

God in Man's Image
A critique of John Eldredge's *Wild At Heart*
By Rut Etheridge III

Wild At Heart, by writer and counselor John Eldredge, is a book dedicated to helping men recover a biblically based self identity. Though it contains some helpful insight and commentary, especially on the damage done to gender roles by cultural forces of political correctness, the key principles of this book are sorely lacking in biblical integrity. Eldredge's desire to help hurting people is obvious and commendable, but his mishandling of Scripture and the consequent misguided advice he gives are too serious to ignore.

Eldredge's basic thesis is that males are wild at heart because God is wild at heart, and that both men and women need to understand this in order for men to live the kind of daring, adventurous lives for which God has created them. Eldredge's explication of this thesis reveals his alarmingly unbiblical view of four fundamental aspects of Christianity: 1.) God's sovereignty and authority 2.) the person and work of Jesus Christ 3.) the purpose and substance of the gospel 4.) the nature and content of God's direct revelation to man. As will be demonstrated in this critique, many of the views expressed in *Wild At Heart* are, beyond issues of denominational preference, irreconcilable with biblical Christianity. Those seeking help from Eldredge's words, if they accept his theology, will be damaged in their understanding of God and thus actually be led away from the only One who can truly help them.

Eldredge knows that any real understanding of masculinity must begin with the creator of masculinity and all things, the Lord God as He is revealed in His Word, and Eldredge attempts to do just that. However, when Eldredge expounds on this point, his guiding philosophies become apparent and he begins to falter. We'll examine first Eldredge's view of God, and move more specifically to his view of God's sovereignty and authority.

In the opening pages of his book, Eldredge portrays God as one who loves wildness. Eldredge argues that the fierceness of certain animals (killer whales, bull mousers, white sharks) and the untamed nature of certain parts of creation (the woods at night, the Great Barrier Reef) reflect the fierceness and untamed nature of God (p.29). Eldredge contends that the wildness of creation is God's way of: "...letting us know he rather prefers adventure, danger, risk, the element of surprise" (p.30).

Eldredge sees God's innate wildness especially exemplified in men. The inside jacket of *Wild At Heart* reads: "Deep in his heart, every man longs for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue. That is how he bears the image of God." Considering the complexity of Scripture's teaching on the *imago Dei*¹, Eldredge gives us an overly simplistic understanding which is geared toward and probably results from his

¹ An exposition of the Image of God is far beyond the scope of this critique. Systematic Theologies will almost invariably have much to say on this topic. For a credible, readable handling of the topic, I recommend Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology, an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 1994.

own love for rugged, romantic individualism.² One wonders how his understanding would be received by Christians in foreign cultures which do not prize the same ideals, and further if men who are shy, quiet and non-violent in temperament would be considered in Eldredge's model adequate image bearers of God.

Eldredge writes that Adam was created outside the Garden of Eden ("the outback", as it were) and infers from this that man was meant to be undomesticated, wild and free (p.4) like "the wild one whose image we bear" (title for chapter 2). This thinking, however, ignores several key details about the creation of man and what it reveals about God's character.

Adam was *in a sense* created outside the garden. He had to be, because according to Genesis 2, Adam was created before the garden was planted. (Genesis 2:7,8)³. So really, the phrase "outside the garden" does not apply to Adam's origin. It is more faithful to the text to see that the garden was made *for* man, as his ideal place of dwelling. Even given the idea that the Garden existed before Adam, Eldredge implies that the placement of man in the garden is less than ideal, and somehow contrary to man's true nature. "Only afterward is he brought to Eden. And ever since then boys have never been at home indoors, and men have had an insatiable longing to explore." (p.4) Apparently, even God does not really understand the wildness of man's heart; He forces man into the garden and quells his God-given desire to explore.

But what of the fierceness of other parts of creation, the tigers and killer whales? Do these not reveal God's love of wildness? It would seem that much of the ferocity of these creatures is due to their desire to kill and eat flesh, arguably a result of the fall. Even given the idea that the pre-fall world contained the killing of animals for food⁴, Scripture still gives the distinct impression that the new heaven and earth will be an even more tranquil version of Eden, for the wolf will graze with the lamb (Isaiah 65:25).

It seems that the lack of ferocity and battle in the eternal state would crush the very heart and soul of Eldredge's ideal man, that something intrinsic to the image of God and therefore true masculinity would be missing in heaven. Though worshipping our God and basking in His presence could perhaps be described as an adventure, there will certainly be no battle to fight or beauty to rescue. The violence and pain of post fall creation will be forever gone. This is clearly God's understanding of a perfect relationship between Himself and His creation, and it stands in stark contrast to Eldredge's definition of God's image and the masculinity that reflects it.

So how "wild" is God's heart in reality? We must remember that God was wholly satisfied in Himself before He created the universe (John 17:5). There was nothing inherently wild about God because He was all there was! Certainly God does not develop new attributes (Malachi 3:6), so the creation of the world or any part of it cannot be understood as a reflection of a characteristic God does not possess. God created the universe and interacts with it to display His attributes (Psalm 8), to rule over and conform it to His glorious, eternal purposes (Ephesians 1:11). Through creation we see God's grandeur and glorious imagination, not His need for adventure.

² This is a constant theme in *Wild At Heart*, seen especially in the heroes Eldredge admires. See page 8 of this critique.

³ All Scripture citations in this critique are taken from the New American Standard translation.

⁴ In Genesis 1:29,30 God gives plant life as food for the man and beast, but some theologians would argue that man had the implicit authority to kill and eat animals before the fall. This, however, does not imply the desire of the animals to kill and eat each other.

What Eldredge claims about God reduces the Lord of heaven and earth to the wild man upstairs. Consider Eldredge's perspective on God's sovereignty and authority.

