

HOW TO BE A MAN CHALLENGE

ADULT LEADER/TEENAGE SMALL GROUP

INTRODUCTION

By downloading this document, you've taken the first step in an extremely important journey. You have committed to leading young men as you journey together toward a more Christ-like masculinity. This guide, an eight-week companion to the devotional books *How To Be A Man* and *How To Be A Man: Student Edition*, will provide you with the framework to have a meaningful time of small group Bible study that accompanies the content you're engaging with in your daily devotions. After eight weeks of reading the daily devotions in the books and meeting weekly to talk through this guide, our prayer is that you'll find a deeper relationship with the Lord, and with the guys in your small group.

Look on the next page to learn how the *How To Be A Man Challenge* works.



WHAT IS THE
HOW TO BE A MAN
CHALLENGE

The *How To Be A Man Challenge* is two-fold. First, we want to challenge you to make living a Christ-centered masculinity so important that you and your students would set aside time over the course of the next eight weeks to meet and discuss what God is doing in your lives. Second, in every session, there is a final activity called *The Challenge* that challenges you and the teenagers in your group to implement a specific task in your lives. This is what the challenge is all about.

HOW THE HOW TO BE A MAN CHALLENGE WORKS

This guide is designed to help you have a brief (30 minutes or so) time of discussion and Bible study centered on what you and your students have read the previous week in *How To Be A Man*. There are eight sessions in this guide, one for each section of the book. The idea is to read a particular section of devotions over the course of a week, then meet and go through that week's content in this guide. As such, you'll need A) to have read the previous week's devotions, B) to have your book, and C) to have access to a Bible, either a physical one or a Bible app.

THERE ARE THREE SECTIONS THAT MAKE UP EACH WEEKLY SESSION:

- **Looking Back** - A short time of reflection where you and your students collectively look back and make note of any content that was particularly meaningful
- **Digging In** - A time of Bible study where you lead students deeper into one of the passages you read during the week
- **The Challenge** - A closing activity where you and your students are challenged with a particular, practical way of living out a Christ-centered masculinity during the next week

ONE WORD BEFORE YOU GET STARTED . . .

The pace of our lives works against us being able to commit to anything for very long. Let us encourage you to fight for the next eight weeks. Commit to the guys in your group that you will do your absolute best to keep up with the daily readings. (This is one reason we only included five days per session. It allows you a day or two "grace" each week for those situations when life keeps you from being able to read your devotion for that day.) Ask them to do the same. More than anything, as a group, do everything in your collective power to honor the weekly time you've set aside for your small group. It's much harder to commit to this than it is to see it as something you may or may not get to. But here's a good truth to internalize: most worthwhile things don't come without some sacrifice. Make your small group gathering a priority and do your best to honor it.

Having said all this, we'd be foolish not to acknowledge that things come up. Stuff happens. Help students see that the worst thing you can do is to allow a few missed days or a missed weekly meeting to knock you out completely. If you or your students stumble in your commitment, get back up and try again. God will honor your efforts.

Now go to the next page to get started!

SESSION 1: IDENTITY

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 7-17 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

This section will be similar in each session. The idea is to spend a few minutes each meeting reviewing what the you've learned in the previous week. It's an unstructured time of review, growing out of your own respective interactions with the content in the daily devotions. Your goal for this time is to share your reflections, and engage in a dialogue with your students around any questions or thoughts that may arise.

Having said this, we've provided you with a set of questions. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with your group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't quite understand or maybe disagreed with?**
- **What did you encounter that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in *Identity*. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 3.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Matthew chapter 5. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **When Was It Written?** Probably in the late 50's or 60's AD, or roughly 30 years or so after Jesus' crucifixion.
- **Why Was It Written?** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

NEXT, read Matthew 5:13-16. Here Jesus is wrapping up what is known as the "beatitudes" and kicking off His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus makes some statements about salt and light that are really instructive for our discussion of our identity.

