



the
WARRIOR'S
way

A 7-Day Plan



The Warrior's Way

A 7-Day Devotional

Heart, Life, and Kingdom ...

Three Keys to Engaging the Larger Story

by Michael Thompson

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1. Introduction

There is "A Way" things work.

There is a way a toaster works, a computer, just as there is a way an airline pilot, an accountant or an athlete works. Associated with how something works, whether a tool or a role or job, there are significant, pertinent and specific terms associated. Mechanics have a language to themselves as do engineers. Words are always significant to whatever role it is you are looking at. Scientists speak a little differently than Poets, hopefully you get the point.

When you look at the Life of Jesus, is there anything fierce about it? Anything courageous? Anything laser focused or intentional? Anything that appears to be controversial?

The answer is yes, Yes, YES and YES!!!

Now, I'm not saying we set out to be these things. We won't have to do that if we recover something else. If we recover this something else, you won't have to recover it, Jesus will entrust it to you more and more. It's the way the Kingdom works,

"Faithful with a little and you will be given more."
-Luke 16:10

If the day to day of the 1st Century can have a whole group of religious folks, the Jews, off base, out of alignment and distanced from the way of God then I don't believe we have a hall pass on this thing. No, the enemy of our hearts is too good for that and oh yes, there is an enemy in our story. The fact that few know how this Love Story and Battle really work is testimony to reason we have the vast majority of Christ followers disoriented and unable to offer the world a life of substance, a life that looks as is different from those who don't yet have Christ.

If you are now wondering, "*Am I one of these saved people that are lost?*"

The answer is yes, if you felt or asked that question then you don't yet know and haven't experienced *the Warrior's Way*.

What IF everything could change? What if in a few days you could begin an exploration of an orientation that would, over time and with God's help of course, change everything. Jesus bestowed on his friends a dangerous presence: they were ***dangerous for good!*** Warriors in the Kingdom of Christ with Whole Hearts, Full Lives and a Kingdom Authority are truly dangerous men and women.

In this 7-day devotional we will explore the words associated with a Beloved Son or Daughter of God caught up in the Larger Story God is authoring; the greatest love

story set in the midst of the fiercest battle. An Epic story is what we find ourselves in the midst of and yet, most people, Christ-Believers included don't live that way.

The disciples of Jesus learned a certain way to live, they learned a language, a set of terms specific to their roles as His apprentices in the Kingdom. For the most part, these critical and defining terms have been lost and therefore the way *to live* has also been lost, the way of a Christ follower... nothing less than the way of a Beloved Son Warrior man or Beloved Daughter Warrior woman of God.

If we are ever going to live free, then we must understand how this story works, how authority works and who has it in our lives. Believe lies and you live compromised. Believe the truth and you are set free.

What do you make of Paul's warning in Ephesians 5:15-17? ...

Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], [a]making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil. Therefore do not be foolish and thoughtless, but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is.

-Ephesians 5:15-17 AMP

Time Alone With God ...

Do you believe that passage has expired or that it is appropriate for today? How so?

What if there was something specific to walking with God that you have yet to discover? Is there more? Could this be part of a way that has yet to be explored, discovered, enjoyed by your heart?

2. Where Are We?

Context/environment of any story gives you major clues to the characters in the story.

For example, if I say, "The 100 Acre Wood" (the environment/context of a story), you know the characters?...

Winnie the Pooh, Piglet, Tigger...

If I say, "Galaxies far, far away," then you know we are talking about

Jedi, the Dark Side, deathstars, and storm-troopers ...

Dodge City and the O.K. Corral ...

Middle Earth ...

Each of these "places", each environment, brings a *context* to the story and therefore what the characters are like and the way the characters are to live within that particular story. Once in a while a character is transported into a different world and the story seems to always turn to that character adapting to his or her surroundings. Nothing could be *more true* for us and yet very, very, few believers ever step up and adapt well to the true (not new) surroundings.

If we are unaware or naïve, well, what happens to characters in any story who live that way? They are either casualties, victims, captured or they die.

