



THE *Call* OF THE WILD

Tell me if this hasn't been your experience at some point during this fall hunting season.

It's a beautiful, autumn Sunday morning. You are sitting in a pew at church, worshipping God and enjoying it... but also longing to be out in His Creation, pursuing a trophy bull elk or tracking that elusive white tail. The call of the wild can be an intense call on a man's heart. The reason it is so powerful is because God put it there. The Bible tells us that after God created the earth and all of the animal kingdom, He created man and put him in charge.

His glory and His purposes on earth. So I ask you, how are you using your God-given desire to hunt to bless the Creator who gave it to you?

Let me tell you how Scott in Wyoming is using his passionate pursuit of the wild for God's passionate pursuit of hearts. In 2006, Scott befriended an 11-year-old boy named Masen. The world saw Masen as a pretty typical kid—one of the countless kids in every community who are being raised by single moms. But Scott saw someone different. Scott saw a boy with a gaping wound in his heart, a wound that was created when his dad abandoned him for a life of crime that eventually led to prison. That wound of abandonment tormented the little boy non-stop, convincing him that he was not worthy of a father's love.

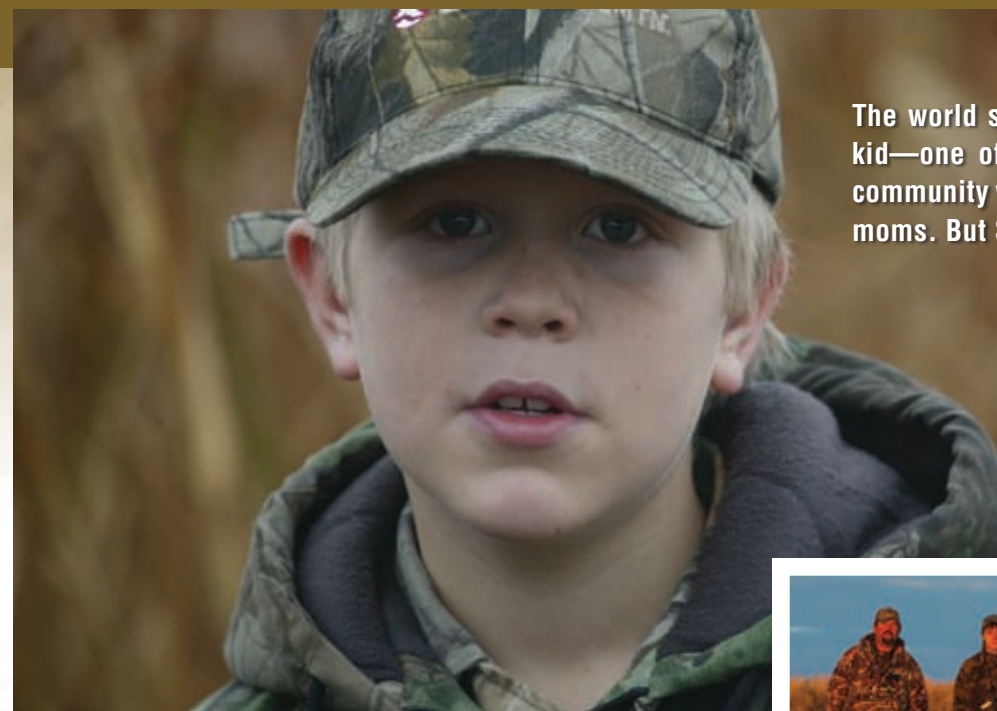
Through their hunting and fishing adventures and exploration of the great outdoors, however, Scott helped lead Masen to a different conclusion. The boy learned that he does have a father who loves him and wants a relationship with him—his Father in Heaven, the Creator of the earth and everything in it including the majestic mountains abounding with animals and the rushing streams teeming with fish. At first, it was too much for Masen to handle or believe. But as the two pondered God's Word, His promises,

and the forgiveness and love offered through His Son, Jesus, Masen embraced his Father in Heaven.

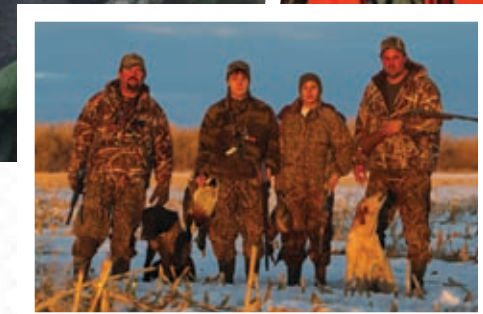
One Sunday morning on their weekly ride to church, Masen excitedly told Scott that he had prayed for forgiveness from his Heavenly Father and salvation through Jesus Christ. But that wasn't all. Masen had also decided to forgive his dad for abandoning him. To say the least, Scott was blown away. What a privilege it was for Scott to watch Masen's gaping wound of abandonment has begun to heal before his very eyes. Incredible!

This is what can happen when we use our God-given desires to serve the Lord. He blesses us beyond our imagination. In fact, within two weeks of that life-changing Sunday morning, Masen got a surprise letter from his father in prison who wanted to see him. Just months earlier, such news would have infuriated this hurting boy. But now, with his wound of abandonment beginning to heal, Masen welcomed the opportunity to visit his dad, tell him he forgave him, and share with him the freedom that he had found in Jesus Christ.

Masen's story is just the tip of the iceberg. There are countless fatherless boys in communities across America who desperately need mentor fathers to come alongside them and show



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them what it means to answer God's call—His call on their hearts to follow Him and His call of the wild to love and rule over His Creation.

God convicted my heart and stirred my passion to start *Fathers in the Field*—a Christian adventure ministry that unites fatherless boys ("field buddies") with mature Christian men ("mentor fathers") in God's classroom, the great outdoors, to help boys learn about the liberating love of God and the healing that comes through the forgiveness of their earthly fathers.

Right now, we are looking for men who want to combine their passions for the Lord and the outdoors in a way that makes a difference in the world. If Masen's story inspires you and the idea of blending your passion for the Lord with your passion for hunting intrigues you, consider joining *Fathers in the Field*. We are men united in our love of God, passion for the outdoors, and pursuit of purposeful living. For more information, visit us at www.FathersintheField.com.



Left: Masen and Scott. Directly above: John Smithbaker and Laine with antelope.



FAITH • FATHERHOOD • FORGIVENESS

John Smithbaker, a long-time outdoor industry advocate, entrepreneur, and founder/CEO of North American Gear, headquartered in Lander, Wyoming, started Fathers in the Field in 2005. For more information, visit www.FathersintheField.com.

> *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

-Genesis 1:26

God took delight in His masterpiece—man. And He said to us,

> *Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on earth.*

-Genesis 1:28

That longing that we have as men to be out hunting and gathering is a God-given desire.

As with any good gift that He gives us, we bless Him when we use it for