

The Place Every Man Needs

Recently I took a backpacking trip through the Big Frog Wilderness in Tennessee with my good friend, Brian. In all designated wilderness areas, there are no trail blazes (easy to get lost), no bridges across streams (learn to ford them or turn around), and remote enough so that there are no crowds to preserve the silence (count on being alone out there).

All of this adds up to some challenges and concerns. I certainly felt some anxiety packing up the night before. Was I up to the challenge? But what happened out there vaporized my anxiety.

On that first night, I felt an unexpected joy in my tent. I sensed God's quiet presence as I read the Scriptures and prayed, finally being lulled to sleep by the babbling water from a nearby stream.

A Place for Meeting God

On the second day, we ascended Big Frog Mountain. On the way up, the vegetation and landscape slowly changed, as we came across bear scat and one, lone young man. But, despite the increasing roar of the wind, there seemed to be a deepening quiet as we approached the summit—no birds, no animals, no humans.

Pitching our tents at the top, Brian realized he was getting sick with a cold, so I volunteered to find the water. I had read of a small rock-in basin that held some seepage down another path. But as I walked, I couldn't find any sign of it. Anxiety began to trickle through me: What if I couldn't find it? How would we survive up here without water? How far would I have to walk to find help? Those thoughts whirled through my head as I suddenly ran up on the spring. There it was—with plenty of water.

Walking back to the campsite, I experienced a powerful breakthrough. The wilderness areas have mysteriously attracted me for years, almost as if they were calling out to me. But, I never understood why. All of a sudden, I understood. It is God who has been calling out to me. He desires me to come there and meet with Him. There He will teach, encourage, and protect me, exactly what I had felt in the tent that first night. I don't ever have to be anxious out here again, even with all of the challenges and unknowns.

A Place for Every Man

I am not unique in having a place like this. Each man needs a special place to enjoy God's presence and feel enjoyed by Him. I have a friend who senses that when he fishes, another as he goes duck hunting, and still another when he swims laps in the pool. For other men it may be a walk in the park or playing the guitar or simply being quiet on the back porch.

Each of us has a unique architecture to our hearts that comes alive in that special place. Here God loves to meet with us personally, for He wants us to feel His joy. These experiences ground us in the love of His Son, so that we become rooted and established in His love (Eph. 3:17-18). Here we thrive and come alive as men, becoming filled with all of His fullness (Eph. 3:19) instead of the empty abyss our hearts have known. This is the deepest source of our manhood, one to which we must return repeatedly.

There is the place every man needs. What is that special place for you? Are you going there? And if you have no special place, are you seeking one? This idea is no luxury, but a necessity. It is here that we can be rejuvenated by the sound of His voice and the aroma of His love—with sounds and aromas that will linger long after we return to engage in our daily battles.

When I got back home from Big Frog, I found myself planning

the next trip to the wilderness. It's my special place.

What's yours?

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