Eldredge's theology as reflected in the book makes unmistakable overtures toward the Openness of God theory. Though he gives a glib denial that his book endorses openness theism (p.32),⁵ the brevity of his disavowal and the fact that he felt the need to mention it indicates that he is aware of how closely his views come to Openness Theism. In fact, in earlier editions of *Wild At Heart*, Eldredge cited for support of his views on God's sovereignty professor John Sanders, an avowed Open Theist⁶. That quote is missing from newer editions. A critique of Openness Theism as a whole is beyond the scope of this work, but it is important to demonstrate the proximity of Eldredge's views to this heresy with which he apparently does not want to be identified.⁷

The idea that God takes risks, integral to Openness Theism, is profoundly offensive to Scripture's description of God's sovereignty (Isaiah 46:9,10, Ephesians 1:11). Eldredge, however, heartily endorses this notion of a risk taking God, seeing it as reflective of God's wild nature. On page 32, Eldredge writes, "God's willingness to risk is just astounding – far beyond what any of us would do were we in his position" (p.32). Also, "And unlike some hyper-controlling parents...God gave us a remarkable choice. He did not *make* Adam and Eve obey him. He took a risk. A staggering risk, with staggering consequences. He let others into the story, and he lets their choices shape it profoundly...It's not the nature of God to limit his risks and cover his bases. Far from it. Most of the time, he lets the odds stack up against him" (p.31). From here, Eldredge cites God's handling of the confrontation between David and Goliath and the downsizing of Gideon's army as examples of risks that God has taken.

A risk implies uncertainty and the possibility of failure. If Eldredge means what he says, then there must have been some degree of uncertainty in the mind of God as to the outcome of these events. This, of course, is monumentally inconsistent with Scripture.

God chooses the "long shots" in order to display His power and draw attention to Himself as the real combatant in those battles. He is so certain that He will prevail that He deliberately creates what seem to be unbeatable odds. But these instances do not reveal God as an adventurous gambler who likes to take on the house to prove His skill. Rather, they illustrate God's absolute power and knowledge and His desire to display those attributes to His weak and often doubtful people.

Eldredge agrees that God acts to display His power, but he insists that there is an element of chance involved. This he says is the case not only in the battles which are recorded in Scripture, but even in the central theme of Scripture itself: the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Have you thought about his handling of the gospel? God needs to get a message out to the human race, without which they will perish, forever. What's the plan? First,

⁵ "Trying to reconcile God's sovereignty and man's free will has stumped the church for ages. We must humbly acknowledge that there's a great deal of mystery involved, but for those aware of the discussion, I am not advocating open theism. Nevertheless, there is definitely something wild in the heart of God" (p.32). A serious study of Open Theism and Elderdge's book will leave the discerning reader scratching his head as to any abiding, substantial difference between Eldredge's view and that of Openness Theology.

⁶ "Yet as John Sanders says, God's own character ' keeps him in the game despite the risk'." This is from page 32 of a copyright 2001 edition of *Wild At Heart*, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁷ For a sound and extensive critique of Openness Theology, I recommend *Bound Only Once: The Failure of Open Theism*, ed. By Doug Wilson. Canon Press, Moscow, ID. 2001

he starts with the most unlikely group ever: a couple of prostitutes, a few fishermen, ... a tax collector. Then, he passes the ball to us. Unbelievable.”

The idea that the Lord would somehow risk the salvation of His people is not only unbelievable; it’s reprehensible. Yes, God does entrust the spread of the gospel to fallible human beings, but the success of God’s plan of redemption is never in question (Philippians 1:6, Romans 8:29-30). Again, God shows His glory, particularly in this case the power of His Word to save (I Peter 1:23), by using sinful people to accomplish His eternal, undefeatable purposes.⁸

Missing from Eldredge’s scanning of Scripture are all the passages emphasizing God’s absolute control over and knowledge of all things. Ephesians 1:11, Isaiah 46:9,10, Acts 2:23-37, and the witness of the whole Bible teach us emphatically that there is no element of chance involved in God’s dealing with His creation.

If God is a risk taker, then faith in such a god would also be a risk, and this is what we find in *Wild At Heart*. On page 200 Eldredge writes that God: “...rigged the world in such a way that it only works when we embrace *risk* as the theme of our lives, which is to say, only when we live by faith.” Here, faith is not “the certainty of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen” (Hebrews 11:1), but rather the blind existentialist leap into the unpredictable, a necessary adventure of ignorance.

Eldredge makes no mention of the historical, objective work of Jesus Christ on which our faith is grounded and sustained. Rather, he presents faith as the ultimate and defining risk of life. Granted, living a life of faith leads us into uncharted waters. But we go into those waters not seeking or embracing risk, but rather grasping through faith God’s certain and steady hand. Our faith is the anchor in life, not the boat rocker.

The nature of true faith is that it is unshakable and certain. This is because God Himself, the object of our faith, is an unchanging Rock of fidelity. Though Eldredge would not dispute God’s faithfulness, he does contend that God has no set pattern of

⁸ Not only is Eldredge’s emphasis on God’s risk taking irreconcilable with Scripture, but it is also inconsistent with his own views expressed in his book. On page 31, Eldredge writes: “God seems to fly in the face of all caution. Even though he *knew* what would happen, what heartbreak and devastation would follow upon our disobedience, God chose to have children.”

If God knows what genuinely free creatures will choose in the future as well as the consequences of those choices, then how can it be said that God is a risk taker? As stated earlier, risk taking involves a lack of certain knowledge of the future. Perhaps Eldredge believes that, as Openness Theology claims, God knows some details of the future but not others, but he never makes this claim. Rather, he abandons his arguments to internal inconsistency.

Or perhaps we are meant to interpret the quotation above as saying: “God knew what would happen *if* they decided to disobey.” But even this does not help. That statement implies that God did not know what Adam and Eve would choose, but He did know what would happen if they chose to disobey. Here, God’s knowledge of the future would be relegated to contingencies and not actualities. None of this is biblically tenable. To deny God’s knowledge of any aspect of the future is completely unbiblical (Psalm 139:16, Isaiah 46:9,10, John 21:17). Though God may be grieved at our choices, His knowledge of the future, and of all future contingencies, is exhaustive; therefore, no real risk is involved.

The only way for Eldredge to have avoided incoherence in his description of God’s sovereignty was to adopt the Openness position on the issue. Openness Theology maintains that for true human freedom to exist, certain aspects of the future are unknowable and therefore even God cannot know them. If Eldredge held this view, he would still have been entertaining a drastically unbiblical notion of God, but at least his position would not contradict itself. For unexplained reasons, though, Eldredge does not want his views labeled as Openness Theology. Ironically, endorsing a heresy would have actually helped Eldredge in terms of clarity and internal consistency, though certainly not in terms of biblical accuracy.

activity. On page 209, he writes: “There are no formulas with God. Period. So there are no formulas for the man who follows him. God is a Person, not a doctrine.⁹ He operates not like a system – not even a theological system - but with all the originality of a truly free and alive person.”

