

EQUIPPING THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

TOOLS TO HELP MEN GROW TODAY

HELPING HURTING MEN

page 4

**ALSO
INSIDE**

I Feel Fine page 3
Christ: Is There Another? page 7
Like Father, Like Son page 58
Daily Devotions page 15



Take the Journey

journeytobiblicalmanhood.org

EQUIPPING THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

January/February/March 2016, Vol. 11, No. 1

Publisher Man in the Mirror, Inc.

Executive Chairman Patrick Morley

President and CEO David Delk

Executive Editors David Delk / Brett Clemmer

Publication Manager Lucy Blair

Art Director Cathleen Kwas

Writers Lucy Blair and Ruth Ford

Office 180 Wilshire Blvd., Casselberry, FL 32707

Phone 800-929-2536 **Fax** 407-331-7839

Website maninthemirror.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURED ARTICLES

- 3 **First Things First** by Brett Clemmer
- 4 **Broken Mirrors** by Jeff Kisiah
- 7 **From the Pages of Devotions for the Man in the Mirror** by Patrick Morley
- 8 **Field Staff Speaks Out: Helping Hurting Men**
- 9 **Reflections on Suffering**
- 57 **Straight Talk on the Snare of Porn** by Sam Black
- 58 **From the Pages of Like Father, Like Son** by Pete Alwinson

RESOURCE TOOLS

- 11 **Equipping Your Men's Small Group**
- 14 **How to Use This Devotional**
- 30 **Resource Catalog**

DEVOTIONS

- 15 **January 2016 Devotions**
- 28 **February 2016 Devotions**
- 43 **March 2016 Devotions**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Follow the One-Year Bible reading plan by reading the daily Scripture at the end of each devotion. To see the complete reading plan, go to oneyearbibleonline.com.

NEW BOOKS!

See two excerpts from these new books for men by Dr. Patrick Morley and Pete Alwinson.



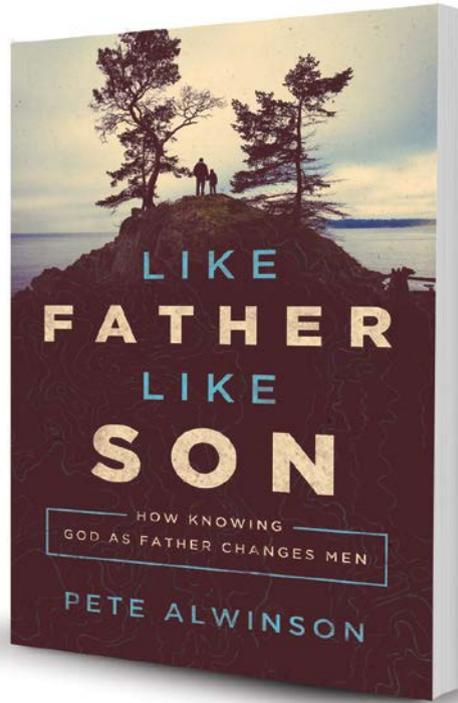
Copyright © 2016 by Patrick Morley and Man in the Mirror, Inc. All rights reserved.

Subscription Information: One year—\$25. Two years—\$43. For reprint requests or bulk subscriptions call 407-472-2100 or send an email to EQMIM@maninthemirror.org and ask for reprint permissions.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2010 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. Scripture marked NKJV taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture marked as NASB are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Stop Trying to Be a Real Man

Call it machismo, masculinity, or manliness—it can never anchor a man’s life, shape his identity, or repair what is broken in his relationship with his earthly father. Key Life men’s ministry expert Pete Alwinson shows convincingly how a growing relationship with our heavenly Father gives a man real purpose as a son, father, brother, or friend.



“Every once in a while a book comes along that is life-changing. *Like Father, Like Son* is that kind of book and it’s that in spades.”

Steve Brown, Key Life radio broadcaster

“If ever a book deserved to become a bestseller it’s the uplifting, winsome, and tightly written *Like Father, Like Son*. You’ll never read anyone who has a better grasp of the gospel of God’s grace. He doesn’t write to beat you up, but set you free.”

Patrick Morley, Man in the Mirror Founder

SAVE 40% with promo code
LFLS on a Single Copy

SAVE 50% with promo code
LFLS50 on a 10 Pack



NEW GROWTH PRESS

Publishing Gospel-Driven Christian Books to Change Lives
www.newgrowthpress.com

Discounts taken off standard retail price. Offer ends May 31, 2016

FIRST THINGS FIRST IT’S THE END OF THE WORLD (AND I FEEL FINE)

by Brett Clemmer, Vice President
of Man in the Mirror

Have you ever noticed how many of us are simply unwilling to admit when we’re hurting?

How ya doin’?

Oh, fine, thanks.

FINE, to quote *The Italian Job*, stands for Freaked Out, Insecure, Neurotic and Emotional.

Recent media coverage of men’s health issues bears this out. Suicide is now the number one cause of death in Britain for men under 45. Another study found that “being married or middle-aged significantly increases the likelihood that men have no one (apart from their partner) to turn to in a crisis.”

Married or middle-aged—that’s a lot of guys in the church. The causes of men hurting are well-known. Job loss, marital discord, addictions, pornography, health issues (to name just a few) all wreak havoc on a man’s life. Worse, since Adam hid from God in the garden, men have been going to their “drug of choice” to deal with difficult times: Isolation.

There’s a solution—not for the problems, but for dealing with them in a way that is consistent with the Gospel. “Love one another,” Jesus commanded. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples” (John 13:34–35).

Why a command? Because loving hurting men is hard. Besides our propensity to lie about how well we’re doing, hurting men can be messy. The suffering they are going through comes with all sorts of baggage: The unemployed man who can’t pay his bills. The divorced man struggling through custody issues. The sick man sitting alone in a hospital. The addict who keeps making excuses and promises to finally change.

We hope this issue gives you some practical tips to engage men who are hurting and show them the love of Christ. *Broken Mirrors* gives you some specific ways to engage hurting men. Our field staff share some stories about how they’ve seen men in the church help men through difficult times. Our friends from Covenant Eyes give us some insights into the causes of pornography addiction.

} Let’s be devoted
} to each other.

Paul admonishes us not just to care for each other, but to be “devoted to one another in love” (Romans 12:10). So let’s reach out to the hurting men around us. And if you are hurting, turn to your brothers in Christ. Let’s be devoted to each other.



HELPING HURTING MEN BROKEN MIRRORS

by Jeff Kisiah

Jim (not his real name) was fairly active in many of the men’s activities—a “behind the scenes” guy who liked to make things happen but stayed out of the spotlight.

Jim walked into church every Sunday with his family. His wife was involved in the children’s ministry, and his kids were engaged in the youth group. Jim had a great sense of humor and a reputation for being there for guys when they needed someone. A lot of guys knew Jim.

Well, actually, they didn’t *know* him. They were acquainted with him. What they didn’t know about him was that his long-time marriage was really a struggle. He had been feeling more and more distant from his wife. The occasional drink had turned into several beers every night.

When Jim’s marriage imploded—in spectacular fashion that included the police—most of the men in the church were caught off guard. Jim was a stand-up guy. How could this happen?

Jim was like a lot of men in the church today. Though the appearances were good, he was like an iceberg. Only a few men ever got to see what was going on beneath the surface. Luckily for Jim, a few guys did know about his struggles—though not the extent of them—and they were there

to walk through the aftermath of his poor decision-making.

Regardless of their spiritual maturity, all men go through difficulties at various times in their lives. At any given point, many men in your church may be going through a tremendous challenge. Many times, we ask men, “How many of you are going through a significant struggle in one or more of these areas: finances, marriage, child rearing, aging parents, employment or health?” At least half the hands go up every time.

Men are hurting.

In his book, *Seven Seasons of the Man in the Mirror*, Pat Morley talks about “Seasons of Suffering” that every man goes through. He cites three reasons he has seen for men to suffer: (1) For doing wrong; (2) for doing right; (3) for what seems to be no reason at all. You can probably think of men you know that fit into each of those categories.

Unfortunately, many men tend to respond to suffering the same way—whether it’s their suffering or someone else’s—they flee

relationship, isolate themselves. Sometimes in an effort to appear strong, sometimes because they just don’t know what to do.

But the Bible is clear about what our response is supposed to be. Jesus told his followers, “By this all everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). In Galatians 6:2, Paul encourages the Christians in the churches he is writing to, “Bear one another’s burdens.” He says that when you are doing this, you “fulfill the law of Christ” (NKJV). Many men struggle with two things: Knowing how to ask for help, and knowing how to offer it.

Every man needs to have at least a couple of other men who know them well enough to recognize when something’s not right. In the opening story, Jim had a few friends that were there for him when things got out of hand. They couldn’t prevent the crisis that happened, but they loved him enough to walk through the aftermath. Without them Jim might have ended up hurting himself or someone else.

So just exactly how do you help a hurting man? Eugene Peterson states in his paraphrase of Galatians 6:2, “Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed.”

Here are five practical ways to **REACH** out to a hurting man:

R is for Relationships

At Man in the Mirror, we focus on a “life-on-life” approach to men’s discipleship. The first step in helping a hurting man is to have close relationships. Create an environment in the church where men are more than just buddies who talk about sports and weather.

Hurting men can be messy. It takes a Godly man to step into that mess. Remember Job’s friends? Sure, they

eventually gave him some bad advice, but first they “met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him.” They loved him so much that they wept for him. “And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.” (see Job 2:11–13)

E is for Encouragement

The writer of Hebrews said, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24) Encourage literally means to instill courage in another person.

When a man is going through a difficult time, he needs brothers to come around and give him courage. Remind a man of God’s promises. Reassure him that God has not abandoned him, and that he is not going through this difficulty alone. As a Christian brother, you are the tangible representation of the presence of God.

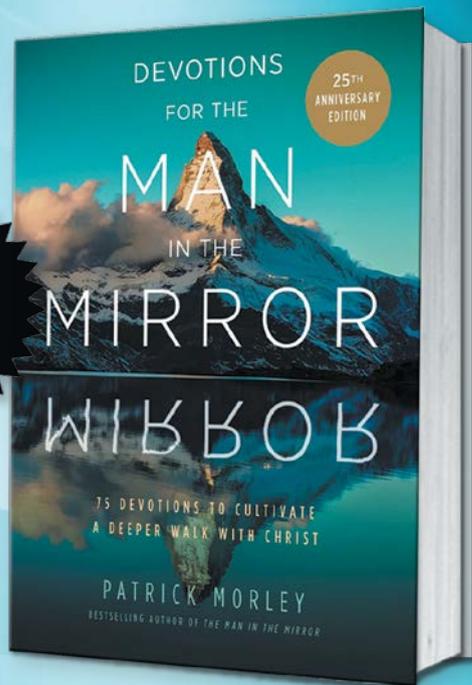
A is for Attitude

When walking with a hurting man, sometimes it is our role to hold a man accountable for his attitude. Some men are prone to give in to the despair and assume that things will never get better. This is in spite of the fact that the Lord has brought them through difficulties before. Remind a man of what God has done and encourage him to trust God for His greater purposes.

Jesus assured his disciples, “In this world you will have trouble.” But he brackets that statement with an assurance of His presence and power, “so that in Me you may have peace” (John 16:33). Keep pointing a hurting man to the Gospel of power and peace, and urge him to focus on God and not just his problems.

Broken Mirrors continues on page 60 ►

Cultivate a **deeper walk** with Christ
with the new, updated
Devotions for the Man in the Mirror



Now
Available!
Order
Today

Patrick M. Morley challenges men not to settle for a watered-down version of Christianity. Reflecting Jesus in all aspects of life requires a complete, **no-regrets surrender to Him**. By fully submitting to Christ, believers will find the true freedom that only Jesus offers. With 75 short, powerful readings, **men will find meaning and purpose** as they deepen their relationship with God and seek to become more obedient in their careers, finances, and relationships.



For more information or to purchase a copy of *Devotions for the Man in the Mirror 25th Anniversary Edition*, visit maninthemirror.org.

FROM THE PAGES OF DEVOTIONS FOR MAN IN THE MIRROR

by Dr. Patrick Morley

Christ: Is There Another?

Lord, to whom shall we go? —John 6:68

For thirty-two years I met weekly with a man for fellowship, prayer, and accountability. For the first several years, the relationship passed through several veneers. Each time we peeled back another layer and became more transparent and vulnerable, the relationship leaped to a higher (or deeper) level. The culminating stage was a simple acceptance of each other.

Through the years each of us agonized through our fair share of grueling problems and trials. We often said to each other, “The Christian life is a hard life.” The other would nod in knowing agreement. A short “woe is me” speech usually followed.

Then, as we commiserated, we always came around to the same supreme question: “Where else would you go? If there were a better way, I would choose it. But as hard as it is, Christ is the best answer.” In the weakest moment of our faith, in the darkest hour of doubt, we turn back to Jesus. Why? “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Hard as life is, without Jesus it is no life at all, only death and despair.

Here is the idea to take hold of: the only reason we don’t desert Him in our weak

moment is because of His commitment to us, not because of our commitment to Him. “Have I not chosen you?” (John 6:70).

We don’t turn back to Him. Though embarrassing to admit, if we could find a better way, we would. When we find out He is not the God we wanted, we are sorely disappointed. His teachings are hard (John 6:60). He won’t give us what we want. He won’t work the way we want Him to work. “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66).

The best way is this: I will change. I will want Him and Him alone. I know that there is no better way (for I have tried and failed with so many false gods). And I accept that the reason I know He is the only way is that He chose me, not because I chose Him.

Lord Jesus, I will not resist You. I have told You about all the things I want from You. Now tell me what You want from me. Thank You for choosing me. I know that if it was not for Your love for me I would never have found You. In my darkest hours, I have thought of leaving, but to whom would I go? Amen.

Would you like to read more? To order, see ad on adjacent page.

FIELD STAFF SPEAKS OUT HELPING HURTING MEN



How have you seen a hurting man served well by the men of the church?

■ Healing and Restoration in a

Broken Marriage: In one church I am working with, a man involved with porn and dating sites was caught by his wife. *The first thing she did was call the men's leader—asking for help.* He had dropped out of the group, wallowing in isolation, but they loved him back into it—and even started meeting at his house. He has asked his wife to forgive him and to go to counseling with him. They are healing their relationship and he is working on the issues that led him to his actions, especially issues with his own shame and a father wound.

