



the heart of a  
**WARRIOR**

A 14-Day Plan

Adapted from the book *The Heart of a Warrior*  
by Michael Thompson



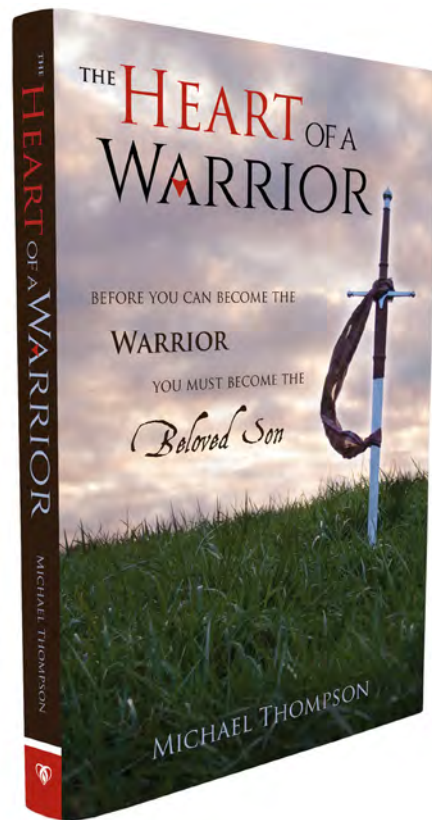
# *The Heart of a Warrior*

## **A 14-Day Journey**

### **Plan Description:**

All men want a mission. We want to make a difference. But before we embark on that mission, we must know that we are Beloved Sons of God. Otherwise, we'll fight bravely but die quickly in battle; whether that battle is in the workplace, on the internet or in our own homes.

Join us on this journey of fourteen days to awaken, deepen, and fulfill your understanding of how God sees you ... a Beloved Son.



**Adapted from Michael Thompson's book *The Heart of a Warrior: Before You Can Become the Warrior You Must Become the Beloved Son***

# 1. An Ancient and Relentless Crisis

Possibly our greatest challenge is getting on the same page regarding the problem plaguing men. Men are casualties of an ancient and relentless masculine identity crisis. They suffer from a lostness that regenerates itself generation after generation. I have a hope for men, a vision that fuels me...

***I hope to one day see the hearts of men so foundationally settled, so well-trained, so well-equipped, and so well-engaged that when evil dares raise its head, Beloved Sons/Warrior men will know what to do, and will do it well.***

In order for this to happen, a man needs to recover his true heart—the good heart filled with the life of Christ and stamped with his character that the Father gives his sons at rebirth. And he needs to experience that he is indeed **the Beloved Son of a good Father**.

Then, and only then, can that man be shown and trained up into his Warrior Heart. A Beloved Son is one who experiences the unconditional love of his Father in a way that deeply impacts him and leaves him with:

***Nothing to Hide,  
Nothing to Prove,  
and Nothing to Fear.***

A Warrior is a Beloved Son with a settled heart who is then trained and equipped to engage in the life-and-death battles that are continually going on in him and all around him. Being a Warrior involves more than force. It goes deeper: there is a deftness to it, an intuitiveness, and a gracefulness.

**Warriors** are dangerous characters in any story and they can be lured into roles and causes that run counter to what a Warrior is made and trained to be. We see it every day in the headlines: men taking shortcuts, making compromises, stepping across blurry lines, hiding or striving. It is killing us. This confusion has resulted in what I call **disorientation** and is a forecast of what will continue unless an ancient way is recovered—because disoriented men produce more disoriented men, and the legacy of failure will pass from one generation to the next.

I hope to persuade men to remove whatever things block them from receiving the love God offers them: the love of a Father for his Beloved Sons. Then, with their ability to receive the Father's love recovered, I hope to instill in men an awareness (over multiple encounters) of the ongoing training required to see disoriented men become oriented.

What does it mean to be *oriented*?

An “oriented man” grounds his life and actions on three things: his *identity*, his *environment*, and his *mission*. He knows:

**Who he is.** In Christ, he is a Beloved Son of the Father.

**Where he is.** An oriented man has “eyes to see and ears to hear” what is going on around him. He is alert to the spiritual forces at work behind physical circumstances.

**The Good that God is up to in his Life.** An oriented man seeks to partner with his Father’s redemptive purposes. He looks for the good God is doing in and through his life, and he views his circumstances and relationships with an awakened and engaged heart.

Over time, the oriented way of life leads to a more settled heart—a deeper stability that comes from ongoing experience. A settled heart (a man who has nothing to hide, prove, or fear) doesn’t come overnight. Through deep renovation of the heart, you and I can become true men.

**Make no mistake: training in the oriented life isn’t easy,  
but it is good and it is always in progress.**

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## ***Time Alone With God ...***

*Father God, what is in the way of me seeing myself as your beloved son?*

*Jesus, in which areas of my life do I need orientation? What is causing my disorientation?*

## 2. What If We're Wrong?

From all that has happened to us in our lifetime, all we have encountered and experienced, we have drawn conclusions about life and how to make it work. We form our conclusions in order to protect and provide for ourselves. Like bricklayers constructing a house, we build our belief system brick by brick from our stockpile of conclusions. We consult our experiences to determine how the world operates, who we are in it, how to avoid pain, when to promote ourselves, and more.