We live outside the Garden, we live in the in-between of Christ's comings. We fell and God comes in Jesus first coming to rescue, redeem and restore and what of the story when Christ comes again? Look at the context of the story. We turn to Revelation 19:11-16 ...

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who was riding it is called Faithful and True (trustworthy, loyal, incorruptible, steady), and in righteousness He judges and wages war [on the rebellious nations]. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many royal crowns; and He has a name inscribed [on Him] which no one knows or understands except Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, dressed in fine linen, [dazzling] white and clean, followed Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword (His word) with which He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He will tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty [in judgment of the rebellious world]. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name inscribed, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

-Revelation 19:11-16 AMP

What kind of story are we in?

If this is how Jesus is coming back then the posture of the story we live in, the context of the Larger Story in which we find ourselves in right now, is War!

We desperately NEED to be *oriented*, able to rightfully, accurately, truthfully discern what is

going on around us and absolutely become skilled at discerning what is going on inside of us. There is an unholy trinity: Satan and this Fallen World operating outside and the brutal False-Self/Flesh and its operation in our inner world.

It's time we step out of naïve and into awareness that leads to healing. The Holy Spirit giving us eyes to see and ears to hear so we can engage with whole **Hearts** into this battle and what is all about ... **Life!** And living wholehearted in the Kingdom of God whose citizenship has been bestowed on the sons and daughters of God and therefore Christ's power and authority given to us in which to walk ...

Jesus came up and said to them, "All authority (all power of absolute rule) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations [help the people to learn of Me, believe in Me, and obey My words], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always [remaining with you perpetually—regardless of circumstance, and on every occasion], even to the end of the age." -Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus gives us, sends us out with, His power and authority ... we must gonna need it! But do we know how to wield it?

How would you describe the story in which you have been living?

How do you see the Gospels? ... as a great revolution filled with battle, warfare and the death of the one leading it (which led to His resurrection by the way)?

It was Phillip Yancey who wrote about this great revolutionary man in his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*,

You don't kill Mr. Rogers or Captain Kangaroo ... a nice guy.

He is right ... You don't kill someone for being a nice guy, you kill someone on a cross who is a threat, who is your enemy, who is in the way of you're position and threatens your power. Quite a plot unfolded against Jesus. And to imagine it was all according to the Father's plan of revolution.

Our Life with God is violently opposed and a Warrior's way is needed to not only survive but to live abundant and full, playing our part in the Larger Story. Like everything in this life, we learn it, we learn how to play our part from the one who is in control of both the context and the characters. *So let the training begin!*

Time Alone With God ...

What if you had a power and authority in your life, in this story and never or seldom have wielded it? How would you feel? What would you do?

***The Warrior's Way* devotional is written by Michael Thompson, author of the books *The Heart of a Warrior* and *Search and Rescue*. To purchase your copy and other resources visit zoweh.org.**

3. The Heart

***Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.
-Proverbs 4:23***

***If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.
-Romans 10:9-10***

The heart is central. This piece of real estate is where our true self resides. It has become our common practice to say, rightfully, "Invite Christ into your *heart*." Yet we often miss the *theo*-logical implications of that saying. Would Christ, through the Holy Spirit, dwell in anything that is evil, wicked, corrupt or heinous? Never! So if he dwells in us, then what does that tell us about our hearts?

We have been sold the lie that our hearts are wicked. But that's not what the Bible says about men who have been born anew in Christ.

The Bible doesn't say, "Love the Lord your God with all your *evil* heart" (Matthew 22:37).

It doesn't say, "I trust in your unfailing love; my *wicked* heart rejoices in your salvation" (Psalm 13:5).

It doesn't say, "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the *corrupted* heart" (1 Peter 1:22).

It doesn't say, "Believe in your *heinous* heart" (Romans 10:9).

It says, "I will give you a **new** heart" (Ezekiel. 36:26).

And that is exactly what we need ... a NEW Heart ... one that is calibrated to God, a Heart in which He inhabits. His residence within our hearts makes our hearts NEW!!!

Time Alone With God ...

What is have you believed about your heart?

Once you accept Christ, invite Him in, do you still believe you have a bad heart?

How can we live the Life Christ has given us if we are still bad?