—Ronn Read, Greater Chicagoland Coalition for Men's Discipleship

■ **Hope Replaces Isolation:** A young man who is part of a men's discipleship community found his wife with another man after being at a Bible study one night. He returned to that group, which sat with him and grieved and offered biblical counsel. He has stated that prior to becoming part of the group he would have isolated himself, resorted to destructive behavior and substance abuse. Now he is healing and moving forward with them. He has connected with other guys who have suffered the same situation to help them.

—Jim Boetjer, Northern California Coalition for Men's Discipleship

■ **A New Purpose:** A man had been divorced years ago, remarried years later and felt he could not serve God. He was in three men's studies and God began to move in his heart to show him He had a plan for him. In the study *Radical*, the leader challenged the men to dream big. This man started a ministry to apartments by setting up a tent, sharing the gospel, feeding them, and ministering at his own expense!

—Bob Ryan, Northwestern Arkansas Coalition for Men's Discipleship

■ Foxhole Friends Come Through:

A man from a church I am working with shared this: "My adult son was seriously injured in a fall at work. My wife and I rushed to the hospital to be with him. While we were at the hospital, Tom (not his real name) from my small group showed up at the hospital. He prayed with my wife and me. Over the next few months, guys in my group would stop by the hospital to visit, pray for us and encourage our family. When I think about a disciple of Jesus, I think of Tom and all those brothers that supported me during one of the toughest seasons of my life! Thank God, my son is better and I have a group of 'foxhole friends' that I will never forget!"

—Larry Niggli, San Diego County Coalition for Men's Discipleship

REFLECTING ON THE SUFFERING OF MAN

Encouraging Words for Those in Pain



“We all know people who have been made much meaner and more irritable and more intolerable to live with by suffering; it is not right to say that all suffering perfects. It only perfects one type of person—the one who accepts the call of God in Christ Jesus.”

—Oswald Chambers

“Even in the greatest afflictions, we ought to testify to God, that, in receiving them from his hand, we feel pleasure in the midst of the pain, from being afflicted by Him who loves us, and whom we love.”

—John Wesley

“When you suffer and lose, that does not mean you are being disobedient to God. In fact, it might mean you're right in the center of His will. The path of obedience is often marked by times of suffering and loss.”

—Chuck Swindoll

“I am certain that I never did grow in grace one-half so much anywhere as I have upon the bed of pain.”

—Charles Spurgeon

“But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

—C.S. Lewis

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

—James 1:2-4 NLT

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

—Romans 5:3-5

“I am not a theologian or a scholar, but I am very aware of the fact that pain is necessary to all of us. In my own life, I think I can honestly say that out of the deepest pain has come the strongest conviction of the presence of God and the love of God.”

—Elisabeth Elliot

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

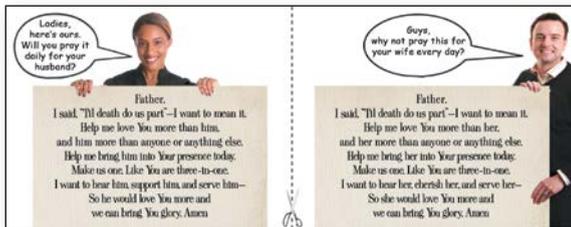
—John 16:33 NLT

Don't just read about it—experience it!

The Marriage Prayer Seminar for Couples

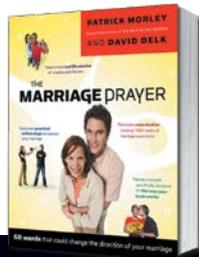


The Marriage Prayer Seminar emphasizes the importance of prayer in marriage and features the elements that build a thriving marriage. At this 2-hour seminar, together we will walk through this prayer and address topics like:



- Faithfulness
- Security
- Conflict
- Purpose
- Unity
- Sex
- Encouragement
- Finishing Strong

Have fun with this seminar. "Sweeten" your event by serving a dessert, or holding a "date night" dinner followed by a seminar. Please call **800-929-2536** for more ideas or to schedule a Marriage Prayer Seminar at your church today.



Pray Together—Stay Together. Divorce rates drop dramatically to less than one percent for couples who pray together.

EQUIPPING YOUR MEN'S SMALL GROUP

What Your Men Can Accomplish

Get all your men engaged in the regular study of God's Word

by using this magazine as a small group tool. At the end of each week's devotions, you'll see a box containing discussion questions and exercises. These can form the basis of your time together. These pages supplement those questions with additional steps. If you use this magazine with your men this quarter you will have:

- { } Prayed for and shared a goal you are striving to achieve
- { } Memorized Philippians 3:12-14 as a reminder of our goal to follow Christ.
- { } Decided on a way for your group to share the entirety of God's plan.
- { } Written and evaluated a personal mission statement.
- { } Spent time in prayer for people who are going through times of suffering.
- { } Reached out to someone with whom you need to restore a relationship.
- { } Written and shared some questions that have helped you make decisions according to God's will.
- { } Discussed how learning integrity early in life can impact the lives of young men.
- { } Planned a "Take a child to lunch day" to spend time with one of your children/grandchildren.
- { } Prayed for your children or grandchildren every day for a full week.
- { } Committed to invite a friend or colleague to your church or small group.
- { } Become members of the Fellowship of the Red Bandanna.



EQUIPPING YOUR MEN'S SMALL GROUP

Suggested Applications Steps

January 4-10

In this week's devotions, you'll **focus in on the purposes, goals and plan God has for your life.** **SAS (Suggested Application Step):** Ask your men to list three goals that they each have in their lives. Discuss those goals—their origins, the plan to achieve the goals, etc. Have each man choose one of those goals to pray for, plan actions for accomplishing that goal and share that goal with their wife or loved one. Come back next week ready to share what you have learned about that goal.

January 11-17

These devotions teach you about **who God wants us to be and what God wants us to do.** **SAS:** Memorize the following passage of Scripture: "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus," Philippians 3:12-14. From last week, what did you learn about your goal?

January 18-24

Our devotional theme this week is about **having the faith to believe God's plan—starting with creation in the Old Testament to His plan of salvation in the New Testament.** **SAS:** Discuss some of the reasons that people need to know about God's entire plan. What are some ways your church teaches or discusses this issue? Identify and pray for some men who don't currently see the whole plan of what God is doing in the world.

January 25-31

This week the devotions will **help your group think through the meaning of life as described in Ecclesiastes 4.** **SAS:** Write a personal mission statement for your life. Talk about how to incorporate what you learned in Ecclesiastes into your mission and what your mission statement says about the meaning of your life. Read your mission statement every day this next week.

February 1-7

This week your men will learn **that suffering is a part of everyone's life and God walks with us through those difficult times.** **SAS:** Ask the group to think of people they know who are suffering (illness, loss, divorce, etc.) On a white board or large piece of paper, write down the first names of those people. As a group, spend 10 minutes in prayer for the people on the list and commit to praying for them throughout the next week.

February 8-14

These devotionals remind you of **the restoration after suffering promised to us by the grace of God.** **SAS:** Discuss what the word restoration means to the members of your group. Is there a relationship that needs restoration in your life? Have you prayed about the relationship and sought ways to restore it? In this next week, make an effort to reach out (by email, telephone, etc.) to that person in an effort to start the healing process.

February 15-21

This week you will read about **what it means to make decisions according to God's will and how you can help younger men with that process.** **SAS:** Write down some questions that have helped you as you've made important decisions. Share the questions that you listed and the wisdom you've learned about decision-making with a younger man. From last week, did you reach out to someone?

February 22-28

This week you learn **the value of having integrity in the big things and the small things.** **SAS:** Think about ways that you have seen men display integrity and ways men have lost their integrity. How can your group show integrity to the young men in your church or community? Discuss the changes that could take place in those young men if they learned integrity early in life.

February 29-March 6

The theme of these devotions is to remind you of **the vital role men play as fathers and grandfathers to children.** **SAS:** Think about these three areas of your children's/grandchildren's lives: spiritual life, relationships and purpose in life. Discuss how you might be able to help them in those areas of life. Plan a "Take a child to lunch day" and set aside some time to chat about one or more of these areas.

March 7-13

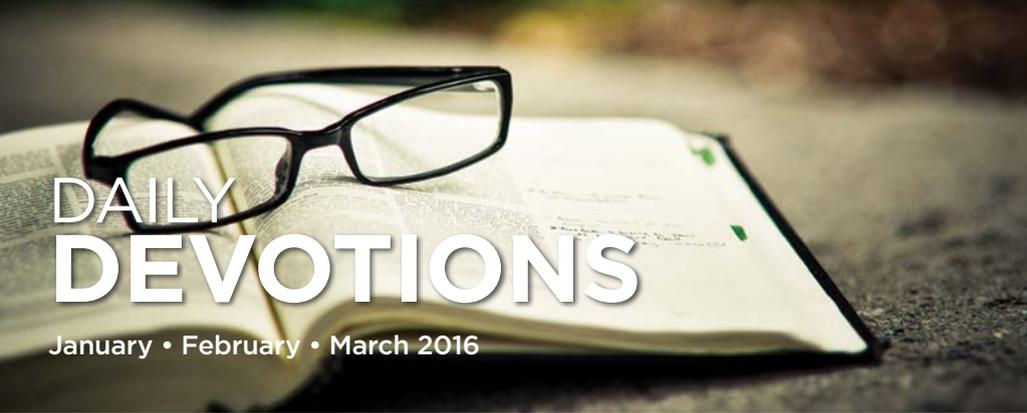
This week's devotionals address **the power of prayer for your children and grandchildren.** **SAS:** Consider your hopes and dreams for your children or grandchildren. Spend a few minutes discussing those with the group. Could you set aside time to pray for your children or grandchildren this week? Would you be willing to commit to praying for them each day of the next week?

March 14-21

These devotions teach you about **the importance of God's faithfulness to us and our faithfulness to Him.** **SAS:** Make a list of guys in the church, at work, or in your neighborhood who could benefit from being in God's Word and being in a small group. Spend a few minutes in prayer for those men. Commit to inviting one of those guys to church or to your group. Come back next week ready to share their responses.

March 22-28

In this week's devotions, you'll **learn the story of Welles Crowther and what it means to leave a true legacy.** **SAS:** Go to the website www.redbandanna.org to learn how to conduct your own Red Bandanna ceremony and induct your group member into this special fellowship of men. From last week, did you get any responses from your invitations to church or your group?



DAILY DEVOTIONS

January • February • March 2016

To make the most of *Equipping the Man in the Mirror*, we have dissected a devotional so you don't miss any aspect of the magazine (see below).

Correlating Scripture

Source material

Monday—January 4 ■ Searching for Meaning

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11)

The most surprising thing about Tom's call wasn't that he was fifty-eight years old and crying. The most surprising element was his candor. Tom is one of Florida's most prominent attorneys, yet he said, "My life has no meaning and no purpose. It's as though I've been chasing after the wind all these years."

We made an appointment to talk, and Tom unfolded his life story. His vast array of accomplishments and his list of credits revealed a Who's Who in the legal field. Yet, having reached the pinnacle of professional success, he still ached for a sense of purpose. He attained a rung on the ladder that every young lawyer aspires to, yet his view from the top revealed only clouds of disillusionment.

Tom spent a lifetime pursuing the god he wanted. Then one day, like the writer of the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes, he realized his accomplishments didn't bring fulfillment. With that awareness, he accepted a friend's invitation to a prayer breakfast sponsored by Man in the Mirror Ministries. *Maybe God will have some answers*, he thought. Men you know are looking for answers too. **MIM**, Chapter 5

Describe a time when you or someone you know pursued something wholeheartedly, and when the pinnacle of success was achieved, your satisfaction was short-lived.

Daily Reading: Genesis 8:1-10:32, Matthew 4:12-25, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 1:20-23

One-year Bible daily reading

Discussion/journal questions

At the end of many of the devotionals you will find an abbreviation for a resource that expands on the devotional material. For more information about the Man in the Mirror Bible Study (MIMBS) go to maninthemirror.org/archives/categories.

- 25th Anniversary Man in the Mirror, Chapter 20, Avoiding Suffering
- 25th Anniversary Man in the Mirror, Chapter 5, Purpose—Why Do we Exist?
- 25th Anniversary Man in the Mirror, Chapter 8, Children: How We Avoid Regrets
- MIMBS 1—Where Did Jesus Come From?
- MIMBS 2—Finding the Shoe That Fits
- MIMBS 3—Show Men How to Handle Temptation
- MIMBS 4—Do Something Important with Your Life
- MIMBS 5—Hanging out w/Jesus—Hopeless
- The Young Man in the Mirror, Chapter 12—How to Make Important Decisions/Chapter 13—Integrity and Other Values

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

January always give us a special gift—a new year. It is a gift that gives the opportunity to look at the past 12 months and the challenge to envision 365 new days.

As you recall the last year, what comes to mind? Do you have fond memories? Were there disappointments and difficult days? Did your family grow with new members or lose much-loved seniors? How did God work in your heart and life? How did God use you in the lives of people you know and love? Spend a few minutes giving God thanks for all the last year held for you and your family.

2016. None of us have any idea what lies ahead in the New Year. It may turn out to be similar to last year or it could bring about significant changes. Retirement, weddings, births, graduations, vacations and other wonderful milestones may be part of 2016. This next year may also bring about health concerns, strained relationships and financial woes. We cannot foresee the future nor can we control it.

Would you like to see changes in your life over the next days and months? Make a list of what those things might be. If your list contained "exercise more" or "bike to work", you can make efforts for those things to happen. If your list included, "reconcile with my brother" or "healing for my back", there are steps you can take, but the end result is not something you can do on your own. Our future is in the hands of our Creator. Much of what we must do is surrender to Him and trust that what comes our way is part of His plan. Can you trust God to handle 2016 for you?

What do you look forward to next year? What are some of your concerns or worries about the year ahead? Are you able to surrender those concerns to God and trust He will do what is best?

Daily Reading: Genesis 1:1-4:26, Matthew 1:1-4:11, Psalm 1:1-3:8, Proverbs 1:1-19

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

January 1-3

Read aloud Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

- What does it mean that the Lord has plans for you to prosper?
- Does this verse give you hope about the New Year?



I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11)

The most surprising thing about Tom's call wasn't that he was 58 years old and crying. The most surprising element was his candor. Tom is one of Florida's most prominent attorneys, yet he said, "My life has no meaning and no purpose. It's as though I've been chasing after the wind all these years."

We made an appointment to talk, and Tom unfolded his life story. His vast array of accomplishments and his list of credits revealed a Who's Who in the legal field. Yet, having reached the pinnacle of professional success, he still ached for a sense of purpose. He attained a rung on the ladder that every young lawyer aspires to, yet his view from the top revealed only clouds of disillusionment.

