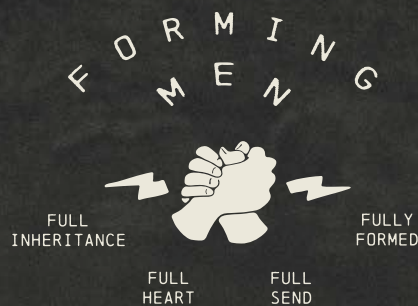


FORMING
MEN

MAN YEAR PLAYBOOK

> Emotional Module Workbook:
MONTH THREE



MAN
YEAR

Forming Men

// Man Year Playbook

"Cover"

LETTER FROM JEFF & JON

Brother,

We hope that the first eight weeks of this module have been deeply helpful in your own emotional processing in a way that will unlock even more for you and those you love.

This month, you will undertake a deeply personal and emotional project: writing your Legacy Letter. This is a two-page heartfelt letter to your wife and kids (or close friend or parent if you are single), written as if you were to pass away tomorrow. Over the next four weeks (Weeks 9-12), you'll reflect on your life, values, and relationships, put your feelings into words, refine your message, and finally share this letter in a meaningful way.

Each week's section includes an opening essay to guide your reflections, a scripture for spiritual grounding, discussion questions for your group, and a weekly report for personal accountability. However, for this month, the main aspect of the playbook will be journaling exercises to help you write your legacy letter at the end.

Each week follows a structured process:

- > **Week 9:** Beginning the Letter - Defining your identity, values, and legacy.
- > **Week 10:** Writing with Emotion & Clarity - Crafting your first draft.
- > **Week 11:** Revising & Refining - Strengthening the message.
- > **Week 12:** The Ceremony - Sharing your letter in a meaningful way.

We have a feeling that engaging in this month's homework to the fullest will be one of the most impactful exercises of your life. It will guide you through deep reflection, honest writing, and revision, culminating in a powerful family or group ceremony where you share your letter.

Let's finish strong, gentlemen!

JEFF & JON

FORMING MEN

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--- WEEK NINE ---
BEGINNING THE LETTER

Contemplating your own legacy can feel daunting, but it starts with understanding who you are (your identity) and what matters most to you (your values). This week, imagine that you only had one more day on earth. That's it. It would be your last 24 hours. Let that sink in.

What would you want your wife and children to know? What final messages would you leave with them about your love, hopes, and lessons learned? A "legacy letter" is not about material inheritance or legal instructions; it's a heartfelt expression of your values, life lessons, love, and blessings for your family.

In other words, it's a chance to say what truly needs to be said to your loved ones, in case you don't have the chance tomorrow. Not just what you want to leave them, but what you hope for *them*.

Beginning this letter is an exercise in self-reflection. And so that's what we will spend the next week or two on, before we take an official 'crack' at the first draft of a letter. Take time to think about the roles you fulfill - as a man of God, a husband, a father, a friend. How would you describe yourself in these roles? What core values guide your life (for example: faith, integrity, generosity, perseverance)? Consider how those who know you best might describe your character and impact. This isn't about vanity or criticism; it's about identifying the principles you live by and the legacy you want to leave behind in your family's hearts.

As you start drafting, focus on what you most want to communicate to your wife and kids. This likely includes affirming your love for them, sharing important values or wisdom, reflecting on cherished memories, and offering encouragement for their future. It may also include acknowledging regrets or asking forgiveness for any ways you feel you've fallen short - being honest and vulnerable is hard, but it's an act of love that can bring healing. Remember that your legacy isn't just in big accomplishments; in fact it's usually not about accomplishments at all! It's

largely in the relationships you built. *What do you hope your children will remember about you? What do you hope for them as they go out into the world without you here? If you could leave them with 5 lessons to guide them, what would those be? How do you want your wife to feel when she thinks of your life together?* The goal this week is simply to begin processing through the questions below from a place of authenticity.

**“Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom”**
(Psalm 90:12)

This scripture, a prayer of Moses, reminds us how short and precious life is. When we **“number our days”** we recognize that tomorrow isn’t guaranteed, which helps us focus on what truly matters. Writing a legacy letter is an opportunity to apply this wisdom. By imagining the end of your life now, you gain clarity on the important truths and values you want to pass on. Let Psalm 90:12 guide you this week as you reflect on your life: ask God for a heart of wisdom to know what to write. Embrace the humility that comes from knowing our time is limited, and use it to fuel honest, loving words to your family. The brevity of life, rather than leading to fear, can inspire you to **speak life into your loved ones** through this letter.

Take a moment to meditate on this verse. In prayer, acknowledge to God that your days are in His hands. Thank Him for the gift of your wife and children. Ask Him to help you write words that will bless and guide them. Scripture often shows godly people giving final blessings or instructions to their children – think of Jacob gathering his sons, or King David charging Solomon at the end of his life. In the same way, **God can use your letter as a vessel of wisdom and love** from your heart to your family’s. Trust that He will lead you as you begin.