4. The NEW Heart!

We are happiest when we are loving or being loved.

Love is what we were made for, love is what we are meant for, and Love is what God is all about. And we need a heart in order to love and receive love. That is why we desperately needed Jesus to change our hearts, make them new. Before he did, the news about our heart was bad:

***“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”
-Jeremiah 17:9***

After seven chapters in Jeremiah, God had very good news indeed concerning our heart:

***“I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.”
-Jeremiah. 24:7***

Have you ever seen the “Before and After” pictures? With either weight loss or surgeries or hair or makeup. Before: bad news, After: good news. Before Christ, after Christ ...

Before Ezekiel. 14:3:

“Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces.”

After Ezekiel. 36:26:

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Knowing just how wonderful this news about our new heart, how thorough the transformation is through Christ, the apostle Paul prayed this prayer:

I pray that out of his glorious riches [the Father] may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. -Ephesians 3:16–18

God, actually takes up residence in the holy of holies deep within us... our heart. He makes it new and is committed to doing a work with us and for us from the inside out. The really beautiful thing is, at this inner being, we are transformed and therefore CAN

live a Christ life. We're not wicked or evil ... that is *before*. We live in the *after* and we are no longer sinners, sin is not the truest things about us, that was *before*, we are now sons and daughters of the most high God and learning how to live that way. This is a really, really good *after*.

Time Alone With God ...

What does it mean to know that at your core, you have the equipment (a new heart) to live "newly"?

How does being transformed by Christ and invited to live that way overshadow the lie that you are still a sinner?

If you are still just a sinner, then what is the big deal about sinning? You're just doing what you are. BUT if you are something else entirely, a Son, then the invitation is to live like one.

5. The Life

You make known to me the path of Life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
-Psalm 16:11

"I am the way and the truth and the Life."
-Jesus, John 14:6

In his classic book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis speaks of two distinct and very different kinds of life: biological life and spiritual life.

In reality, the difference between Biological life and spiritual life is so important that I am going to give them two distinct names. The Biological sort which comes to us through Nature, and which (like everything else in Nature) is always tending to run down and decay so that it can only be kept up by incessant subsidies from Nature in the form of air, water, food, etc., is Bios. The Spiritual life which is in God from all eternity, and which made the whole natural universe, is Zoe [pronounced zow'-eh]. Bios has, to be sure, a certain shadowy or symbolic resemblance to Zoe: but only the sort of resemblance there is between a photo and a place, or a statue and a man. A man who changed from having Bios to having Zoe would have gone through as big a change as a statue which changed from being carved stone to being a real man.

And that is precisely what Christianity is about. This world is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statues and there is a rumor going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life.

Lewis is saying there is a type of life worth searching for, worth hoping for: Zoe life - or Zoweh, my rendering of the pronunciation, reflected and pronounced in the name Yaweh.

Zoweh was the thing that motivated Jesus's whole ministry:

"I came that they might have Life [Zoweh] and have it to the full."
-John 10:10

It was the reason why the apostle John wrote his gospel:

These [stories and sayings of Jesus] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life [Zoweh] in his name.
-John 20:31

To the Roman believers, the apostle Paul had this to say:

***The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life [Zoweh] and peace. . . . You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.
-Romans 8:6, 9***

And in his second letter to the young pastor Timothy, Paul wrote:

***Our Savior, Christ Jesus . . . has destroyed death and has brought life [Zoweh] and immortality to light through the gospel.
-2 Timothy 1:10***

Love and Life, the offer of the Gospel. Sure we get the wonderful grace and never ending forgiveness but both grace and forgiveness are so we can Live ... live Loved and that is the greatest Life of all.

Time Alone With God ...

How have you experienced God's Love?

How, when and where has He demonstrated you are one of His favorite image bearers?

6. The Kingdom

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.
-Psalm 103:9

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."
-Matthew 4:17

The new, good heart God has given you and the life he intends for you come together and find their purpose in God's *Kingdom*. So in order to understand your *heart* and *life*, you need to know what that *Kingdom* is about. Jesus majors on the subject; it is mentioned 119 times in ninety chapters of the redemption story recorded by four separate gospel writers.