Tom spent a lifetime pursuing the god he wanted. Then one day, like the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, he realized his accomplishments didn't bring fulfillment. With that awareness, he accepted a friend's invitation to a prayer breakfast sponsored by Man in the Mirror Ministries. *Maybe God will have some answers*, he thought. Men you know are looking for answers too.  *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

Describe a time when you or someone you know pursued something wholeheartedly, and when the pinnacle of success was achieved, the satisfaction was short-lived.

Daily Reading: Genesis 8:1-10:32, Matthew 4:12-25, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 1:20-23

Tuesday—January 5 ■ Satisfying Goals

Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

Do you enjoy setting and meeting goals? I find it intoxicating. Years ago, I set a goal to pursue and achieve a certain level of income. I felt a deep sense of personal satisfaction when I finally reached that goal. But after a few weeks, I found I just wanted more.

Many men are perplexed when they find that met goals tend to become an unrelated string of hollow victories, increasingly frustrating as more and more is achieved. That's the problem with goals: You have to keep setting new ones, because achieving them doesn't produce lasting satisfaction. The fleeting satisfaction of a met goal begs the question: "Is there something bigger for my life than the routine of setting and meeting goals?" To be satisfying, our goals need to reflect our examination of life's larger meaning. Most men whom I meet either don't know their purpose in life, or their purpose is too small. A man can do nothing more important than to wrestle with the purpose of his life.

 *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

Today's reading says, "A man can do nothing more important than to wrestle with the purpose of his life." Is that effort at or near the top of your priority list? Why or why not?

Daily Reading: Genesis 11:1-13:4, Matthew 5:1-26, Psalm 5:1-12, Proverbs 1:24-28

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)

I believe the process that leads a man to find significance in his life begins with two fundamental questions.

- "Who am I?" We derive meaning and identity from understanding *who we are* in Christ. It's a *position* we occupy. It's a *relationship* with God. True identity cannot be found through fame, fortune and power.
- "Why do I exist?" Once we've settled the question of identity, anchoring our identity in a growing relationship with God, then we can move on to the realization that God does have a *purpose* for our lives. He offers a mission, a destiny—which is why we exist. This second question provides the second half of our search for significance. Once you settle the issue of who you are, the next question must be, "What does God want me to do with my life?"

Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that only those purposes linked to God will survive. Once we understand the direction He has in mind for us—our purpose—then we can begin setting goals that move us in that direction.  *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

Psalm 32:8 says: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." Does that verse encourage you to prayerfully ask God to reveal your personal earthly purpose? Why or why not?

Daily Reading: Genesis 13:5-15:21, Matthew 5:27-48, Psalm 6:1-10, Proverbs 1:29-33

Thursday—January 7 ■ Purpose Gives Birth to Goals

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Today's passage indicates that, if we understand God's will, we can make wise daily decisions. In other words, you could say that a person who understands his God-given purpose can set daily goals that move him toward success.

A *goal* is a specific objective. Sometimes it's measurable. For instance, a person may set a goal to buy a home, or to save a certain amount of money to retire. A goal also may be more qualitative than quantitative. For instance, if a person sets a goal to become a more loving person, measuring success will be subjective rather than objective. Nevertheless, becoming more loving is a worthwhile goal.

Purposes are the threads of continuity woven into the overarching view of our lives. Goals come and go, but purposes survive, because they are long-term and relate to the theory of our lives. Purposes are a starting point. They help focus our lives and give us direction so our goals don't become an unrelated string of hollow victories.  *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

We've probably all heard the saying, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Describe how this saying fits today's explanation of the relationship between purposes and goals.

Daily Reading: Genesis 16:1-18:15, Matthew 6:1-24, Psalm 7:1-17, Proverbs 2:1-5

“This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” (John 1:30-31)

John’s Gospel includes a quote from John the Baptist, which demonstrates the distinction between *what* we do and *why* we do it. John’s *what* was baptizing with water. His *why* was for Jesus’ identity to be revealed. Ideally, a person’s *why* should drive his *what*.

Let me give an example. One year we decided to enroll our daughter in a Christian elementary school. The broader issue was *why* we decided to pursue this goal. We believed God intended for us to pass on to our children a heart for God. We tried to weave that thread of continuity into everything we did with both of our children. When we looked at *why* we existed as parents, we felt giving our children a “spiritual edge” fit into the purpose we discerned for our lives. The goal (*what*) was school enrollment. The purpose (*why*) was to work toward giving our children a heart for God.

The distinction between *what* we do and *why* we do it is important. If we can examine each goal in clear view of *why* we want to achieve it, then we can set goals that build toward our understanding of God’s purpose for our lives, rather than pursuing our own agendas.  MIM 25, Chapter 5

Describe a goal you recently set for yourself. Now explain why you are pursuing that objective.

Daily Reading: Genesis 18:16-24:51, Matthew 6:25-8:17, Psalm 8:1-9:20, Proverbs 2:6-3:6

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

In 1643, The Westminster Assembly met to clarify the doctrines of Christian faith by carefully examining Scripture. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, an important product of this assembly, asks and answers 107 essential questions forming the basic tenets of Christianity. Profoundly, the first question is, “What is the chief end of man?” We might rephrase it, “Why does man exist?” The answer is both eloquent and simple: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

In that answer, we see a distinction between God’s *eternal* purpose and His *earthly* purpose, which also is revealed in Matthew 6:31-33. The passage refers to:

- God’s kingdom, which is unseen, for Jesus also said, “My kingdom is not of this world. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36). In the words of the catechism, our *eternal* purpose is to enjoy God forever. Without this eternal purpose, our faith would be futile.
- God’s righteousness, which can be visible through our daily choices. In the words of the catechism, our *earthly* purpose is to glorify God here on earth.

 MIM 25, Chapter 5

Jesus’ words (above) clearly call us to the overarching priority of knowing and doing God’s eternal purpose. How clearly is that priority revealed in your daily choices?

Daily Reading: Genesis 24:52-26:16, Matthew 8:18-34, Psalm 10:1-15, Proverbs 3:7-8

Tuesday—January 12 ■ Universal Purpose

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. (2 Timothy 1:9)

In searching Scripture to discover our life purpose, there is a sense in which all men are alike before God, because He gives us all the same *universal* purpose. We can break this down into two areas:

1. Who God wants us to *be*.
2. What God wants us to *do*.

The universal part of our earthly purpose is to be a certain type of man in character (being) and conduct (doing). The apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, noting that God “has saved us and called us to a holy life.” His eternal purpose for all men is to save us, and His earthly purpose is for us to live a holy life characterized by faith, love, obedience and service. Paul went on to remind Timothy that this purpose is “not because of anything we have done.” Essentially, we have no input in establishing this universal purpose, because it’s the same for all men regardless of our age, our circumstances, or the culture in which we live.  MIM 25, Chapter 5

If a friend asked you to define your own life purpose, how would you describe this universal purpose, in your own words? And how would you explain that God’s universal purpose applies also to the friend who asked you?

Daily Reading: Genesis 26:17-27:46, Matthew 9:1-17, Psalm 10:16-18, Proverbs 3:9-10

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



January 4-10

Read the following verse aloud to the group, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21).

- How would you define the Lord’s purpose?
- How have you seen the Lord’s purpose demonstrated in your life?

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

God gives all men the same *universal* purpose of salvation and holy lifestyle choices. But God also created each of us as unique individuals, and He gives each man a specific call. I can assure you, God has a *personal*, unique and specific purpose for your life. I encourage every man to prepare a *Written Life Purpose Statement*, encompassing what he discovers as God's personal earthly purpose for his life. This is like a mission statement for a business, only in this case, the "business" is life.

If possible, your purpose statement should spring from Scripture, so you can be sure it conforms to God's will. Crafting this *Written Life Purpose Statement* can be exacting and exhausting, but it's well worth the effort. It describes in a general and overarching way what your life is all about. It points the way to meaning and significance. Like a gyroscope, it helps a man stand upright whenever life knocks him off balance. Like a compass, it points the way for daily choices, because it answers questions like "Why do I exist?" and "What should I do with my life?"  *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

If you haven't written a Life Purpose Statement, find someone who has done this and ask this question: How has that statement helped you stay focused and upright? If you have already written one yourself, answer the question based on your own experience.

Daily Reading: Genesis 28:1-29:35, Matthew 9:18-38, Psalm 11:1-7, Proverbs 3:11-12

Thursday—January 14 ■ Other Life Purposes

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

In addition to developing a *Written Life Purpose Statement*, which describes the overarching purpose for your earthly life, you also can drop down a level to develop written purpose statements for important areas of your life. These may include your relationship with God, with family, with friends, the use of your gifts, and your work life.

Goals and activities are how we put specific actions to our purposes. We determine God's purposes for our lives, then we can focus our goals and activities toward doing God's known will. For instance, if my God-given goal is to be an encourager, I might set a goal to take one man to lunch each week, and I might establish a schedule that includes regular activities like writing notes or calling hurting men.

Our purposes change over time. Children grow up, men retire, and new spiritual gifts develop. So we need a measure of flexibility, and we need to periodically review where God has placed us by His sovereign will.  *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

Describe something that recently changed in your life. How will that affect your purposes, your goals and your activities?

Daily Reading: Genesis 30:1-31:16, Matthew 10:1-23, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 3:13-15

"Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1-2)

My first *Written Life Purpose Statement* came from Philippians 3:10, which says, "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings." I adopted this at a time when I desperately wanted to know Christ more intimately. I wanted to penetrate His power and really understand the significance of His resurrection.

That desire didn't change, but over time I did adopt another purpose statement. All of my adult life, I've endured migraines. After trying every conceivable modern and medieval remedy, I discovered I'm allergic to everything I put in my mouth. Truly, I've never been tested for anything to which I am not allergic, except the glycerin in which they mix the allergens. By eliminating or controlling certain foods, I've reduced these daily migraines to a few headaches per week, manageable with medication.

The scripture above helped me survive those many years of tearful, agonizing pain. The prospect that, because of physical suffering, I might overcome sin and spend the rest of my earthly life for God renewed my courage and strength to plunge forward with hope. When I began improving after 15 years of sometimes hopeless despair, I was drawn back to that passage. One morning, years of deep, unutterable groanings flowed spontaneously through my pen and onto the title page of my Bible: I want to spend the rest of my earthly life for the will of God. That 1 Peter passage became my *Written Life Purpose Statement*.

 *MIM 25, Chapter 5*

What circumstances in your life seem overwhelming right now? Write a prayer that might address that situation and keep you moving toward a godly goal.

Daily Reading: Genesis 31:17-36:43, Matthew 10:24-12:21, Psalm 13:1-15:5; Proverbs 3:16-26

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

January 11-17

What are the two areas that give all men the same universal purpose?

- Have you been seeking who God wants you to be?
- Do you know your purpose or what God wants you to do?
- If your answers were yes, how did you discover those purposes? If the answers were no, how are you seeking those answers?



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Have you seen some of the incredible satellite pictures of the earth as a beautiful blue ball on a black background? How about photos of the moon with its shadows and craters? In recent years, the Hubble Telescope has given us incredible images of nebulae that are hundreds of millions of light years away.

Yet thousands of years ago, long before technology made images available, mankind was amazed at the beauty and complexity of the earth and the sky. The intricacies of our universe invite the question of origin. Where did it all come from?

Well, let's say you walked into your kitchen and found a cake on the counter. You wouldn't assume it just appeared there. You would assume that someone took the time to mix and bake it, and they left it for your enjoyment. In a similar way, when we look at the universe, intuition leads us to conclude it must have a source. And Genesis names the source—the Creator—as God.  MIMBS 1

This devotional says, "Let's say you walked into your kitchen and found a cake on the counter. You wouldn't assume it just appeared there." Do you see the hand of God in the universe? Why or why not? Share your ideas with another man.

Daily Reading: Genesis 37:1-38:30, Matthew 12:22-45, Psalm 16:1-11, Proverbs 3:27-32

Tuesday—January 19 ■ A Sky-Blue Sphere

God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:10)

Suddenly, from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth...home. My view of our planet was a glimpse of divinity.—Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, USA

It must be a wonderful and stunning sight to see God's handiwork from space. To see oceans, mountains and land formed by His hand and held in space by the force of gravity. Some have said that it is hard to deny the existence of God after traveling in space. Many of us feel the same way after we have visited the Rocky Mountains or the Grand Canyon. If you have been scuba diving in the Caribbean or river rafting down the Colorado River, you've seen the great works of God. God's creation is all around us as a daily reminder of His love, His plan and His handiwork.  MIMBS 1

Take some time this week to go on a walk in a park, ride a mountain path, hike a trail in the woods or swim in the ocean. Allow yourself to take in all that God has made and give Him praise for His creation.

Daily Reading: Genesis 39:1-41:16, Matthew 12:46-13:23, Psalm 17:1-15, Proverbs 3:33-35

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

A writer once said, "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen." God's plan for us is vast. It began with creation. He formed the world, the oceans, the land, created light and dark, the animals, man and woman.

The Old Testament tells us of the great faithfulness of Moses, Abraham, Joshua and others. In the New Testament, we learn of God's design to send Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins, that He would die on the cross in our place. Those Old Testament pillars of faith had to believe in something that had not yet happened and in someone who had not yet been born.

Today our faith asks us to trust in the past and the future. We need faith to believe in all that the Bible tells us. And we need faith to trust in the return of our Lord one day. Just like with the patriarchs, faith continues to ask us to believe in what we have not seen.

 MIMBS 1

What other things in life do you trust in without seeing? How does this compare to faith in God?

Daily Reading: Genesis 41:17-42:17, Matthew 13:24-46, Psalm 18:1-15, Proverbs 4:1-6

Thursday—January 21 ■ Jesus' Divine Identity

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through him all things were made... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:1, 3, 14)

Genesis starts "in the beginning," describing an unseen God creating a visible, tangible universe. John's Gospel opens with that same phrase, identifying Jesus as that Creator. "In the beginning," John explains, when the world was created, "the Word" was already there. He was with God, and He was God. And He made everything. And then, that Word "became flesh." In writing that, John identifies Jesus as the invisible One who started everything, yet became visible and came to live in the midst of His creation. He came as a man, yet He also was God.