HOMEWORK FOR THIS WEEK

Grab your journal and start exploring the foundations of your legacy letter with these prompts:

As you journal, don't censor yourself. You might write things here that never directly go into the letter, and that's okay. The goal is to draw out the important themes of your life and feelings. Give yourself permission to be completely honest in these exercises. If painful or emotional memories surface, note them - they might indicate areas where healing words (like an apology or reassurance) are needed in your letter. Above all, keep in mind the image of your family reading this letter - let that inspire you to dig deep and share what truly matters.

Identity Check: Make a list of the key roles and identities you hold (e.g., Christian, husband, father, son, friend, mentor). Write a few sentences about what each role means to you. How has each role shaped who you are? This will help you center on who is writing the letter and why that's important.

Core Values: Write down 5-10 values or principles that are most important in your life (such as faith in God, honesty, hard work, compassion, etc.). For each, jot a quick note on why it's important and how you try to live it out. These values are part of the legacy you want to leave.

Life Highlights & Impact: Reflect on a few key moments in your life that had a big impact on you (for example, your wedding day, the birth of your children, a spiritual turning point, or overcoming a hardship). How did these shape your character and outlook? Who was involved? This can remind you of stories or lessons you may want to mention in your letter.

Gratitude List: List the things you are most grateful for about your wife and each of your children. Think in terms of their character, specific actions they've done, or simply the joy they bring you. This gratitude will be a cornerstone of your letter's message.

Define "Legacy": In your own words, describe what "legacy" means to you. Is it about faith, love, character, memories, all of the above? Write a short paragraph starting with "I want my legacy to be...". Don't worry about making it perfect - just get your honest thoughts on paper. This statement can guide what you decide to include in your letter.

What would your wife and kids miss about you if you died today?

> Write down 5-10 specific things about your personality, habits, or quirks they would genuinely miss (e.g., Dad always made pancakes on Saturdays, Dad's laugh was the loudest in the room, Dad tucked us in every night).

> Now, write a few things that they might not miss (e.g., Dad was always distracted by work emails, Dad lost his temper a lot). Be honest.

What are the three 'snapshot moments' your children will most remember?

> When they think of you, what will flash into their minds first?

> Examples: Dad wrestling with us in the living room, Dad always on the phone and irritated, Dad singing in the car, Dad napping with us on the couch.

> If your snapshots aren't what you want them to be, how can you change the picture you leave behind?

If your wife and kids, or loved one, wrote your eulogy today, what would it say? How does that compare to what you wish it would say?

Group Discussion Questions

When you meet with your group this week, use these questions to spark open conversation:

> **Envisioning Legacy:** If you were to pass away tomorrow, what's one thing you absolutely want your wife and kids to know or remember? (In other words, what message is at the top of your heart right now?)

> **Core Values:** Share two values or life lessons you identified that you want to pass on. Why are these so important to you, and how do you live them out?

> **Emotional Reaction:** How did it feel to begin thinking about your own legacy and mortality? Was it uncomfortable, motivating, bittersweet? Explain what emotions came up as you started journaling or writing.

> **Legacy Fears:** What worries or challenges do you have about writing this legacy letter? (For example: "I'm not sure how to express myself," or "I worry I'll get too emotional," or "I fear I might be misunderstood.") Discuss these concerns with the group - others may share similar feelings, and you can encourage each other.

> **Impact on Present:** Has reflecting on what you'd say at the end of your life changed how you view your life right now? Are there any actions you feel prompted to take sooner rather than later (such as saying "I love you" more often, resolving a conflict, spending more quality time)? Share any immediate insights or changes in perspective you've experienced this week.

These discussions can help normalize the process - it's not every day that men write letters contemplating their death. By sharing, you'll likely find common themes and mutual support. Listen carefully to each other. You might even get ideas from hearing what others want to include. Pray for one another that God would give clarity and courage as you move forward with writing.

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--- WEEK TEN ---
2 DIFFERENT FUTURES

Now that you've explored your identity, values, and legacy in Week 9, it's time to take the next step: beginning to visualize the end of your life. Remember, these are the exercises that will help you as you draft your first draft of your letter this week also. It's about capturing what truly matters. This is your chance to say everything you need to say while you are still here. (Note: this week has a lot of personal writing so make sure to set aside time to honor this process, or break it up into a few moments this week for you).

But first, this week, we want you to first do an enormously powerful exercise called the "Newspaper Obituary Exercise" by confronting two versions of your life story:

1. **The "Satan Wins" story** – what your life would look like if you gave in to your worst tendencies and weaknesses.
2. **The "Jesus Wins" story** – how your life could unfold if you fully embraced your God-given calling and lived with purpose.

Both perspectives will **sharpen your awareness** of the stakes at hand and challenge you to write with greater intentionality.

THE NEWSPAPER OBITUARY EXERCISE

Imagine a newspaper writing your obituary—twice.

Version 1: “Satan Wins” Obituary

This version explores the worst-case scenario. If Satan were to exploit your weaknesses, how might your story end? What sins, temptations, or character flaws could derail you?