When Jesus says in verse 13 that we are the "salt of the earth," He most likely has a couple of main images in mind. While salt has quite a few qualities, the most common ones in Jesus' time would have been its use as a preservative and its use as seasoning in food. In a time before refrigerators, salt was used to keep food from spoiling. And just like today, salt was used to make food taste better. Think about that and discuss these questions:

- **Salt preserved food by preventing decay and rot. How are we like salt in this way? How can our lives serve to fight off the "decay" in our culture each day?**
- **Salt can take a bland meal and make it delicious. What are some ways your life as a Christian man adds flavor to the world around you?**
- **When Jesus talks about salt losing it's saltiness, He's essentially saying that when we don't live out our identities as Christ-followers, we lose much of our purpose. Why is it sometimes tempting not to boldly live out our identities as Christians?**

THEN, Jesus says in verses 14-15 that not only are we like salt, we're like lights. Light drives away darkness. It also shows the

SESSION 1: IDENTITY

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way. Think about this as you answer these questions:

- **If you had to list one place in your world that needs the light of Christ to drive away the darkness of sin and hopelessness, what would that place be?**
- **Think of the way you've lived your life in the last few weeks. Would you honestly say that your words and actions show people the way to Jesus? It's OK to be honest.**

FINALLY, in verse 16 Jesus gives the reason why it's important that we stand out in this world: it's not to draw glory or credit to us, but to God. The idea is that our Christ-like actions will get people's attention. They'll want to know what makes us so different. And we will have the chance to point to God as the source of what makes us different. Answer this question before moving on to *The Challenge*:

- **Let's celebrate a win: Think about a time when you did something or said something that put all the focus not on you but on Jesus. What was the situation? How did it make you feel?**

Our identity as guys, i.e., who we are, is found not in ourselves but in Christ. And sharing this with the world through our words and actions is part of what pursuing a Christ-like masculinity is all about. Our lives were meant to count for something. We were meant to make a difference in this world for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Don't ever forget it.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO DO SOMETHING REALLY UNIQUE OR SPECIAL FOR SOMEONE AND CONNECT WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO YOUR FAITH IN SOME WAY.

FOR EXAMPLE, BUY A HOMELESS PERSON A MEAL AND EXPLAIN THAT YOU DID IT BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO SHOW THEM GOD'S LOVE, OR SOMETHING SIMILAR. BE READY TO TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU DID NEXT WEEK WHEN YOU MEET AGAIN.

CLOSE YOUR TIME TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER. SHARE ANY SPECIFIC REQUESTS YOU WANT PEOPLE TO BE PRAYING FOR.

SESSION 2: INTEGRITY

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 19-29 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back on last week's challenge. Share who among your group successfully accomplished the challenge. Have students share what they did and what they told the person about why they were doing it. Was it easy? Difficult? Awkward?

NEXT, before jumping in, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week. Then, spend a few minutes reviewing what you learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **In one sentence, explain why integrity is such a vital characteristic for a young man of God. Is integrity the norm in the world or an exception? Where do you see integrity modeled by guys/men on a daily basis?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Did this week help you think about the concept of integrity as something that is central to who you are as a young man? Is it a concept you've thought a lot about before? How did the focus on integrity make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with the group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in Integrity. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 3.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Proverbs chapter 21. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** King Solomon wrote most of Proverbs.
- **When Was It Written?** The bulk of Proverbs stems from Solomon's era during the 10th Century B.C. when Israel was united as a kingdom. Keep in mind, this is about 1,000 years or so before Jesus was ministering on earth.
- **Why Was It Written?** The main purpose is to offer short, compact truths that lead to wisdom, a godly life, and a fuller understanding of choices and consequences.

NEXT, read Proverbs 21:3. It's important to remember that this was written when God's people were under the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system was God providing a way for the people to pay for their sins. Thousands of years before God sent Jesus to once and for all pay for the sins of humankind, if you sinned, you were able to offer a sacrifice at the Temple as a way of symbolically paying the debt your sin earned. So you would literally kill an animal, and its death would count in the place of your death. This was God's way of showing mercy by allowing sin to be paid for, but not by the individual who sinned. But God had grown tired of His people continuously offering sacrifices but not changing their behavior. With this background in mind, discuss these questions:

- **Define righteousness and justice. So what was Solomon really saying here in Proverbs 21:3?**
- **It seems like God was more concerned with the hearts of His people than their participation in a religious ceremony. Can you think of a parallel for this in today's world? If you were to re-word the Proverb into modern language with modern examples, what would you say?**
- **Read Isaiah 1:11 and 1:17. How do you see the same principle at work here? What does God not delight in (v. 11)? What does God take joy in (v. 17)?**

SESSION 2: INTEGRITY

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 19-29 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION* DEVOTIONALS.

