



BRENT HENDERSON

THE
ROAR
WITHIN

UNLEASHING THE POWERFUL TRUTH OF WHO YOU REALLY ARE

“In *The Roar Within*, Brent Henderson skillfully uses the best tool for helping men of all ages clearly understand biblical truths that transform. That tool is storytelling, and Brent is a master. Brent’s unforgettable experiences, along with some well-chosen experiences of others, will guide you to not only why but how to apply the wisdom packed into the chapters. Read it and roar!”

Steve Chapman, author of *A Look at Life from a Deer Stand*

“*The Roar Within* is an adventure book with a purpose. It captured me with breath-holding stories ranging from Africa to Alaska and set me free with the paramount teaching of the Bible—that the power of God is at work within me. This excellent book awakens me to the fact that I am more than I realize. This is a book every man needs to read!”

Dr. Jimmy Sites, producer and host of
Spiritual Outdoor Adventures TV

“*The Roar Within* is a must-read for men. It is compelling, a page-turner, and brilliant in speaking directly to the things that take us out as men and help us live out of who God says we are. Brent is unique in his ability to weave together entertaining adventures as a professional outdoorsman with incredible wisdom as a seasoned leader, and his humility, honesty, and wisdom are both inspiring and refreshing.”

Robby Angle, president and CEO of Trueface.org

“Our culture’s onslaught against righteous masculinity is Satan’s strategy to destroy men’s role as image-bearers of God. But God has raised up His spokesmen. One such warrior for truth is Brent Henderson. *The Roar Within* exposes the emasculating lies of the enemy and boldly proclaims God’s life-changing words that every man must hear: you are enough! A compelling, victorious adventure and a must-read for every Christian man!”

Russell Thornberry, *Buckmasters Magazine* editor-in-chief (retired), founder of Wildman, and international pastor at River’s Edge Fellowship, Alberta, Canada

“I have known and partnered with Brent for a number of years, and what I and the men within my influence love about him is his ability to combine fascinating, true life experiences with genuine humility and terrific insight. True to form, *The Roar Within* is for every guy who has either lost or never found his true voice—the one God predestined for him to declare His authority over any opposition to His heart and legacy.”

Randy (RT) Phillips, former president of Promise Keepers and men’s pastor at Life Austin Church, Texas

“Through this book of great adventures, Brent invites you to join him in his greatest adventure—the discovery of trusting God with yourself.”

Bill Thrall, cofounder of Trueface.org and coauthor of *The Cure*

“A must-read! *The Roar Within* is every man’s survival guide to help navigate the wilds and chaos within him. This book brings to light what kills a man on the inside while providing hope and practical methods to defeat these ‘man-killers.’ It gives a voice and supernatural strength to the subdued spirit or ‘roar’ within a man’s heart that, once found and released, provides the courage, strength, and passion to lead himself, his family, and others according to God’s original design for a man. Be prepared for a wild, riveting ride . . . and find a comfortable spot, because right from the first paragraph, you will not be able to put this book down.”

Russell Peck, Palm Coast, Florida, law enforcement officer (retired), outdoor enthusiast, and ministry leader

“In *The Roar Within*, Brent Henderson masterfully and insightfully dismantles the false narratives men have been taught and begins replacing lies with truth. I’ve had the honor to know, travel with, and share experiences with Brent in some pretty extreme environments. Through these experiences, both physical and spiritual, I’ve come to the place (as all men do eventually) of asking myself, ‘Who am I really, where is my true value, and am I enough?’ *The Roar Within* takes you on a journey of self-discovery in search of those answers.”

Ken Dodson, president of True North Ventures, Inc.

“If I were you, I would read this book! Whether you are a non-believer, a new Christian, or have been a believer for decades,

The Roar Within will give you great insight into the love of God and the joy that comes from knowing who you are. No matter where you are in your life's journey, the wisdom of this book will expose the devil's lies and guide you to the joy God intended for you. Enjoy Brent Henderson's labor of love and rejoice in finding your *roar!*"

Will Primos, founder of Primos Hunting

"As a wife, a mom of two boys who are now grown men, a grandmother to two little boys, and a woman working in a mainly male industry, I'm still learning about how God uniquely wired men. After reading *The Roar Within*, I feel a great sense of relief realizing I don't have to dampen the spirit of adventure of the men in my life; it's inborn for a purpose. It's so crucial that our boys have an earthly father who has his focus on his heavenly Father. Each man has to find the confidence that only Christ can give and, in turn, find the roar within that God wants him to share with the world. I highly recommend this book to all women to help them understand the warrior, protector, and adventurer buried in the heart of every man, because it will free you to be the woman God made you to be."