Consider the potential fallout:

- > **If your struggle is anger**, does it lead to a fractured family and deep regrets?
- > **If your struggle is passivity**, do your children grow up feeling unseen by you?
- > **If your struggle is lust**, does it destroy your marriage and leave you isolated?

Example: “Satan Wins” Obituary

“John Anderson, 58, passed away in the silence of an empty house, a man who once had so much promise but ultimately lost what mattered most. He was a man of ambition, always striving for more—more success, more recognition, more control over the unpredictable nature of life. Yet, in his relentless pursuit of achievement, the people who loved him the most became casualties of his neglect. His wife of 30 years, who had once admired his drive, had left a decade earlier, weary of the emotional absence and the countless nights spent waiting for a husband who was always too busy. His children, now grown, had stopped reaching out long ago, knowing the father they once adored had become a distant, critical figure who never seemed satisfied with their choices, never had time for their milestones, and never truly saw them for who they were.

“He always had potential,” said an old friend at the sparsely attended memorial. “But potential means nothing when you let pride, busyness, and distraction consume you.”

John’s legacy in the business world was undeniable—he built an empire, made millions, and was known as a relentless competitor. Yet, as the years went on, the cost of that success became painfully clear. The long hours, the

missed birthdays, the family vacations that never happened—each one a thread pulled from the fabric of his relationships. His children had once clung to his every word, eager for his approval, but as they grew, they learned his affection came with conditions: performance, perfection, and an unwavering dedication to the same work that had stolen him away from them.

His temper, once a tool he used to demand excellence in the boardroom, became a weapon that alienated those who once stood by him. His employees feared him. His friends gradually disappeared, tired of the one-sided conversations and the way John dismissed their concerns about his health and well-being. Even his church community, where he had once been a respected leader, rarely saw him in the later years of his life. He had no time for small groups or deep relationships—his prayers had become mechanical, his faith a shadow of what it once was.

In his final years, John found himself living in a mansion too large for one man, surrounded by the trappings of a life he had worked so hard to build but utterly alone. His phone rarely rang, except for business calls, which became fewer and fewer as younger, more innovative competitors took his place. The family dog, a remnant of a time when his house was filled with laughter, lay at his feet as he scrolled through social media, seeing glimpses of a life he had missed—his daughter's wedding, his grandson's first steps, his son's hard-earned promotion—moments he should have been there for but had instead read about as an outsider.

When he died, it took days before anyone found him. His funeral was a formal, uninspired affair, attended by colleagues who spoke of his tenacity and drive but had little to say about the man himself. His ex-wife didn't attend. His children sat in the back, their faces unreadable, unsure of how to grieve a father they barely knew.

The preacher, grasping for words, offered a hollow comfort: "John Anderson was a man of great ambition. He gave everything to his work." But deep down, everyone in the room knew—he had not given everything. He had withheld his greatest gift: **himself**.

In the end, John's legacy was not found in the wealth he accumulated or the empire he built, but in the hearts he failed to nurture. The mansion stood, the company bore his name, but his true inheritance—the love, respect, and closeness of his family—had long since vanished. **He had traded eternal treasures for temporary gains, and when all was said and done, he left behind a fortune but not a single soul who truly mourned his absence.**

Please write your own version below.

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Version 2: "Jesus Wins" Obituary

Now, write the **best-case scenario**. If you fully lived out your **God-given purpose**, what would your obituary say? What **gifts, values, and impact** would define your legacy?

Consider the beauty of a well-lived life:

- > **If you leaned into faith**, how might your family's spiritual life be shaped?
- > **If you were more intentional in your marriage**, what words would your wife say about you?
- > **If you showed up daily for your children**, how would they describe your influence?

Example: "Jesus Wins" Obituary

"John Anderson, 58, passed away peacefully, surrounded by the family who adored him and the community that respected him. Though his years on this earth were shorter than anyone had hoped, his impact stretched far beyond his time. He was a man of deep integrity, unwavering faith, and relentless love for the people in his life. His home, always full of warmth, laughter, and the smell of his wife's home-cooked meals, was a refuge for all who entered. His children, now grown, knew without a doubt that their father had been their greatest supporter, their truest mentor, and the man whose words would continue to guide them long after he was gone.

"John was a man who truly saw people," his wife said through tears at his memorial service, "especially his family. No matter how busy life got, no matter what stress he carried, he always had time for us. He made sure we knew, every single day, that we were his greatest joy."

*John built a successful business—not just in financial terms, but in **eternal investments**. He led with humility, treating every employee with dignity, mentoring young leaders, and making decisions that honored God rather than just the bottom line. He didn't cut corners. He didn't compromise his values. He refused to let his identity be defined by his career alone. His real legacy was the people he built up, the men he disciplined, and the family he led with gentleness and strength.*

At home, John was a pillar of consistency. His children knew they could come to him with anything—there was no fear of disappointment, no crushing weight of

unrealistic expectations, only love and wisdom. He listened more than he spoke. He disciplined with patience. He prayed over them every night, often with his hands on their shoulders, asking God to bless them, to guide them, to protect them.

