

CA 08 EMAW 08 EVERY MAN A BULLDOG

Music Theme

FOSTER: All around the world, groups of men gather together to strengthen their Christian walk. They might meet in a church, a home, or even in a restaurant. But the reason these regular meetings are important is because men need to be accountable to other men who are committed to Jesus Christ.

But have you noticed that some men attend occasionally while others attend every time? These last guys are the ones who have always done their assignment and have something to share. We're going to call them "bulldogs" and today we are going to look at how God desires every man to be a bulldog.

Welcome to Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. Today we are going to look at what it means to be a bulldog for God. We think you'll find this program a special treat, so stay with us.

Music theme in – 5 S.

Music Theme out

FOSTER: Kent, when I think of bulldogs, I think of a dog that sinks his teeth into whatever it has and hangs on with jaws of steel. You can try to get something out of his mouth, but that bulldog is not letting go. Is that the image we are looking for?

KENT: I think that's pretty close. Because we are human beings, we have a natural tendency to get bored or lose interest when things don't change over time. As a result, after a while, we don't hold on *with jaws of steel*, if you will. And that includes not holding onto the basic Christian Disciplines.

FOSTER: We've discussed how one of the disciplines to deepen our relationship with God is prayer. Are you saying we can get bored with that?

KENT: I think if we aren't careful, our daily quiet times, which include prayer, can get stale.

FOSTER: That's a strong statement and I want to understand this better, but for those who may be new, please give a quick overview of the quiet time concept.

KENT: During the previous programs we focused on God's desire to have a loving relationship with us, and how we need to have a deepening relationship with God. A daily quiet time that includes Bible reading and prayer is an important discipline to master in order for us to have a deep relationship with God.

For the men that listened to our first program in this series and began having quiet times, about 2 months have passed. Consequently, they must be tenacious as a bulldog in maintaining their daily time with God.

FOSTER: Why is that? God is wonderful so why do we...all of us (you and me included) struggle with...

KENT: keeping it up?

FOSTER: I think what I'm trying to say is why aren't we bulldogs for God naturally?

KENT: One reason we already mentioned. We're human beings. Jesus said "the *spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.*" [Mathew 26:41]

It's like the kid who says "if we get a dog, I promise I will take care of it." And they do...for the first week. And then the routine of daily care loses its excitement and it becomes a job—what you do to keep your dog healthy. You aren't necessarily doing it because you feel like doing it that day.

And I'm not saying that following the Lord is boring—far from it—I'm saying that Christian growth is a process. And that process includes times of exciting growth, **and also** times where you don't feel like you're growing, and even times where we struggle and seem to go backwards. It's all part of the process.

The key is to keep doing the things we've learned to do when we feel stagnant or are drifting backward. It's then that the bulldog analogy is so important.

FOSTER: We hold on and don't let go.

KENT: That's right. We keep praying and meditating on God's word and memorizing scripture.

FOSTER: Even if we don't feel like it.

KENT: Especially if we don't feel like it.

FOSTER: If you just joined us this is Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and I'm speaking with Kent Darcie. Today we are talking through the concept of every man being a bulldog for God and what makes that difficult sometimes.

Kent I know it's true, but it's difficult to understand why we aren't consistently excited about being with God all the time.

KENT: We'll, I mentioned that our own flesh is working against us. The Apostle Paul said, in Romans 7:15 "*I don't really understand myself, for I **want** to do what is right, but I **don't** do it. Instead, I do what I hate.*"

But also Satan is working against us. He knows our tendency to want to relax, or sleep in, or skip the men's meeting, or not memorize that verse on our break at work.

But building a deeper relationship with God is no different than mastering a musical instrument, playing a sport well, or being excellent at the tasks we need to accomplish at our job. It takes hard work **and discipline** in every case.

FOSTER: So how can we overcome our desire to relax or even quit doing our quiet times?

KENT: I would suggest three things to keep the "bulldog" in us.

First, we need help to do this. It is critical that we don't isolate ourselves. Men love to do things by themselves—particularly spiritual things. I think sometimes it's because we're afraid of doing it wrong, or failing, and we don't want anyone to see us fail. But we need to build helpful and vital relationships...especially when it comes to growing in the Christian faith.

Jesus sent his disciples out in twos. Paul had Barnabas. James had John. Even when Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane – a time when He was very vulnerable emotionally and physically - He took Peter, James, and John with Him.

So I encourage our men to find another Christian man, ideally a group of men, who are committed to deepening their relationship with God. Lonnie Berger's Book "Every Man a Warrior" is a powerful tool for a group of men to learn how to deepen their relationship with God together.