Lisa Bevell, contemporary Christian musician

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UNLEASHING THE POWERFUL TRUTH
OF WHO YOU REALLY ARE

BRENT HENDERSON



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Introduction

THE ROAR WITHIN

Oh, the power revealed the first time the lion cub roared—and understood who he really was.

One of the scariest nights I have ever spent was in a small fenced-in camp in Balule, South Africa, on the southern banks of the Olifants River in Kruger National Park. At night you can hear whole prides of lions roar—it's *awesome*.

As the African sun began to set, the flickering glow of the campfire illuminated a wide circle. The shadows of the night crept in and sparks drifted skyward. My tent was pitched just feet away from the edge of a barbed wire-topped chain-link fence, and I grilled hamburgers over the open flame. The intoxicating aroma of burning flesh cast a spell on man and beast

for miles around as it swirled about and drifted into the night. When the final glimmer of daylight had melted away, the temperature dropped and blackness descended, as if I were sinking into the depths of the darkest sea.

While I was finishing the last few bites of meat, something caused me to pause and squint past the glow of the fire into the shadows. I sensed something was locked onto me before I had visual recognition; it's an intimidating feeling. Through the fog of the night and the drifting smoke—there, only twenty feet away, a ghostly pair of yellow eyes three feet off the ground was staring straight at me. I was totally paralyzed. Silent fear set in as the hairs stood up on the back of my neck; I could feel “fight-or-flight” begin to pump through my veins. Whatever had me in its sights was tracking my every move, and my eyes strained to uncover the predator blending into the night.

Moments seemed like minutes. Then all at once, the eerie shape of a large spotted hyena materialized; it had smelled the meat and was moving in on its prey. The jaws of a hyena can crush the pelvis of a buffalo in one bite. Knowing I was its intended victim was no small thing.

The hyena moved in my direction only to pause and urinate against the fence just feet from my tent to mark its territory. It became a game. I moved to where it had urinated and marked my territory. Within minutes it was back reclaiming its territory. This game of dominance, with the hyena moving in and out of the shadows, continued for about twenty minutes, when suddenly the hyena's body language changed from dominance

to submission as it cowered and disappeared into the dark. I thought I'd won our game of "king of the hill" until my ears picked up on the true cause of its turning. In the distance, but moving closer, I heard the unmistakable sound of a lion pride roaring, claiming its territory. A male lion is extremely protective of his home and family; he uses his roar to warn off anything that might threaten them. Male lions have been known to take down an animal weighing several thousand pounds and can eat the equivalent of seventy hamburgers in a single sitting. Their ferocious roars can be heard five miles away, and when the whole pride sounds off, every living creature stops what it's doing. They all know who the real king of the African plains is. This king is not a thief; he rules the plains, protects his pride, and takes what is his.

Finding Your One True Voice

A lion's roar isn't something it earns from its father or from how many kills it achieves. That roar is something a lion is born with. It's imputed. The roar is given to the lion by the One who created it.

This book is about helping you find your roar, your one true voice, the real *you* God placed in you the moment you truly believed—the you that is *Christ in you*. Not the flesh and bones walking around afraid, insecure, and full of worry and doubt, but the you from whom, when you live from that place, the enemy tucks tail and runs.

We are embarking on a journey—a safari to help men answer the Big Question: *Am I enough?* When you understand who you really are in Christ, you can live life to the full, the way that God intended.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Are you ready to unleash the powerful truth of who you really are? Are you ready to discover and release the roar within? Then it's time to dress for battle and get your game face on. Let's do this!