One of his sons shared a story at the funeral: “Dad wasn’t perfect, but he was always real. I remember when I messed up big in high school—I thought he’d be furious. Instead, he sat with me, asked me what I’d learned, and then said, ‘Son, I love you no matter what. Nothing will ever change that.’ That moment shaped me more than any lesson or lecture could.”

John was a husband who **cherished his wife**. After 35 years of marriage, they still held hands, still stole quiet moments together, still danced in the kitchen when no one was watching. She described him as “a man who loved like Christ—sacrificially, intentionally, and without reservation.” When she fell sick for a time, John was by her side, caring for her without hesitation, just as he had promised in their vows.

In his final years, John poured himself even more into relationships, knowing that **time was his most valuable currency**. He prioritized presence over productivity, faith over fortune, and love over legacy—building in the worldly sense. He was the father who always made it to the game, the husband who put his phone down to truly listen, the friend who showed up when life got hard.

When the end came, he faced it without fear. He had lived well, loved deeply, and trusted fully in the Savior who had redeemed him. His final words to his family were simple but profound: “Keep your eyes on Jesus. Love one another. And never forget—you were my greatest treasure.”

His funeral was not a somber occasion, but a **celebration**. The room was packed—not just with family, but with people whose lives he had touched. Young men he had mentored spoke of how his words shaped their future. Employees shared how his kindness had transformed their careers. Friends recounted the way he always made them feel **seen and valued**.

The preacher, standing before a sea of grateful faces, summed up John’s life with a verse he had often spoken himself:

“Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:23)

John Anderson didn’t leave behind a **fortune** — he left behind **a family that adored him, a legacy of faith that would continue for generations, and a testimony of a life well lived in pursuit of Christ**.

And as those who loved him gathered to say goodbye, there was one thing they all knew for certain — **John Anderson had won**. Not by the world’s standards, but by the only standard that mattered. Jesus had won in his life, and now, he was home.

Please write your own version below.

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HOMEWORK FOR THIS WEEK

Now that you’ve envisioned these two versions of your life, reflect on the following:

Which version of your obituary is closer to reality today?

What weaknesses threaten your legacy? Where could Satan take you out?

What strengths can God use to build your legacy?
Where is Jesus calling you to grow?

What do you most want your wife and kids to remember about you?

What unspoken words do you need to say to them?

Once you have reflected, it's time to begin writing your **first draft of your Legacy Letter.**

WRITING YOUR LEGACY LETTER (FIRST DRAFT)

Use this simple structure to guide your first draft:

1. Opening: Express Your Love & Gratitude

- > Start with a heartfelt greeting (e.g., "To the best wife, and the most amazing children ever...").
- > Thank them for the joy, lessons, and love they have given you.
- > Example: "I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the life we have shared. You are my greatest blessing."

2. Affirm Their Worth & Speak Life Over Them

- > Write specific affirmations about your wife and each child.
- > Example: "To my son, I see so much strength in you. You are a leader, a protector, and a man of integrity."

3. Share Life Lessons & Core Values

- > Pass on wisdom about faith, marriage, perseverance, or fatherhood. This is the fun part - it can be anything you feel worthy of passing on or wanting to mention!
- > Example: "Always put God first. The world will try to pull you away, but hold fast—He is your anchor—in-temptation, trials, and even abundance."

4. Offer Encouragement for the Future

- > Speak vision and confidence over their lives.
- > Example: "I know you will do great things, not because of what you achieve, but because of who you are. I see you being resolute in your faith in Jesus even when moments will come that your friends won't stand with you."

5. Close with a Blessing

- > End with a final word of love and reassurance.
- > Example: "Know that I will always be with you, cheering you on from heaven. I love you forever."

Scripture Reflection

> **1 Thessalonians 5:11** - *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."*

> **Proverbs 18:21** - *"The tongue has the power of life and death."*

Group Discussion Questions

> What did your 'Satan Wins' obituary reveal about your vulnerabilities?

> How do you ensure the 'Jesus Wins' obituary becomes your true story?

> What was the hardest part of beginning your Legacy Letter?

> What message or blessing do you most want to leave behind?

WEEKLY REPORT

Week 10

Write 1-2 paragraph length reflections and reports based on how this week went in terms of your Man Year journey. Take a picture or send this document directly to your core brothers.

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--- WEEK ELEVEN ---
REVISING & REFINING & FEEDBACK FROM GROUP

With a complete draft in hand, Week 11 is all about turning that rough draft into a polished gem, and mainly getting feedback from your brothers. One thing I've noticed in my life is if I'm doing a shared exercise with other men, hearing their versions and iterations give me massive inspiration for what else I want to include or change in mine. Revising and refining might not have the emotional glamour of writing the first draft, but it is **essential to ensure your letter truly reflects your heart and faith** (there's a good chance, especially if your kids are a little bit younger, the power of the letter won't really 'hit' them and their response to you might be underwhelming, but having a really well crafted and edited beautiful letter is something they can find in a drawer or pull out to read 5, 10, 15 years from now that can deeply impact them). This week, you'll re-read, edit, and possibly rearrange your letter so that it's clear, impactful, and exactly what you want to say. Think of this process as **strengthening the message** - you're making sure nothing gets lost or muddled, and that every word serves a purpose.