Some people don't believe Jesus was both fully man and fully God. The apostle Paul wrote about a veil that covers people's spiritual eyes so they cannot see Jesus as He is (2 Corinthians 3:14). Those people live with a dim understanding, and Paul notes that only Jesus can remove the veil. If you have difficulty accepting Jesus as fully man and fully God, then I challenge you to ask Him to remove the veil so you clearly see and identify Him.

 MIMBS 1

Do you have trouble accepting Jesus as fully man and fully God? Why or why not?

Daily Reading: Genesis 42:18-43:34, Matthew 13:47-14:12, Psalm 18:16-36, Proverbs 4:7-10

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

Christology” refers to the study of the nature and person of Jesus Christ. Christology deals with the idea that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. That debate can sound fairly esoteric, but it really does have implications for everyday life. Today’s scripture identifies Jesus as the son of God. Yet it notes that, because He came into our world as a human being, He can identify with our temptations, our weaknesses, and our challenges.

Coming to terms with Jesus’ unique identity strengthens our confidence in two ways: 1) Because Jesus lived as a man, we know He understands the difficult situations we face. 2) Because Jesus is fully divine, we know He has the power and the ability to move on our behalf when we face life’s many challenges. In fact, today’s scripture says that, because Jesus is both God and man, we can “approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Jesus understands your situation, and He can and will do something about it.

Why not pray this prayer today? “Lord Jesus, I confess and acknowledge that You are the God of Creation. Yet I know You identify with my struggles because You came into this world and lived as a man. Grow my confidence, Lord, so that I can bring my need to You, receiving Your grace to help me on a daily basis. Help me trust You, in both my victories and my challenges, so I can rest in You and in the knowledge of Your mercy. Amen.”

 MIMBS 1

In your own words, explain how Jesus’ unique identity as fully God and fully man can strengthen your confidence to seek His help in difficult situations. Share this with another man.

Daily Reading: Genesis 44:1-49:33, Matthew 14:13-16:12, Psalm 18:37-20:9, Proverbs 4:11-27

And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 4:2-3)

Scripture reveals that, when Solomon died, the Israelites approached his son and said, “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you” (1 Kings 12:4). Oppression didn’t stop when Solomon died. In fact, his son didn’t respond favorably to the people. He threatened to make their lives even harder, so they rebelled.

Oppression still exists in many forms in our culture. You may be under the oppression of an unreasonable employer. You may find yourself forced to do things you don’t want to do. You may not have the opportunity to air your opinion in a planning meeting. Oppression happens in buying and selling, relationships and in litigation, as parties press each other to get the best possible result from a deal.

Solomon hadn’t suffered from oppression—he had benefited from it. And still, he said, death would be better than living in that state. He tried the lifestyle of power, but it didn’t fit.  MIMBS 2

Describe a time when you suffered or benefited from oppression. What did you learn from that experience?

Daily Reading: Genesis 50:1 - Exodus 2:10, Matthew 16:13-17:9, Psalm 21:1-13, Proverbs 5:1-6

And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:4)

When someone engages in an all-out pursuit of wealth, we say he is “trying to keep up with the Joneses.” That’s the attitude that Solomon is describing here. A man is desperately unhappy, because he covets what his neighbor has. The envy propels him to work harder. He accumulates the same belongings as his neighbor. But he finds he’s still not happy. Solomon said such a man is “chasing after the wind.”

By contrast, as Moses was preparing the Israelites to go into the Promised Land, he warned them about chasing after wealth. He said it might cause them to forget God. That’s what happens when we try to “keep up with the Joneses.” Moses explained, “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth...” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). If you’re chasing money, you’re chasing the wind. If you’re remembering God, you’re pursuing something that will last forever.  MIMBS 2

Have you worked simply for the purpose of accumulating possessions? What did you learn from that experience?

Daily Reading: Exodus 2:11-3:22, Matthew 17:10-27, Psalm 22:1-18, Proverbs 5:7-14

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



January 18-24

Ask someone to read aloud the devotional, “By Faith” from Wednesday, January 20.

- What is one of your favorite Bible stories from the Old Testament? What does that story teach you?
- What are some things from the Bible that you have heard family or friends struggle with?
- Why does it take faith to believe everything the Bible has to teach us?

Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves. Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:5-6)

Ecclesiastes 4 describes different lifestyles that we can “try on” to see if they fit. In the previous devotional, we saw that Solomon tried on the lifestyle of the workaholic. Here we see that he also tried on the lifestyle of the underachiever—the lazy person. Solomon explained that this kind of person “ruins himself.”

In other places, Solomon wrote:

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man” (Proverbs 6:10-11).

“Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth” (Proverbs 10:4).

“Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense” (Proverbs 12:11).

Solomon concluded that neither extreme is healthy. This coincides with another passage from Proverbs: “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God” (Proverbs 30:8-9).

📖 MIMBS 2

In your own words, explain the wisdom of not pursuing either extreme when it comes to work.

Daily Reading: Exodus 4:1-5:21, Matthew 18:1-20, Psalm 22:19-31, Proverbs 5:15-21

Thursday—January 28 ■ Trying On a Lifestyle of Isolation

Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. (Ecclesiastes 4:7-8)

We see in these verses that Solomon also describes the lifestyle of a loner. I’ve heard that in Deadwood, South Dakota, there’s an inscription written by a prospector. It says, “I lost my gun, I lost my horse, I have no food, the Indians have been chasing me, but I have all the gold I can carry.”

That reminds me of an encounter recorded in Scripture. Jesus was teaching a large crowd, and someone asked Him to arbitrate a financial dispute. “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me” (Luke 12:13). This man apparently was choosing possessions over relationship. Jesus replied, “Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (v. 15). Then He told a story about a man whose crops did particularly well one year. Rather than sharing his wealth, the man decided to build bigger barns and store it up for himself. The story doesn’t mention any other person, so this man apparently lived in isolation. (See Luke 12:16-21.)

Solomon called that kind of attitude “meaningless.” God called that kind of man “a fool” (Luke 12:20). 📖 MIMBS 2

Why would Solomon say that choosing wealth over relationships is meaningless? Discuss what that looks like with some other men.

Daily Reading: Exodus 5:22-7:25, Matthew 18:21-19:12, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 5:22-23

This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:16)

Ecclesiastes 4 exposes a number of lifestyle choices as “meaningless.” Solomon reveals that pursuing power, labor and achievement, indolence, isolation and popularity all lead to a fruitless existence—“a chasing after the wind.”

As he became king, Solomon felt the weight of his responsibilities. He said, “Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong” (1 Kings 3:8-9).

Solomon basically asked for the knowledge of good and evil. That leads us to Solomon’s despair spelled out in Ecclesiastes. You see, Solomon had to come to terms with something that haunts all men, regardless of whether they are following Jesus. Every day you will have to make choices. Some things will be obviously evil. But if we aren’t using the Bible as our guide, then every path that is not obviously evil will seem to be obviously good. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon warns of another force at work in the world—he calls it meaningless. Fourteen times Solomon warns us against the meaningless activity of “chasing after the wind.”

We live in a culture that offers many choices. You would think that having more choices would bring delight. Instead, choices consume our energy, especially when we thought we were pursuing something worthwhile, and we found instead it was meaningless. We’ll only find true meaning when we study God’s Word and seek His plan and purpose. 📖 MIMBS 2

Describe a time when you pursued something, and you eventually found it was meaningless. What truth could have kept you on the right track?

Daily Reading: Exodus 8:1-13:16, Matthew 19:13-21:22, Psalm 24:1-25:22, Proverbs 6:1-15

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

January 25-31

Read together Ecclesiastes 4.

- What does this passage tell us about the meaning of life? About idleness and labor?
- How have you struggled with the meaning of life?
- How can ministry or serving others help you find meaning in your life?



Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

I had fought off the wolves for months and months, living each day in the jaws of financial turmoil. The pressure of my problems turned my love for God and my family into a stale loaf of bread. I would have done anything to avoid more suffering. Weary from the business blues, I went home early one afternoon. Driving down the highway, my heart quickened when a gigantic lightning bolt flashed on the horizon. If the road had continued straight, that scorching rod of lightning would have burned a hole right through the asphalt pavement. To be completely honest, for a fleeting moment I couldn't help but wish I was under that lightning bolt, going out in a literal blaze of glory. That would solve all of my problems, and I would be with the Lord.

God wants to bless our lives with abundance, but the Bible also teaches that suffering is part of God's order. Everyone is going to suffer. The only decision we have is whether we'll suffer with Christ or without Him.  *MIM 25, Chapter 20*

Have you made one of your life goals to avoid suffering? Why or why not? Share your thoughts with your group.

Daily Reading: Exodus 13:17-15:18, Matthew 21:23-46, Psalm 26:1-12, Proverbs 6:16-19

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. (Proverbs 2:10-11)

Picture a loving father comforting his teary-eyed son. Perhaps the boy was playing baseball in the street, and through his or someone else's carelessness, the ball rolled into the storm sewer. It was an innocent mistake, but still, the ball is gone forever. Or maybe the boy hit the baseball through a neighbor's window. He made an error in judgment, because he shouldn't have been playing so close to the neighbor's house.

Now let's apply those same issues to adults. Jack invested in a speculative oil venture that checked out great, but he lost his money and had to pay taxes on some phantom income. Jack made an innocent mistake, but still he will suffer consequences. Or consider Andrew, who made an error in judgment in cosigning his brother-in-law's banknote for a car loan. According to the Bible, cosigning a loan for a friend is an error in judgment (Proverbs 6:1). Six months later, the bank was leaning on Andrew to make payments. Pursuing God's wisdom can help us avoid suffering consequences of innocent mistakes and errors in judgment.  *MIM 25, Chapter 20*

In your own words, paraphrase today's passage from Proverbs 2:6-11. Describe how studying and understanding God's Word, along with praying for wisdom, can help a person avoid some innocent mistakes and errors in judgment.

Daily Reading: Exodus 17:8-19:15, Matthew 22:34-23:12, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 6:27-35

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Martin Luther once explained, "No man ought to lay a cross upon himself, or to adopt tribulation... but if a cross or tribulation come upon him, then let him suffer it patiently and know that it is good and profitable for him." The questions that float through our minds when we suffer tell the story:

- Does God care about me?
- Does He know how much agony I'm going through?
- Is He able to help me?
- What is His will for me? Is it to help me, or to let me fall?

The plain truth is that when life goes our way, we don't carefully examine our ways. God can't receive the glory for blessing us, because we often take the credit. If nothing else, suffering does get our attention. Usually when we look for a reason, we find that suffering comes from man's mistakes or errors in judgment (our own, or someone else's), from an occurrence of evil, or because God is disciplining or testing us.  *MIM 25, Chapter 20*

Are you surprised when you suffer? Why is it hard to suffer patiently?

Daily Reading: Exodus 15:19-17:7, Matthew 22:1-33, Psalm 27:1-6, Proverbs 6:20-26

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7)

We suffer for many reasons—some of our own making and some outside our control. Lapse of integrity: Jerry sold a product based on false claims. The purchaser innocently suffered consequences, and when he reports his displeasure, Jerry also may suffer consequences for his lapse of integrity.

Change in environment: Gary endured a painful financial loss, simply because the environment changed when a key stock plunged in value.

An occurrence of evil: Ron has served the insurance needs of a particular client for several years, only to discover that an unscrupulous agent convinced the executive to cancel all of his policies and replace them with inferior ones. As a result, Ron lost a lucrative account.

You're probably getting the idea that suffering is not easily avoided. We can suffer because it's our own fault, or because it's someone else's. And sometimes it isn't anybody's fault—it's just the result of living in an imperfect world. Whatever the reason for our suffering, we can humble ourselves under God's plan for our lives, or we can resist, but we cannot avoid suffering.  *MIM 25, Chapter 20*

In times of suffering, how does it help to know you can cast your anxiety on God, because He cares for you? How can you believe He cares for you when the suffering doesn't stop?

Daily Reading: Exodus 19:16-21:21, Matthew 23:13-39, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 7:1-5

FOCUS ON YOUR DAILY WALK



Order TODAY!

Devotions for The Man in the Mirror

Cultivate a deeper walk with Christ with the new, updated *Devotions for the Man in the Mirror*. This is the 25th anniversary edition, which will feature newly updated content from author Patrick Morley. He challenges men not to settle for a watered-down version of Christianity. Reflecting Jesus in all aspects of life requires a complete, no regrets surrender to Him. With 75 short, powerful readings, men will find meaning and purpose as they deepen their relationship with God and seek to become more obedient in their careers, finances, and relationships. **Available in hardcover for \$15**

FOCUS ON MEN'S ISSUES

The Man in the Mirror—Revised Edition

For the Issues Men Face in the 21st Century. *The Man in the Mirror*, called by some the best book for men ever written, is now revised and updated to inspire a new generation of men. With over three million copies in print, this bestselling book has challenged and encouraged men worldwide and was selected as one of the 100 most influential Christian books of the twentieth century. **\$12 (bulk pricing available)**



Newly Revised and Updated

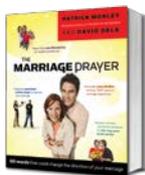
FOCUS ON YOUR MARRIAGE



Take the Marriage Prayer Challenge

What might God do if you said a simple prayer every day for your spouse? Everyone knows couples ought to pray for one another, but how many actually do it? Here's

a next step all the couples in your church could take to build a better marriage—pray the 68-word Marriage Prayer each day for 21 days. **50-pack of Marriage Prayer Cards \$6**



The Marriage Prayer

Help couples apply The Marriage Prayer through this book! *The Marriage Prayer* helps couples apply biblical principles to real life. **Individual book for \$15, 5 pack for \$55; 10 pack for \$99**

Check out all The Marriage Prayer resources by visiting maninthemirror.org/the-marriage-prayer

FOCUS ON FAMILY ISSUES

Drive Time for Husbands

Men—Do you want to be equipped for a great adventure? This CD Series includes 18 great audio/video series. **\$59**

- Husband in the Mirror—12 CDs
- Work & the Man in the Mirror—3 CDs
- Sex & the Man in the Mirror—3 CDs



Family and the Man in the Mirror

What is God's desired role for a man in His family? In this set you'll receive 3 CD's that contain not only Audio, but also Video and Discussion Questions! An essential tool for your small group! Watch video on your computer desktop. Listen to audio in your home or car stereo. Print discussion questions. **\$18**



BOOKS! BY THE BOX

All
Books
Under
\$2
Each!