Scripture teaches that God’s actions are always in keeping with His character, thus rendering God quite predictable. In fact, the very reason He gives us His word is so that we can know Him and what He expects of us (Exodus 20:1-17). He always acts in conjunction with His Word (Hebrews 6:18), and He never fails or falters. Thank the Lord that He is predictable! Otherwise, how could we trust His promises? Some of God’s providential activity will undoubtedly astound us, but there are definitely formulas with God. Further, God gives us formulas by which we are to live and to expect God’s blessing (Genesis 4:6,7, Joshua 1:8, Proverbs 3:5,6, Malachi 3:10).

It would be well if Eldredge’s point was merely that we do not know the details of life and that from our vantagepoint, things seem risky and God seems unpredictable. Indeed, on p. 213 he tells us that he is not suggesting that the Christian life is chaotic or irresponsible. This would be fine, but the rest of his writing indicates that he means more than this.

On page 213 again: “What I *am* saying is that our false self demands a formula before he’ll engage; he wants a guarantee of success, and mister, you aren’t going to get one. So there comes a time in a man’s life when he’s got to...head off into the unknown with God.” Further, on page 214: “The only way to live in this adventure – with all its danger and unpredictability and immensely high stakes – is an ongoing, intimate relationship with God. The control we so desperately crave is an illusion. Far better to give it up in exchange for God’s offer of companionship, set aside stale formulas so that we might enter into an informal friendship.”

Eldredge claims that for the Christian, there are no guarantees of success in life. However, Scripture absolutely does guarantee success! (Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 1:6) This is the case unless success is defined in purely worldly terms, but that definition is foreign to the values of Scripture (Matthew 6:19-21). This is indicative of a major flaw in *Wild At Heart*. It emphasizes the earthly aspect of our existence to the complete neglect of the heavenly, and never makes an attempt to understand the former in light of the latter (Matthew 6:33). The only true success for the Christian is pleasing God, and as previously mentioned, God has certainly given us in His Word the formulas for success.

Though we are to work with all our heart at our earthly endeavors, and pray for God to bless our work, we will face failure along the way. But those failures are in Christ triumphs that lead us closer to Him. If the earthly is defined by the heavenly, then the Christian can rest in his soul, even in the most discouraging circumstances, because in Christ there is no ultimate risk and no possibility of ultimate failure (John 10: 28,29).

Eldredge’s handling of the alleged “risks” of a walk with God is emotionally evocative but lacking in biblical truth. For some, it will have the enticing appeal of a locker room pep talk before the big game: everything’s on the line and it’s time to see

⁹ Who would call God a doctrine? Obviously, what Eldredge intends is that God is not bound to a system or teaching. He has erected the unfortunately popular false dichotomy between doctrine and the knowledge of God. And yet again, God Himself tells us in His word that doctrine is essential (II Timothy 4:1-5). Doctrine is merely what the Bible teaches on any given topic. We must know the unchanging truth of Scriptural doctrine to know God.

what we're made of. But as exciting as that kind of situation may be, it is not truly akin to the kind of excitement, intensity and depth of a true walk with Christ.

The understanding expressed in *Wild At Heart* of what it is to walk with God never reaches beyond what could be experienced in merely earthly situations; it never looks above by way of Scripture to see the real thing. As people of another world, we must look beyond the temporal aspects of life to truly understand our union with Christ, and how we are to live and understand this life in light of that union (Colossians 3:1-4).

Scripture is voluminous in its commentary on the Christian's identity in Christ, their true selves as it were, and what it means to walk with our Savior. One of the most encouraging and faith affirming studies I've ever done is to study through the pages of Scripture, noting how Scripture describes Christians. Here is but a sampling of these kinds of passages: Jeremiah 31:27-34; Ezekiel 36:26,27; Romans 6:1-11, 7:4; I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:3-7, 13; Colossians 1:13,22, 2:13, 3:3; and Hebrews 2:9-18. These are words that truly heal and inspire. To plumb the depths of these passages is to immerse ourselves in God's love and emerge strengthened against any false, damaging lies about our identity and value as God's children.

Though Eldredge would certainly advocate the study of these passages, they and anything connected to the foundational truth of our identity in Christ are conspicuously underemphasized in *Wild At Heart*. The near absence¹⁰ of this kind of biblical teaching implies that Christian men can understand what it is to be men without understanding much about the most crucial and defining aspect of their existence. In a book attempting to recover a biblical view of men, this is a crucial and telling oversight.

With the assault on God's sovereignty comes the consequent attack on God's authority. Eldredge embraces the notion that our relationship to God is basically a partnership between nearly equal parties than anything else. Of course, he considers God the superior partner, but not by much. He quotes Dallas Willard as saying: "The ideal for divine guidance is . . . a conversational relationship with God: the sort of relationship suited to friends who are mature personalities in a shared enterprise." (p.215). While the immediate context of Willard's words is not explained, what Eldredge means by this thinking is illustrated in his recording of various "conversations" he has allegedly had with God. Eldredge's view of God's revelation will be dealt with in the following sections, but it is instructive to highlight one of these conversations here because it shows so clearly the humanization of God inherent in Eldredge's theology and the attack on God's authority resulting from it.

On page 202, Eldredge remembers: "I went to the mountains for the weekend to sort things out... The tentacles of the world and my false self seemed to give way as I climbed up into the Holy Cross Wilderness. On the second day God began to speak. *John, you can take that job if you want to. It's not a sin. But it'll kill you and you know it.* He was right; it had False Self written all over it. *If you want to follow me,* he continued, *I'm headed that way.* I knew exactly what he meant – "that way" headed into the wilderness, frontier."

¹⁰ On page 136, which will be alluded to later, Eldredge does encourage his readers to answer doubts about our self worth with the fact that we are forgiven. This is good and helpful along the lines I've been suggesting, but this kind of thinking is eclipsed by the emphasis on unbiblical ways of relating to and understanding God and our relationship to Him. Further, Eldredge's handling of this line of reasoning, when it does appear, is questionable. See footnote 21 on page 13.

