

Connect Your Outdoorsman to Jesus!

One of the unique niche resources recently released by PrayerShop Publishing is the devotional book, *Hunt of a Lifetime: An Outdoorsman's Journey to Prayer* by avid outdoorsman, Scott Lemasters. It is a book that seeks to connect hunters and fishermen with their Creator, and through a 30-day devotional, loaded with hunting and fishing stories, get them on a path of regular prayer.

In this recent interview, Phil Miglioratti of The Reimagine.Network talks with author Scott Lemasters about the book and his heart for outdoorsmen.

Phil: Why write a book aimed at hunters, outdoorsmen, trailblazers?

Scott: Thank you for this opportunity, Phil. It is my hope that the book will help me to kick-off Trailblazer Ministries, a ministry dedicated to outdoorsmen and their relationship with our Eternal Trailblazer, Jesus Christ. True outdoorsmen are inspired by nature. We share an emotional connection to creation that, whether we recognize it or not, is a call from God. *Hunt of a Lifetime* is intended to be a "field guide" for avid outdoorsmen to lead them to a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with our Creator. Through personal outdoor stories and the accounts of others, the book urges readers to respond to the sense of yearning they feel deep within their heart when they are alone in God's creation.

Outdoorsmen should also draw comfort and understanding from the fact that Jesus called four fishermen to be His disciples. These were men of strong conviction, men that made their living on the water and came to know their Savior in a very personal way. And like Peter, Andrew, James and John, Jesus

calls out to every outdoorsman through our experiences in nature, because He wants to share this same intimate relationship with each of us. He also enjoys a good campfire with His friends—check out the 21st chapter of John!

Phil: What does Acts 17:24 reveal to us about what our perspective should be about the Creator and the Creation? “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.”

Scott: The Lord our God, King of the universe, is present anywhere and everywhere. We can't confine Him to our churches. And while we may ignore His Presence in our everyday life at times, it's impossible for most outdoorsmen to overlook the wonder and beauty of His creation. Like the four fishermen disciples, we share a love of nature and have felt the joy that it brings.

In the book, I recall this scripture verse and the sense of God's presence felt during a Dall sheep hunt in the Wrangell Mountains of Alaska. “In that moment, creation itself truly spoke to me,” as I sensed God's presence, felt compelled to praise Him for the joy I experienced in that moment, and yearned to know Him more.

Readers are encouraged to remember similar times in their life where they experienced joy or a sense of awe in nature. Once this connection is made, they are led to consider their personal relationship with Christ through reading and a few reflective questions at the end of each chapter. In doing so, I hope to establish an interest or, better yet, a Spirit-led hunger in the reader that leads them to ask Christ to be their Guide.

Phil: What is your message to hunters in this chapter title? “Rest in the Hands of the Heavenly Archer”

Scott: For non-archery types, it's important to know that the

place on the bow, where the shaft of an arrow sits before its release, is literally called the “rest.” To do so in our own lives for the “Heavenly Archer” implies complete surrender. And this degree of surrender means that we seek His will for our lives alone, Christ-centeredness over self-centeredness, if we are to be “on target.”

For many years, I only involved God in the parts of my life where I needed Him or wanted Him to be. And as a result, I was frequently “off target,” because of my failure to fully “rest” in Him and seek His will for my life. I think many men tend to struggle with similar control issues. Praise God for the love and grace He showed me as He patiently led me to the point of surrender.

Likewise, if you seek Him and ask Him to help you surrender your will to Him, He will do it! And while you’ll experience joy, peace, and grace in the process, it will also be a struggle as the Holy Spirit brings you to a fuller understanding of what it means to follow Christ. If you’re patient with yourself and dedicated to following your Eternal Guide, your life will become “a glorious opportunity for seeing marvelous things all the time,” so well put by Oswald Chambers.

Phil: Tell us about “A Campfire With Christ.”

Scott: My love for fishing began early in life with my dad. Together, we have fished all over the world, from red salmon in Alaska to tiger fish on the Zambezi River. But my favorite trip of all time happened when I was eight-years-old fishing with my father and a friend on an old mill pond near our home. Unlike most of our fishing trips, we took a break for lunch that day, beached the boat, and fried-up some of the fish we caught. We had shared many adventures together, but this was something new and exciting.

It was a beautiful, crisp fall day, and the fish tasted better

than it ever had before. But beyond just the fun we were having, there was something else about that shore lunch—something about the fellowship, the outdoors, and the food—that left me feeling more than simple pleasure. I felt joy! I remember the moment vividly to this day. And when I became a believer, the scene where Christ cooked fish over open coals for His disciples (John 21) took on a deep, personal meaning to me because of this memory with my father.

Imagine the overwhelming emotion experienced by the disciples following Christ's crucifixion. Is it little wonder that an outdoorsman like Peter would choose to go fishing (John 21:3)? On the boat with him were Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and two other disciples—men who had experienced the same incredible journey and felt the same immeasurable loss and sadness. While they fished through the night and caught nothing, you can imagine the conversations these men shared, retelling stories, reflecting on the past three years, and talking about what each of them might do next. This was a time for laughter, tears, and hope.

And as the sun rose that morning on the Sea of Galilee, a man was there on the shore waiting for them. It was in that moment that Peter—the “Rock,” the commercial fisherman, the leader among the disciples—recognized Jesus, jumped into the water, and swam to Him like an excited child. This is the sort of abandonment that God desires for us. It's a lifelong journey, and just as deeply personal as the relationship Peter shared with Jesus that morning over breakfast on the seashore . . . an eternal inner campfire with the Ultimate Outdoorsman.

Phil: How can a “Journey To Prayer” help a trailblazer begin to reimagine praying (rethink biblically and personally and corporately)?

Scott: After 34 years in the Coast Guard, it's hard to imagine starting a ministry without a mission statement. At Trailblazer Ministries, our mission is to lead outdoorsmen

into a deeper relationship with Jesus through daily prayer and fellowship. An outdoorsman's connection to God's creation is a powerful way to share the Gospel and lead men to Christ. And it's entertaining! From funny and captivating hunting and fishing stories to personal accounts of surrender and intimacy with the Holy Spirit, I hope to meet outdoor adventurers "where they are" and encourage them to pursue a deeper relationship with their Eternal Trailblazer.

It all begins with a simple chat with our Creator. If we start the conversation with God, seeking Him in prayer and listening for His voice, He will respond. He will bring people into your life seemingly out of nowhere to share their experiences and inspire you to move forward. Reach out to Him. Allow this journey to lead you to the power of His forgiveness and the saving grace which was achieved for you through the loving sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a humbling experience to finally realize that He's been there all along, calling out to you.

I am convinced that no matter where you are on your journey with our Eternal Guide, if you commit to 30 days of dedicated, intimate prayer with Jesus, you will sense that something is missing if you fail to talk with Him on day 31. And in that moment, you will have come to understand the truth revealed in Galatians 4:9, "Now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how [can you turn back]?" Your soul will never again be satisfied with the status quo.

—Scott Lemasters is available to speak at Wild Game dinners or to the men's group at your church. Contact him through Trailblazer Ministries.

Hunt of a Lifetime (PrayerShop Publishing 2020) is available wherever you purchase Christian books, but you can get it at discounted prices at prayershop.org.