Fri/Sat/Sun—February 5, 6, 7 ■ Suffering as Discipline or Testing

If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. (Hebrews 12:8)

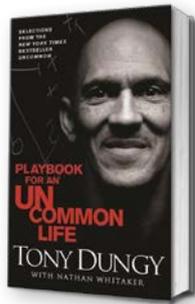
After serving as a church elder for eight years, Ted became overly proud. He acted like, if he said something, his words settled the issue. The consequence came as discipline, when the other elders quietly asked him to step down. Even when human beings don't notice a man's sin, God knows, and He disciplines.

God also uses suffering to test us, proving whether or not our character is pure. The Old Testament tells how God required something of Abraham that caused suffering. God instructed Abraham to take his knife and sacrifice his only son Isaac. The chapter says Abraham traveled to the appointed place and built an altar. He bound Isaac and laid him on the altar, prepared to slay him. But God intervened and provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice. He told Abraham, "Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (Genesis 22:12).

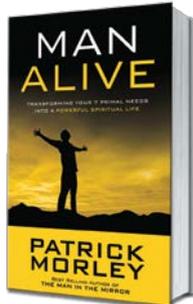
You also may remember the story of Job. Satan accused Job of being upright and fearing God only because he had so much of the good life. God gave Satan a green light to test Job, who lost his business, his children and his health. This incredible level of suffering proved Job's character, for the Bible says in all of this, he did not sin. **MIM 25, Chapter 20**

Describe someone you know whose suffering has proved what his character was like—whether it was good or bad.

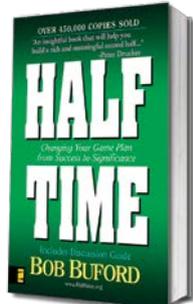
Daily Reading: Exodus 21:22-27:21, Matthew 24:1-25:30, Psalm 29:1-31:8, Proverbs 7:6-8:11



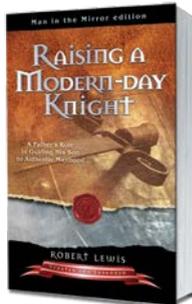
\$1.50



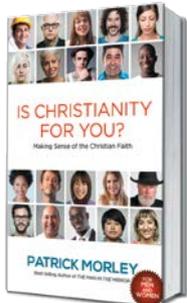
\$1.65



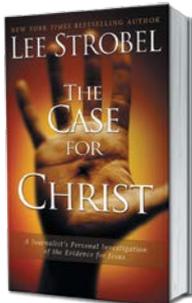
\$1.44



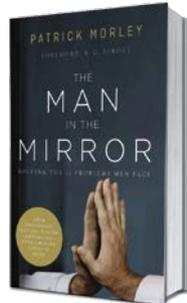
\$1.67



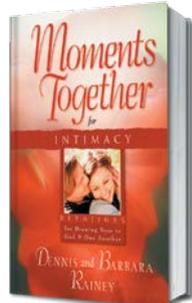
88¢



\$1.71



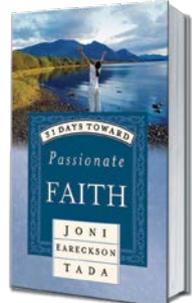
\$1.65



\$1.13



\$1.44



\$1.50

GREAT GIFTS

for Men, Women and Small Groups at fantastic prices!

Prices shown are for cases of 48, does not include shipping and handling. Cases of 12 available for some titles.

Check our website for additional titles and specials or give us a call!
1-800-929-2536 • booksbythebox.org

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

February 1-7

Think of a time when you saw or experienced the suffering of a friend or family member.

- Describe that experience in a few words.
- What was helpful to that person during that time of suffering?
- Were there lessons learned during that time?



The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all. (Psalm 34:19)

God wants to teach us specific lessons through suffering, but most of us resist. We plead with God, indicating that if He doesn't respond according to our desires, He's not fair. Yet Scripture repeatedly explains that even righteous people endure troubles.

We may compare ourselves to others who seem to enjoy easier circumstances. The next step is pouting, even lamenting with the psalmist, "This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every new morning brings new punishments" (Psalm 73:12-14).

We may even become angry, but that's futile, "because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires" (James 1:20).

After our suffering settles on us, and we realize how devastating our anguish can be, we can even doubt God's presence and surrender to fear. But as we allow Scripture to remind us of His faithful mercy and compassion, we cannot help but be encouraged.

📖 MIM 25, Chapter 20

Isaiah 41:10 says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Find a verse that gives a similar message and explain how that passage can help you focus on God's presence and His mercy and compassion.

Daily Reading: Exodus 28:1-43, Matthew 25:31-26:13, Psalm 31:9-18, Proverbs 8:12-13

Tuesday—February 9 ■ Empathy for Our Suffering

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Sometimes God delivers us from suffering according to our desires. But sometimes He has bigger plans for us, so He doesn't necessarily deliver us quickly. The solution to suffering isn't just figuring out how to get over it. It's learning not to falter in times of trouble, to resist the urge to be anxious, to endure patiently, and to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the midst of all that, we can rest in the assurance that Jesus knows what we are going through. Suffering can lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus than what we would experience if the circumstances of our lives exactly followed our desired script.

Because Christ suffered just as we do, we can look to Him as the model for our own attitude, just as the apostle Paul did when he wrote, "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10). He knew from experience that, when we turn to Christ, He is able to empathize with our suffering.

📖 MIM 25, Chapter 20

Today's devotional says, "Suffering can lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus than what we would experience if the circumstances of our lives exactly followed our desired script." Do you agree or disagree? Why? Share your thoughts with your group.

Daily Reading: Exodus 29:1-30:10, Matthew 26:14-46, Psalm 31:19-24, Proverbs 8:14-26

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Through the ages, Christians worldwide have undergone persecutions and indignities unknown to most Americans. In fact, religious oppression formed the foundation of America. But in many countries still today—Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan among the most visible—Christians are severely persecuted or imprisoned if they discuss their faith in public. In countries like North Korea, Christians meet in secret to avoid arrest and execution. Around the world, many Christians live in constant danger, and many are killed for their beliefs.

The apostle Paul faced similar circumstances. Scripture tells us he also had some physical infirmity which he referred to as his "thorn in [the] flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). Three times he asked God to take it away. You can see God's answer in the passage noted above: "My grace is sufficient." God made His power available to sustain Paul, even in times of weakness. The rest of the passage indicates that Paul counted it a privilege to suffer, and he rejoiced and expressed his great delight, knowing the end result would be that Christ's power would rest on him. 📖 MIM 25, Chapter 20

Describe a time when you or another believer have been in a place of weakness or suffering, and God's grace gave sustaining power. How did that affect your ongoing relationship with God and with other people?

Daily Reading: Exodus 30:11-31:18, Matthew 26:47-68, Psalm 32:1-11, Proverbs 8:27-32

Thursday—February 11 ■ Sharing Fellowship with Christ

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him. (Philippians 1:29)

Suffering for doing good is part of the Christian experience. Frankly, until we have suffered, not in some superficial way—like, not getting that new car we wanted—but in a way that saps our dependence on personal resources and ingenuity, we won't fully grasp the power of the Holy Spirit's ministry.

Until you've been up against the wall with no more wise counsel from friends, all favors owed having been called in—until you've been totally exhausted and without hope, not just for a moment but for a lengthy period of time—not until then will trusting the Lord move entirely from abstract concept to realistic experience. When you come to the point where you feel you will die unless Jesus shows you some compassion, then you will know you can trust Him completely. Once you pass through this threshold of His grace, you will have incredible power to overcome anxiety. The tempter cannot terrorize you with any uncertainty that you have not already known, for you have felt God's hands reach down, embracing you in response to your faith. 📖 MIM 25, Chapter 20

How do you suppose our experience with suffering can empower us to overcome anxiety? Ask another man about his experience.

Daily Reading: Exodus 32:1-33:23, Matthew 26:69-27:14, Psalm 33:1-11, Proverbs 8:33-36

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

No one avoids suffering. Even the man who is so security conscious that he never sticks his neck out will sooner or later find the sorrow of suffering knocking at his door. We can patiently endure suffering when we focus on the character qualities produced.

No matter how rough your life gets, remember that it isn't over till it's over. Never quit. Until your heart stops beating and your wrist no longer registers a pulse, there is always another way. God will always restore His children. The Old Testament tells of a man named Job, who was able to maintain his integrity before God even in deep suffering. He stayed faithful and steadfast because he trusted God completely. He knew God was in control.

God doesn't promise that we can avoid suffering, but as today's passage reminds us, He does promise restoration. The truly good life always includes trials and difficulties. We suffer for many different reasons, but we have one hope. We can try to resist suffering, but we'll never completely avoid it. But if we refuse to run and hide, and if we invite God into our anguish, we can learn to rejoice in the sweet character qualities that will grow from our suffering.  *MIM 25, Chapter 20*

Re-read today's verse from 1 Peter 5:10. God promises restoration for our suffering. What are some ways you've seen Him honor that promise?

Daily Reading: Exodus 34:1-38:31, Matthew 27:15-28:20, Psalm 33:12-34:22, Proverbs 9:1-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

Ben was a good student, well-liked by his peers, and a respected football player. One morning at 4 a.m. he snuck out with his friends and went for a joy ride. They got the car up to 130 mph when a curve appeared out of nowhere. Ben tried to slow down but the centrifugal force popped all four tires off the rims and he was thrown from the car, suffering brain damage. He would never play sports again and his hope for an athletic scholarship vanished.

Just as Ben's future changed in an instant, decisions that men make as teenagers and young adults may alter the rest of their lives. Young men often think they're invincible; a choice that seems harmless at the time can result in permanent consequences.

Make a lasting impact on a young man's life by teaching him the power of choice and what wise choices look like. Allow him to experience the consequences of his decisions, while guiding him along the way. The man he will become will, in large part, be defined by the choices he makes in these formative years.  *TYMIM, Chapter 12*

When you were younger, did you grasp the power behind your choices? How can you help teach young men wisdom? Is it difficult for you to allow those you care about to experience consequences? Why?

Daily Reading: Exodus 39:1-40:38, Mark 1:1-28, Psalm 35:1-16, Proverbs 9:11-12

Tuesday—February 16 ■ Moral vs. Priority Decisions

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5)

Not every decision is black and white. We are presented with two kinds of decisions every day: moral decisions and priority decisions. A moral decision is a choice between right and wrong, and is often obvious. When you're helping young men make these decisions, direct them first to the Word and to what God says is the right choice, not their feelings or friends.

Priority decisions, however, are not as clear. These decisions are a choice between right and right. Instead of discerning right from wrong, we have to discern good from better. In other words, there are no obvious moral implications for either choice. Young men may be choosing whether to go to trade school or college, what degree to pursue, whether or not to date, where to work, what sport to focus on, etc.

These choices can be a source of just as much anxiety as moral choices. As an older man who's made many of these choices already, be intentional about offering to help them with both kinds of decisions, and to direct them to wisdom regardless. Be involved.  *TYMIM, Chapter 12*

What are examples of common moral decisions younger men face? Of priority decisions? Consider the young men God has placed in your life through family, church, sports, your neighborhood, etc. How can you be intentional about making yourself available?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 1:1-3:17, Mark 1:29-2:12, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 9:13-18

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



February 8-14

Read aloud the following verse, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

- What is God's promise in that verse of Scripture?
- Have you ever experienced restoration? How did it affect your faith, relationships, and your physical and emotional well-being?

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. (Psalm 130:5)

Have you ever rushed into a bad decision? Maybe circumstances made you feel rushed; maybe you didn't stop to gather the facts or ask the right questions. You might have bought a used car without getting it checked out by a mechanic, only to have it end up a lemon. Or perhaps you agreed to a job transition without first discussing it with your wife.

Frequently, young men make decisions based on short-term goals and desires, instead of long-term ones. As a result, they're susceptible to making hasty decisions they later regret. Encourage them to slow down when faced with major decisions. If the right choice isn't obvious, suggest they write things down to gain perspective, listing each option and its benefits and consequences. Teach them the importance of operating out of fact instead of feeling. Most decisions become obvious given enough time and more information.

If the answer still isn't revealing itself, direct them to wait. Remind them that God is committed to working for their good and encourage them to let Him set the agenda; never rush God. He will make it clear in His timing.  *TYMIM, Chapter 12*

What hasty decision have you made that you later regretted? Think of a time when you were faced with a decision without an obvious answer. How did you approach it?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 4:1-5:19, Mark 2:13-3:6, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 10:1-2

Thursday—February 18 ■ Seeking Counsel

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

When discipling a young man, be open and available as you lead him in wise decision-making. Often a young man simply needs a good listener to help him crystallize his thoughts. If you express openness and trustworthiness, he will be more apt to come to you for counsel. Since you won't always be the one he comes to, teach him the value of choosing wise counsel; direct him to choose friends who are trustworthy, people who have a track record of making wise choices, and youth leaders at church.

But the most beneficial thing you can teach him is to seek counsel from above. Show him how to pray—how to communicate with and listen to God. Model this discipline and gift for him. Prayer is the currency of our personal relationship with Christ; encourage him to spend it liberally!

Finally, teach him about the Holy Spirit, who not only offers counsel but conviction. A guilty conscience, troubled with conviction of the Spirit, provides clear evidence that we are not in God's will. Don't just lead him to wisdom; lead him to the source of wisdom and the power to make good decisions.  *TYMIM, Chapter 12*

Consider a young man that God has brought into your life; what is a tangible way that you can model a strong prayer life to him? That you can model the power and purpose of the Holy Spirit?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 6:1-7:27, Mark 3:7-30, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 10:3-4

The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; for the ears of the wise seek it out. (Proverbs 18:15)

Nothing clarifies our thinking quite like a pencil and paper. Francis Bacon said, "Writing maketh an exact man." Encouraging a young man to write his way through a decision can be a practical process to accurately identify his problem and discern God's will. As you teach him this process of decision-making, remind him that the goal is not to get our own way, but rather to find God's way.

In the following exercise, each step builds on itself; at some point, the answer may become obvious. If the right answer doesn't make itself clear, he should keep moving through the steps. First, he should write down the question as concisely and clearly as possible. This will clarify his thinking right from the start. Example: Should I continue to date Jessica?

The next step is to write out a purpose statement that defines why he is considering that decision. "Why" is he trying to decide "what" he is trying to decide? Why is he unhappy or confused? Example: I am trying to decide whether to continue dating Jessica because I believe she wants to have sex and I know we shouldn't. I like spending time with her.

Then he should submit his purpose statement to a series of questions: What are you trying to accomplish and why? Other questions should follow: What are your expectations and why? How does this decision fit in with your calling? What does the Bible say about my decision? What counsel have I already received? Usually, by the end of this series and with much prayer, one option will prove more desirable and wise. As Professor Louis Agazziz said, "A pencil is one of the best of eyes."  *TYMIM, Chapter 12*

Do you ever write as part of your decision-making process? Identify a major decision you're considering. Submit it to the series of questions.