God's Kingdom is not a democracy. We do not get a vote. Not in how it all works anyway. We do get a vote in whether or not we believe how it works, who we are in it, and who God truly is. Our wills matter - they matter a heck of a lot. But his will matters most, and he created the whole thing with the reference point of *Kingdom*.

Jesus talked about how the kingdom works more than any other component in the Larger Story. And why wouldn't he? He's the King of kings. The more your spiritual eyes grow, the more Jesus will show you the kingdom way. It's what He does; it's what He did. One of his favorite phrases in the Gospels is, "The Kingdom of heaven is like ..."
In Matthew, Jesus compares the Kingdom of heaven to ...

a man who sowed good seed in his field (13:34).

a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field (v. 31).

yeast that a woman took and mixed into flour until it worked all through the dough (v. 31).

a merchant looking for fine pearls (v. 45).

the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old (v. 52).

a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants (18:23).

a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son (22:2).

When we get hold of this truth trinity of *Heart, Life, and Kingdom* - or when it gets hold of us - the tide changes. The momentum in our life shifts, and the lost ground of our hearts will certainly be taken back. We become *more* - because the deepest needs

of our heart are met in abundant supply. We find clarity and understanding and an invitation in Proverbs 19:2 says, *“Desire without knowledge is not good - how much more will hasty feet miss the way!”* And the converse is also true. If we will invest the time to learn, we will see more and hear more. When we begin to see and hear more, we will experience that God is more, the story is more, and we are more. And once we become more, everything changes.

We're fighting a new war. The *Love* and the *Life* are looking for you, and they are God himself. He is the author of Life, and He is Love - and he wants you.

Time Alone With God ...

How does seeing the Christian life as a battle for the heart invite you to live?

Kingdom is how Jesus talked about this life, a way in which to see, hear and orient our hearts. When do you most often exercise your rights, privileges and responsibilities as a Kingdom citizen?

7. The Great Mission

The great mission of the Kingdom is upon us ... *Freedom*.

We are in deep need of a *reformation*. Jesus himself set the first one in motion; Martin Luther ran point on the second; now it's time for the third! Experiencing *who we are, where we are, and the good God is up to in our lives* is exactly the ingredients of orientation that re-form us. One step at a time, encountering and experiencing the Love and Life of God, this restoration of our true selves, is what will lead to the next great reformation.

Not all will listen; not all will want it.

They didn't in Jesus' day, nor did they during Luther's, and they won't today. But convincing conversions aren't as affective as convincing lives.

And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By looking within ourselves: are we really trying to do what he wants us to?

-1 John 2:3

How does He want us to live?...

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,

if you love one another.

-Jesus, John 13:34-35

Are Christ's apprentices able to live like Christ?... fiercely, courageously, compassionately and intimately. Conversions and ministry aren't the goal; *intimacy is!* - intimacy with the Father. Conversions and ministry are the fruit.

Through that intimacy, Jesus showed us what we can believe and how that believing the truth deep in our hearts make us free and will set us free.

Galatians 5:1...

It is for FREEDOM that Christ has set us free.

And living free is the best way to offer freedom.

For those who know there must be *more* - those who desire, who long, who want, who thirst - the King is sure to show the path and deploy a guide. Those men won't have to be converted, they'll just need to be shown the Warrior Way, how to live full and abundantly from the *Heart, for the Life, and in the Kingdom*.

Those who don't know, who haven't experienced Heart, Life and Kingdom will need to be shown the Warrior Way by one who simply lives it out and offers it when another is ready.

Time Alone With God ...

Why is Freedom the mission of the Kingdom of God?

What does Love have to do with Freedom?

How does Freedom affect how we can Live?

What are the greatest threats to your liberated and new heart? How does the enemy come to steal, kill and destroy your Freedom?

THE HE Art OF A WARRIOR



BEFORE YOU CAN BECOME THE
WARRIOR

YOU MUST BECOME THE

Beloved Son

MICHAEL THOMPSON

BOOK AND SMALL GROUP RESOURCES



THE HE Art OF A WARRIOR

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