This incident does not describe a Christian struggling to find God's will for his life, not sure which way is God's way. Rather, it presents a Christian who has been clearly informed by God Himself as to the right path, and yet one who is under no compulsion to choose that path. Imagine telling this story to Jonah! God has apparently over time become much mellower in calling His servants to follow Him. In fact, to blatantly walk away from God is not even considered sin! God expresses no concern for His own glory or purposes, only concern for Eldredge's "true self." Eldredge does not consider this relatively casual mood from God to be a result of his facing less significant decisions than the biblical prophets. On pages 213-215, he cites Adam, Abraham, Moses and David as normative examples of conversational, chummy relationships with God.¹¹

Scripture teaches that God is not at all ambivalent in the matter of our obedience, in a broad sense or in the specific details of life; nor does He kindly offer us His desires as merely one way to go. The reason that God saves His people is so that they will accomplish in obedience the specific works that He has planned for them to do (Ephesians 2:10). Thus, to walk away from God and His desires is to violate the very purpose of our salvation. This straying yields dreadful consequences, far beyond a lack of self-fulfillment. Again, Eldredge is not writing about the typical Christian struggle to find God's will in the particulars of daily life, nor is his example merely to be understood as indicative of a choice between two morally acceptable options¹². In his case, he claimed to know God's will, thus rendering this choice a moral choice between following God (always good) or not following God (never good); but in his mind God gave him the option to follow his own path.

Eldredge has presented us with a truncated version of God, a God who risks and whose purpose for our lives is not enforced by any real authority. The massive irony of Eldredge's view of God is that he is unwilling to let God be as strong as God claims to be. Far from revealing the vigor of the Almighty, Eldredge removes it. In seeking to unleash the wild strength of the heart of man, Eldredge has attempted to shackle the power, authority and knowledge of the only One to whom all strength and glory are rightly ascribed. Eldredge has employed the reverse of John the Baptist's axiom: in order for men to increase, God must decrease.

An assault on the character of God is of course an assault on Jesus Christ, the God-man. To this point, we have examined Eldredge's Theology Proper, and now we will examine Eldredge's view of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

According to Eldredge, men must be "initiated" into manhood and then be taken on a journey of self-discovery. Jesus, he claims, was no different. On page 104: "Jesus

¹¹ Eldredge never considers the special role that these men and other people played in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation. Abraham is the father of our faith, and Adam, Moses, and David clearly possess, by God's design, unique relationships to God. They are types and their lives foreshadows of Christ (II Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 22, Romans 5) In fact, Miriam and Aaron are the subjects of God's burning anger because they complained against Moses, with whom God had and defended a unique relationship (Numbers 12:1-10). *Wild At Heart*, evidences very little if any concern for understanding Scriptural passages in their context, and thus the true meanings of the passages cited are distorted.

¹² This is why it is so helpful to remember that, as Deuteronomy 29:29 teaches, there are some things in life that the Lord does not want us to know. God tells us what we need to know directly from Him in Scripture, and we are to use Scriptural principles to make decisions in our daily lives, trusting that as we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5,6). Looking for God's direct word beyond Scripture violates the purpose and sufficiency of Scripture, and in the end only creates or contributes to confusion about God's will. See the discussion on special and general revelation starting on page 12.

shows us that initiation can happen even when we've lost our father or grandfather. He's the carpenter's son, which means Joseph was able to help him in the early days of his journey. But when we meet the young man Jesus, Joseph is out of the picture. Jesus has a new teacher – his true Father – and it is from him he must learn who he really is and what he's really made of.” It is true that Jesus “...kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

The fact that the omniscient Jesus learned is one of the profound mysteries of Scripture and must be handled with great care so as not to misunderstand the deity or the humanity of Christ.¹³ What Eldredge gives us is not the careful handling of mysterious truth, but his own less developed version of the denial of Christ's messianic self-awareness, an idea popular in liberal, non-Christian theology.

We can safely assume that God has given us in His word all that He wants us to know about Christ's earthly life (John 21:25, II Timothy 3:16,17,). Any silence from Scripture on the topic ought to encourage our own. Scripture gives very little detail about the first thirty years of Christ's earthly life. What we *are* told about Jesus' childhood in no way indicates that Christ ever had to discover His purpose or identity. On the contrary, Luke 2 tells us that as a 12 year old, Jesus was in the temple dialoguing with the “teachers.” Verse 47 says: “And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”¹⁴ Further along in the text, Jesus actually rebukes his worrisome parents on the basis of his knowledge of exactly who he is and what he came to do. “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?” (v.49). The chapter ends with the aforementioned verse 52, which emphasizes Christ's progression in the fulfillment of His redemptive task. Even in the rare glimpses we have of Christ's childhood, Scripture never presents Him as in the process of discovering who He is; rather, He is always described as consciously following the path laid out for Him from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8, John 12:27, Matthew 1:21-23).

Eldredge essentially summarizes his view of Christ on page 203 by calling Him “fierce, wild, and romantic to the core.” Christ is certainly fierce; zeal for His father's house consumes Him (John 2:14-17, Psalm 69:9). However, Christ is never the marauding renegade that Eldredge wants Him to be. Christ's fierceness is a holy desire for the glory of God and the good of His people. Eldredge, though, likens Christ's fierceness to that of movie heroes such as William Wallace from *Braveheart*.

Eldredge makes much of his comparison of Christ and Wallace (pgs. 22-25). For instance, he writes that Christ's battles with the Pharisees are like Wallace's battles with cowardly Scottish nobles. This kind of comparison along with the disproportionate

¹³ The fact that Jesus gained wisdom as a human in no way contradicts His omniscience as God. Granted, much like the Trinitarian nature of God's being, we are at a loss as to the ability to explain such apparent paradoxes. But we must never violate Scripture by denying Christ's eternal possession of all of God's attributes. God cannot change (Malachi 3:6) and Jesus is God (John 1:1-14). Thus, if God is omniscient, and unchangeably so, our Savior possesses as God the same attribute. Christ's “emptying “ of Himself described in Philippians 2, contrary to the soundly refuted Kenotist theories of the 19th century, should be understood as a willing disavowal of His rights and privileges as God, and not a disavowal of His essential being as God.

¹⁴ Verse 46 describes Jesus listening to and asking questions of the teachers. Given verse 47, the implication seems to be that Jesus is testing the knowledge of the teachers!

amount of space given to loving descriptions of Wallace, is indicative of a problem in Eldredge's view of Christ.