Daily Reading: Leviticus 7:28-12:8, Mark 3:31-5:43, Psalm 37:12-38:22, Proverbs 10:5-9

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

February 15-21

On a large piece of paper or whiteboard, make a list of the most difficult decisions the members of your group have had to make in their lives.

- How did you go about making those decisions? What things did you consider?
- How could your father or another man in your life have helped you with those decisions?
- Is there a young man in your life that could use some help in making some important decisions? Would you be willing to walk or pray him through that process?

MOST DIFFICULT DECISIONS YOU'VE MADE...



The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. (Proverbs 11:3)

One of the more important things you can teach a young man is the value of integrity. Former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson said, “If you have integrity, nothing else matters. If you don’t have integrity, nothing else matters.”

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary states: “Integrity *noun*: 1: Firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: INCORRUPTIBILITY 2: An unimpaired condition: SOUNDNESS 3: The quality or state of being complete or undivided: COMPLETENESS.”

Integrity means being undivided and unwavering. Integrity means not folding under pressure; pressure only makes a man of integrity more determined to do the right thing. He is not double-minded and cannot be corrupted.

Teach young men that the Christian man of integrity takes responsibility for his inward character and outward conduct, while trusting Christ to empower him through the Holy Spirit. Remind them that it doesn’t mean being flawless, but it does mean being steady and determined in Christ. 📖 *TYMIM, Chapter 13*

Define integrity in your own words. As a teenager or young adult, who was a man of integrity that you looked up to? How did he display those qualities? Share your answers with a few other men.

Daily Reading: Leviticus 13:1-59, Mark 6:1-29, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 10:10

I will maintain my innocence and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live. (Job 27:6)

In my daughter’s college dorm, the girls figured out they could put two quarters inside a pair of nylon stockings, insert the quarters in the slots of the washing machines, push the lever, start the machine, and then pull the lever out and retrieve their quarters. One night my daughter, frustrated because of her lack of money, said, “Maybe I should start doing that, too.” My wife responded, “You will have many choices like this in life, and it will always cost you more to be honest.”

Every choice comes with an opportunity cost; it will always cost you something to be a man of integrity. It may be a higher-paying position at work, a relationship with the unhappily married woman across the street, or a night out drinking with the guys. For a younger man, the equivalent may be a good grade on his final exam, his new girlfriend, or the party that everyone else will be attending. At that age, any one of those can feel like the end of the world as he knows it.

Be sensitive to the costs of integrity he will experience, but reaffirm the benefits! Help him decide—in advance—that he would rather have God’s blessing than the fleeting pleasures that could come from compromising his integrity. 📖 *TYMIM, Chapter 13*

What cost have you experienced as a result of making the right choice? What blessing resulted, either then or down the road?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 15:1-16:28, Mark 7:1-23, Psalm 40:11-17, Proverbs 10:13-14

Tuesday—February 23 ■ Integrity in the Small Things

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. (Luke 16:10)

The clerk at Starbucks rang up \$1.50 for my \$3.50 drink. When I told him he had made a mistake, he said, “It’s okay. Don’t worry about it.” We all face situations like this on a regular basis—situations that call for us to act with integrity, even when the consequence is minor or nonexistent. The truth is these seemingly inconsequential matters can make small dents in our integrity. Over time, the dents become craters, and eventually, our character is fractured.

A young man is often faced with these kinds of choices. A classmate offers to let him cheat off a routine homework assignment that the teacher won’t check thoroughly; his parents ask him how much change was left over from the pizza they had him pick up. These things may all seem harmless enough, but your job as an older man of integrity is to teach him the value of making the right choice even if no one is watching or if everyone else is doing the opposite.

Integrity is about more than good behavior—it is a way of expressing our faith in, and love for, Jesus Christ. If you want God to trust him with much, teach him to strive to be faithful with very little. 📖 *TYMIM, Chapter 13*

Why is it easier to sin when the direct consequence isn’t apparent? How have you seen compromise in the little things lead to greater compromise in your own life, either in the past or currently?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 14:1-57, Mark 6:30-56, Psalm 40:1-10, Proverbs 10:11-12

Thursday—February 25 ■ You as an Example

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Sometimes when a baker makes cookies, he first puts all the spices and sugar together in a bowl: sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, etc. As he stirs, the cookie dough picks up the different ingredients; each time the sticky dough passes over the mixture, the sweeter it becomes.

How do we get integrity? We pick it up, over time, by watching people we respect. We see them handle dicey situations, face trials, and pursue good. As we roll through life and interact with others, we recognize qualities such as courage, perseverance or compassion. We begin to identify different characteristics—different ingredients or seasonings—to which we aspire.

When a younger man comes into contact with you, be someone that coats him with the ingredients of integrity. Leave him with a vision for what he aspires to be.

As you see a young man identify one of these qualities (either in you or someone else), first tell him to ask God to work it into his character through faith and the Holy Spirit. At the same time, encourage him to pursue the value diligently and cultivate it through his choices. 📖 *TYMIM, Chapter 13*

How did you “learn” integrity? How can you “teach” integrity through your daily actions?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 16:29-18:30, Mark 7:24-8:10, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 10:15-16

They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.” (Mark 12:14)

This scripture gives a clear, concise description of integrity in the description of Jesus. He was not swayed by men. Part of living with integrity is standing your ground firmly. Each time a young man goes against his peers, the status quo, or his own temptations, he builds integrity. Guide him as he forms these foundational values.

Jesus didn’t show partiality to people based on their position. In high school especially, a strong pressure exists to rate or order others. Suddenly everyone finds themselves in a category, while subtly supporting the system of hierarchy themselves with how they view and treat others. Point a young man back to Christ’s example; He didn’t favor people for being attractive, athletic, wealthy or popular. Teach a young man that his value is based on whom God says he is.

The leaders said that Jesus taught the way of God to those around Him. Empower a young man to follow Jesus’ example, looking for opportunities to share God’s way. Help him to recognize and focus on the need, and not on his fears or potential inadequacies.

The final attribute about Jesus was that He lived according to the truth. Remember this: a young man can’t live according to the truth if he doesn’t know the truth. Invest in him with your time and wisdom and commit to disciplining him. Remind him that he won’t be perfect. Integrity is a progressive response to the good news that Jesus loves and forgives us, not something we must first do to “merit” His love and forgiveness.  *TYMIM, Chapter 13*

Which of the above attributes of Jesus do you find the most challenging to model? Which comes more naturally to you?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 19:1-23:44, Mark 8:11-10:12, Psalm 42:1-44:8, Proverbs 10:17-19

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Men face temptation to adopt three impoverished values: personal peace, affluence, and cultural Christianity. When we succumb to those influences, we generally pursue things with limited eternal value, and the people in our lives suffer emotional pain.

Respected Christian psychologist Dr. James Dobson cited research done by Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner. Researchers asked a group of men to estimate the amount of time spent each day with their one-year-old children. The average response was 15–20 minutes. Since self-reporting often leads people to exaggerate, the researchers attached microphones to the children’s shirts, recording actual parental interaction. The average amount of daily time each dad *actually* spent with his kids was 37 seconds.

Unfortunately, this scene replays in millions of American homes every day. A child spending 37 seconds with his father probably also spends four hours with a screen each day—and most of that is morally bankrupt. Many of us have accepted a lie that quality time is more important than quantity. In reality, quality and quantity are both important.

 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

How would you rate the amount of time you are investing in the people God has brought into your life?

Daily Reading: No reading due to leap year.

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



February 22-28

Share the four attributes of Jesus found in the devotional above.

- Are those attributes something you saw in the men in your life as you were growing up?
- Why is integrity such an important characteristic to pass on to others?
- Are the young men in your life seeing integrity in you? In what ways?

Tuesday—March 1 ■ Freedom to Be Kids

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

When our two children were toddlers, I was always uptight about new scratches showing up daily in our coffee table. My blood boiled when I spotted a new nick in the luster of the smooth-grained wood. Finally my wife, who couldn’t care less about such matters, challenged me: “Leave my children alone! I’ll not have you ruining a million-dollar child over a \$300 table!” It finally connected in my brain. I asked Patsy to forgive me. “Let them do whatever they like to anything in the house. When they’re grown, we’ll buy a whole new houseful of furniture.”

Several years later, my daughter came home crying over some neighborhood spat. I barked out four easy steps to solve the problem, but she just cried louder. “Dad,” she sniffed. “From now on (sniff) when I’m crying (sniff), would you please not say anything that’s logical?” Growing up is harder on kids than adults. Let’s give them freedom to be kids. Many times our approach should be to just help them get through it.

 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

Do you give your children the freedom to be kids, or do you try to make them act older than they actually are? Give an example in which you expected more from your children than you should have. Share with another man.

Daily Reading: Leviticus 24:1-25:46, Mark 10:13-31, Psalm 44:9-26, Proverbs 10:20-21

Love is patient, love is kind... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7)

When we allow our children to be indiscriminately exposed to the secular worldview, we risk losing their fragile, impressionable minds to secular values. On their own, children cannot discriminate between good and evil.

In the late 1980s, popular singer George Michael sang a single called “*I Want Your Sex*”: “Sex is natural, sex is fun, sex is best when it’s one on one.” The song shot to number two on the charts. After Michael’s Orlando concert, the newspaper reported: “During the hit song... he thrust his hips and gazed adoringly at girls in the front row... mostly 13 to 19 years old.” Back then, George Michael’s song was censored. Today it would be prime-time—that’s how much our culture has eroded.

On a positive note, my wife used the sexually provocative songs and performances in our culture as a platform to openly contrast our views on sex with the secular view. We talked openly with our children about everything, because we found they already knew about everything anyway. The goal is *protection*, not *insulation*. 📖 MIM 25, Chapter 8

Our children’s value system and belief system are influenced by us, teachers, coaches, professors, pastors, peers, music, movies and television. How active have you been in monitoring those influences? What changes should you make?

Daily Reading: Leviticus 25:47-27:13, Mark 10:32-52, Psalm 45:1-17, Proverbs 10:22

Thursday—March 3 ■ Internet’s Influence

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. (Psalm 119:9-10)

With the internet, you can assume that your children know much more about sex than you would like to think. Christian writer and speaker Anne Marie Miller, herself a recovering pornography addict, finds more students looking at pornography at younger ages and with greater frequency. Miller explains that most of us who grew up before the age of the internet learned about pornography through glimpsing at someone else’s dirty magazine. “Now,” she explains, “when a student hears a word or phrase they don’t understand, they don’t ask you what it means (because they face getting in trouble). They don’t ask their friends (because they fear being ashamed for not knowing)... They go straight to Google Images. In almost all of the stories I heard, this is how someone was first experienced to pornography—Google image searching.”

Children discriminate best between what makes them feel good and what makes them feel bad. Unfortunately for this generation of latchkey children, sin feels good. The duty and role of fathers includes protecting our children from evil as well as teaching them righteousness. 📖 MIM 25, Chapter 8

Do you believe the problems kids face growing up today are just like the ones you faced, or are they very different? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: Leviticus 27:14-Numbers 1:54, Mark 11:1-26, Psalm 46:1-11, Proverbs 10:23

Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. (Philippians 2:2,3)

Four anglers boarded a small seaplane and skimmed over the Alaskan mountains to a pristine, secluded bay. When they returned later that afternoon, they found the outgoing tide left their seaplane high and dry. They enjoyed some dinner and then slept in the plane.

The seaplane was adrift by morning, so they promptly cranked the engine and took off. Too late, they discovered one of the pontoons had filled with water. Moments from liftoff, the seaplane careened into the sea and capsized. My friend Dr. Phil Littleford was on that plane, along with his son Mark. The group prayed. They found no safety equipment, so they inflated their waders. They began swimming, but the riptide countered every stroke. The two men alongside Phil and Mark made it to shore. They last saw Phil and Mark disappearing on the horizon, swept arm in arm toward the open sea.

The Coast Guard reported they probably lasted no more than an hour in the freezing waters. Hypothermia would cause Mark, with a smaller body mass, to fall asleep in his father’s arms. A strong swimmer, Phil could have made it to shore, but that would have meant abandoning his son. Most fathers are willing to go so far as to die for their children. Why is it that we often don’t seem willing to live for them? 📖 MIM 25, Chapter 8

Today’s devotional asks, “Why is it that we often don’t seem willing to live for them?” How would you answer that question?

Daily Reading: Numbers 2:1-7:89, Mark 11:27-13:13, Psalm 47:1-49:20, Proverbs 10:24-28

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

February 29–March 6

Ask each group member to make a list of struggles or challenges that his children/grandchildren face or have faced.

- Are those the same challenges you faced as a child? Are they any harder than the struggles you faced?
- How can you help your children/grandchildren with these struggles?



Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away. (Proverbs 22:15)

We need to influence our children as much as possible as early as possible, because once they become teenagers, their friends (peers) exert more influence on them than any other single factor. Teaching our children what to look for in a friend, and placing them in environments where they can be found—these are gigantic contributions to the stability of their beliefs and values.

Short of purposed, planned effort on our part, our kids will self-select the values that they unwisely think will make them feel the best. But many things that make them feel good at first will deeply scar their lives—drugs, alcohol and sex lead to addiction, STDs and unplanned pregnancies. We owe our children the protection from calamity that only we can provide, just as God our Father provides it to us. Syrupy permissiveness will only appeal to the foolishness that is bound up in the heart of a child. These days, when we misjudge, we tend to under protect, not overprotect. 📖 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

Once our children become teenagers, their peers become the primary influence in their lives. What can we do before they become teenagers to best prepare for the teen years? What can we do while they are teenagers to help them get through these tough years?

Daily Reading: Numbers 8:1-9:23, Mark 13:14-37, Psalm 50:1-23, Proverbs 10:29-30

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4)

Gordon MacDonald told a story about James Boswell, the famous biographer of Samuel Johnson. Boswell frequently mentioned a special childhood memory—a day of fishing with his dad. Apparently Boswell's life had been deeply etched for the better on this single day, for he constantly referred to the many matters his father had tutored him about on that one occasion.