All of these moments, and all the conclusions we draw from them, are stored in a precious place called **the heart**.

***A man's heart is engaged with his belief system regardless of his condition. Whether alive in Christ or spiritually dead, the heart is in constant danger of being compromised and wounded.***

No wonder two kingdoms, Light and Dark, are at war over such a beautiful and vital piece of real estate. Is it any wonder that men's hearts are in serious need of renovation? In our core, our center, are stored the attitudes, beliefs, and conclusions shaped by our experiences. These need God's attention, because we don't get by without being hurt, missed, or wounded in this Larger Story and at this central core of places. It is with good reason that the Scriptures tell us:

***"Guard your heart above all else,  
for it is the source of life." -Proverbs 4:23 HCSB***

What every man has left unguarded for much of his life needs his and God's attention. There are things growing there and wandering about that have gone unattended far too long. There is a remedy for the false-self life from which we all suffer. There is another kind of life, another way of life, and it is almost too good to be true. **Almost.**

It is the life of a son of God, a Beloved Son, one who knows how to fight and knows how to rest, knows how to be loved and, in time, learns how to love. The invitation for a man to see the things within himself that need caring for, and then brings those things to God for treatment and healing, is just another great day of training in the kingdom. It was Francis of Assisi who said:

***"Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives  
to his beloved is that of overcoming self."***

Overcoming the **false** self, to be exact—the outer layers of a man, both the good and the messed-up and sinful, that he mistakes for his deepest identity.

Things began to change in my life when I began to observe my false self. They continued to change when I let my true self, my core identity in Christ, take over my false self. Things needed to change.

Seeing what had to be overcome was a huge step toward actually overcoming it!

**Some things need to be *unlearned*.**

One of the first steps in our training is to circle back to what has already taken place in our story. What we learned along the way and why we have become the way we are requires our focused attention if we are to become truly free. Early in training, regular visits with God to explore one's personal history are standard practice for men to shed the false self and to become true men.

**You can start right now.**

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## ***Time Alone With God ...***

*Father, who delivered the messages and materials that formed the beliefs of my heart?*

*Jesus, what happened to me that has brought on a loss of heart?*

*Holy Spirit, in my life's journey, who inflicted hurt, guilt, fear, or shame? When? Where? Find answers with God to these questions and you will find your false-self, the thing the enemy of your heart controls and the thing that opposes your life with God.*

### 3. What Do You Dream Of?

In his book *Fathered by God*, John Eldredge writes:

“...most men and most boys have no real father able to guide them through the jungles of the masculine journey, and they are—most of us are—unfinished and unfathered men.”

**“Unfinished” and “unfathered”  
are two core ingredients of disorientation.**

One reason I can often recognize another disoriented heart is because I lived in that condition for so many years. It doesn't necessarily mean we had bad fathers. But it may very well mean that our fathers were themselves *unfinished* and *unfathered* men.

One sign of disorientation is a man who settles for being a servant of the kingdom rather than a Warrior for it. Service is not a **bad** thing but it is definitely not a great thing. Men don't dream of growing up to be a servant. They do dream of becoming a man that matters, contributes, provides and protects. Being a son who serves is far greater than being a servant who isn't a son. Service that originates from the wrong source, as it so often does, is in itself enough to anesthetize your soul. Duty-bound serving will take its toll on a man until life is either boring or irrelevant.

***You can be a servant and not a Warrior.  
However, it is impossible to be a Warrior and not be a servant.***

A man must learn the way of **Life**, which is the narrow road, and he must know the voice of the only One who can truly teach him how to be a Warrior. There is a language, an understanding, a path, and an experience that leads to a practice. That practice is a way of Life that every man must learn if he is going to be an oriented man.

One significant question each man must answer: ***Can I trust the heart of my Teacher (Jesus) . . . is my Teacher good?*** No matter how young or old you are, how inexperienced or experienced, there is One who wants to intervene in your life and take you on this quest for good. There is One who wants the significant role of *teaching, loving, initiating, validating, and turning you loose into the world to be dangerous for good.*

There aren't many men in training, collaborating with God, partnering in a glorious alliance of hearts. Look around you. Loss of heart is everywhere. Loss of Life is extensive. The situation is far worse than we thought. But the Life that is available to you—the abundant Life hidden in Christ—is far better than you can possibly imagine. And it's available to all who seek it out.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father God, which one (unfinished or unfathered) has most affected my life story and journey with You?*

*Jesus, is there anything in the way of me believing that I can fully trust you as my Teacher?*



## 4. Serving from Obligation or FREEDOM?

Men are exhausted from being told:

***“If you would just apply yourself, you would be better. But you really won’t get better because you are what you are—a sinner.”***

This paradox, delivered so often to men in the church, tells men they can’t be trusted but need to try harder anyway. Religious leaders who tell born-again men they are simply “sinners and a mess” and who then get mad at those men when they sin and make a mess—hmmm. How is that helpful?