Often in film or literature, characters are given Christ like qualities such as a transcendent courage and sense of destiny. It could be argued that *Braveheart* intended to portray Wallace as a Christ like figure in the film¹⁵. In that case, Wallace would be complemented by a comparison to Christ, but Eldredge goes about this comparison backwards. He wants our view of Christ to be enhanced because of Christ's likeness to William Wallace.

God says of Himself in Isaiah 46:5, "To whom would you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?" There is no one worthy of comparison to our Lord. Christ's greatness is insulted through Eldredge's portrayal of Him as a William Wallace figure.

Is Christ wild? Since Christ is in absolute control of all things (Mark 4:39-41), the term "wild" just does not apply to Him. Further, when we examine the distinctive personhood of Christ and His Messianic role, we see not wildness, but pure and complete submission. Jesus said and did only what the Father wanted Him to (John 8:28,29; Philippians 2:7,8), and He lived in complete submission to the Law (Matthew 5:17,18). Our very salvation depended on Christ's lack of wildness! (Romans 5:18,19). Sure, Christ railed against Pharisaical hypocrisy and drove moneychangers from the temple, but are those things really indicative of wildness . . . or self-controlled, passionate obedience to the Father? How can the very personification of meekness, humility, and absolute power be considered wild?

Eldredge's point, of course, is not that wildness implies a lack of submissiveness. However, especially given his previous association of wildness with immense risk taking, his emphasis on the wildness of Christ obscures and distorts the biblical teaching of Christ's sovereignty as God and His dutiful humility as the Suffering Servant.

Is Jesus romantic? Eldredge never seems to expound on this particular point¹⁶ and therefore he does not seem to advocate anything inappropriate in this regard. However, given the rest of his theology, the suggestion that Christ is romantic needs to be carefully explained.

Eldredge's postulation of a fierce, wild, romantic Christ is accompanied by his postulation of a Christ who can be thwarted, if even a little, by demonic powers. On page 165-166, Eldredge draws our attention to Christ's encounter with Legion, the group of demons ravaging a man in Gerasenes (Luke 8:26-33). According to Eldredge's interpretation of this passage: "In fact, when he encounters the guy who lives out in the Gerasenes tombs, tormented by a legion of spirits, the first rebuke by Jesus doesn't work. He had to get more information, really take them on" (p.166). Eldredge's point is that if

¹⁵ While the movie version of Wallace may have had admirable qualities, his adulterous tryst with a French princess should cancel him out right away as being a Christ-like figure in the way Eldredge deems him to be.

¹⁶ On pages 32-34, Eldredge writes that God's romantic nature is seen in his institution and approval of physical romance between husband and wife. On page 32 he writes: "And all his wildness and all his fierceness are inseparable from his romantic heart." Whatever legitimate points he makes about God's relationship to romantic human relationships are blurred by his faulty, humanistic conception of God's wildness and fierceness. Here, Eldredge is walking on thin ice without showing the biblical caution necessary to keep the reader from coming to faulty and potentially blasphemous conclusions.

Jesus had to step it up to fight demons, we must be willing to as well.¹⁷ Again, Eldredge's exegesis not only misses, but also completely reverses the point of the passage.

The only possible inference that Jesus' first rebuke had failed (though there is no explicit reference to this) would come from verses 29 and 30. "For He had been commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times . . ." (NASB). In verse 30, Jesus asks the spirit its name. Eldredge infers from this progression of events that Jesus' first method of attack was insufficient, a conclusion completely unwarranted by the text.

The text reveals that the demonic group was already in agony because of Christ's mere presence. Verse 28 says: "And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before him, and said in a loud voice, 'What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.'" Rather than assume that Christ had already tried to cast the demons out once and they were too strong, it is more natural to see that Christ was in the *process* of casting the demons out. The Greek which begins verse 29 can be translated either as it is above, or as "For He was commanding the unclean spirit . . ."; either reading gives the sense that Christ was in the process of the exorcism. The demons, as if grasping for a continual hold on the poor man, were screaming for mercy as they were being dragged away by the irresistible force of Christ's holiness. Jesus then asks the demon its name, and after the demon reveals itself (themselves), it asks to be cast into the nearby heard of swine rather than the abyss. These implies that the demonic group knew it was on its way out, and further that it was in complete subjection to Christ as to where it would be sent.

The sense of present action in verse 29 could only yield one of two conclusions: that the demon was in the process of being cast out by Christ's words, or that Jesus had actually tried several commands, all of which had failed. The second option, of course, is absurd, and rendered void by even a cursory study of Christ's power and His dealing with Satan's forces. Eldredge holds to neither option, maintaining the one failed command view that cannot be solidly supported by any aspect of the text. As a result, he purports an insulting view of our Savior.

This may seem like a lot of wrangling over one passage of Scripture, but it is precisely this kind of wrangling that would keep Eldredge from misinterpreting God's word so often. He seems far too willing to skim the surface of a text in order to justify his theology. This kind of careless interpretation pervades the book, and this is no small matter. A careless handling of God's word leads to and supports a faulty perception of God's character. A right understanding of Scripture includes the fact that Jesus knew exactly who He was and what He was doing, and furthermore, that He always did it to perfection.¹⁸ He is the almighty, triumphant Lamb of God, not the fallible wild man Eldredge presents.

¹⁷ At this point in the book, Eldredge is describing his wife's battles with dizzy spells. He considers them a demonic oppression that must be conquered by fierce opposition in the name of Christ.

¹⁸ It has been argued that Jesus, being fully human, could well have made some carpentry errors or the like growing up, and that these errors would not be tantamount to sin or failure. Again, I am impressed at Scripture's silence on the issue. However, even if we grant that point, it would be hard to compare a carpentry miscalculation to a fundamental error in exerting power over Satan. We must be careful what we assume when we read that Jesus was made like us in all things (Hebrews 2:17).

With the humanistic reduction of the person of Christ comes the humanistic reduction of the gospel itself. Eldredge presents the salvific work of the Messiah as one aimed primarily at the discovery and release of our true, inner selves. The gospel of salvation from sin is traded in for the gospel of masculine self-realization.

