

CA 20 EMAW 20 THE REAL MEASURE OF A MAN Lesson 3 bk 2

Music Theme

FOSTER: There's an expression, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." But it isn't always that simple. Listen to these words from someone who was having a very difficult time.

"Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking. Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest! I would fly far away to the quiet of the wilderness."

Those are the words of King David in Psalm 55. This is the same David who killed a lion, a bear, and even the giant Goliath. He was a mighty warrior, but apparently even mighty men of God still have rough days. So how should we respond when we have challenging times in our lives?

Welcome to Champions Arise. This is Foster Braun and I'm joined by Kent Darcie. The fact is, even Christian men will have days when the job, and wife, and kids, and life-itself seem out of control. And we may be tempted to "fly away" like David wrote. But today we'll look at how the godly man responds to the pressures of life. So please stay with us here at Champions Arise.

Music Theme out

FOSTER: Kent, to me, David has always been a man's man. Kills a giant. Grabs an attacking lion by the beard and kills it. Was king over Israel. But here we see... the vulnerable David who says, "I wish I could quit."

KENT: I love this scripture. We know David didn't quit and he later became King. But it shows that life can be tough and the real measure of a man is his ability to turn to God in the crisis.

FOSTER: That reminds me of 1 Peter 4:19 that says, "*So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*"

KENT: Yes. Basically, that verse is saying, "go to God and do what is right."

FOSTER: that's easy to say, but hard to do sometimes.

KENT: Absolutely. I'm thinking of a couple, both Christians, who were having major problems in their marriage and he was faced with this question; do I quit? Their trouble involved difficulties in being physically intimate. They'd stayed pure until they were married. And the groom was pretty excited for the wedding night. But when the time came, he found his bride curled up in a fetal position, covers over her head, and sobbing.

FOSTER: On their wedding night?

KENT: Yes. That was when the husband learned that his new bride's older brother had sexually abused her during high school.

FOSTER: Oh no.

KENT: That's how—I'll call them Carol and Kevin—that's how Carol and Kevin's marriage began. For the first ten years of their marriage, the intimate part of their marriage was never good. Carol "performed her wifely duty," even though Kevin knew she hated it and resented him for it.

FOSTER: I... can't... imagine.

KENT: Foster, 20 years into their marriage, and after four children, Kevin was losing hope of ever having a "normal"—if you will—physically intimate relationship with his wife. She's getting more and more angry with him. She'd have outbursts of rage and would stare at him with hate after they were intimate. Or she would leave the room, go sleep on the couch and seethe at him for days.

FOSTER: But you said she was sexually abused.

KENT: Yes. By her older brother—all through high school. So there's an explanation for her actions. Kevin's background included a dad who was harsh, unloving, and constantly berated him. So Kevin is really sensitive to criticism. Carol is responding to her woundedness by attacking her husband. And at the same time she is unknowingly attacking her husband's area of woundedness.

He's not going to divorce her, because that goes against his Christian beliefs. He was definitely tempted, but he didn't have an affair because he's a Christian and, when he was kid, his dad had an affair with the secretary and left his family to live with her.

So Kevin is in despair and sinking into depression. And here's the question: if you were Kevin, what do you do?

FOSTER: This seems so much harder because his wife isn't being vindictive. She isn't being mean for no reason.

KENT: That's why I picked this particular story. So what do you do if you're Kevin?

FOSTER: I guess I would have sought counsel. You know, with a pastor or professional counselor.

KENT: Actually, they did see some counselors. None seemed to help. In fact one told Kevin it was hopeless and he should file for divorce.

FOSTER: No kidding!

KENT: Nope

FOSTER: I hope it wasn't a Christian counselor

KENT: Unfortunately, it was.

FOSTER: No! So what do you do in that kind of situation?

KENT: You stand on the scripture you mentioned earlier. 1 Peter 4:19 which basically says, “Go to God and do what is right.” You keep doing it regardless of how you feel, or if you get bad advice—like in Kevin’s case.

FOSTER: If you just joined us, this is Champions Arise. I’m Foster Braun, and Kent Darcie is leading us through a challenging discussion.

Kent, I agree with 1 Peter 4:19, one hundred percent. “Go to God and do what is right,” but what is the “right thing” in a situation like this?

KENT: Kevin did the right thing. After he was told by the counselor to divorce his wife, he turned to a godly man in his church. This man worked with Kevin and Carol, made them aware of some solid resources, and Kevin and Carol are still married today and doing much better.

FOSTER: So be persistent in getting God-honoring, scripture-based help.

