find and ran to the chopper as fast as they could. There was no turning back now. If they didn't have it with them, they would have to figure out how to survive without it.

The plan was for each patrol to be dropped off separately at first. They were given an envelope and told not to open it until they arrived at the pickup point. It was emphasized to them that this envelope was the most important piece of gear that they had. The Raccoon patrol was first to be dropped. As the chopper lowered to the ground, each ranger jumped off and grabbed the gear that they had. The chopper then lifted up and took off to drop the Eagles 10 miles away.

They were to meet each other exactly in one week to be taken home and receive the special honor.

The chopper then lifted off to take the Eagle patrol to their assigned drop off site. The rangers held on to their gear and readied themselves for the landing. The envelope was safely placed inside the main backpack that held all of the supplies that were absolutely necessary for the mission. All was in place and their plans were put into action. They set their compass and began their journey, following their map step by step.

Ten miles away, the troops were not so happy and organized. Each one began telling the other which way they were to go. A couple thought they should just stop and make camp so they could plan. After all, how long could it possibly take us to go five miles? A day spent to prepare couldn't possibly hurt them. So that is what they did. As they set up camp they realized that they had forgotten a few things and they began to blame each other for not having what they needed. They fought so hard with each other that soon no one wanted to do anything. They bickered and argued and accomplished nothing. After a while, they realized that they were not going to get anything done this way and they began to pull together and ready themselves for the night. If they were going to do this, they had to be a team and put their differences aside. This mission was a great one. They had already wasted too much time by fighting and blaming. They had to pull together.

After taking a look at what they actually had brought with them, they discovered they were lacking a lot of necessary things. The two rangers in the patrol that had taken the time to plan had only planned for themselves. So it was obvious that they would have to search for more food. Their survivor skills would be put to the test even stronger because the manual had been left on the chopper. Two of the other Rangers were appointed as the trappers for dinner that night. They went off into the deep woods to see what they could find. The rest set up the tents and started a fire. Fortunately, one of them had thought to bring their flint and steel kits. It wasn't long until a fire was glowing. After a couple of hours, the Rangers returned with a huge rabbit for dinner. It had been

a long day and hot fresh food sounded very good. Following dinner, they would all get a good night sleep and begin the hike of a lifetime early in the morning. The plans were to meet with the Eagle patrol tomorrow evening if all goes well. But meeting at the rendezvous point was not going to be easy since they were not at all prepared.

At the same time, across the river and the steep cliffs, the Eagle patrol had stopped to eat and make sure their coordinates were still on track. They planned which way to go through the wilderness with the least amount of treacherous terrain. After they had finished, they continued on to find a good place to hunker down for the night. If all went as planned, they should meet up with the Raccoon patrol early evening the next day. Then they would eagerly wait for the chopper to pick them up sometime in the next few days. They weren't sure when it would actually happen. But they were confident and encouraged each other that they were going to make it just fine.

Day two was now well underway for the Eagle patrol and going very well, until they reached the Hawk Bluffs. They had to make a choice to either repel down the rock walls and into the clearing where they would meet with the Raccoon patrol, or there was a path that they could take. The path would lead them to the same destination, but it would mean an extra day of hiking for them. It was a much longer route. They all agreed that since they were prepared to climb and repel that that is what they would do. They would arrive on time at the rendezvous and enjoy the outdoors with the other patrol. They gathered their gear and began the steady decent down the bluffs. As planned, they arrived right on time to the camp spot. They set up camp and waited eagerly for the Raccoon patrol to arrive.

The day began very well for the Raccoon team as well. They had had a great night of sleep and were able to make a healthy breakfast with the little bit that they brought. Of course, they had remembered that a lot of plants and roots in the woods were edible and they creatively prepared them for their meal. As they approached the Hawk bluffs, the sun was already beginning to set. The first day

of arguing and bickering had set them back, but they were now determined to meet up with the Eagle patrol.