1

The Big Question

The LORD is a warrior;
The LORD is His name.
EXODUS 15:3 NASB

The dark, rolling waves crashed against our boat, slamming us into the side of the large scow we were tied up to miles out in the open ocean of Bristol Bay, Alaska. Above the sounds of the smashing waves, I heard an argument breaking out on the deck of the scow. The voices were those of our captain and a deckhand from the larger scow, and things were getting out of hand quickly. As I was working to keep our boat steady, the captain's son was on a rope ladder above me, peering over the side of the scow to see what was causing this heated exchange. The next thing I knew, the son jumped off the rope ladder onto

the deck of our boat, ran for the stern, opened a compartment below deck, and moments later burst out from behind the cabin door with a loaded AR15.

Several days before, there had been an altercation between our captain and this deckhand as we unloaded our catch onto this same scow. The deckhand's job was to weigh the 30" × 30" × 40" brailer bags full of salmon, each about a thousand pounds, to know how much to pay us once we totaled the weight of all the bags. The problem was the deckhand hadn't zeroed the scale and was trying to cheat us out of a lot of money—salmon isn't cheap.

When the salmon are running, sleeping even an hour or two is a luxury. Around-the-clock fishing for five days straight leaves everyone exhausted and on edge. Having to function at a high level with very little food or sleep, on dangerously cold, rolling seas, and smelling like a fishery gut pile makes for short, nasty tempers. When fishermen come ashore after being at sea for days or weeks, trouble is a sure thing. These small fishing villages attract a lot of people who just don't fit in the lower 48 (and a few who, like me, were just looking for an adventurous way to earn some money before the daily grind of college). For some of them, the wiring upstairs has a few faulty connections. Gambling, prostitution, heavy drinking, and illegal drugs were all there for the finding, and fights between these rough-cut hotheads were a given. When we had last been ashore, we'd gotten a burger at a hole-in-the-wall called the Red Dog Saloon, and we heard that the night before a couple of coked-up guys

got into a knife fight, resulting in one man losing an ear. This was not a place you wanted to take your kids; you took a large handgun instead. It didn't take much to light someone's fuse, and they were all too ready to strike that match.

I guess I should clarify something. The devious deckhand wasn't a man; she was the roughest, smelliest woman I'd ever seen. I could only guess that when her ship made it to port, her shampoo of choice was Rogaine and her washrag was 40 grit sandpaper. She could outdrink a camel and was hairier than a muskox, meaner than a Cape buffalo, and more foulmouthed than a turkey vulture. The reason my buddy had gone for the AR15 was that he'd seen his dad shove this cheating deckhand hard onto the deck after she'd attempted to pull a knife on him.

Before the mayhem escalated into shots being fired, the captain of the scow burst onto the deck, grabbed the deckhand, and escorted her to her quarters. The captain instructed us to leave to help defuse the situation, and also let us know that she was being fired and would be on the next supply ship headed to shore.

On land or at sea, things in Alaska can go south quickly, and you'd better be able to handle yourself or you'll find yourself in a life-or-death situation on the count of one. Alaska isn't for sissies; only those who are wild at heart can survive there.

As crazy as that encounter was, I was strangely drawn to the new chapter of which I was now a part. It was almost as if I were taking the exam to get my man card, and I'd survived the first trial—at least as a character in a much larger story. I was being

battle-tested, and something inside of me was beginning to step up. My boyhood question was being answered: Do I have what it takes to be a man?

A man needs a much bigger orbit than a woman. He needs a mission, a life purpose, and he needs to know his name. Only then is he fit for a woman, for only then does he have something to invite her into.¹

In John Eldredge's book *Wild at Heart*, he states that all men need three key elements in their lives: "a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue."² When I first read the book in 2001, that message grabbed hold of me like nothing I'd ever heard. It wasn't churchy, it wasn't girly; it awakened the masculine in me the way that building forts, playing army or cowboys and Indians, and exploring the mountainside behind my house as a young boy had done. Most men I talk to who have read *Wild at Heart* say they felt the same way I did: *finally*, a message for men that wasn't feminized, watered down, or politically correct—that gave men permission to be men.

While attending a Wild at Heart men's conference in Colorado in 2004, I had a conversation with John Eldredge about purpose. I felt embarrassed as I shared, "John, I'm here because I've lost my heart. I'm forty-four years old, and I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be doing with my life. I've always done what I thought everyone else thought I should be doing, but that pursuit has left me feeling like I'm just trying to please other

people. I've lost the truest part of who I really am and what makes me come alive." I remember the next thing he said to me, because it moved me to my core in a way that nothing ever had before. He told me to stop asking myself what the world needed but instead ask myself what made me come alive, because what the world needs is men who have come alive.

