

Wild at Heart – is this God's will?

I perceive two problematic themes running through "Wild at Heart".

First is the idea that God's plan for a man is adventure. Several men who are good friends and mature Christians have told me this was their major (and favorable, to my surprise) reaction to this book. Throughout the book, Eldredge brings in the word "dangerous", implying that it's a major component in God's life as well as man's. While Eldredge can be assumed to be speaking metaphorically about the Lord, it's a stupid thing to say about the omni powerful God of the universe. He who is and was and ever shall be, Who holds all of His creation together by His own will – He faces no danger! Who can successfully oppose Him? I believe that if a man follows God's will, he will experience adventure, but said adventure isn't the point. This viewpoint is flawed because it is focused on man, not God.

When I was in the army, we who were leaders were told by bureaucrats that the number 1 priority of a training mission was safety. Hogwash! If safety was #1, we would have stayed in bed. It's important, but not the REASON for the mission.

Our REASON for being here on planet Earth is to glorify God. For some, that means lying in bed with sickness praying daily for the saints. For others, it means torture and death in the jungle of Ecuador. The route taken, and the adventure quotient therein, is not the reason for the trip (life). Lives drawn to Christ are the measure of success, which we will not be able to adequately discern until after the "adventure." To use our own sense of satisfying adventure as the indication of being in God's will tends to put self on the throne rather than God. Just as any self-centered perspective will.

We who are earth-bound cannot glorify God unless we love Him – the greatest commandment which fulfills the entire law. Throughout scripture, obedience to God is the call, better than sacrifice, more important than winning wars – the greatest adventure possible for humans. Three times in John 14 Christ, himself tells us that IF we love Him we will obey Him. Obedience leads to holiness. Obedience pleases the Father. Obedience demonstrates our love for Him.

Second is the recurring reference to Robert Bly, of "naked men beating drums in the forest" fame, with an implicit endorsement of this man without any qualifications at all. Bly is a pagan (or was when he wrote "Iron John") and Christians must always be careful about recommending non-biblical sources. There are more than enough Christian examples of men that God has provided; no need to use men that Satan has provided (let us not forget that there is no demilitarized zone in the spiritual war Christ described.)

Here then are my specific notes:

Pg 48 - "Desire reveals design." So many desires are the product of a wicked heart and do not reveal God's design for man. This generalization is too dangerous (there's that word again!) to be left alone. Does a man's heart ever desire sex with a woman to whom he is not married? This basic desire is the basis for what I estimate to be well over half of the advertising in our country. This desire does not reveal God's design for any man.

pg 79, second paragraph: "Turn the other cheek" equates to "stripping him of his strength." Therefore, boys ought to be taught to fight back, Eldredge says. 'Tis true that there are times when a boy must fight back, but this is man's teaching, not Christ's. Eldredge says, "Jesus was able to retaliate ... but He chose not to." He fails to note that THIS is the definition of masculinity, and then tells men that because Jesus turned the other cheek, our sons must NOT – and should fight back. How can a rational person cite the teaching of Christ (turn the other cheek) as a basis for doing the opposite? Eldredge sets up two extremes and declares one of them to be God's

will. Life ain't that simple. Boys must be taught to discern when they must fight back and how to turn the other cheek. The more mature one becomes, the more turning of the cheek occurs.

pg 87, "The enemy fears you!" Yeah, right - a Bob Larson view. In truth, the enemy fears Christ in me; he isn't impressed with me at all. So many teach the same lie as this without thinking about the important distinction. We are to worship the Lord our God with our whole heart, strength, soul, and MIND. We are to test all things, not accept a few things which sound good.

pg 115, "God in His humility gave us Eve." This made me wretch. The only time God is recorded in scripture as being humble is when He took on human form and Christ submitted Himself to the Father in all things. God the Father, humble? Not in my Bible! I don't even know why Eldridge threw this line in the book.

pg 166, "You are a huge threat to Satan." Same issue as with pg 87.

pg 174, "Rebuke the enemy in your own name and he laughs; command him in the name of Christ and he flees." More Larson theology. Can't find instruction in scripture to rebuke Satan, only resist him. We suit up and stand in faith, Christ takes care of Satan, not waiting on my command. Again, this is an important line to recognize; because all of Satan's lies are God's truths twisted just enough to deceive us without being a frontal attack.

Now there are good points throughout the book as well: Masculinity cannot be properly bestowed or validated by women, men have the role here. Also, as he points out on pg 164, "the battle is in your mind." This is the most important point in the book and one most Christians fail to comprehend! I perceive that the favorable reaction so many Christian men have for this book is that they are not using their minds to examine it in light of Gods truth, they are responding emotionally to its "right sounding" message.

There are too many problems for me in this book to buy it or recommend it. The guys I know who are excited about it seem drawn to the (Robert Bly) notion that God wants us to have a great adventure! This strikes me just like those who think God wants them to be happy and healthy. His word says He wants us to be holy - and then our lives will be what He makes of them.

Find me one reference in scripture where the Lord's desire for us is "adventure" and I will reconsider my main objection to this book. "Adventure!" It sounds too much like an invitation to take another bite from the apple.

Sincerely,

Stuart Brogden
August, 2002