Apparently his dad had a very different view of the event. Many years later someone stumbled across the following entry in his father's journal: "Gone fishing today with my son; a day wasted." That sounds harsh, but I believe it is actually a positive statement about Boswell's father. Whatever personal feelings he had, he must have effectively suppressed them since his son profited so much from the day. Sadly, we often express our displeasure and ruin the day for everyone. Because Boswell's father held his tongue, his son was deeply encouraged by the mundane affair, and the memory became a cornerstone for his entire life. 📖 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

Describe a time when you were either built up or crushed by someone's words. How can you apply the lesson learned in that experience to how you relate and converse with your own children, or with any children in your life?

Daily Reading: Numbers 11:24-13:33, Mark 14:22-52, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 11:1-3

Tuesday—March 8 ■ Encourage, Don't Embitter

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)

Tradition says that mothers love and stroke their children, while angry fathers handle the discipline. This image of dads may not be fair, but when we do err, this is usually how we go astray. Colossians 3:21 confirms that this is a problem by its inclusion in the Bible as one of the very few instructions given only to fathers: "Do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."

Angry fathers are everywhere. I once heard a dad scream at his elementary aged son, "Why don't you act your age?" Actually that's exactly what this youngster was doing—acting his age. What his dad really meant was, "Why don't you act like a grown-up!"

We don't have to be the sweetest guy in the world to impact our kids. We just need to give them time and attention. If we can learn to control our selfish desires, control our tempers more, and encourage our kids, they will inherit a great legacy from us.

📖 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

Do you become angry with your children too often? What changes could you make in your attitudes and expectations that would lower your temperature? Share your thoughts with another man.

Daily Reading: Numbers 10:1-11:23, Mark 14:1-21, Psalm 51:1-19, Proverbs 10:31-32

Thursday—March 10 ■ Guardianship Through Prayer

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." (Acts 16:29-31)

Seven couples, all new Christians, started meeting in a prayer group. The results were so dramatic, I verified their story with three separate sources. They all corroborate each other. These naïve new Christians found a verse of Scripture—Acts 16:31 printed above—and decided to claim it as God's promise. Among the seven couples, they had 23 children, none of whom were Christians. The couples prayed weekly for their children's salvation. Within two years, all 23 kids committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

In a Denver crusade, Dr. Billy Graham spoke about this verse, noting research indicating in homes where a child was the first member to accept Christ, 25 percent of the time the entire family became Christians. When the wife came first, the percentage rose 40–50 percent. But in families where the father came to faith in Christ first, the entire family came to faith 60 percent of the time. Fathers have great spiritual influence. What better way to equip our children for a meaningful life than by praying for their eternal salvation?

📖 *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

Do you believe most men do or don't pray regularly for their children? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: Numbers 14:1-15:16, Mark 14:53-72, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 11:4

*I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you.
May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up
of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. (Psalm 141:1-2)*

We can make no greater contribution to the well-being of our kids than to intercede for them daily in prayer. Over the years I built up a regimen of prayer subjects for my children. Here's a list of the subjects I accumulated:

- A saving faith (thanksgiving if your child already is a Christian).
- A growing faith.
- An independent faith (as they grow up).
- To be strong and healthy in mind, body, and spirit.
- A sense of destiny (purpose).
- A desire for integrity.
- A call to excellence.
- An understanding of the ministry God has for them.
- An acquisition of wisdom.
- Protection from drugs, alcohol and premarital sex.
- The mate God has for them (alive somewhere and also needing prayer).
- Glorify God in everything.
- God's help for me to set aside time to spend with them.

Can you think of anything in the world more important than for your children to place faith in Jesus Christ? By God's grace, they will.  *MIM 25, Chapter 8*

*Do you pray regularly for your children? If yes, what do you pray for them?
If you don't, why? How could you make prayer a regular habit?*

Daily Reading: Numbers 15:17-20:29, Mark 15:1-16:20,
Luke 1:1-25, Psalm 54:1-56:13, Proverbs 11:5-8

*You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I
would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. And I was soon
in serious trouble in the assembly of God's people." (Proverbs 5:12-14)*

Several years ago, I learned an expensive lesson: it's hard to get rid of rats in your attic. The exterminator charged \$300 to seal up every hole he could find. He said the rats would die, and no more would get in. That worked for a while, and then the rats were back.

The exterminator explained that my trees were too close to the house. That allowed rats to climb on the roof and in through the air vents, which cannot be sealed. So I called an arborist, and paid another \$300 to trim the branches. Then the exterminator came back and put down poison. Within the week, I wasn't hearing anymore rat noises from the attic.

It occurred to me that temptations are a lot like rats. Once they take up residence in your mind, it may take longer than you expected to get rid of them. You "seal up" one way in, and they find another. Better to be proactive—look for the ways your mind is susceptible and do the preventive work now.  *MIMBS 3*

Look at today's verse from Proverbs. Have you ever spurned discipline or correction only to pay a higher price later on? Is there an area of your life now that needs to be sealed up before the "rats" get in?

Daily Reading: Numbers 21:1-22:20, Luke 1:26-56, Psalm 57:1-11, Proverbs 11:9-11

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters... We should not commit sexual immorality as some of them did... We should not test Christ, as some of them did... And do not grumble, as some of them did... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us. (1 Corinthians 10:6-11)

Romans 1:25 talks about people who "exchanged the truth about God for a lie." That is always the starting place when someone falls into temptation.

No one intends to believe a lie. Nevertheless, all men either live by the truth of God's Word, or they accept a counterfeit. We have all, at some point, traded in the truth of God's Word and accepted a lie in its place. This actually makes us idolaters, for it means we choose to worship something other than the true God. Usually, of course, other negative behaviors follow. We commit sexual immorality, we grumble, we test the Lord, and we set our hearts on evil things, even when we think we are doing right. The first step to defeating temptation is to return to God's Word and cling to the truth of who He is.  *MIMBS 3*

Can you think of a time when you traded in the truth of God's word for a lie? What did it cost you? How did you realize it? Share your story with a brother.

Daily Reading: Numbers 22:21-23:30, Luke 1:57-80, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 11:12-13

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



March 7-13

Read aloud the subjects for prayer from the devotional on this page.

- How often do you pray for your children or grandchildren?
- Do your children and grandchildren know that you pray for them?
- What can your children or grandchildren learn about the power of prayer from you?

But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15)

If you've ever been fishing, you have all the wisdom needed to understand James 1:14-15. You bait your hook and drop it in the water and wait. You see a huge fish swim toward you. Will he be enticed by the bait so you can drag him away? Well, my experience tells me it probably depends on whether or not he is hungry.

The same is true of any temptation. If you allow yourself to be enticed and dragged away, it's probably because you were hungry for something. The best way to avoid being enticed is to stay full.

Paul wrote, "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise, but as wise... Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:15, 18). You can avoid the hunger that leads to debauchery if you stay filled with God's Spirit. When we fail to do that, we are susceptible to the lie that we can fill ourselves with things that never will really satisfy our hunger.  MIMBS 3

If your heart had a gauge on it, like your gas tank does, how full would it show your heart to be right now? How will that affect you the next time you are tempted?

Daily Reading: Numbers 24:1-25:18, Luke 2:1-35, Psalm 59:1-17, Proverbs 11:14

Thursday—March 17 ■ God is Faithful

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Ask any group of Christian men, "Do you believe God is faithful?" All of them will likely say yes. Yet, when faced with temptation, many don't seem to really believe that God's faithfulness will help them resist. They cry out to God, "Help me deal with this temptation!" They know that God wants them to be victorious, and that He's promised to provide a way out. Yet in the end, they succumb to the sin.

So is this scripture really true? Frankly, if it were not true, the whole world would be in chaos, because no one would resist temptation. But if you're already nibbling at the bait, it's pretty hard to pay attention when God opens a way of escape.

Let me assure you, this promise is absolutely true. To the extent that men rely on God's faithfulness when they are tempted, this scripture always works. When it fails, it's not because God is unfaithful. It's because we are more attracted to the bait of temptation than we are to God's faithfulness.  MIMBS 3

Describe a time when you relied on God's faithfulness, and He provided a way out when you were tempted to do something you knew was wrong.

Daily Reading: Numbers 26:1-51, Luke 2:36-52, Psalm 60:1-12, Proverbs 11:15

Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:9)

Temptation happens to everyone. It even happened to Jesus, though He never yielded to it. The Bible says we have an enemy who actively attempts to lure us toward our own destruction. With God's help, we must stay self-controlled and alert, so the devil doesn't take us by surprise. That implies that we can take some specific steps to prepare ourselves to resist and stand firm in our faith.

Men sometimes ask me, "How can I live out my Christianity successfully?" You need to read your Bible on a regular basis. Clearly, filling your mind and heart with God's truth makes you a lot less hungry for the counterfeit offerings of Satan.

Find a small group of men where, over time, you can allow yourself to be vulnerable regarding your weaknesses. Find a group of Christian men who will hold you accountable for your choices and your behavior.

You may think no one else knows what you're going through, but today's passage reminds us that men all over the world are going through the same kinds of sufferings. You may want to protect your reputation, but hidden sin has a way of being exposed anyway, often with drastic results. Protecting your character is the best way to safeguard your reputation.  MIMBS 3

How well have you prepared yourself to resist the devil and stand firm in times of temptation? What's one step you should take this week?

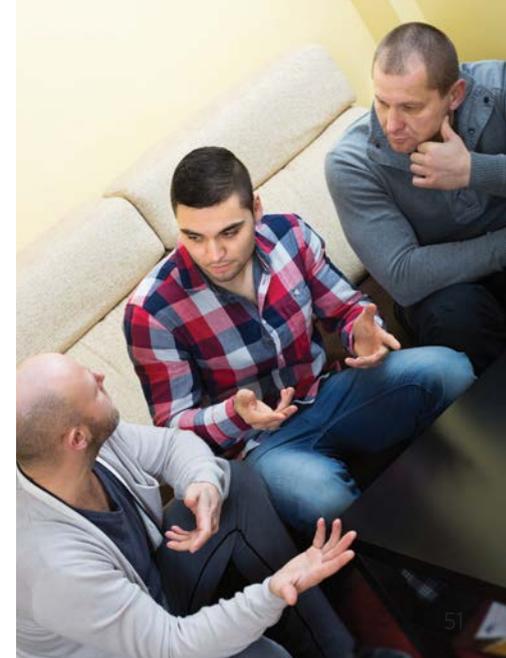
Daily Reading: Numbers 26:52-31:54, Luke 3:1-4:30, Psalm 61:1-63:11, Proverbs 11:16-21

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

March 14-20

What are the suggestions for successful living offered in the devotional on this page, "Firm in the Faith"?

- Ask someone to share how reading God's Word on a regular basis has impacted their life.
- What are some of the benefits of being in a small group and sharing your life with other men?
- Are there other men in the church who need an invitation to join this group or start a new group?



Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

On December 13, 1862, a bloody battle erupted at Fredericksburg, VA. All day, Union soldiers charged up a slope into Confederate fire. As night fell, both sides could hear the moans of wounded soldiers.

The next morning, 19-year-old South Carolinian Richard Rolland couldn't ignore the cries any longer. He sought permission to attend to wounded Union soldiers. His commander skeptically agreed.

He gathered canteens and scaled the wall. Someone shot at him, but Rolland was undeterred. He went to wounded soldiers, cradling heads and offering water. All firing stopped. A cheer started from the Union line, then the Confederate line. Astonished soldiers watched for an hour and a half while the young Confederate took water to every injured soldier.

We won't all get the chance to make a difference in as memorable a way as Richard Rolland. We can, however, take advantage of the opportunities God puts in front of us to live out our faith in unexpected ways. 📖 MIMBS 4

Name a man that you believe has done or is doing something important with his life. What do you believe is his motivation?

Daily Reading: Numbers 32:1-33:39, Luke 4:31-5:11, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 11:22

Tuesday—March 22 ■ A Man's Desire

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12)

Every man has a need to be significant. It gets him out of bed in the morning and enables him to invest himself in something, without regard to personal cost. Every man wants to know that something about his life matters. Without a sense of purpose, many of us wander in the state described in the verse above—our hearts sick with longing.

I have been in that place myself. I sensed that God wanted me to do something, but I didn't yet know what it was. I remember praying through my tears, saying, "God, please either satisfy this desire to serve You in some way, or take away the desire. I just can't continue living like this."

If any man tells you he doesn't have that longing, I'm convinced he's lying. We all have the same desire, and some of us will pursue it by following man's formula, while others will try God's. Only God's way really fulfills the longing and leads to a life of purpose. 📖 MIMBS 4

Have you discovered your God-given destiny? How did you discover your purpose? If you are still seeking to know your purpose, share with a few other men where you are on your journey.

Daily Reading: Numbers 33:40-35:34, Luke 5:12-28, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 11:23

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. (Luke 9:46)

Most of us start with noble motives. We want our lives to matter. Probably that's what inspired the disciples to follow Jesus. He promised to make them more than "fishers of fish"—He would make them "fishers of men." His invitation changed their lives. Yet even those 12 men were tempted by the lure of worldly status.

That kind of error happens when we mistakenly believe our "importance" is linked to how people view us. Men with this worldview need to make this much money, live in this kind of house, drive this kind of car.

A man who accepts that viewpoint must eventually use people and make them serve him. And once he's achieved an acceptable level of prestige, he finds it's not enough... he needs more.

If you're pursuing that kind of "greatness," I warn you—that lifestyle will eventually cost you everything. Jesus has a much better plan, and it begins with asking others, "How can I help you?" Not, "How can you help me?" 📖 MIMBS 4

Define what you believe makes a man "great," and then explain whether you believe your definition more closely matches God's or man's viewpoint. How much does your life line up with your stated belief?

Daily Reading: Numbers 36:1-Deuteronomy 1:46, Luke 5:29-6:11, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 11:24-26

Thursday—March 24 ■ Jesus' Perspective

Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest." (Luke 9:48)

Jesus repeatedly admonished His disciples to give up the world's definition of "greatness":

"The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12).

"Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them... But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:25-26).

That is the essence of success Jesus' way: If you really want to be great, then serve. And He didn't just say it—He did it.

Scripture tells us that, hours before one of His disciples would betray Him, Jesus' washed the feet of His 12 closest followers. In that context, He told them, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). True greatness only comes through service. 📖 MIMBS 4

Look up Philippians 2:6-11 with some brothers. Discuss how it reflects Jesus' perspective on greatness.

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 2:1-3:29, Luke 6:12-38, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 11:27

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39)

September 11, 2001. Almost every American can tell you where they were and what they were doing when they heard that planes had flown into the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

As reports began to emerge from World Trade Center survivors, several mentioned a mysterious young man who wore a red bandanna across his face. For 76 minutes he went from one group of survivors to another, leading them to safety. He carried one badly injured woman down 15 flights of stairs to get her out then went back up and wasn't seen again.