**Until the healing and training of men becomes the central mission of the church and not just one of the many ministries it offers, men aren’t going to find what they need within its walls.**

Programs and service often land on a man like chores: he’s glad to do them (and needs to do them), but he won’t get **Life** from them. When sin plays on a man’s heart with guilt and shame, he will serve in the church out of a sense of obligation rather than freedom. The gospel is about way more than just being forgiven for sin. Wonderful though that is, if we stop there, then we’re vastly short-selling the hugeness, the surpassing glory, of what God has accomplished through Jesus ...

***The gospel is about restoration, a future, and a hope.***

Much of who a man becomes and what he settles for has been “learned” over time and through the shaping experiences and conclusions he makes during his life. Can you imagine the sum of all our conclusions, all the beliefs we hold in our hearts, being accurate? Some of them, yes ... but all? **No way.** We all harbor inaccuracies, lies about ourselves, others, and God, which we have learned to hold on to and all too often hold us. These lies arise from wounding moments, they then become ways in themselves, and our wounded ways infect us and in turn affect others.

It is therefore of paramount importance that we experience healing and treatment so that something glorious and good can replace the pain, guilt, and shame. Just as wounded hearts wound other hearts, so a whole heart can help other hearts become whole as well. The damage is reversed and the wound is redeemed. What was intended for bad, God makes good, so now what is passed down comes from the good stored up in the good and noble man’s heart. That is everyman in Christ’s **TRUE IDENTITY.**

**We need to receive from God the good things we didn’t get and give to him the bad things we did get.**

We need to experience the reality of being Beloved Sons; then we'll be able to take our rightful place in the story God is telling and the part he has created for each man to play. We bear the image of the Beloved Son and in turn are and are becoming Beloved Sons. God wants his image-bearers back so he can heal them, train them, equip them, and then turn them loose into a battle where many are waiting for the sons of God to enter the fight for freedom.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father God, what is in the way of me experiencing the reality of being a Beloved Son?*

*Jesus, what wounds; hurtful moments where shame, guilt and fear were the packages delivered to my heart, are still unresolved in my heart?*

# 5. How Goes Your Comeback?

**Understanding** is a precious thing ...

If someone comes up to me and shoves me down, my initial reaction might be to get up and give him a left hook. But if he then explains that there was a snake behind the log I was about to step over, a quick shift takes place. That person turns from bully to hero in a nanosecond.

***Unfortunately, wounding moments won't be healed or relieved simply by understanding alone, but understanding is a huge start.***

Early in our story, the enemy of our Life gets a jump on the fight for our hearts. Before we even know we are in a fight, darkness is inflicting injury...wounding men at their core as boys. The enemy takes ground in our young heart and uses it against us, both in the moment and also in the future. Growing up, some of us had it **far worse** than others. With our hearts weighted down, enduring and making the best of things often becomes our plan. Even worse than carrying the pack of lies is getting our strength from its contents. Being fueled by our wounds and their messages is a recipe for disaster in a man's life; one our enemy loves to cook up and serve up again and again. The Father God invites a man, his image-bearer, to partner with him, walk with him, trust him, depend on him, and align with him for more. First on the agenda is redeeming the man's past, which is also where the early days of training begin.

**God is guiding each man toward a great comeback.**

God directs the steps. Christ has set the table and much of the work has already been accomplished. But we are to play our part. We have a contribution to make, a corresponding choice, an exercise of our will. What God desires to do first in a man's life is to get out of the way everything that is in the way of receiving his love then he will initiate and validate a man by pouring his love into him. I'm not talking about salvation here ... this is the normal day-to-day invitation of God, "Will you let me love you?"

Doing so, receiving love, settles the man's heart and, in the process, invites him to partner with God in deconstructing the explosive work of the enemy and a man's false self impostor. Oh yes, every man contends with an impostor...at least we hope he contends. Many men are so far integrated with their false self, they can't see true from false...therefore a man needs understanding, **and then the deep work can begin.**

Getting a better understanding of our past sets us up for redemption and our next great step forward: moving into the critical healing and training we all need as Beloved Sons. Once we see the lies we have lived under, we can invite Jesus to treat them. These wounded places foster false guilt, shame, and hatred toward ourselves, others, and ultimately, God. Again, these wounding moments had lessons, we learned something from them and what we learned wasn't good.

**Jesus wants to help us *unlearn*.**

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## ***Time Alone With God ...***

*God, what wounding moments, and the false declarations that rise from them, stand in the way of my freedom? Of my becoming Your Beloved Son?*

*Holy Spirit, what heavy burdens might I be carrying in my heart? What wounding moments and wounding messages can You reveal to me that it's high time I stopped toting around?*

## 6. Is He Good?

Every man has had authority figures in his life, and much of what a man perceives about God and projects onto God was shaped by those authority figures. At the top of every man's "authority list" is his earthly father.