Begin by reading your entire letter draft from start to finish, preferably out loud. Hearing it spoken can reveal where the phrasing might be awkward, where you might have repeated yourself, or where the emotional tone shifts in unintended ways. Pay attention to your emotional reactions as you read it. Do you feel a swell of love and peace? Or is there a part that makes you cringe or second-guess? Trust those instincts - they point to what might need refinement.

Clarity is a top priority in revision. Ask yourself: *Will my wife and kids understand what I mean here?* Remove any ambiguous language and replace it with plain, specific wording. For example, if you wrote, "I wasn't always there for you," consider clarifying: "I'm sorry for the nights I stayed late at work instead of being home for dinner - I know I missed precious time with you." Specificity makes your apology more powerful and your meaning clearer. If you find any section of the letter is *too wordy or repetitive*, streamline it. You want your letter to be engaging and easy to read, not tiring or confusing. On the other hand, if something feels *too short or vague*, flesh it out a bit. For some of you men, this might be the first time you've been so specific and particular with your

praise and encouragement over your kids and spouse. Perhaps you realize you mentioned a value like faith but didn't elaborate - you could add a line or two about why that's important to you, and how and why Jesus has so deeply impacted you.

Tone is another focus. Read for the overall tone: does it sound loving, humble, and hopeful? Ensure that even the serious parts (like apologies or life advice) are wrapped in a tone of love and grace. Make sure any mention of regrets about your family (like "I wish we had spent more time together") doesn't come across as guilt-tripping them. Clarify that it's your regret, not their fault (e.g., "I regret not making more time..." instead of "I regret we didn't have more time..."). The last impression you want to leave is one of blame or sadness; you want the letter to ultimately feel like a **hug on paper**. Something they will hold onto for years.

As you refine, **reflect your heart and faith clearly**. If your relationship with God is a cornerstone of your life (which, given this program, it likely is and we hope so!), ensure that shines through appropriately in your letter. You might have already included a favorite scripture or a mention of God's role in your life. In revision, double-check: *Is my faith communicated in a way my family will grasp?* For example, if your kids are young, maybe writing "I pray for you every day" is clear and powerful. If your spouse shares your faith, you might add something like "I thank God for the gift that you are to me." If some family members are not strong in faith, you can still gently express how your faith motivates your love for them ("I love you so much, and that's just a small reflection of how God loves you."). You know your family best - adjust the spiritual content to be authentic to you but considerate of where they are.

Also, consider **structural flow**: does the letter progress in a sensible way? There's no right or wrong, just what feels most natural. A common flow is: opening, gratitude/affirmation, apologies (if you feel the need), lessons/blessings, encouragement/closing. But if your letter took a different order, that's fine too. Just ensure each transition isn't jarring. Add a connecting sentence if needed, like "Looking back, I realize...", "On that note, I want to say sorry for...", or "Above all, I want you to remember..." to smoothly guide the reader through your thoughts.

The main purpose of this week though, is to get **feedback from your brothers**. We suggest that the primary gathering time this week with the men you are in cohort with, is spent reading the letters out loud to each other. Is this vulnerable? Massively so. Will it be powerful, bonding, and also helpful for feedback? Absolutely.

During this week, be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance. Pray as you edit: *"Lord, is there anything I've left unsaid that I should include? Is there anything I wrote that I should remove or change?"* Listen in prayer and read scripture for inspiration. You might be prompted to add a story or a line of praise you hadn't before. Or you might feel a conviction to ensure a certain apology is very clear. Trust God in this. Remember how Scripture emphasizes passing on our faith and memories to our children: *"We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done."*

Finally, **begin to think of the finished printed paper or product that we will help you with next week on how to deliver.** You could also decide if you want to add any embellishments in the final copy, like a family photo attached or awesome regal fancy letterhead and stationery that maybe you plan to frame for them after you read it to them! These touches are optional, but thinking about them now helps you be ready for next week's presentation.

As you refine your letter, reflect on **Psalms 78:4**: *"We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the **LORD**, His power, and the wonders He has done."*

Additionally, consider **Proverbs 10:7**, which says, *"The memory of the righteous is a blessing..."*. Your letter will become part of your and their memory - a blessing that lives on in your family. By revising it carefully now, you are effectively ensuring that *"the memory"* you leave through this letter is indeed a blessing - one that points them to God's love and to the principles of a righteous life.

Group Discussion Questions

In your group meeting for Week 11, you'll be sharing about the revision process. By now, everyone has a draft and is working on refining it. This is a great time to encourage each other to finish strong. Consider discussing the following:

> What Did You Change or What Do You Want To Change After Hearing Other Guys Letters? Share one significant change or addition you made to your letter during revision or after you hear others. Why did you decide to make that change? (For example: "I realized I hadn't explicitly told my son I was proud of him, so I added that in," or "I removed a section that felt more like advice than encouragement because I want the tone to stay uplifting.")