On March 19, 2002, that young man's remains were found intact, in a makeshift command center set up by the fire department in the south tower lobby. He was identified as Welles Crowther, a graduate of Boston College, and he was known for wearing a red bandanna. When he graduated, he went to work for a financial firm on the 104th floor of the South Tower. He told his parents he didn't know how much longer he could keep working there, because his real dream was to be a public servant and a fire fighter. On September 11, 2001, when he was 23 years old, Welles Crowther realized his dream.

His whole life, God had prepared Welles for this moment. And when the time came, he was ready. It may not be as dramatic as Welles Crowther, but if you are following Him, you may one day find yourself in a position to make a self-sacrificial decision. Will you be ready when God gives you that "moment"?  MIMBS 4

If you want to do something significant with your life, then I invite you to join the Fellowship of the Red Bandanna (www.redbandanna.org). Have you known anyone who made a sacrifice for others? What would you have done in that person's situation?

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-8:20, Luke 6:39-8:3, Psalm 68:1-69:18, Proverbs 11:28-12:1

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:5)

At some time, everyone I know has found himself in a seemingly hopeless situation. I've had my own life issues that deflated my sense of hope. I know other men who have endured seemingly endless custody battles. Others have experienced financial disasters. Others have dealt with health problems or employment issues. In the midst of that kind of difficulty, we all tend to wonder if God is ever going to answer our prayers... in fact, is He even listening?

The psalmist must have been tempted to give up hoping for God to answer his prayer. In Psalm 42 he wrote, "My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" (v. 3). That sounds pretty hopeless. But twice he spoke to himself and said, "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him" (vv. 5, 11).

Where did that confidence come from? Somehow in his lifetime of experience with God, the psalmist knew there is no such thing as a hopeless situation.  MIMBS 5

Think of a time when you have felt hopeless. Were you able to put your hope in God? If you are in a hopeless time now, find a brother to walk with you and point you towards God as your strength.

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 9:1-10:22, Luke 8:4-21, Psalm 69:19-36, Proverbs 12:2-3

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



March 21-27

Go to www.redbandanna.org and read aloud the story of Welles Crowther.

- What makes Welles' story so unusual? What kind of heart did Welles have?
- Share with one another other stories of heroism or sacrificial love.
- What prepares a man to act heroically when circumstances like these arise?

Tuesday—March 29 ■ Would You Like to Get Well?

One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?" (John 5:5, 6 NLT)

He had been disabled for 38 years. Though paralyzed, he somehow arrived at a place where sick people might get healed. When the pool waters stirred, the first one in the water was healed.

We don't know why Jesus picked him from the crowd of disabled individuals. We do know that Jesus didn't even wait for this man to ask—our Lord went to him and simply asked, "Would you like to get well?"

Frankly, the man never really answered. He just offered excuses, "I have no one to help me into the pool... While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me" (v. 7). He thought the key was to be "in the right place at the right time." He suffered from two afflictions: A physical one: he was paralyzed. And a spiritual one: he didn't see any possibility for healing.

But Jesus brushed the man's physical and spiritual handicaps aside. He said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" (v. 8). And the man did. The simple reality is that no situation is beyond Jesus' ability to show mercy and power.  MIMBS 5

Do you know someone who has struggled with something for so long that they have lost hope? Have you? Pray for an encounter with Christ for that person where they can experience His power and love.

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 11:1-12:32, Luke 8:22-39, Psalm 70:1-5, Proverbs 12:4

At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. . . . So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed. . . . “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?” The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him. (John 5:9-14)

I watched a movie called “Bounce,” in which Ben Affleck played a man in recovery from drinking too much. His new male assistant invited him to an AA meeting. Affleck’s character responded that he didn’t want to go. And besides, he explained, “I don’t believe in God.” The assistant responded, “He’ll be so crushed when he hears that.”

This reminds me of an important point in John 5. A man was paralyzed, and then he encountered Jesus, and suddenly he could walk. But the man didn’t know who Jesus was. I don’t just mean that he didn’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God. He didn’t recognize Jesus at all! You see, in this case, it wasn’t the man’s faith that healed him. This man didn’t believe in Jesus at all, but Jesus believed in him.

Sometimes, God works in our lives as a response to our faith. Other times, He works in our lives in order to reveal His love to a faithless man, or remind us when our faith is running a little low. It’s not our faith that heals, it’s His power. 📖 MIMBS 5

Have you seen God work in your life when your faith was running low? Or work in the life of a faithless man to reveal Himself? Share these stories with a brother.

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 13:1-15:23, Luke 8:40-9:6, Psalm 71:1-24, Proverbs 12:5-7

Thursday—March 31 ■ Hope Points Toward Eternal Purpose

Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore. (Psalm 131:3)

I have endured some hopeless situations, both financial and physical. I was a real estate developer in the 1980s relying on borrowed money for my business. Let’s say I had \$200 worth of properties, and my mortgages totaled \$150. That kind of shows my situation, albeit on a smaller scale. But then recession hit. The value of my property was cut in half. Suddenly I had only \$100 worth of property, but I still had \$150 in debt.

I threw myself on God’s mercy and chose to believe He had the power and the desire to deliver me. Over the course of seven years, we were able to right our financial ship. I learned something in that process—even when I lost hope, God did not lose hope in me.

I also have endured debilitating migraine headaches. When I was in my mid-30s, the pain would become so intense that tears would stream down my face. I remember one specific time when I lost hope. But over the course of time I’ve found that His grace is sufficient for the day.

The following passage clarified the purpose that God sometimes has when He allows us to endure physical suffering. Peter wrote, “Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin” (1 Peter 4:1). When I read this verse, it reminds me that God has a purpose for my suffering, and it brings me hope to persevere. 📖 MIMBS 5

Are you in a situation now that feels hopeless? Do you have a brother you can “share the load” with?

Daily Reading: Deuteronomy 16:1-17:20, Luke 9:7-27, Psalm 72:1-20, Proverbs 12:8-9



STRAIGHT TALK ON THE SNARE OF PORN

by Sam Black

The battle against sin is a battle against the world, the flesh and the devil (Ephesians 2:1-2). When it comes to porn, all three are in play, but a man’s flesh is particularly susceptible to its power.

Quite simply, porn feels good.

Porn focuses a man’s attention to the point of tunnel vision, providing an absolute distraction during its use. It floods the brain in a soothing bath of neural chemicals that provide a mind-numbing escape.

The more you use it, the more you want it. And yet, the more you use it, the less it feels good. The brain gets used to it. So, men do it more. . . more times, more often, more variety, more deviant. . . just more in pursuit of that fix. This continued “more” actually builds neural pathways in the brain to desire more porn.

For some, a vicious circle plays out: viewing porn to feel better, acting out, feeling shame, keeping their secret, viewing porn to feel better, acting out, feeling shame, keeping their secret. . . The merry-go-round continues and escape seems unrealistic.

Adolescents (12 to 17 years old) are among the most prolific users of porn. And this can lead to a sense of “normalcy” around its use. This time in life is often associated with conflicts, anxiety, and change. Often adults feel the wounds of adolescence deep into adulthood, and unfortunately,

sinful habits don’t end with high school graduation.

Porn can become the “drug of choice” for some, providing distraction and release from difficult times or memories. While pain and past wounds are not the only reasons men use porn, porn addiction is often rooted in its use as a coping mechanism.

Blaming others and avoiding responsibility for porn use or sex addiction will not help someone get well, but the person should acknowledge the wounds they suffered and seek to address them. Rather than burying painful memories, these memories need to be brought to the surface where they can be discussed and reviewed with a good friend or a counselor.

Paths to overcoming wounds and pornography use can’t be covered within a few paragraphs here. But self-discovery, biblical study, prayer, and counseling to overcome scars are a vital part of the recovery process. Learn more about addressing the issues of pornography at www.covenanteyes.com/ebooks, and subscribe to the Covenant Eyes blog to discover the latest in gospel-centered support for porn recovery. 📖

A speaker, writer, and partnerships manager for Covenant Eyes Internet Accountability & Filtering, Sam Black is the author of *The Porn Circuit*, *Understand Your Brain* and *Break Porn Habits in 90 Days*.

FROM THE PAGES OF LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

by Dr. Pete Alwinson

Relationship Restored

Going your own way, what the Bible calls “sin,” has radically distorted our nature and made it impossible for us to experience the fatherhood of God. But even as God was telling Adam and Eve about the destruction their sin caused, he held out the hope of a savior. There would be a son who would crush Satan (Genesis 3:15). A man would arrive on the scene who would do what Adam failed to do. His name is Jesus, and he is the perfect son. He always did his Father’s will. He always loved his heavenly Father and the people around him. God calls him his “beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

This perfect son would set in motion the Father’s plan to restore relationship with his children. Jesus’s perfect life and willing death on the cross for the sins of his people destroyed death forever. The resurrection—God’s amen to Jesus’s work on the cross—has begun a whole new era. Jesus accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection what we could never achieve: restoration of our relationship as sons with the Father. “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has

sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:4–7).

Like Father, Like Son

Your adoption as sons is by grace, freely available to all who turn to Jesus and accept his sacrifice by faith. No performance on your part, no great success, no failure, no damning words from other people, can ever change who you are: a son. In Christ your identity as a son of the living God is restored. Your core identity—that which will never change throughout every phase and season of life—is that you are a special creation of God, an image-bearer, and a son of God.

Because of Jesus all that was twisted and broken in the fall is being restored and redeemed. Your relationship with your heavenly Father is restored when you go to Jesus and ask for forgiveness for your many sins. In him, your relationship with your heavenly Father is remade. In Christ, the Father’s words to Jesus also become his blessing on your life, “You are my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.”

Your adoption as sons is by grace, freely available to all who turn to Jesus and accept his sacrifice by faith. No performance on your part, no great success, no

failure, no damning words from other people, can ever change who you are: a son. In Christ your identity as a son of the living God is restored. Your core identity—that which will never change throughout every phase and season of life—is that you are a special creation of God, an image-bearer, and a son of God.

Because of Jesus all that was twisted and broken in the fall is being restored and redeemed. Your relationship with your heavenly Father is restored when you go to Jesus and ask for forgiveness for your many sins. In him, your relationship with your heavenly Father is remade. In Christ, the Father’s words to Jesus also become his blessing on your life, “You are my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.”

Your High Status and Worth

The creation account clearly displays that, as God’s image-bearer, you have an incredibly high status. The story of redemption shows that you are a wanted son. Like Father, like son. There is a principle of life at work here: the higher status the father and family, the higher status his children. Since there is no one higher in status than God, his offspring bear high status and worth. A man gains his worth not by what he accomplishes or how he fails. His worth is directly tied to origins.

The Irreplaceable Father

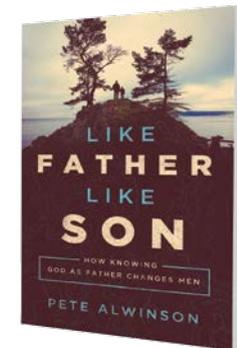
Did your own father give you the impression you were not wanted? When you don’t believe your own father wanted you,

it’s easy to spend your life trying to prove to yourself and others that you are worthy. But you don’t have to do that anymore. Jesus’s death for us proves that we are loved and wanted sons.



As you learn to live out of your identity as son, instead of repeating the mistakes of the past, you will learn to live a whole new life as a son of your perfect heavenly Father. When the Father gave us life in Christ, he restored our worth and status. Knowing who you are in Christ will change your life. 

Like Father Like Son is published by New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC 27404. Copyright © 2015 by Key Life



■ PETE ALWINSON



Pete founded and led Willow Creek Presbyterian Church, Winter Springs, Florida, for 27 years, and now serves as Vice President of Leadership and Men’s Discipleship at Key Life Network and serves on the board of directors for Man in the Mirror. For information about Pete’s ministry, go to www.freedomsedge.org.

C is for Community

Scriptural engagement and biblical community are two crucial aspects of the Christian life. Hurting men may have never experienced biblical community, and may be primed and ready for such an authentic, transparent environment that provides a safe haven for their hurting soul.

As mentioned above, don't allow a man to isolate himself. Instead, continually invite him to join into community with other men and couples in the church. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reminds us, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

H is for Hope

A hurting man may lose his health, his job, his family. But the most devastating loss of all is the loss of hope. Discouragement leads to despair, and despair to despondency. Men who are left alone to fester in their misery can give in to hopelessness. In severe situations, sometimes suicide becomes appealing.

Paul reminds us in Romans 15:13 that we believe in a "God of hope" who can "fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

We must remember that the battle we fight is a spiritual one. Satan is a thief, Jesus said. He seeks to steal, kill and destroy. He is a wolf who snatches and scatters the sheep (see John 10:11,12) When you step into the life of a hurting man, you are doing battle with him against evil.

Don't retreat from the battle. The life of a hurting man can be lonely, difficult, depressing, frustrating and chaotic. As Christians, we are called to step into that



mess and shine the light of the Gospel. Engage with hurting men. Draw them into relationship and community. Pray with them and for them. Challenge them to trust God. Help them find hope through their faith in the power of God. Remind them that God will meet them even as a "Broken Mirror." **MAM**



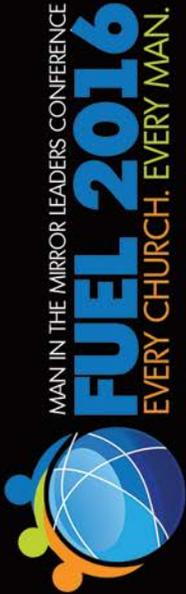
■ JEFF KISIAH

Jeff Kisiah is the National Field Director for Man in the Mirror. He's a former Associate Pastor and a relentless warrior in the battle for men's souls. He and his wife, Candie, live in Charlotte, NC.



EVERY CHURCH. EVERY MAN.

Join us February 25-27, 2016 at the
DoubleTree Orlando at Seaworld!
Registration opens October 1 at
LeadersConference.org.





man in the mirror

180 Wilshire Boulevard
Casselberry, FL 32707

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Tampa, FL
Permit No. 995

2016 GOALS

1. Spend more time with God
2. Read God's Word
3. Start a small group



Get started on your goals! Order a free 6-month subscription today! In *Equipping the Man in the Mirror* magazine you'll find: Daily Devotionals, a Bible Reading plan, Inspiring Articles, Small Groups discussion questions and more!



EquippingTheManInTheMirror.org