**How your dad handled your heart has shaped you  
and contributed significantly to how you perceive God.**

Starting from varying degrees of inaccuracy, men must journey individually with God to discover both *who they are and who they aren't* and just as importantly...a man must discover both who the Father is and who He isn't.

For one thing, **He isn't our earthly father.** Like us, our fathers were wounded men with wounded hearts. They lived in the same story we live in (the great Love Story set in the midst of a Fierce Battle). I often hear men say, "Dad did the best he could." That can be either an excuse or compassion. It all depends on how well the son knows his father's story. Most thirty to fifty-year-old men don't know their father's story and haven't earned the right to say their dad did his best. What a man discovers from learning his father's story will very often change his heart toward his father. Misinterpretation and excuses can be replaced with understanding and compassion.

Besides our dads, many other authority figures have had access to our hearts along the masculine journey. Some had a positive impact, but there were others who should have provided for us and protected us—but didn't. Tough coaches who punished us with extra wind sprints, challenging teachers who enjoyed pointing out when we answered wrong, preachers yelling at us, older siblings embarrassing us, mothers "surviving" us, so-called friends lost in their own small stories betraying us: all of these reflect a reality I continually stress with a maxim I hope you'll memorize: **wounded hearts wound hearts.**

**If a man lives with an undercurrent of mistrust in the Father in his deep masculine heart, then becoming the Beloved Son will be unattainable, walking with the Father will be impossible, and fighting for the Kingdom will not go well.**

This is where many men's ministries fall woefully short of their mark. Their default is to start with training men what to do (or not to do) and how to live. In other words, they focus on men's behavior rather than on redeeming and reworking the foundation of *who men are and who God is*. If they do address the "who you are," it is usually with a list of biblical truths to memorize or paragraphs of character traits to which we should aspire.

Not all of this is wrong, but it is ill timed, and therefore not helpful. There is a time for such an education, but learning about space does not make one an astronaut, reading about the ocean does not make one a sailor, and memorizing tips and techniques on behavior will not help a man be holy. It puts the proverbial *cart before the horse*.

We've got to set the horse back out in front, beginning with what the **heart** of God is really like. Our greatest obstacle to becoming *Beloved Sons* may well be the lies we've believed about our heavenly Father and the belief that he is anything other than good.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Jesus, where did I get my information about my Heavenly Father?*

*Holy Spirit, what have I believed about God that is directly tied to my relationship with my earthly father?*

*Father God, what if that information was wrong? What if they were actually lies tactfully played to keep me from the one who loves me the most?*

## 7. Intensive Care

Because there were battles in our past that we didn't know how to fight, and no one was there to step in and fight for us, the losses both small and great have had a cumulative effect. But we don't go back in our stories to stay there, stuck in some moment of our personal history. We go back in order to **see** it, understand what happened, exchange it, and receive healing for brokenness and then move forward

It's critical to find out what is in the way of receiving love and then offering love because most men *are* stuck; they carry the past into the present as pieces of a wounded and unsettled heart. Paul Young wrote in his book *The Shack*:

***“Pain has a way of clipping our wings and keeping us from being able to fly . . . and if [it is] left unresolved for very long, you can almost forget that you were ever created to fly in the first place.”***

What is it that a man reaches for to cope and find comfort? Maybe the better question is, what reaches for a man when he is hurting, angry, or overwhelmed? In order to be free, a man must take inventory of the “packages” that have accumulated in the secrecy of his heart. *What are they?* How do the lies they contain shape so much of how a man thinks and what he does?

The question is never whether there are such packages; the question is only: *how many are there and what are their results?* Wounding has made broken pieces of heart the universal experience in every life story. All those wounding moments and broken pieces get carried forward by a boy who is trying his best to become a man and it won't work. Take some time to grab a journal and walk with Jesus back into your personal history, into your pain. Hold Jesus's hand as you search out the wounding packages with Him.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father, when did I receive the deepest wounds in my heart?*

*Holy Spirit, what messages (true or untrue) do they contain?*

*Jesus, I know that right here and now I can exchange them for healing through You.  
Show me how.*



## 8. A Tailor-Made Creature

Love is what every man longs for. A man wants to be seen, wanted, and invited, he wants to belong. Every man deeply desires to offer his strength, to be courageous, and to matter. Love is what every masculine heart longs both to receive and to give; it is what a man was made for, *and* it is the standard by which every man hopes to abide. Love is how men (and women for that matter) bear God's image.

Life goes wrong for a man when he is harshly judged and his hopes of being loved are not met, or worse, are crushed.

**The main ingredients of love are validation, acceptance, worth, belonging and significance.**

The lengths a man will go to in order to obtain these precious ingredients vary both gloriously and dangerously. Love factors into both our greatest triumphs and our worst tragedies. Love will settle a heart and even set it free, but love distorted can and will just as easily arrest and imprison a man. Our greatest wounds of the heart come from the “perversions” of love: jealousy, betrayal, unfaithfulness, and hatred.