> Reflection on Journey: Take a step back and reflect: How has the process of writing and editing this legacy letter impacted you so far? Share with the group any personal growth or changes in perspective you've noticed. Maybe you've been more present with your kids lately, or you've found a sense of peace about the idea of death, or you reconciled a relationship because writing about it moved you to act. This is a powerful testimony time.

> Preparing to Share: Looking ahead to next week's ceremony, how are you feeling about actually giving this letter to your family? Are you nervous, excited, relieved? Talk about any anxieties or anticipations you have (we will help you in next week's module for tips and different ways to deliver the letter). If someone feels very anxious, the group can and should pray for him. If someone is eager, he might share his plan and inspire others. Use this time to build each other up and remind one another why this will be worth it.

By now, trust in the group is likely strong, so these discussions can be very heartfelt. Pray together, specifically mentioning any remaining fears about sharing the letter. Ask God to bless the final edits and to prepare each family member who will receive the letters. There is power in unified prayer as you approach the culmination of this module.

WEEKLY REPORT

Week 11

Write 1-2 paragraph length reflections and reports based on how this week went in terms of your Man Year journey. Take a picture or send this document directly to your core brothers.

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--- WEEK TWELVE ---
THE CEREMONY

This is it - the week you've been working toward. In Week 12, you will **present your legacy letter** to your wife and kids, or friend or loved one, in a special "ceremony." The term *ceremony* might sound formal, but it doesn't have to be stiff or elaborate; it simply means a deliberate, meaningful moment set aside for this purpose. The main thing is the ceremony or moment should feel like YOU and your family. Are you funny and rambunctious? Make it like that. Are you poetic and thoughtful? Make it feel like that. Do you throw a good party? Bust open some Martinelli's, stand on your dinner table in a funny tuxedo, and read it out loud. Basically make sure to do something that matches you and your family's culture! Think of it as creating a memory that will last a lifetime. You've poured your heart into this letter - now you have the privilege of delivering it in person, seeing and embracing your loved ones as they receive your words. This can be one of the most powerful emotional moments your family ever shares.

First, let's acknowledge the significance: **very few people take the step to openly communicate their love, faith, and feelings this thoughtfully and in this way while they're still alive and well.** Often, such heartfelt messages are only heard in eulogies or letters read after someone is gone. But you are choosing to bless your family now, when they can hug you back, ask you questions, and cherish your presence alongside your words. It's a beautiful act of love and humility. It might feel a little awkward or nerve-wracking to orchestrate a special moment like this, but remember why you're doing it - so that, whether your time is short or long, nothing important is left unsaid and your family's "hearts" are closely connected with yours.

There are **multiple ways to share** your letter, and you should choose the approach that best fits your family's dynamics and your comfort level. Here are a few options to consider (you may have already decided in last week's plan, but if not, think these over):

> **Private One-on-One:** You could read and present the letter individually to each member - for example, take your wife on a walk or a quiet dinner, give her the letter (or read it to her) in a private setting, then do the same separately with your children one by one. This approach allows for intimate, focused conversations with each person. It might be especially appropriate if you address very personal sections to each (though your letter is a single letter, you can still share it part by part).

- > **Family Gathering at Home:** Many will opt for gathering the whole immediate family together at home. Let the family know you want to do something fun and meaningful that Thursday around dinner time for example. Perhaps after a nice family meal or during a scheduled family time, you can say that you have something special to share. You might choose to read the letter out loud to everyone at once. Reading it yourself can be very impactful - your voice carries emotion that the written words alone might not. Yes, it may be hard to get through without choking up, but that's okay. In fact, seeing your emotion can show your family just how deeply this matters. After reading, you can hand the physical letter to your wife or kids so they can re-read it later on their own. (print a few copies and maybe put them in envelopes and say, 'this is for you to store somewhere in your room. Dad loves you!')
- > **Symbolic Ceremony or Gift:** If you like symbolism or tradition, you could tie the letter presentation to a symbolic act. For example, put the letter in a nice envelope or box and **present it as a gift**. Some fathers have paired the legacy letter with a meaningful object - a family Bible with highlighted verses, a piece of jewelry or watch to pass down, or a photo album - something tangible that represents legacy. You might say, "I've written you all a letter, and I want to give it to you along with this [item] that means a lot to me, as a symbol of everything I've tried to pass on." The item isn't necessary, but for some it adds weight to the moment.

No matter which format you choose, set the atmosphere for comfort and significance. Pick a time when there are no pressing distractions or time constraints. Turn off phones or put them aside. You might preface the moment with a short explanation in your own words: e.g., "As you know, I've been in this men's group working on becoming a better husband and father. One of our projects was to write a 'legacy letter' - basically a letter as if I were saying my final words to you. I want to share that with you now, not because I'm going anywhere, but because I love you and don't want to wait to tell you these things." Tailor it to your situation, but giving context will help your family understand why you're doing this and not be alarmed (make it clear you're not ill or dying if that's the case!).