One writer wrote that religious actions (like attending church) aren't bad in themselves. But they don't matter much to God compared to what's actually happening in the life of the individual.ⁱ Think about this:

- Does God know what's in your heart? Does He know if your religious activity is sincere or not? Then why do you think some people, especially some teenage guys, "go through the motions" when it comes to their faith?
- A hypocrite is someone who says one thing and does something different. How does Proverbs 21:3 address this concept of being a hypocriteⁱⁱ?
- So, here's the big question: What does this have to do with being a young man of integrity?

FINALLY, read this short example of integrity in action:

- In 1959, 40-year-old Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox was suffering from a pinched nerve in his neck. "It was so bad that I could hardly turn my head to look at the pitcher," he said. For the first time in his remarkable career, he batted under .300, hitting just .254 and only ten home runs. Williams was the highest salaried player in sports that year, making \$125,000. The next year, the Red Sox offered him the same contract. "I told them I wouldn't sign it until they gave me the full pay cut allowed, 28 percent. My feeling was that I was always treated fairly by the Red Sox. They were offering me a contract I didn't deserve." Williams cut his own salary by \$35,000!ⁱⁱⁱ

This is a picture of integrity at work! Williams was always known as a man of high principles. This was Williams powerfully showing the world that his actions lined up with his words. As Christian men/young men, we have to be people whose actions line up with our stated beliefs. We can't just say we're followers of Jesus. We have to actually follow Him. As guys who publicly identify with Jesus, we have a target on our backs. People will be watching to see if our lives match up with our faith. And while we'll never be perfect, we have to be men/young men who are willing to do what it takes to live lives of integrity.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

BE A MAN/YOUNG MAN OF INTEGRITY IN ALL OF YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE THIS WEEK.

DON'T LET THIS CHALLENGE FOOL YOU! WHILE IT MAY SEEM A LITTLE VAGUE, IF YOU TAKE IT SERIOUSLY YOU'LL FIND THAT THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN IT'S EASY NOT TO DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY. BE AWARE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAVE TO BE A GUY WHO SHOWS OTHER PEOPLE THAT THEIR LIFE IS IN LINE WITH THEIR FAITH.

CLOSE YOUR TIME TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER. SHARE ANY SPECIFIC REQUESTS YOU WANT THE OTHER PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP TO BE PRAYING FOR.

SESSION 3: PURPOSE

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 31-41 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. How would you describe the way you interacted with others? Can you say that you were a young man of integrity? Were there times it was difficult? Were there missed opportunities?

NEXT, before jumping in, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week. Then, spend a few minutes reviewing what you learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **How is your understanding of your purpose different now than it was before you read this week's devotions?**
- **Do you think the concept of purpose is something guys you know struggle with? Why or why not?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with the group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand or that you maybe disagreed with?**
- **What did you encounter that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't encountered before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in Purpose. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 4.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Acts chapter 1. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** Acts was written by Luke, a Gentile physician, to a man named Theophilus, possibly a benefactor of some sort. Luke also wrote the gospel bearing his name.
- **When Was It Written?** Most likely between 70 AD and 80 AD, or about 30 to 40 years after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.
- **Why Was It Written?** The Book of Acts begins with Jesus' ascension and His command for His followers to share the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The rest of the book traces this journey as the early church leaders spread the Gospel and plant churches.

NEXT, read Acts 1:6-11. We're going to pay close attention to verse 8, as it's at the heart of our discussion of purpose for this week. This passage tells of Jesus' last moments on earth. He has been appearing to people for a period of 40 days after His resurrection. And at the moment we pick up the story in Acts, Jesus is getting ready to return to heaven. But He doesn't do this without one more word for His followers.

Re-read Acts 1:8. Jesus instructs His disciples to share the Gospel and He says the Holy Spirit will help them do so. It's interesting to note something important about that list of geographical locations. Jerusalem was the city they were living in. Judea was the region in which Jerusalem was located. Samaria was the neighboring region. And of course, the ends of the earth are, well, the ends of the earth. Let's see how we can apply this in our lives:

- **Have you ever thought about how remarkable it is that Jesus chose people - flawed, unreliable people - to be "His witnesses"? What is significant about this? If God were most concerned with maximum effectiveness, He would NOT have chosen people to be the primary way of sharing the Gospel. He would have done it Himself. So what does that mean that God is most concerned with: maximum effectiveness or us being a part of the process? How does this change the way you think about sharing your faith?**
- **Picture it in your head: you are having a conversation with someone that turns to spiritual topics. You sense a true opportunity to share your faith. What thoughts come to your mind as you imagine sharing the Gospel**

SESSION 3: PURPOSE

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with someone?