The enemy of our Life, of our *Belovedness*, used to enjoy love himself. Satan knows that love is the greatest thing and he knows the power of unconditional love to set hearts free. He is therefore hell-bent on twisting love into something it's not, using all his wiles and every means at his disposal to turn life's wounding moments to his advantage. Satan opportunistically uses those moments to plant his lies in our hearts about love; God's, others', and our own in order to construct a false image that we wear and operate from as if it were true. This false image keeps us from receiving freely and giving real love freely, the way we were created to.

**Every man has a false self, a tailor-made creature constructed through the wounding of his heart.**

Referred to as “the flesh” in the Bible, this *impostor*, this *traitor*, arises out of a man's strategies to make life work. It creates inner programs to avoid pain or obtain pleasure; his methods of *self-protection*, *self-promotion*, and *self-provision*—all of these are the man's elaborate, false-self construction attempting to arrange for love for himself. The enemy is delighted to assist, knowing that the false self (flesh) keeps a man from experiencing True Love and Real Life. That's got to stop. In the fight to reclaim our whole heart we must stop seeking out secondary sources of validation and worth.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father, what do you see in me that isn't of you?*

*Jesus, show me what my false self looks like, how it acts out, defends, promotes?*

*Holy Spirit, show me how I've turned from You for the validation and worth only You can provide.*

## 9. Our Story in the Larger Story

There is a character in the Larger Story you and I are in who is determined to make us lose our way and fail to find our rightful place and our role to play. The great villain opposes our living full and free out of our masculine hearts because he knows the impact we would have if we did.

In order for us to understand the context our personal stories fit into, we need to understand the nature of the Larger Story and its characters. Bunnies and chipmunks suggest quite a different story than do cowboys and Indians, or aliens and Jedis, or rangers from the North and orcs from Isengard. The relationship between the characters in the story and the context of the story are inseparable. And it is here that men suffer from a great blind spot in their masculine journey.

It is as if our enemy has pledged, ***We must deceive them, lie to them about where they are and what Life is really about. We must shift the context of their lives a few degrees so they will never find rest for their hearts nor step into the true roles that are theirs to play. We must blind them to the One who made them and loves them by offering the illusion of control and the life goal of comfort and ease—a life they will settle for and yet can never truly have.***

Getting men to *settle* for a smaller story is a condition, a weakness with which the enemy has had a field day. It's like **kryptonite**. In his essay, *This World: Playground or Battlefield*, A. W. Tozer wrote:

***“The idea that this world is a playground instead of a battleground has now been accepted in practice by the vast majority of Christians. A right view of God and the world to come requires that we have a right view of the world in which we live and of our relationship to it. So much depends upon this that we cannot afford to be careless about it.”***

The Life we are meant for, the one granted to us by God, is both fragile and glorious. It must be understood, learned, and practiced. Charles E. Fuller, founder of Fuller Seminary, once said:

***“Fellowship with God means warfare with the world.”***

Similarly, Oswald Chambers wrote:

***“Life without war is impossible either in nature or in grace. I must learn to fight against and overcome the things that come against me, and in that way produce the balance of holiness. Then it becomes a delight to meet opposition.”***

Our enemies are ancient, ruthless, and diabolical, and they are opposed to everything good in us and in this world. They are not to be feared, but they are to be understood and respected. Jesus mounted a revolution against them on our behalf, and now he commissions us to continue his fight for our hearts and the hearts of others.

Men cannot join Jesus in bringing in the Kingdom and advancing freedom, nor caring for the injured and releasing those who are bound by being “pacifists.” Jesus wasn’t one, nor should we be. He is the Prince of Peace; it is a peace that is won. It is a peace on the other side of battle, worth fighting for and worth fighting to keep.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father God, what is in the way of me understanding my role in the Larger Story?*

*Jesus, where have I settled for a smaller story? Is there some (positive or negative) part of my story where I have missed the significance of what's really going on?*

*Holy Spirit, bring conviction to me in the areas of my life where I've not fought my own selfishness or the tricks of Satan.*

# 10. Basic Training

## **Basic Training 1: Staying Connected to the King**

The first and most essential principle of our training is this: we must stay intimately connected to the King—we in him and he in us. Whatever else happens or doesn't happen, Warriors stay close to their King.

Jesus is where our Life is and where it comes from. Through his own deeply connected relationship with the Father, Jesus showed us how we, in turn, can live our lives in a similar connected relationship with the Father, and why we must. And he removed everything that impeded our intimacy with him and the Father (His prayer in John 17 confirms it).

## **Basic Training 2: Fighting for Freedom**

Setting captive hearts free is no mere abstraction. It's as real as the friend who struggles with alcoholism, the wife who bears the wounds of childhood sexual abuse, or the guy two seats over in church who is contemplating suicide. They're why we fight: because they're in pain, bound and brutalized by an enemy they can't see in a war they don't comprehend. And a Warrior well knows, "*That used to be me.*" And feels compassion to those still broken or bound.

