

BUGGIN' OUT!

Newsletter

Applying Biblical Truth and Humor to the Struggle.

The Voice

It's a question I have asked myself a thousand times. *Robert, why is it when you land yourself a hot man, you are unable to enjoy him in peace? In the heat of passion, you hear a voice calling you away from it all.*

Then one day, as I was chilling on the beach with Champ, my German Shepherd, things began to make sense.

I first saw Champ walking along the highway during a hot summer day in a bad section of New York City. He was dirty, dehydrated and limping along the street, coming within inches of being hit by passing cars. As I peered in my rearview mirror and saw his helpless situation, I couldn't help but love him instantly. I pulled over and invited him into my car with some peanut butter crackers I had on hand.

Champ came home to live with me. When I took him to the veterinarian for an exam, she told me Champ had been wild for some time, possibly all his life, and that he might not take well to being domesticated.

She was right. For three months, he was the epitome of nastiness, disobedience and rebellion. However, one evening, as I brought Champ his food and sat down next to him, as was our nightly ritual, he turned to me and licked my face. Finally, I had earned his trust and he accepted me as his master.

The following spring, I brought Champ to the Jersey shore with me. I wanted to show him the ocean and let him run on the beach. No one was around and, since we were miles away from traffic, I let him off his leash to explore.

Our day was going well. I was watching the waves while Champ was chasing seagulls and playing tag with the tide. Then, from behind us came a pack of three wild dogs. I thought they were going to attack us, but, instead, I saw Champ running toward them. The four of them sniffed and Champ turned away from me to run off with the pack.

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All I could remember were the vet's words that *Champ had been wild for some time, possibly all his life, and he might not take well to being domesticated*. Great. As soon as I grew to love this dog, his instinct to be wild kicked in, and he took off to live the life that was instinctive to him.

As I watched the group of now **four** dogs scurry off down the beach, I gave a final yell and called out *Champ, come back*. In the distance, I saw three figures gradually getting smaller and one seemingly larger. It was my Champ. He turned around and he came back to me. I was a cluck not to have seen the lesson sooner.

I had never domesticated the other three dogs, and they never accepted me as their master. However, Champ and I had a history together. He remembered how his life was before we had met. He recognized and practiced my authority over him and he obeyed me. He knew that, although the pack would always be a part **of** him and a temptation **to** him, that love, security, companionship and a home could be found with me. He also knew that I would take care of his needs. He did not have such a guarantee running wild with the pack.

Champ heard his master's call and was unable to ignore it. Yes, Jesus. Now I get it. I finally understand why everyone else can have a blast in the gay life but me. Not all men recognize You as their Master. They are free and answer to no one but themselves. But, You invited me out of the wild and domesticated me. And just as I trained Champ to live in a human's house, You are training me to live in the Father's house.

I'm sure when I called out Champ's name to come back to me, my voice must have blended with the chirps of the gulls and the crashing of the waves to the three other dogs. But not to my Champ. He recognized that faint, barely audible plea as the voice of one who cared enough to give him another shot at life, and so he walked away from the pack and he turned away from instinct to follow his master.

And I hear YOU, Master Jesus, whispering to my heart to turn away from instinct and stick with the One who loves me. That nagging voice in my heart that took all the joy out of my wild days...it was You, calling me to return home. And, while you sometimes had to put your still-small voice

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aside and whip out a megaphone to reach me, I did hear You and I had no choice but to leave the wild and return home. Thank You for caring enough to call out after me. There's no place like home.

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