Though Eldredge does make brief allusions to the forgiveness given us by Christ¹⁹, it becomes quickly apparent that this defining theme of salvation will not be his focus. He wants to move beyond it to what he sees as the primary purpose of Christ's coming: the healing of our emotional scars. The best case scenario here is that Eldredge wants to focus on not just our justification, but on our daily sanctification as well, that He wants to show us the gradual outworking of our salvation. This would be fine, except that he all but ignores the issue of sin and our daily battle against it and muddies the waters with talk of "the wound."

The "wound" is a crucial concept to *Wild at Heart*. Though he focuses primarily on men, Eldredge believes that every person is given a wound by someone in their lives. On page 60: "Every boy, in his journey to become a man, takes an arrow in the center of his heart, in the place of his strength." The wound could be the result of verbal, emotional or physical abuse; the defining element of the wound is the communication to the victim that the victim is no good, that he or she does not "have what it takes" to be a real man or woman. Eldredge relates heartbreaking stories of how individuals he knew received their wound, and sadly, many of his readers will no doubt be able to relate to those stories. Eldredge rightly decries the injustice done to these people, himself being one of them. Again, Eldredge's heart for the hurting is obvious, but his theories about how this wound must be dealt with and healed are dangerous and unbiblical.

Eldredge writes of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin and its vital connection to the wound (pgs. 55-57), and here we see the beginning of Eldredge's distortion of the gospel. On page 57: "...Adam and Eve's fall sent a tremor through the human race... Thus every little boy and every little girl comes into the world set up for a loss of heart. Even if he can't quite put it into words, every man is haunted by the question, 'Am I really a man? Have I got what it takes...when it counts?'"

There is no talk here or elsewhere of spiritual and physical death, the true results of the fall (Genesis 3:1-24, Romans 5:12-21, I Corinthians 15:20-24). Eldredge bypasses Scripture's teaching about the fall in order to replace it with the focal point of *Wild At Heart*, masculine and feminine self-realization. If the primary nature and effect of the fall were what Eldredge conveys, then the primary nature and effect of the saving work of Christ would be to restore to people their masculine or feminine confidence, and this is precisely what we find in *Wild At Heart*. What Eldredge gives us is a pop-psychology driven reduction of the gospel.²⁰

Consider Eldredge's view of the ministry of Christ, as given on pages 128-129. He writes: "...we invite Jesus into the wound, we ask him to come and meet us there, to enter into the broken and unhealed places of our heart. When the Bible tells us that Christ

¹⁹ Given the proportionally great amount of writing in the book about God and how we can only truly find ourselves if we are in a relationship to God, Eldredge never explicitly says that one must be saved through faith in Christ or what it even means to be saved. That one must be saved to benefit from *Wild At Heart* may be an assumption made by Eldredge, but given his blurred view of the gospel, the reader is left without the ability to make that assumption with the author.

²⁰ Indeed, his views come perilously close to the Robert Schuller school of theology which teaches that sin is not a moral rebellion against God, but rather a lack of self-esteem.

came to ‘redeem mankind’ it offers a whole lot more than forgiveness. To simply forgive a broken man is like telling someone running a marathon, ‘It’s okay that you’ve broken your leg. I won’t hold that against you. Now finish the race.’ . . . No, there is much more to our redemption. The core of Christ’s mission is foretold in Isaiah 61: ‘The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners (v.1). The Messiah will come, he says, to bind up and heal, to release and set free. What? *Your heart*. Christ comes to restore and release you, your soul, the true you. This is *the* central passage in the entire Bible about Jesus. . . .”

Eldredge fast-forwards past the issues of sin and death and hell, issues whose existence and importance are barely even implied in *Wild At Heart*, to get to the healing of the “wound.” The passage in Isaiah 61 is not understood as it should be as Christ delivering us from the pains and punishment of sin, but rather as Christ restoring our true masculinity and femininity. Apparently, the people Isaiah prophesies about are brokenhearted not over their sin, but over their lack of gender based self-actualization. Again, Eldredge wrenches a passage from its context, from its home in the great, progressive Scriptural narrative describing redemption in Christ. The passage is thus bled dry of its God-established meaning so that it can serve Eldredge’s own felt-needs.

On pages 124 and 125, Eldredge cites a portion of dialogue from the film *Good Will Hunting*. A psychologist brings a troubled young man to the tearful admission that his life circumstances and the trouble that has resulted were most emphatically *not* the fault of the young man. Eldredge uses this dialogue as a way to point out to us that our wound is not our fault: “It is no shame that you need healing; it is no shame to look to another for strength, it is no shame that you feel young and afraid inside. It’s not your fault.” Certainly, the kind of abuse Eldredge writes about is not the fault of the victim. But relating this back to Eldredge’s idea that Jesus’ primary work was to heal us of our wound, we must then conclude that Jesus’ primary ministry was to come and heal us of something that is not our fault!

The wound cannot be equated with our own sin; and if this is the case, then according to Eldredge’s understanding of Isaiah 61 and similar passages, Jesus’ primary mission in coming to this world is separated if not divorced from the deliverance of His people from sin. Scripture teaches that the primary purpose of Christ’s coming and dying and rising again was the salvation of His people from sin (Isaiah 53, Matthew 1:21, John 3:16. . . the whole Bible!) so that they would show forth His praises to the rest of the world (Ephesians 2:10, Matthew 5:13,14). But there is none of this biblical rhetoric about salvation in *Wild At Heart*.

Instead of treating the healing of the wound as one aspect of Christ’s ministry to His people, subsequent to their salvation, Eldredge treats it as the all-encompassing, defining element of the gospel. This is a blatant violation of Scripture’s teaching on the gospel and thus an attack on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How is it, then, that Eldredge comes to these unbiblical conclusions? Clearly, he is not paying careful attention to Scripture, nor limiting Himself to Scriptural texts to come to his conclusions about the texts. In addition to interpreting Scripture in light of his felt needs rather than according to a passage’s inherent context, Eldredge claims and

cites many other avenues of hearing from God, and these all seem to influence his mishandling of Scripture.

As alluded to earlier²¹, Eldredge obviously believes in extra-biblical revelation, the idea that God directly and verbally (though not necessarily audibly) communicates to us outside of Scripture. Many Christians embrace that notion today. Hopefully, the unbiblical views galvanized by Eldredge's belief in extra-biblical revelation will cause these Christians to rethink their own beliefs on the topic.