## **Basic Training 3: Seeing with the Eyes of Your Heart**

Through Christ and in Christ we are free, yet we live with a gravitational pull toward the old ways of the old nature. So after our initial healing from our wounds (during which we confess and repent as often as we need to), we continue to vigilantly engage our will and say no to whatever our enemy throws at us that will impede our freedom.

We are trained as our Father's *Beloved Sons* to see, listen, and discern between the presence and voices of two kingdoms: Life and death. This is what the Father is up to in the hearts and lives of his *Beloved Sons*. It is what Jesus practiced, and so must we.

## **Basic Training 4: Listening and Patience**

It's all training: what to do, what not to do, and learning how to exercise care in drawing conclusions. The false self is quick to run crazy commentary of how we should act, react, judge, or accuse. Every moment consists of a multitude of variables, it's never just one thing.

The Heart of a Warrior must learn that God is good and is up to good in his life and in the lives of others. The Father's aim is to deploy his *Beloved Sons* into many different situations where he wants a Kingdom presence. Learning how to be that presence takes time.

## Basic Training 5: Solitude and Cunning

Being still (Psalm 46:10) is a daily practice of a Warrior that is uncommon to most men. The Message version of the Bible does a beautiful job of rendering Jesus' instructions about praying in solitude:

***Here's what I want you to do: find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.***  
**- Matthew 6:6 (MSG)**

Only by practicing stillness aggressively, pushing all the clamor and busyness of life aside, can a man truly experience God. In the still and quiet, discernment is learned so that in the heart of the battle it can be practiced. If a man can't practice it when things are still, there is no way he will be able to do so when the arrows are flying.

## Basic Training 6: Moving in Glory

The letters of Peter, James, John, and Paul to first-century believers were all written with a common expectation: those who read them would “get better” because they were oriented and equipped to get better. The new believers' old hearts of stone (Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 11:19) had been replaced with new ones (Jeremiah 24:7; Ezekiel 18:31). Now, at the center of their being, the heart, they were made *noble and good* (Luke 8:15).

So it is with us as well! Now we too are to learn how to live our lives out of the good heart within us. Our Father invites us to get better, to become more—more loving, more kind, more patient, more like Jesus in thought, words and deeds, more who we truly are as Beloved Sons.

## Basic Training 7: Love

Love is what we were made for, and in love God restores us. Our job as men is first to receive and experience God and then offer him to others—because he is love. Love is the family business of the kingdom. It will take some training, and everything we have and everything we are as men, to protect love and see it done. Love will not happen without a fight. If we fight for it, the outcome is certain. He became like us (sinful man) so we could become like him (glorious ones, Romans 8).

For most of our lives, as with all those lives around us, we have experienced love so “conditionally” that the vital move toward *unconditional love will take time*. A man can't just buckle down and make it happen in a moment. *Love is something that happens to a man and then settles the heart within him.* **What does that love look like? Jesus. Jesus!**

***The Heart of a Warrior 14-Day Journey is comprised of excerpts and quotes from The Heart of a Warrior book. To purchase your copy and other resources visit [heartofawarriorbook.com](http://heartofawarriorbook.com).***

# 11. Advanced Training

Training is essential for the Apprentice of Jesus ...

*Now every athlete who [goes into training and] competes in the games is disciplined and exercises self-control in all things. They do it to win a crown that withers, but we [do it to receive] an imperishable [crown that cannot wither]. -1 Corinthians 9:25 (AMP) Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. -Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)*

*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. -Hebrews 5:14 (NIV)*

*For physical training is of some value, but godliness (spiritual training) is of value in everything and in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and for the life to come. -1 Timothy 4:8 (AMP)*

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. -2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)*

*If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. -James 1:5 (MSG)*

I wonder: how many training moments I have misclassified as *inconvenient, punishment, bad luck, my fault or someone else's*? I am convinced that Jesus wants to redeem **all** such moments. Learning how to get the best out of training moments takes time. One day you don't know how; the next, you do. All the days leading up to when the old gives way to the new, **matter**. It is over time that training pays off.

There was a time when I didn't understand that much of what God is up to in my training journey. I thought it was more about policing me, waiting for me to step out of line so he could dispense the proper punishment. This false belief had **great power** in my life. It was a false gospel that made sin central and punishment primary. Those two ingredients do not make for intimacy and didn't make for a very good version of me.

Under that *old belief* system, when hardships or inconveniences arose in my life, I was certain God was using them to punish me or get even. I see it all as training now. If you understand the heart of the Father and what he is really up to in your own heart, then you also understand what he is preparing and readying you for: **MORE!** It is why the art of *living curiously* is so helpful to the Warrior in training. Asking God questions in prayer puts him in the rightful place of Teacher and us in the safest place, student.

If God is going to be *more* and do *more* in your life, then it's critical that he have greater access to your heart. Living oblivious to the heart and the Larger Story and how it works is a guarantee for being a casualty, not a Warrior.