KENT: Yes. Go to God and do what is right. The full verse of 1 Peter 4:19 says “*So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should **commit** themselves to their faithful Creator and **continue** to do good.*” We are simplifying that to “go to God and do what is right.”

FOSTER: However, this doesn’t mean that trials will be easy. We saw that with Kevin’s trial.

KENT: Yes we did, but we must remember, God’s plan is that trials will have a transforming effect on us. Sometimes pain is necessary to change our character or our values. And that might come from a situation like Kevin and Carol. I used their problem with physical intimacy in marriage, because this is a very important area for most guys, and we need to think through this. As Christian men, what we do if we were in Kevin’s situation?

But it could also be, we’re having a very difficult time at our job. Or our kids are running to sin. Or we’re having problems with our in-laws, or there’s even issues in the church. Maybe neighbors are a source of difficulty, or there’s long term illness in our family, or unemployment. Life isn’t always fair. But, as disciples of Christ, how should we respond?

FOSTER: I know sometimes men, Christian men, will respond to the pressure by becoming bitter, abusing alcohol, or taking drugs, looking at pornography, or having an affair.

KENT: Yes. But when we do that, we’re responding in the flesh to a spiritual issue. We must always remember two things: we are in a spiritual battle, and God is for us. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:

“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.”

And Peter writes in 1 Peter chapter 5 starting in verse 8 *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

And Satan uses situations like Kevin and Carol experienced, or whatever your challenge is today. So what do you do?

Verse 9 says: “Resist him,” How?

Verse 9 “standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

My friend, what you’re going through, could be harder than any of us could imagine. And you feel alone, and you’re tired of doing the right thing, and you want to quit.

But take heart and keep your focus on the Lord.

Because verse 10 says this

“And the God of all grace, who called you,” and I want to stop here.

My friend, God called you to serve Him in the situation you are in. Remember that and remember

Verse 10 “And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast.”

FOSTER: Those are such encouraging words.

KENT: Yes. When we’re tempted to quit, or when we let our own needs and desires take over, two things **have** happened,

We’ve taken our eyes off God and are only looking our situation. **And** we’ve taken our eyes off others and we’re focusing on ourselves instead.

Back to Kevin and Carol’s situation, Kevin needed to understand Carol and put her needs before his. She needed to pursue healing from her past abuse so she could genuinely love her herself and her husband.

As men, we have a choice. We can choose to be harsh and bitter with our wife, or with our kids, or boss, or coworker, or neighbor. Or we can choose to go to God and do what is right. **But to** do what is right, we need God’s power.

FOSTER: And to access God’s power to press through or to overcome suffering we need to have a personal relationship with Him, and that is only possible through Jesus Christ.

KENT: That’s right. The Bible is very clear.

1 John 5 verses 11 and 12 say, “And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life.” [NLT]

Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (Jn 14:6)

And you might say, Well Kent, I believe in God. James 2:19 says “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!”

But the demons have not confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and committed to following Him for the rest of their days. So the question is my friend, have you?

Are you trying to go through your suffering by yourself? Trying to be a man of God...without God. You don't have to. The Bible says

"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." [Romans 10:9-10, 13]

My friend, everyone here at Champions Arise invites you to confess your sins, repent of them, accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and profess to be His disciple for the rest of your life.

FOSTER: We pray that you've taken those steps today. And when you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, please contact us here at Champions Arise through our website championsarise.org. Let us know so we can celebrate with you.

KENT: And it is a celebration, but it's also work. As a Christian you need to be in a body of believers that can encourage you, pray with you, and hold you accountable to God's word. So it's important to know God's word. And you do that by reading your Bible every day.

Over time, you'll learn scriptures like Galatians 9. *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*

My friend, Kevin and Carol didn't give up. And I believe, God is looking for men who are prepared to follow Him, through whatever challenges or discomfort may confront them, without turning back. Because **the real measure of a man is his response in trials.**

When faced with a tough situation that makes you want to quit, or cheat, or become bitter, you can cast all your cares on God, for He cares for us.

FOSTER: Men, Kent and I hope you understand that the real measure of a godly man is not his wealth, position, or accomplishments. It is response in the trails of life. My friend, whatever you are facing, we encourage you to go to God and do what is right.

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Program Close

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed the real measure of a godly man. This program was based on Lesson 3, "When Marriages Hurt" in the book "Every Man a Warrior," Volume 2, by Lonnie Berger. You can learn more about his book and listen to this, or any of the programs in this series at our website 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 Theme out

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