- Why do you think you feel the way you do about sharing your faith?
- The Greek word for “witnesses” in Acts 1:8 is also the word we get for our word “martyr.” Why is this significant when it comes to how we should approach sharing our faith with others?
- About Acts 1:8, Warren Wiersbe wrote, “Ordinary people were able to do extraordinary things because the Spirit of God was at work in their lives. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity.”^{iv} Have you ever doubted your ability to convincingly share the Gospel with someone? How does it change when you consider that you have the Holy Spirit empowering you to be His messenger?

As you think about how sharing your faith relates to your purpose as a young man, keep in mind that Jesus’ statement - “You will be my witnesses . . .” - was both a command and a description of us as His followers.^v Sharing the Gospel can’t be separated from who you are as a Christian guy. It is a huge part of your purpose. Sharing your faith is what you do as a Christ-follower. As you consider this concept, it’s important to take stock of your habits in this area of your life. Far too many Christians, and especially Christian guys, neglect this aspect of their faith. Doing so not only goes against who you were called to be, but you miss out on experiencing a huge part of what it means to be a Christ-follower.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you’ve learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

MAKE NO EXCUSES: SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH SOMEONE THIS WEEK, NO MATTER HOW INTIMIDATING OR AWKWARD IT MAY SEEM.

MANY OF JESUS’ FOLLOWERS MOST LIKELY THOUGHT HE WOULD RETURN TO MAKE JERUSALEM THE CAPITAL OF HIS PHYSICAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.^{vi} WHEN JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS DISCIPLES TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM, IT WOULD HAVE EXPANDED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT JESUS WAS TRULY SEEKING TO ACCOMPLISH. IT WOULD HAVE PUSHED THEM OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE. THIS WEEK, GO OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE. EMBRACE THE TRUTH THAT JESUS WANTS TO GROW HIS KINGDOM THROUGH YOUR FAITHFULNESS.

CLOSE YOUR TIME TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER. SHARE ANY SPECIFIC REQUESTS YOU WANT GROUP MEMBERS PERSON TO BE PRAYING FOR.

SESSION 4: SURRENDER

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 43-53 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN AND HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. Did you share your faith with someone? How did it go? Or did you fail to share your faith? Be honest: what kept you from doing so? What can you do to move closer to sharing the Gospel with someone who needs it?

THEN, before getting started, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week. Spend a few minutes reviewing what you have learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning:

- **How do you define surrender? How do you define what it means to surrender to God? How are the two different? How are they alike?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with your group and talk about why it impacted you.**
- **As a teenag guy seeking to pursue a Christ-centered masculinity, what did you learn about surrender that you maybe didn't know before? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in *Surrender*. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 2.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Luke chapter 14. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **When Was It Written?** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Why Was It Written?** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man.

NEXT, read Luke 14:25-33 paying special attention to verses 26-27. The *New American Commentary* breaks this passage down really well. We're going to use their framework for looking at what's happening here.^{vii} Jesus is basically telling folks what it costs to be a true believer in/follower of Christ. There are essentially three conditions for following Jesus. Discuss them by working through the following questions:

- **The first condition Jesus mentions is that if we want to follow Him we must "hate" our family. Now, Jesus is not commanding us to literally hate our family. This would go against what we know to be true about God. What Jesus is actually saying is that we should love Jesus more than our family. How does this make you feel? How would you say this lines up with how you view both your relationship with Jesus and your family?**
- **The second condition for following Jesus is that we must be willing to carry our cross and follow Him. What does this mean exactly? One writer put it this way: "Dedication to Jesus is a life-long commitment to follow the road that leads to death. Persons in the crowd who sought power, responsibility, food, health, fame, or fortune could quit now."^{viii} How does this quote make you feel?**
- **Can you share a few ways that following Christ in your school, or in your day-to-day life could be challenging to you?**
- **In verse 33, we see the third condition. A disciple must be willing to give up all to follow Jesus. Be honest**

SESSION 4: SURRENDER

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 43-53 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN AND HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION* DEVOTIONALS.

with your group: If a situation somehow came up where your commitment to Christ literally cost you everything (a situation Christians around the world face daily), what would be the thing in your life you missed most? Would the sacrifice be worth it in your eyes? What does your answer say about where you are in your faith journey?

- What do you have to lose by completely following Jesus? What do you have to gain? Have you ever thought about your relationship in Jesus in those terms?