In order to renovate your heart, Jesus will have you revisit your belief system. **What you see, hear and conclude ... what you believe in any and every situation matters... It has authority in your life!**

But that's okay. Just wait until you see the results! The Warrior cannot and does not force his way, nor can he make someone change. He only offers whom he is and what he knows—a dangerous prospect, because you never know how another image bearer will respond. You never know who is for or who will be against a man with a settled heart. Jesus didn't win them all, and neither will you.

The question for an oriented man is:

***How will you live, knowing what you know,  
among others who don't?***

The answer: Patiently. Kindly. Generously. Lovingly. And *Uncompromisingly*. This is what Jesus modeled, and this is the ***Life in which he invites us to share.***



# 12. First Things First

Most of boyhood is a hands-on learning experience of *how to do and how not to do*. Watching someone else do something, like watching my dad hammering a nail or painting a chair, was never fun, but it was part of my learning curriculum. Whenever he turned that hammer over to me and said, “You give it a whack,” I grinned from ear to ear.

Try it with any boy or girl under the age of eleven and you’ll see. Crack and whisk an egg with a young heart looking on, then casually drop the invitation “You want to try?” and watch what happens next. Sometimes the learning proposition is that life is grand and beautiful. Other times, the hammer hits the thumb or the eggs splatter on the floor.

The apostle Paul wrote:

***The world is unprincipled. It’s dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn’t fight fair. But we don’t live or fight our battles that way— never have and never will. The tools of our trade aren’t for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture. We use our powerful God-tools for [1] smashing warped philosophies, [2] tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, [3] fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity. -2 Corinthians 10:3–6 (MSG)***

Did you see the 1- 2- 3? **Read it again.**

Far too many men believe their mission is to fight for other peoples’ lives. I believe Paul is talking about the “1, 2, 3” as the mission of a man’s own comeback- the fight for his **own heart**. Walking with God to smash my own warped philosophies helps me to tear down the truth barriers in my heart, and to restructure my life in alignment with that of Christ’s.

The “School of Hard Knocks” has a high tuition. I hear stories every day of the mistakes people make and their hopes of recovering. Some mistakes are innocent enough, casual mishaps or the messy debris of an unfocused moment. Other mistakes can take months, even a lifetime, to repair. We’ve all heard the lines and maybe even said them ourselves:

***“I only did it once.”***  
***“Never again.”***  
***“I wish someone had told me.”***  
***“I should’ve listened to my ... ”***

These are not promising ways to begin a story.

Think back on your life. What moments of bad judgment or split-second miscalculations have led to wounds of your heart or those you love?

I have a history of casualties due to impulsivity, misunderstanding, or simply being at the wrong place spiritually at the wrong time physically. It's what can happen when a Warrior helps others sort through their stories, helps in uncovering the lies, and escorts a heart to healing.

The *rescue, redemption, and restoration* of any man, and the *validation, acceptance, worth, belonging* and *significance* he continues to seek in his story, is an incredible experience in which to play a part is why a man's first mission and training is to get his heart back... journeying with Jesus through his past in order to partner with Jesus for the future— first the man's own future, then that of others.

It's an overwhelming proposition, inviting us to settle into God ... always.

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## ***Time Alone With God ...***

*Father God, when have I focused on Your love of others more than of me and set Your pursuit of my heart to the side?*

*Jesus, what barriers to the truth are residing in my heart?*

# 13. Loving a Woman

If the masculine heart is opposed, the feminine heart is all-out assaulted. Satan comes at a woman's glory with a **jealous and vengeful hatred**. And it makes sense. The archangel, Lucifer, was the strongest and most beautiful of all created beings. He was the reigning general of the angel armies—until he went astray. Why did he go astray? **Jealousy**.

Eve was the crown of creation. Beautiful and strong. Lucifer did not want to share the glory of God with God's new creations, man and woman. Lucifer was unwilling to hand over his crown to Eve, the beautiful image-bearer of God. The **mutiny** was Lucifer's idea. And the book of Revelation (12:7) tells us that now in a new role and playing a new part in the story, Satan, the ol' dragon, is hurled to earth and continues his jealous campaign of hatred, making war against the Sons of God (Revelation 12:17). The prince of this dark world is deemed a liar, a villain who wants to **steal** the crown back, **kill** the image-bearers, and **destroy** love.

And now for the feminine heart: achieving the world's standard of womanliness is utterly exhausting for women—always striving and yet never measuring up.

***If you know the glory of your wife's or daughter's heart—what they love to do, what they are passionate about, what makes them come alive, what each one uniquely brings to the kingdom—then you know what the enemy is up to in their lives.***

The question is, *do you know, do you see, will you* invite and validate those things in her heart? You must know her: each of her stories, her journeys of heart, but most men don't. What happened to her? Men's wounds and those of our wives mixed together making for the perfect storm. Women cannot turn to us for *healing* just like we cannot turn to them. We cannot heal one another. Love each other, yes; heal, no. That is God's department.

