

## Breeding the Desire to Win

The gentle lapping of the waves against our bow seemed to arouse the sleepy dawn. Soon little colorful song birds began to rustle about, calling excitedly from the brush tops along the grassy banks. The cares and hustle of the far off big city seemed to slip effortlessly from my shoulders as I breathed deeply of the tall pines which etched the magnificent shoreline. My thoughts were swaying in harmony with the rhythms of the earth. This was the day that the Lord had made. My soul was at ease.

Then, without warning, a loud slap echoed across the water. The boat heaved.

“Get the net!” my buddy Derek called, his straining fishing rod held high.

Another bass had attacked his spinner bait. I gritted my teeth and reluctantly tossed the net, then quickly spun back around to make another angry cast.

I’d been gracious when he’d caught the first fish, but now, as he reeled in the second, I could only force a smile. There’d be no more ‘Mister Nice Guy’. Not in my boat. Game on! All that harmony stuff is for the birds.

Immediately I began to work the trolling motor so I could box Derek out and get to the best holes first. When he got hung up, I kept on fishing like I didn’t notice. When he missed a strike, I threw in on top of him to catch his leftovers. I gave him the full treatment.

Derek was no stranger to such tantrums of testosterone. He stepped up to throw a counter punch by chiding, “How does it feel to be getting whooped in your own boat?”

“Little mind games won’t work on me,” I grumbled. My next cast sailed high up into the bushes.

I just can’t help myself. The drive to win was bred into me. For example, take the day I walked out of the dove fields as a kid boasting two more birds than my dad. I was grinning from ear to ear. As we hopped in the truck to leave three birds trailed over the tree line as if on cue. Dad jumped back out and dropped em’ all.

Mom’s no pushover either. She attempts to memorize the whole scrabble dictionary before I come over to play.

However, these days there seems to be a lot of passive teaching out there on the subject of winning, and while I’ll admit, most of it was probably written because of knuckle heads like me, I still have a hard time believing that having a desire to be victorious and to overcome is a bad thing. I mean, isn’t God Himself a champion and a conqueror? (*The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. Exodus 15:3 NIV*)

Weren’t we made in His image? Weren’t we commanded to subdue and have dominion? It only stands to reason that deep down each of us would have a penchant for winning.

Did you know this very nation was birthed out of a fight? Yes, one to overcome religious oppression. Our forefathers challenged the unknown seas and the muskets of the red coats in their struggle to forge this great nation they hoped would remain under God.

Naturally dark forces have sought to stamp out our freedom at every turn, but God has always raised up brave men and women to conquer the lies, the hatred, and all of evil’s aggression. They’re still doing it today.

Of course, meekness and humility must always play an important role in our lives if we are to properly harness these passions for God’s purposes. Recognizing the real enemy can be a bonus too. (Note to self: Mine is not Derek!)

The Lord Jesus not only showed us our enemy, but made a show out of him! (*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:15 NKJ*) Our real foe is the devil, and his whole crew.

As Christians, our job is to enforce Jesus’ victory on this earth and to spread His Good News until He returns. When He does, I pity the fools who have decided to ride against Him. That’s a day the Lord will be packing a sword. See **Revelations 19:11-16**.

But anyway- Derek had a ten to nine lead when the dark clouds set in. I offered the use of my spare rain suit, but he declined. (He might've been a little irritated with me by then.) As he graciously grabbed a paddle to work us back toward the boat ramp the bottom fell out and the poor fellow got plumb drenched. I don't reckon that made him half as mad as me fishing the whole way back and catching that last bass at the dock.

-Guy Sheffield 3-09-06