Scripture teaches that God is revealed in all creation (Psalm 8, Romans 1). As Augustine is quoted as saying: "All truth is God's truth." We can learn of God through every aspect of life, but the idea of God actually speaking to us is another matter. Once that is the issue, the categories have shifted and the stakes have become infinitely higher.

We must recognize the qualitative difference between Scripture and the rest of the world in terms of God's communication to us. Scripture is God's special revelation, His direct Word to us. This Word tells us how to interpret the rest of life, wherein God does not directly speak. To fail to make this distinction is to attack the purpose, sufficiency and authority of Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2, 29:29, Psalm 119:105, II Timothy 3:16,17.) For if God speaks outside of Scripture, then He is continuing His direct revelation to man. If this is the case, we should be adding text to the end of the Bible as often as God speaks. Most Christians will rightfully balk at the idea of adding to Scripture, but many still insist that God speaks directly to them outside of Scripture. These Christians either fail or refuse to see the inconsistency of their belief. Eldredge, too, falls prey to this inconsistency.

On page 136, after relaying many incidents of extra biblical revelation, Eldredge cites a friend's tale of hearing from God: "...I heard God say to me, 'You're doing great. I am proud of you, right where you are'. But I could not believe it. It just doesn't seem true.' That is why we always rest on propositional truth. We stand on what Scripture says about us. We are forgiven. Our heart is good.²² The Father's voice²³ is *never* condemning. From that place we ask God to speak personally to us..."

Notice that Eldredge refers us back to the Scriptures because sometimes we're unable to believe what God says outside of it. This assumes a qualitative difference between the words God has spoken in Scripture and the words He allegedly speaks to us outside of Scripture. But how could there be that difference? After all, Scripture is the recording and assembly of what God directly said to His prophets throughout the ages! (II

²¹ See page 6 of this critique.

²² Eldredge never specifies who the *we* is. Again, we would hope that he is referring only to Christians, but he gives us no real evidence of that. Further, though Christians are new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), we still have the innate sin nature to deal with (Romans 7). Calling our heart good is a statement in need of much qualification; Eldredge does not provide it. The statement that the Father *never* speaks to us in a condemning manner also needs much qualification. True, there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Romans 8:1), but the Father still rebukes and chastens us in our temporal lives. Much of Scripture contains the rebuke of God directed toward believers (Isaiah 1, Galatians 1:1-9, Hebrews 5). If we have it in our heads enough that God will never condemn us, we may miss much of what He is in fact saying to us for our protection.

²³ Eldredge emphasizes here the Father's voice. One wonders how this fits with Christ's role as the lone Mediator between God and man or the Spirit's role in teaching us God's word and sealing its truth on our hearts. Typically, those who embrace Eldredge's idea that God speaks directly to us outside of Scripture attribute that communication to the Holy Spirit, or less often to Jesus. It is rare that the Father is credited with direct speech to His people.

Peter 1:20,21). Does God *sort of* speak to us outside of Scripture and *really* speak to us inside? Those who claim that God speaks to them outside of Scripture are forced to maintain the strange idea that God's extra-biblical words to them, in comparison to His spoken words in Scripture, are somehow lessened in clarity, authority, or both.²⁴

When God speaks, worlds are created and souls are raised from spiritual death. His word is sacred, and He completely revealed His word in the past to and through prophets of His own appointment (Hebrews 1:1-4)²⁵. The Scriptures are God's very words and any claimed direct revelation beyond Scripture is inherently false and must be rejected (Jeremiah 23:23-32). Scripture, and Scripture alone, is God's complete, authoritative, direct revelation to us His people.²⁶

Though Eldredge maintains some distinction between Scripture and his other claimed sources of God's direct revelation, he does so inconsistently. Really, there is no reason for Eldredge to maintain that distinction, for he considers himself to have heard the words of God through these other venues.

On page 200-201, Eldredge describes a time when he was browsing through a bookstore. One volume in particular jumped out at him. He picked it up, read the introduction, and was convinced that God had spoken to Him: "Reading the counsel given to Bailie I knew it was God speaking to me. It was an invitation to come out of Ur. I set the volume down without turning another page and walked out of that bookstore to find a life worth living."

No doubt all of us have been moved and inspired by books, some perhaps so moved as to change plans and goals for our lives. But these experiences are common, not supernatural, and they occur among the unregenerate as well as the regenerate. To call these experiences direct communication from Almighty God is to drastically diminish the sacred nature of God's Word and to exalt the mere words and experiences of man to the threshold of Holy Scripture.

Eldredge also claims to hear directly from God through movies, or more precisely that God uses movies to address Eldredge's needs. Eldredge writes profusely of his love for movies²⁷ and he draws many of his illustrations and explanations for his opinions from films. On pages 134-135, Eldredge writes of his desire to be like Henry V or Maximus from the movie *Gladiator*. One day, on a plane trip home from England,

²⁴ The problem could not be, as is sometimes suggested, our struggle to listen, or perceive God's voice outside of Scripture, because that same problem would have to apply to Scripture. How do we know Scripture is indeed the voice of God? Once you claim that God speaks to you outside of Scripture, you have removed any objective standard by which you could truly discern the voice of God. And that's the point. Scripture, and nothing else, is meant to be God's direct word, His direct revelation to us.

²⁵ God's direct revelation to man culminates and terminates in the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prepares us for His coming, the New Testament chronicles His coming and prepares us for His next coming. How, after we have received the crowing glory of God's direct revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ, can we look for more?

²⁶ Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word (John 1:14), and Scripture gives us from Genesis to Revelation the story of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Himself is the fullness of God's revelation to man, and as the New Testament tells us of Christ from one end of eternity to the other, how could we desire any direct word from God beyond the magnificence of what He has given us (Hebrews 1:1-4)? To desire more is to be ignorant of the nature and depth of Scripture, and ungrateful toward the One Who gave it.

²⁷ Eldredge has a great deal of experience in the theater industry. It seems that his love for film, though, has blurred his judgement as to God's mode of direct revelation. For a brief biographical sketch of Eldredge, see his profile at ThomasNelsonPublishers.com

Eldredge doubts as to God's approval of him and his work. This is allegedly what God says to him: "You are Henry V after Agincourt...the man in the arena, whose face is covered with blood and sweat and dust, who strove valiantly...a great warrior...yes, even Maximus."