Let's be honest: no one likes to talk about losing everything for Christ. It's our human nature. We're sinful. Surrender doesn't come easy. But it's absolutely expected of us, especially as men/young men. In fact, the brand of faith the Bible teaches leaves no room for anything BUT surrender.

FINALLY, end your time of Bible study by reading this story of a Chinese preacher named Lough Fook:

- **Lough Fook, a Chinese Christian, moved with compassion for the thousands of indentured Chinese slaves working in South American mines, sold himself as a slave for a term of five years. He was sent to work in a mine in what is now the present day country of Guyana. His goal? To carry the Gospel to his countrymen working there. He worked in the mines alongside these slaves and preached Jesus as he labored. Lough Fook died; but not before he had lead nearly 200 new believers to Christ as a result of Fook's faithful communication of the Gospel. Would you consider what Lough Fook gained through surrender to be greater than what he lost?**

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

IDENTIFY ONE THING IN YOUR LIFE THAT KEEPS YOU FROM MORE FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING AFTER JESUS AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET RID OF THIS DISTRACTION.

WHAT THIS DISTRACTION IS WILL LOOK DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE. IT MAY BE A HABIT, A HOBBY, A RELATIONSHIP, A BEHAVIOR, EVEN A PLACE. PRAY THAT GOD WILL SHOW YOU WHAT IT IS THAT STANDS BETWEEN HIM AND YOU, AND THAT HE WOULD GIVE YOU THE POWER TO WALK AWAY FROM IT.

CLOSE YOUR TIME TOGETHER IN PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER. SHARE ANY SPECIFIC REQUESTS YOU WANT YOUR GROUP TO BE PRAYING FOR.

SESSION 5: PASSION

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 55-65 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. Were you able to make any moves to rid your life of the thing(s) that come between you and God? What was that like trying to make that change? If you weren't able to move closer to this goal, what kept you from doing so? What if you were to try again this week?

THEN, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week. Next, spend a few minutes reviewing what you have learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **Passion is something you may not have associated as part of what it means to be a young man after Jesus' heart. Do you understand it better after this week? How would you describe the concept of a Christ-centered passion for life, relationships, etc. to someone else?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with your group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities about being a young man of passion?**
- **Was there anything you didn't understand? What questions do you have? Did you disagree with anything?**
- **What did you encounter that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in *Passion*. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 5.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to John chapter 10. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** John the Apostle wrote the Gospel of John. John was a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also wrote the Book of Revelation, as well as 1, 2, and 3 John.
- **When Was It Written?** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD.
- **Why Was It Written?** John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

NEXT, read John 10:7-10. This is one of the most well-known passages in the Bible. Here Jesus is describing His ministry with a few different metaphors, primarily using the metaphor of shepherd and sheep. Jesus is the shepherd, and not just any shepherd, the good shepherd. We are the sheep. There's not enough time to go into all the detail here, but it's enough to say that this is a prominent metaphor used throughout the Bible to describe Jesus as a loving, caring, life-giving provider for us, His children. But we want to focus on what Jesus says in verse 10.

This week we talked about passion. It was noted in the book that Jesus didn't only come to save us *from* our sins, but that He came to save us *to* a right, meaningful, and passionate life. We're going to unpack this concept a bit using the following questions:

- **The Greek word used for abundance, *perisson*, means "that which goes way beyond necessity." Jesus wanted us to know that He came to give us a life "beyond our wildest dreams."^{ix} It's easy for us to forget this is part of what it means to be a Christian, and a Christian guy. Why do we forget to see our lives this way?**
- **Jesus wants you to live a life of passion. He wants you to have an overflow of life, an abundance. One Greek scholar defines the word used here for abundance as an "overplus" of life.^x What a great word! When was a time recently where you felt like you were living an "overplus" of life?**

SESSION 5: PASSION

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 55-65 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION* DEVOTIONALS.

- Can you name a few aspects of your daily life that kind of suck the joy and excitement out of life? It's OK to be honest. You're not complaining!
- What can you do to remind yourself in these moments that, while life won't always be awesome, it doesn't have to steal your passion for the life God has given you?

This is an awesome quote from Matthew Henry:

- "Christ came to give life and . . . something more, something better, life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice. Life in abundance is eternal life, life without death or fear of death, life and much more."^{XI}

FINALLY, spend a few moments talking about how you might live a life like this as a man/young man. What does it look like to pursue a life like this when it comes to your faith? At your school? In your home? In your relationships? In your hobbies? How would it change your life if you started pursuing a life like this? How would you change the world around you if this were a picture of how you approached your life as a Christian?