PLEASE NOTE: Make sure you are not doing this activity for the immediate reaction of your kids or spouse. You are simply doing it to bless them, and express your love for them. There is a very good chance their reaction might not meet your expectations, or they might need time to process, or God had you write this letter so they can find it 10 years from now when they are having a hard night away and alone at college, etc. Surrender the reaction and expectations to God. There will be fruit.

After the letter is read and given, **open the floor for response**, but gently. Your wife and kids may be moved and want to respond with their own words - or they might be quiet, processing it internally. Both reactions are normal. You can say something like, "I'm happy to talk about anything I wrote or answer any questions you have. But you don't have to say anything right now; I mostly just wanted you to have this letter." This lets them know the conversation is open but doesn't pressure them. Some might immediately hug you and say thank you, or even apologize back for something you mentioned - beautiful moments of reconciliation can happen here. Others might simply nod and need time to read it again later alone. Allow each person to react in their own way.

One encouragement: **make it a dialogue if possible**. While keeping expectations modest (as mentioned above), be prepared to listen if your wife or children start sharing their feelings. Perhaps your letter sparks a story from your wife's perspective, or your child wants to reassure you of their love too. These can become treasured conversations. If an older child or spouse ends up sharing their thoughts about you or even verbally expressing their love and gratitude, receive it - that's a bonus gift for you. (One also possible way you could lead the moment if it goes here naturally, is getting them to think about the end of their own life. What will you regret? Who will you miss the most? What do you hope is true of your life then?)

Remember Malachi's prophetic words that "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers"

In many ways, that is what this ceremony is all about - a turning of hearts toward each other. By humbly speaking your heart, you invite a deeper heart connection with your family. God can use this moment to fulfill that promise of restored and strengthened family bonds. **Reconciliation and healing** can happen if needed. Even if your relationship with your family was already good, it can reach new depths after this.

As you conclude the ceremony, consider marking it with a prayer or a blessing. You could pray over your family, or perhaps read a favorite scripture as a blessing (like the classic Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26, "The Lord bless you and keep you..."). If you presented a symbolic item, explain its significance. You might say, "Whenever you look at this Bible/watch/necklace, remember the words I shared with you today and know how much I love you."

Finally, when all is said and done, **do something normal and comforting**. Maybe share a dessert, or have a family group hug, or watch a favorite movie together that evening - something to gently transition. Life will go on, but you've created a milestone that will last. Encourage your family to keep the letter someplace safe. You too should keep a copy for yourself - you might even revisit it over the years and update it as needed (a legacy letter can be revisited as life goes on; it's not necessarily one-and-done, though this original one will always be special).

In the days following, be open to continued conversations. One of your kids might come to you later with "I've been thinking about what you wrote..." - make time for that. Your wife might write you a letter back or just be more communicative; receive that openly. The ceremony is a spark for **lasting connection**. Also, give yourself a moment to reflect and decompress - you've accomplished something truly meaningful.

HOMEWORK FOR THIS WEEK

Even though the main writing is done, journaling in Week 12 can help you prepare for the ceremony and reflect afterward. Use these prompts as you head into the final presentation:

Final Preparation Checklist: Brainstorm how you want to deliver your letter. What would create the best atmosphere and moment for your family? Something funny, something serious, something together, something separate, etc. Include things like: "Print final copy of letter on nice paper" (or "Finish handwriting letter in card"), "order one of those funny Tuxedo t-shirts from Amazon", "Get that special gift/item ready" (if using one), etc.

Plan for Reactions: Consider each family member and jot down how you think they might react, and how you will respond. E.g., "My teenage son might act cool and not say much - and that's okay, I'll just give him a hug and not push him to talk." Or "My wife will likely cry; I will have my arm around her while I read." Planning in this way helps you be mentally prepared and sensitive to each person's way of handling emotion. Also, plan how you'll handle your own emotions.

Prayer of Surrender: In your journal, write out a prayer giving this ceremony to God. For example, "Father, I have done what You led me to do in writing this letter. I pray now for your blessing the moment I share it. Prepare the hearts of my wife and children to receive it with love. Give me the right words and the strength to get through the reading. Let Your presence fill the room and bind us together. I surrender my fears to You - let this be a moment that honors You and knits our family closer. Amen." Writing this prayer can deepen your trust that God is in control of how the letter will be received.

Post-Ceremony Reflection: After you have shared the letter (later that day or the next), journal about how it went. Describe the scene, how you felt, and each family member's reaction. What was the most meaningful moment for you? Did anything surprise you? Also note any significant things said by your wife or kids in response. This not only helps cement the memory for you, but it can also be shared with your group as a testimony. Additionally, reflect on what you learned through this entire experience of writing and sharing the legacy letter. Did it change something in you or in your family dynamic? Write about any changes or commitments you want to continue (e.g., "I want to continue writing a letter every year or on special occasions," or "We all agreed to have more regular family devotion times after this"). Capturing these thoughts ensures the legacy of the legacy letter continues.