The Hawk Bluffs were not really very steep, but when it is dark, it proposes some opposition that was not in the plans. The patrol had to make some choices now. They looked at the gear that they had and decided that repelling down was not an option. They had brought the hooks to anchor themselves with while descending, but failed to bring rope. The other option was to take the winding path down to the river. This brought on another decision. Should they do it tonight or wait until morning to begin. They do have flashlights with them, but will they last long enough to get to the bottom. There were no spare batteries. The decision was made to sleep on the bluffs and hike down at sunrise. Dinner was again hunted for because there was absolutely nothing left for them to eat. Very quickly three ground squirrels were located and lured into the simple traps that they made. Once again, food was provided for them so they could keep up their strength.

The sun rose quietly and the birds chirped softly. The rangers rose and quickly gathered up their belongings and started down the narrow path to the river floor below. They knew that the hard part of the journey was almost over. Maybe the Eagle patrol would have enough supplies for them to make it through the rest of the week as well.

The Eagle patrol camp was very concerned and had a hard time resting. They wondered what had happened to the Raccoons. They had not arrived. Here it is morning and there still is no sign of them anywhere. As they kept a watch out for the Raccoons, they were also preparing for the arrival of the chopper. They knew it would be a few days a way, but they had learned to always be ready for anything. All the while, they grew more concerned about the Raccoon patrol.

It took the Raccoons two days to get down off the bluff. They were tired, hungry and a little discouraged. They did not know that they would encounter so many turns. There were jagged rocks to climb and snakes to avoid. They were beginning to understand why it was so important for them to be prepared before they even started on this adventure.

They reached the river as the sun was setting and once again had to set up camp. Their destination was so close, but it was too dangerous to try to cross the river in the dark. At least they could catch fish and eat to gain their strength back. Then they would be ready to meet with the Eagle group and they would be able to use their rations and supplies to survive. They all ate well that night and slept better than any other night because they knew it was about to end.

The next morning they crossed the river and headed for the meeting place. They were so excited to get there. It was almost sundown when they arrived and the Eagle patrol was elated to see them. They immediately began to set up camp.

The leader of the Eagle patrol noticed that the Raccoons were lacking a lot of things. They knew that it was because they did not prepare. He felt very sad for them but was not able to help them. This was a survival test. Everyone had to be prepared for themselves to help the team be prepared. They couldn't help someone else pass the test. It had to be an accomplishment made only by you.

The leader of the Raccoon group pleaded for them to help them out with supplies and rations, but The Eagle Ranger, as hard as it was, stood his ground. He could not help them; it had to be their own efforts.

That night at camp, the day before the chopper was to arrive; they all sat together and waited. It was time for them to open the envelope to reveal the last step of the test. The Eagle patrol leader pulled the envelope from the backpack that he so carefully put it in.

Upon seeing this, the leader of the Raccoons went to get into his backpack to get the envelope out as well. Much to his dismay, he could not find his backpack. He searched and searched for it. There was only one possible thing that could have happened. He must have left it back at the river or on the bluffs.

This couldn't be happening. That means I have to go back and find it or we won't be rescued. The whole Raccoon patrol immediately got up and began searching for his backpack. It was not there. They had to wait now until morning to leave because they had no light. "Tomorrow is the day the chopper comes! Please let us read your envelope and we can all be picked up", they all begged.

Sadly, the Eagles had to turn their backs and tell them that they have to use their own envelope. "You should have been prepared", the Eagle patrol leader said, "I am so sorry."

The next morning the Raccoons took off on the most important mission they would ever face. They practically ran to the river to recover the backpack. Finally they arrived and to their dismay, it was nowhere in sight. They searched and searched until one of the rangers happened to look up and spotted it sitting about halfway up the path of the bluffs. "What are we going to do now?"

Desperately, they all took off towards the path and began to climb up the steep and rocky path. They knew they had to quickly get the backpack and get back to the camp before the choppers arrived.