God will often partner with a man by giving him a message of truth to deliver to a wounded feminine heart, **but the man never heals her**, nor can she ever be his source of healing. Just as neither image-bearer, man nor woman, can be the primary source of life for one another, there must be someone else they turn to for Life.

***Our hearts are far too needy to put that kind of pressure and demand on one another.***

You must know, the daughters of Eve hold a special place in the Larger Story. They are in our story and lives for a very important reason...God has them in our lives to teach us how to love. As men, we can play an important part of their healing journey, or we can aid the enemy in wounding them. When God lovingly allows us to see the wounds women bear—the lies, brokenness, and false self they carry within themselves—what then? How are we to help the feminine heart be free?

The feminine heart, the deepest and truest thing about a woman, was designed to be loved, pursued, delighted in, enjoyed, protected, and fought for. Like us, women long to be loved—to be the Beloved Daughters, to know that God sees them and **loves what he sees**. Every feminine heart on the planet desperately needs to experience God's love and possess it as her own. If a woman does, it will change everything.

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Father God, when have I turned to the women in my life to provide the healing only You can provide?*

*Jesus, what wounds or hurtful moments are affecting my wife's (daughter's, mother's...) ability to know You? To know that she is Beloved?*

*Holy Spirit, reveal to me what I need to apologize for, accept responsibility for and seek forgiveness for from the women in my life (living or dead).*

# 14. Following the King

Remember, every Warrior requires two things greater than himself to keep him on the path of becoming himself:

He needs a cause worth living and dying for, and ...  
he needs a king to love and a king who loves him back—one who loves first and loves the most, and to whom the man can turn for counsel, guidance, and training.

Great kings lead by example, inspiring and imparting to their men power and authority when their men are ready to wield it. ***The foundation of the relationship between a king and his men is trust, love, admiration and respect.*** When a man has these two interlocking requirements; a cause and a king, he is ready to be turned loose, deployed back into the Story. He is ready to be ***dangerous for good.***

The King of we “small-k” kings heals, settles, and trains Beloved Sons. And in the same way a mission finds us, the King and the cause find the man. They come provoking, inviting, intriguing, and even disrupting a man. They come with answers to a man’s questions:

***Do you see me?  
Am I worthy?  
Am I strong?  
Can I come through?***

***The Father’s answers are yes, yes, yes and YES.***

A man longs to hear these answers, and when he does, his heart is both settled and inspired. The relief this can bring is tremendous. Since every man has a unique and personal path to hearing the Father’s answers, the eventual answer “yes” may be the same but it will be delivered at tailored times for each man. This relieves us from being in charge of one another (you’re not the boss of me, nor I you). What we **can** do for our brothers (and sisters) is lovingly point one another to *the* King, encourage one another with his cause, and walk as friends on the journey.

Friendship bears a great fruit: accountability. Without friendship, accountability becomes just a chore or a job. Few men receive Life from a chore, but from a friend—that is a different story. Many “accountability” arrangements fail for lack of real friendship; there’s no time invested or trust earned in one another’s life. The result is just two men policing each other. And who wants to be policed?

The Warrior doesn’t go to others to have his heart policed or the questions of his deep masculine heart answered. The weighty answers come from his Father, his King, and by the Spirit that dwells strong within him.

This is an enormous and fundamental shift for a man, changing to whom he goes with questions about his worth and ability.

***As long as a man seeks validating answers from others (a woman, his kids, or other men), a man is vulnerable to the enemy (Satan) using anyone, but if his source for validation and affirmation is God, then the answers he receives are final, transformational, and settling for the man's heart.***

A *settled heart* is a declaration that a man is ready to re-enter the Story. His Warrior Heart will then be tried and strengthened through battle. We see this principle at work all through the chapters in the book of Acts. The disciples are settled, trained, and initiated. Then they are deployed, stepping into the fray to ensure that the freedom campaign, the cause of their King, *advances*. It doesn't take long before the first casualty is recorded, a beautiful heart named Stephen. He knows the truth, tells the truth, and just like his King, those who hate the truth kill him. ***But the truth can't be killed.***

Where there is persecution, hearts are convicted of the truth. When truth convicts hearts, change occurs. And when change occurs, persecution comes. The friends of Jesus experienced who he truly was and were changed. Equipped with their convictions, they were then deployed into the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8) with their King's promise, power and presence, telling them "I am with you always."

The effect of it all reminds me of a quote I recently heard, ***"Be the kind of man that when your feet hit the floor in the morning, the Devil says, 'Oh crap, he's up.'"***

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## **Time Alone With God ...**

*Jesus, do I know that the answers to the questions "Do you see me? Am I worthy? Am I strong? Can I come through?" are all a resounding "YES"? Why or why not?*

**PRAY:** *Holy Spirit, I KNOW You will give me the strength to fight the battle well and to be dangerous for good in my day-to-day life. Show me where I still need to allow You to work in my heart, how to fight for the hearts of others (when I'm ready), and the courage to fight from a settled heart. Amen!*

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