Letters to Each Other (Optional): Here's an optional prompt - invite your family (in the days or weeks after) to write a short letter back to you or to each other. In your journal, you could draft a gentle invitation like, "If you ever want to write me a letter or even a note about your feelings or anything, I'd love that. What I did isn't just for dads - any time you write down your heart, it's powerful." You don't necessarily read this aloud, but you could bring it up in conversation. Journaling how to encourage this can help you follow through in nurturing ongoing open communication in your family.

These exercises ensure you are mentally, spiritually, and practically prepared for the ceremony. They also help you process the outcome afterwards, which is important. A lot of emotional energy goes into an event like this; reflecting through writing can help you make sense of it and thank God for what He's done.

Group Discussion Questions

In your final group meeting for this module (likely at the end of Week 12 or beginning of the next phase), you'll debrief the ceremonies. This is a celebratory and reflective discussion - a chance to share testimonies of how God worked through these legacy letters. Possible questions and prompts for the group:

> Sharing the Experience: How did your letter presentation ceremony go? Walk us through it - where were you, who was there, and how did it unfold? (Each man can take a few minutes to describe his scenario, e.g., "We sat around the dinner table on Sunday evening, and I read the letter aloud...")

> Family Reactions: What was the reaction of your wife and children? How did they respond in the moment, and were there any memorable things they said or did? (One might share, "My wife just held my hand and cried, saying it was the most beautiful gift she's ever received," another might say, "My usually stoic dad even teared up when I told him about it," or "My son gave me the tightest hug of my life.") Rejoice with each other in these stories.

> Impact on Relationships: Do you sense any change in your relationship with your family after doing this? Share any signs of strengthened connection, greater openness, or healing. For example, "My daughter and I talked for two hours afterwards - something we hadn't done in years," or "There's a new sense of peace in our home, like we all know we're on the same page of love and forgiveness now." These are powerful testimonies.

> Lessons Learned: Summarize the key lessons or takeaways you've gained from the Emotional Module and writing your legacy letter. This could be about the importance of emotional openness, or something about communication, or a spiritual lesson about trusting God with your family. Write something like, "Through this process, I learned that sharing my feelings isn't as scary as I thought, and it brings my family closer," or whatever resonates.

> **Personal Growth:** Ask each man to reflect: What did you learn about yourself through writing and delivering your legacy letter? How has God worked in your heart in this emotional module? Perhaps someone will say they learned to be vulnerable, or they realized the importance of expressing love regularly, or they experienced God's strength in their weakness. Acknowledge these growth points and give God credit.

> **Emotional Audit:** Do you think you've changed already or noticed changes in yourself since your loved ones filled out the emotional audit at the beginning of this module? How have you seen yourself grow directly related to something that was written in there?

> **Future Commitments:** Now that this letter is done and shared, how do you plan to continue building your legacy moving forward? This could include commitments like "I want to be more verbal about my love now, not just wait for special moments," or "We decided to start a new family tradition of open letters on birthdays," or simply "I'm going to keep praying for my family daily and maybe update the letter as years go by." Discussing this helps ensure the module's impact is lasting and not a one-time event.

This final discussion is often very uplifting. It might bring laughter (as some share funny details) and tears of joy (as others share touching moments). It's time to congratulate one another for having the courage to do this. If some outcome was not as expected (for instance, if someone's family reacted awkwardly or they haven't done it yet for some reason), the group can rally around that brother, encouraging him and brainstorming any needed next steps. There's no judgment - only support.

End the group meeting (and the module) with a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing. Perhaps each man could bring his letter (or a copy) and the group leader prays over all the letters and families represented. Thank God for the turned hearts and the legacy of love that has been documented and shared. Pray that these letters continue to speak for years to come and that the men remain committed to living out what they wrote.

Congratulations - you've completed the Emotional Module and created something of **eternal value** for your family. Your legacy letter is more than words on paper; it's a reflection of God's love working through you to touch your family. By following through each week from the initial reflections to the final ceremony, you've not only written a letter, you've likely started a ripple effect of closer relationships and open communication in your home.

As you finish this report and this module, take a moment to just sit in God's presence and feel His pleasure. You have acted as the spiritual leader of your family in a courageous way. The connections forged and the healing or encouragement given will echo into the future - possibly even for generations. If you can, keep these playbook materials (your essays, journal entries, etc.) in a binder or digital folder along with a copy of your letter. They tell a story of growth that you might want to revisit or even share with others on a similar journey someday.

Going forward, remember that the emotional work of a husband and father - the honest conversations, the heartfelt prayers, the loving letters - is never wasted. Continue to be "strong and courageous," as Joshua 1:9 says, in leading your family not just physically and spiritually, but emotionally as well. May the Lord continue to **turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and children to their fathers** in your household.

WEEKLY REPORT

Week 12

Write 1-2 paragraph length reflections and reports based on how this week went in terms of your Man Year journey. Take a picture or send this document directly to your core brothers.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.