Christ's words in Scripture about His love for His people are apparently not, at least in that moment, sufficient to comfort Eldredge. Instead of counseling Eldredge from His Word, God tells Eldredge that he is Maximus! This cannot be the voice of God. Besides the fact that this alleged revelation is way beyond the scope of Scripture, Maximus, a brave man to be sure, is also a worshipper of false gods! Would the true God try to inspire His people by comparing them to legendary idolaters? This is, of course, completely out of step with the God of Scripture, and that is what is so frightening about Eldredge's theology. God and His word are reduced to such a low level as to be no better, and sometimes apparently worse,²⁸ than the products of Hollywood imagination.

It is at these points in the book that the true nature and origin of Eldredge's view of God and God's Word becomes clear. On page 200, he writes: "God is intimately personal with us and he speaks in ways that are peculiar to our own quirky hearts – not just through the Bible, but through the whole of creation. To Stasi he speaks through movies. To Craig he speaks through rock and roll...God's word to me comes in many ways – through sunsets and friends and films and music and wilderness and books."

Eldredge is postulating a tailor made religion for the individual. Whatever you want or need, God will provide, and provide it in such a way that it is consistent with your favorite pastimes. Eldredge wants to be Maximus; so God tells him that he is Maximus. Eldredge wants to climb Mount Everest, so God tells him that in following his dreams, he is climbing Mount Everest (pgs. 216-217). God's voice has become to Eldredge the voice of His own felt needs, or rather, the voice of his own felt needs has to him become God's voice. Eldredge is listening to his own psyche and treating it as God's direct communication to him. He recognizes needs in himself and then interprets Scripture in light of those needs (thus distorting Scripture's teaching about God), or even goes far beyond the scope of Scripture to hear what he needs to. He has made God the idol of his own psychological, emotional cravings. This is why *Wild At Heart* is so dangerous; it leads hurting people into idolatry.

Of course, in rejecting the dangers of Eldredge's view of God, we must never forget that God does in fact meet our needs and speak to us, and He does this through the counsel and comfort of His infallible Word (Psalm 119: 50,82). But Scripture deals not necessarily with our felt needs, but our real needs. We must begin with and learn from Scripture what those true needs are; Eldredge begins with his felt needs and reads them back into Scripture as well as everything else he claims to learn from in his life. Additionally, though he does make some valid points as to the nature of men and their needs, the needs Eldredge is most concerned with often fall more in line with a rugged individualistic mindset in need of psychological validation than anything Scripture addresses.

Eldredge severely mishandles Scripture and drags it down to the level of any other medium of communication. The result is that Eldredge reinterprets God and His

²⁸ On page 13, Eldredge compares the thrill of a James Bond movie to the apparently boring nature of Bible study. Perhaps Eldredge has never experienced a good Bible study, but for God's people, what could be more enticing and thrilling than knowing the mind of God and being taught by Him?

word, Jesus Christ and the gospel which centers around Him, in order to get the kind of healing he thinks he, and everyone else, needs. This reshaping of God and His word to fit our needs is the essence of idolatry and as such must be opposed and rejected.

Wild At Heart is a heartfelt, emotionally moving but ultimately dangerous book because it is severely lacking in biblical truth. In it, John Eldredge seeks to help free the hearts of men and women who have been hurt by people in their lives and made to think that they are less than what they are. Eldredge rightly points out that men and women have fallen prey to culturally popular but deplorable ideas about masculinity and femininity. Eldredge wants men to be real men and women to be real women. But Eldredge's unbiblical methodology of helping people along this road is what necessitates the rejection of the key principles of the book. In seeking to help people he is in fact leading people away from the true God, the only One who can truly help and heal.

Some may object to this critique on the grounds that perhaps I have not been through the kind of hurtful situations described in *Wild At Heart*. Though personal experience is not the test for truth, let me assure the reader without going into the details that my life experience is precisely the kind of experience Eldredge had in mind when writing his book. Regardless of how this critique is perceived, the attack on the true character of God in *Wild At Heart* was simply too much to ignore, and the immense and growing popularity of this book makes the need for a critique all the more urgent.

We live in a day and age in which sincerity is valued more than truth, and in which the ends of social and psychological pacification justify whatever means are employed to get them. Undoubtedly many have benefited from *Wild At Heart*, but at what cost? To buy completely or even partially into the core principles of this book is to abandon crucial aspects of biblical Christianity for an ill-conceived masculine self-realization. A work cannot be judged by its superficial benefits; after all, many cults boast of happy families and fulfilled lives, but they are rooted in false teaching and thus are deceiving those who look to them for help. We must look beneath the surface to the biblical integrity of a work or movement to determine its true value, and *Wild At Heart* is sorely lacking in biblical integrity.

Some may also feel that this critique is an example of what Eldredge would call "doctrinal Nazism" (p. 27). Tragically, fidelity to sound doctrine is ignored by many in the church who are more concerned with pragmatic social or personal reform. To criticize popular movements within Christianity, especially movements that seem to have done so much good for so many people is to be labeled as divisive and unloving. Of those who would view this critique as unnecessary and harmful, I ask, *Can something be truly helpful if it is not based on and guided by God's truth?* Jesus criticized those who judged merely on external appearances, those who did not understand what was truly happening spiritually behind the scenes (John 7:24). We must follow our Savior's command and be biblically discerning as to what is truly good (Hebrews 5:12-14), and we must have the courage to reject what is not.

Another more fundamental question must also be asked. *If something is not true according to the Scriptures, should we as Christians want anything to do with it, regardless of how much we think we get from it?* If the price of our happiness is the violation of God's Word, and we are willing to pay that price, than we have revealed

ourselves as worshippers not of God, but of ourselves. Nothing is worth an assault on God's truth.

I hope, as worshippers of the One who is the way, the truth, and the life, that we cling to that truth no matter what falls apart around us, and in so doing prove that we love our Savior and His Word more than we love ourselves. God has given us what we need to know from Him in Scripture, and if we would just take the time to truly know His word, we will as I've seen in my own life find the true help and healing that we need. Men will learn how to be real men, women how to be real women, and we will be working toward a goal beyond our own personal feeling of fulfillment. We'll be working toward the goal to which every Christian aspires, the glorification of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.