King Solomon wrote, "Two *are* better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, for *he has* no one to help him up."

That's a great picture of Christian men helping Christian men to be better Christian men.

FOSTER: I've seen that work in my own life, when I have had other men who held me accountable. So what is the second thing we need to do to maintain the bulldog in us?

KENT: The second principle to maintaining our bulldog relationship with God is to go back to doing the basics. Start by recommitting to the 15 minute Quiet times with God,

And when you are reading the Bible, underline a part of the scripture that stands out to you. Or try reading the verses, but emphasizing different words. Sometimes when we've read a scripture a few times, we see the same thing. Focusing on different words can help us see the meaning of the verse in new ways.

Hebrews 4: verse 12 says, "the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." [NLT] Changing how we read the verse can help us to see its contents in a new way.

Another way you can refresh your view of the scriptures is by rewriting the verse in your own words. As men who have accepted Jesus as our Lord, we have God's Holy Spirit Who can help us to see God's word in a different way.

FOSTER: So having another man or men can help us through our dry time and keep us focused on the goal. Doing the basics, but in slightly different ways can help. What is the third way we can move back toward being a bulldog for God?

KENT: The third step is to **commit** to having our Quiet Time and helping others do it as well. Paul told his disciple Timothy: "*Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.*" (2Ti 2:15 NLT)

You might not feel like a bulldog right now, but you can change as you become strong in your commitment to Christ. As a Christian, you can get help from the Christ who lives in you. As Paul the Apostle said, *“I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength.”* (Phil 4:13)

This is vitally important for our listeners to grasp because starting in our next program, we look at common challenges men face.

My friend, if you’ve only been halfhearted in your commitment to follow Christ, something needs to change. We are heading into battle against financial debt and sexual temptation, and family troubles, and more. So your personal relationship with Christ is vital. All the other commitments and relationships in your life will be impacted by that.

So let me ask you. Have you admitted that you are a sinner before God? Have you confessed that there is nothing you can do by yourself to get rid of the stain of your sins that mark you? No amount of good deeds, or good thoughts, or having the right parents, or going to church every week. Nothing you can do can get rid of that stain. And the Bible says our sin earns us eternal life in Hell.

So have you confessed that you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again from the grave, forever triumphing over death? Have you asked God to forgive your sins based on that belief? Have you asked Jesus to be the Savior of your soul and Lord of your life? If you haven’t, all of us here at Champions Arise invite you to do so **right now** with this simple prayer:

God, I know I am a sinner, and I’m sorry for sinning against You. I believe Your only Son Jesus died for my sins, and I want Him to be the Lord of my life. I commit to being His disciple all of my days. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me new life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

If you’ve never accepted Christ as your Savior, I sure hope prayed that prayer. And if you did, Foster can you tell any men who just prayed that prayer what they can do?

FOSTER: Absolutely. I’m so excited for any of you who just committed your life to Jesus Christ. If you did that, please contact us here at Champions Arise at championsarise.org. When we hear from you, we’ll help you with your next steps as a new follower of Jesus.

KENT: Thanks Foster. Now for you men who are struggling to keep up the discipline of a regular quiet time with God, or the memorization or the meditation: of the Scriptures, **don’t be discouraged**. As we’ve already mentioned, it is normal to have times of struggle. *It’s in the process of this struggle that decisions are made, convictions are born and growth takes place.*

Hebrews 12:11 says, *“No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”*

Discipline is finishing what you’ve started just like that bulldog that won’t let go.

As a man of God, I want you to challenge you to commit to the following:

- Commit to God that you will have a quiet time with Him for the next seven days.

- Commit to telling another Christian man that you are going to do this. You'll be amazed how much that will help.
- And finally, for you guys who have grabbed ahold of this process like a hungry bulldog, I want you to commit to helping your Christian brothers to develop their relationship with God. Encourage them to have their quiet times and ask them what they're learning from them. I believe God has called you to be a blessing to them.

FOSTER: That's excellent, Kent; let's do a quick recap of where we have been today.

KENT: Today we challenged our listeners to commit to building a deeper relationship with God by maintaining a regular quiet time with Him. It's time to move past the excuses and latch onto to God.

FOSTER: Like a bulldog.

KENT: That's right.

FOSTER: We'll be right back.

Music Theme in

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FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions

Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed the secret and impact of a changed life. The material for this program is from lesson #8 in the book "Every Man a Warrior," by Lonnie Berger. His book can be used by individuals, small groups, or in a class at your church. For more information on his book or to hear this or any of our previous programs in this series, visit our website at www.championsarise.org. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

(MUSIC BUMPER OUT)