

Leading a Boot Camp

Battle, Mission, Objectives, Tactics, and Ammunition

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Introduction

God is up to something with men—something mythic, profound, powerful, and beautiful. He’s after the hearts of men, freeing us to be what we are—men made in God’s image. Passionate, alive, free, living from the heart, not from the list of “shoulds” and “ought tos” that has left so many of us tired, bored, and in a spiritual malaise. God is pursuing, rescuing, and unalterably changing the lives and hearts of men around the world.

Why is it that most messages and ministries for men ultimately fail? The reason is simple: They ignore what is deep and true in a man’s heart, his real passions, and simply try to shape him up through various forms of pressure. Verbally or non-verbally they say, “This is the man you ought to be. This is what a good husband/father /Christian/churchgoer ought to do.”

Fill in the blanks from there. He is supposed to be responsible, sensitive, disciplined, faithful, diligent, dutiful, etc. These are good qualities. But, men need something more, something deeper. They need a change that emanates from their hearts.

Written on every man’s heart is a yearning for adventure and battle and a beauty. A man needs a deeper understanding of why these longings govern him—and why it is that God made him just like that. And he needs a deeper understanding of why women long to be fought for, to be swept up into adventure, and to be the beauty.

What if? What if those deep desires in our hearts are telling us the truth, revealing to us the life we were meant to live? God gave us eyes so that we might see; he gave us ears that we might hear; he gave us wills that we might choose, and he gave us hearts that we might live. The way we handle the heart is everything. A man must know he is powerful; he must know he has what it takes.
(*Wild at Heart*, p.18)

The Wild at Heart Boot Camp experience is designed with one primary objective: to restore the hearts of man through a real encounter with God.

When we take folks through a discipleship program whereby they master any number of Christian precepts, they miss the most important thing of all, the very thing for which we were created: intimacy with God. There are, after all, those troubling words Jesus spoke to those who were doing all the “right” things:

“Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you.’” (Matt 7:23).

Knowing God. That’s the point. After all—aren’t we “followers of Christ?” Then by all means, let’s actually follow him. Not ideas about him. Not just his principles. Him. Now. Today. (Waking the Dead, p. 96)

Our hope is that such an encounter with God will:

- Give a man back his heart
- Show him his place in the battle
- Begin to teach him how to live

I heard God speak to me for the first time this weekend. This is not a men’s retreat but an appointment with God! -Bob from North Dakota

I have met God here. My heart has been restored and renewed in the company of men who desire a closer more exciting walk with God. ... I came seeking clarity and understanding, and in return I received my heart, a call to fight, to love courageously, and to live valiantly. I realize and see the battle more vividly now. I see the carnage and desolation of the lives back home, and my heart grieves. Where there was once contempt and shame there is grief and compassion. Thank you all for breaking through my callous, stone cold, religious heart. -Doug from Mississippi

And so, The Wild at Heart Boot Camp is not a retreat about the *seven things a man ought to do to be a nicer guy*. It is a four-day quest into the recovery of a man’s masculine soul, the release of a man’s heart—his passions, and his true nature—all of which has been given him by God. It’s an invitation to rush the fields at Bannockburn, to go West, to leap from the falls and save the beauty. For if a man is going to know who he truly is as a man, if he is going to find a life worth living, love a woman deeply, and not pass on his confusion to his children, he simply must get his heart back.

Based on John Eldredge’s book, *Wild at Heart*, the retreat is hosted in a setting of beauty and adventure, and includes teaching sessions, films, guided periods of reflection, and journaling. We have designed something far more than a retreat—it’s an expedition of the heart. The men attending will never be the same.

There are no words to express what has happened to me here. I have found the real Christ for the first time in my life. I have given my life to God and will fight the battle for my own heart. I am on the first step of the journey. -Leon from Israel

This camp opened my eyes to who I am as a part of God's story. The role I play, the person I was created to be had been a mystery to me. I did not recognize that so many of my insecurities and feeling so inadequate came as a lie from hell. When I view my journey from God's eyes I feel restored, renewed and empowered. I know God has planned for me to be a fierce warrior for His Kingdom. And now I feel equipped to be the man I was born to be. Thank you, Ransomed Heart! -Jim from Canada

I have never, ever heard the Gospel message packaged and presented the way it was here... I have never felt more alive in spirit with a sense of true purpose. - Adam from New Mexico

This is our Mission, this is our objective, ... everything revolves around and supports our desire to help a man get his heart back and live from a God-given strength and passion.

We're not alone. God is up to something epic, and it's larger than Ransomed Heart Ministries. It involves many, many others, and it is global. It involves you! You've picked up this resource, because you desire to step into this story--this ministry of fighting for men to recover a life of freedom, passion, and adventure. It's good to have you as an ally in this Mission!

This manual has been put together for a couple of reasons. First, we want to spread the Gospel (and Boot Camps are a powerful way to see that unfold). Second, many men have asked us for help in doing what we do in their church or area. Third, we have a piece of what God's doing with men, but the Mission is way beyond our resources. So we want to do all we can to raise up and encourage others in taking their piece in the unfolding of God's heart and kingdom to those men all around the world.

This resource is designed for a few men who've teamed together to rescue and restore the hearts of men through the materials of Ransomed Heart in a Boot Camp setting of about 30 men.

A couple of other guiding thoughts:

- We've compiled quite a bit of information we've gleaned over the years in this manual—it may be more than you need in this initial season of your ministry to men through retreats. Don't be overwhelmed! The only real instruction is actually pretty simple ... *walk with God*. There you go. Do that and you'll find a place in what God's doing and have an impact on the men around you.
- The enclosed CDs and written materials will give you a clear picture of "*the what and why*" of our ministry. We think they'll change *your* life ... and be a mentoring resource to your team as you develop your ministry. We strongly encourage you to listen to the audio CDs of a recent Wild at Heart Boot Camp with Director's Cuts, to help you with your retreat. A DVD of a Wild at Heart Boot Camp will be released in spring of '07. It will be an irreplaceable resource for you. Come to ransomedheart.com for more info.
- In addition, we encourage you to read through this manual and, *as a team*, give time to reflect and discuss the questions presented. It will be huge for your relationships and spare you a lot of confusion and conflicts later.
- There are many things you only *really* learn by doing--like driving a car, raising teenagers, fly-fishing ... a manual alone is insufficient. God uses hardships, mistakes, oversights, and successes *over time* to train us, mature us, and validate us, and our ministry. We realize, and hope you do as well, that this "how to" guide for Boot Camps *will not* spare you all the inherent difficulties that must come in your journey as a man wanting to have an impact upon other men. Ultimately, there are no short cuts to manhood or a life-changing ministry. All that to say, go to God with this material and allow him to be the sculptor of your retreat.

"That which we have obtained too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price on its goods." -Thomas Paine

There is no shortcut to learning the hard lessons of life. Leading a Boot Camp for other men is no exception. So, welcome to the arena of ministry to men. It will, *perhaps*, be the greatest undertaking of your life. It will, *no doubt*, be difficult as well. What else could explain why so few have stepped forward?

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory nor defeat. -Teddy Roosevelt

Reference Appendices found on CD-Rom

BOOT CAMP PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

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- APPENDIX III - AUDIO TECHNICAL
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