

## Week 1 – The Heart Of A Man

### Read

Eve was created within the lush beauty of Eden's garden.

But Adam, if you'll notice, was created from the earth itself, from the clay. In the record of our beginnings, the second chapter of Genesis makes it clear: man was born from the outback, from the untamed part of creation. Afterward he is brought to Eden. And ever since then boys have never been at home indoors, and men have had an insatiable longing to explore. We long to return; it's when most men come alive. As John Muir said, when a man comes to the mountains, he comes home. The core of a man's heart is undomesticated *and that is good*. "I am not alive in an office," as one Northface ad had it. "I am not alive in a taxi. I am not alive on a sidewalk." Amen to that. Their conclusion? "Never stop exploring."

My gender seems to need little encouragement. It comes naturally, like our innate love of maps. In 1260 Marco Polo headed off to find China, and in 1967, when I was seven, I tried to dig a hole straight through from our backyard with my friend Danny Wilson. We gave up at about eight feet, but it made a great fort. Hannibal crosses his famous Alps, and there comes a day in a boy's life when he first crosses the street and enters the company of the great explorers. Scott and Amundsen race for the South Pole, Peary and Cook vie for the North, and when I gave my boys some loose change and permission to ride their bikes down to the store to buy a soda, you'd have thought I'd given them a charter to go find the equator. Magellan sails due west, around the tip of South America—despite warnings that he and his crew will drop off the end of the earth—and Huck Finn heads off down the Mississippi, ignoring similar threats. Powell follows the Colorado into the Grand Canyon, even though—no, *because*—no one has done it before and everyone is saying it can't be done.

Adventure, with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing written into the soul of man. The masculine heart needs a place where nothing is digital, modular, nonfat, zip lock, franchised, online, or microwavable. Where there are no deadlines, smartphones, or committee meetings. Where there is room for the soul. Where, finally, the geography around us corresponds to the geography of our heart. Look at the heroes of the biblical text: Moses does not encounter the living God at the mall. He finds him (or is found by him) somewhere out in the deserts of Sinai, a long way from the comforts of Egypt. The same is true of Jacob, who has his wrestling match with God not on the living room sofa but in a wadi somewhere east of the Jabbok, in Mesopotamia. Where did the great prophet Elijah go to recover his strength? To the

wild. As did John the Baptist, and his cousin, Jesus, who was *led by the Spirit* into the wilderness.

Whatever else those explorers were after, they were also searching for themselves.

Deep in a man's heart are some fundamental questions that simply cannot be answered at the kitchen table. Who am I? What am I made of? What am I destined for? It is fear that keeps a man at home where things are neat and orderly *and under his control*. But the answers to his deepest questions are not to be found on television or on his smartphone. Out there on the burning desert sands, lost in a trackless waste, Moses received his life's mission and purpose. He is called out, called up into something much bigger than he ever imagined, much more serious than CEO or "prince of Egypt." Under foreign stars, in the dead of night, Jacob received a new name, his real name. No longer is he a shrewd business negotiator, but now he is one who wrestles with God. The wilderness trial of Christ is, at its core, a test of his *identity*. "If you are who you think you are..." If a man is ever to find out who he is and what he's here for, he has got to take that journey for himself.

He has got to get his heart back.

## Reflect

1. What adventures or games did you play as a boy?
2. What is your favorite movie? Why are you drawn to it?
3. The core desires of a man's soul are a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to love. How do you see these three desires expressing themselves in your life?

## Scripture

Genesis 1:27

27 So God created mankind in his own image,

in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.