Back at the camp, the Eagle patrol sat around the fire and read the final instructions to their survival test. The letter was short and direct. It read, "Well done my faithful rangers. You have completed the test and your rescue will be on the way. In a tree stump about 50 paces southeast of the lone pine tree, there is a flare gun. Clean up your camp, get the gun and proceed to the clearing about 1 mile down the path. When you get there, fire the gun and the choppers will be there to pick you up within 5 minutes. You see, I have not been very far from you throughout the test. I have watched from afar and you have done well. Carry on." And it was signed, The Master Ranger.

Immediately the Eagle patrol began to pull up camp. When everyone was ready to go, the flare gun was placed safely in the backpack and they proceeded to the clearing.

The Raccoons by now had found the backpack and were heading back to the camp spot. When they arrived, the only things left were their own camping supplies and tents. The Eagle patrol was nowhere in sight. The Raccoon leader began searching through the backpack, looking for the envelope. It was not in there. They frantically looked through all of their supplies, the envelope was nowhere in sight.

Off in the distance, they saw a light shoot to the sky. Could it be? Was that the Eagle patrol? How did they get a flare? As they stood in shame and self-pity, it finally sunk in that they were not ready at all. Where could that envelope be? It is our answers to our biggest need...Rescued!

Just then, one of the rangers yelled out. "I remember where I put it! I put it in the survival manual so I would know where it was when we needed it." That was a great idea to do, except; he had left the manual on the chopper when they were dropped off.

By now they could hear the choppers heading over the hill. The only thing they could do was run towards the sound and hope to make it to the clearing to be picked up as well. They took off in the fastest pace they had ever run. Running and screaming, and hoping that they would be noticed.

When they arrived at the clearing the chopper had already turned and was rising over the hill. They were panting and yelling and even crying all at the same time. They knew they had missed the greatest opportunity all because they chose to put off being prepared. They could look back at the whole week and see where they had their chances to make the test, but they had decided that they had plenty of time to get things in order. Now they wish that they had been alert and ready.

They had been given a manual to follow, but became too lazy and too sure that they knew what they were doing. The answers were in the manual and everything was there for them, but they had blown it on their own. Now they were left behind to fend for themselves until after the Wilderness Survival Ceremony takes place. The rangers remembered from the manual that it would be seven days from now. They have seven days to prepare. It won't be an easy thing to do, but they had learned a great lesson. They would have to survive on only what was around them for the next seven days. That is plenty of time to look back and learn from their mistakes.

You know, we are on a survival mission as well. Our Bible is our manual and it has all the instructions in it to take on this Challenge of living for Jesus. If we

follow His instructions and not become lazy or think we have plenty of time to get prepared, we are fooling ourselves. Jesus, our Master Ranger, is coming to rescue us from this world. Have you prepared your heart? When he comes will you be alert and waiting for him or will you be trying to pull it all together? Now is the time to be prepare your heart and life for Him. You can do this by praying this simple prayer. Say:

"I know that I have not always put you first. I know there are things in my life that I need to get rid of. I need to make a place in my heart and life for you. Forgive me for all the things I have done that are not pleasing to you. Help me to live for you and not for myself. I want you to come in and take over my life, be my Master Ranger. Help me be the ranger that you want me to be and give me opportunities to share your love and grace with others around me. That is my mission. Help me to follow your manual and live totally for you until the day you come and take me from all the things of this world that would cause me to fall away. I will be ready and I will do my best to make sure others are as well. Thank you for always watching over me. I want to live totally for you for the rest of my life. Thank you for giving me a second chance.

In the Master Ranger, Jesus' name,

Amen.

If you prayed this prayer and really meant it from your heart, the challenge now begins. Pick up your manual, read it, learn it, memorize it, and most important get to know the Master Ranger, Jesus by talking to Him and spending time with Him and at His house. Your Challenge now begins!

The End