When I was flying home from that conference, God spoke to me on the plane and told me that I would be his "warrior poet." What did that mean? What was I supposed to do? How long would it take? That title would change my life forever, but it would be almost ten more years before I would not only understand it but believe it.

Men ask the really deep questions when they are alone. *Why am I here? Who am I really? What is my purpose in this life? Will I make a difference?* My thoughts ran those circles as I sat alone for many hours on the deck of that Alaskan commercial fishing boat, keeping watch on the nets as massive schools of salmon made their way from the open ocean back to the streams where they were formed. They were headed there for one purpose: to give life to the next generation.

There's an old Russian proverb: "If you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one." When I heard it, it was like a punch in the gut, because that was me for many years. I'd chased so many rabbits—all of them good things—but I was almost no further along in getting my questions answered than when I'd begun chasing them many years before. Why? Because I had never been able to identify that *one thing*. I'd been living my life

for the opinions of others. Once again, John's words pursued me: "Ask yourself what makes you come alive."

John had challenged me to ask *and* answer the Big Question. *What makes me come alive?*

What was it that made me come alive like a lion on the prowl? I discovered it was fighting for the hearts of men, writing about the adventures God had planned for me to draw men to Himself! I knew, because it roared inside me so loudly that I couldn't *not* do it. I was made to be His warrior poet!

But almost as quickly as I heard the roar of God telling me who I truly was at my core and what I was meant to do, I learned the enemy wanted that roar—that purpose—silenced. He knew that if I ever truly lived out of that place where God made me fully alive, I would be dangerous. Just as God had a plan for me before I was born, the enemy had a plan to keep me from understanding my true identity.



And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance—just one chance—to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!

William Wallace (*Braveheart*)³

In my home office hangs a replica of the sword William Wallace carried in the movie *Braveheart*. It's the sword Wallace had slung across his back as he rode his horse back and forth in front

of an army of his countrymen and spoke to them when they were about to abandon their place on the front line out of fear. That speech is my favorite movie scene of all time. Whenever I watch it, something inside me wants to step up, to be a part of something larger than myself. Just holding that Scottish claymore in my hands gives me a feeling of power, strength, and purpose.

When I brought the sword home and drew the fifty-five-inch broad-blade, double-edged sword from its leather sheath for the first time, my eight-year-old son gasped and his eyes widened as he asked, “Dad, can I go out and hit some trees with that?” That eight-year-old boy sensed that he was made for something larger than himself; it was instinctive for him to see if he could wield that mighty blade.

Seeing my young son attempting to swing that sword that was as tall as he was stirred some very deep emotions in me. On one hand, I was proud. *That’s my boy!* But the next emotion was one I didn’t see coming: *fear*. It rose from the pit of my stomach into my throat. I wasn’t worried that he was going to hurt himself or damage the trees; this was something much deeper. I agonized over the question, Do I have what it takes not only to teach my son how to wield this sword but to help him fight the many battles he has yet to face, and to help him discover and pursue his purpose as he grows into a man? It was a fight-or-flight moment.

Many men have fled in those moments, leaving their sons to try to figure out life for themselves. They were never trained how to raise their sons with a sense of purpose, or they’d been wounded too many times in battle, which left them feeling

alone and abandoned. A boy who lacks the proper training, challenges, and encouragement as he grows into manhood will rarely find his purpose in life. He will end up settling for a mundane, mediocre life, losing his heart one day at a time. Or he will find himself getting into trouble, constantly trying to prove he's a man by affairs, drinking, or the pursuit of money and fame. Never being taught how to wield the sword brings about a slow, purposeless death—dragging on one day at a time until he is nothing but a dead man walking.



Do you want to know God? Do you want to come alive? Do you want to know your purpose? Do you want to know your true name? Then you have to discover *the roar within!*

They will walk after the LORD,
He will roar like a lion;
Indeed He will roar
And His sons will come trembling from the west.
(Hos. 11:10 NASB)

THE **BIG** QUESTION:

What is that one thing that you just can't *not* do—the one thing that makes you feel truly alive?