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

MAKE AN EFFORT TO APPROACH LIFE THIS WEEK WITH A NOTICEABLE PASSION FOR EACH DAY.

AT FIRST BLUSH THIS MAY NOT SOUND LIKE IT'S AS PRACTICAL AS SOME OF YOUR OTHER CHALLENGES. BUT IF YOU EMBRACE THIS, IT SURE WILL BE! YOUR GOAL SHOULD BE THAT PEOPLE AROUND YOU NOTICE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW YOU'RE APPROACHING EACH DAY. SPEND A FEW MOMENTS TALKING ABOUT PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PUT THIS CHALLENGE TO WORK IN YOUR LIFE. THEN, MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW THROUGH WITH DOING THE THINGS YOU'VE IDENTIFIED.

SESSION 6: COMMITMENT

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 67-77 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. How did it go in your efforts to live life in abundance? Did people notice you trying to be more passionate in how you approached each day? How was your week different as a result? What was the hardest part about trying to live this way?

NEXT, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week. Then, spend a few minutes reviewing what you have learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **Commitment is something so many men struggle with. What did you learn about commitment this week that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two about commitment that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question that caused you to really think about how you view commitment, or that convicted you? Share it with your group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand? Did you disagree with anything in the book?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in Commitment. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 1.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to John chapter 14. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** John the Apostle wrote the Gospel of John. John was a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John also wrote the Book of Revelation, as well as 1, 2, and 3 John.
- **When Was It Written?** The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD.
- **Why Was It Written?** John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

NEXT, read John 14:15-17. This is a very profound and important moment in the course of Jesus' life and ministry. The Last Supper has just ended. Judas has left the room to go gather the officials and soldiers who will soon arrest Jesus. At the end of John 14, Jesus will rise with His disciples and leave the upper room. He will walk to the Garden of Gethsemane, teaching as He goes, where He will pray in agony over the trial He is about to experience. But in these verses you just read, Jesus is offering comfort to His disciples. It's almost like the calm before the storm.

This backdrop makes Jesus' words very interesting. The words He's speaking are powerful considering that this is one of the last moments of truly undivided attention He will have with His disciples. With this backdrop, discuss this passage using the following questions:

- **Jesus set the pattern of love and obedience. We are expected to follow. Can you think of some examples of how Jesus modeled obedience to the Father?**
- **In verse 15, Jesus makes an "if/then" statement, otherwise known as a conditional statement. In a conditional statement, the truth of the conclusion (the part that follows the "then") proves the validity of the "if" part of the statement. In other words, our obedience proves our love for Christ. Think about this question: what**

SESSION 6: COMMITMENT

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 67-77 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

- does your obedience say to the world about your love for Jesus?
- Obeying Jesus isn't only to be understood as obeying His ethical teachings or following all the rules. When Jesus said to obey Him, He meant to live according to "the entire scope of [His] teaching and revelation."^{xii} How do you react to this statement?
 - We know that we are sinners. We can't perfectly obey God. This is where commitment comes in. God wants us to be as committed as we can be to following Him and His ways. How would you describe your commitment to obeying Jesus?
 - Look at verse 16. One author wrote, "Jesus knew very well that the requirement of love and keeping his commands would necessitate a resource of divine proportions and accordingly he prayed that his followers would have 'another' resource."^{xiii} This is referring to the Holy Spirit. How does the Holy Spirit partner with you in your commitment to living a life of obedience?

FINALLY, as we process this concept of obedience and commitment, it's important to make the distinction between commitment and performance. Our commitment to obedience isn't how we impress God. We don't earn His favor by being obedient. Susan Maycinik put it this way:

- "The line between obedience and performance can be a blurry one. Yet it is an important distinction to grasp, because obedience leads to life, and performance to death."
 - o Obedience is seeking God with your whole heart. Performance is having a quiet time because you'll feel guilty if you don't.
 - o Obedience is doing your best. Performance is wanting to be the best.
 - o Obedience is following the promptings of God's Spirit. Performance is following a list of man-made requirements.
 - o Obedience springs from fear of God. Performance springs from fear of failure."^{xiv}

Do you think this is something most guys struggle with? Before transitioning to The Challenge, spend some time responding to the difference between obedience and performance.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

IDENTIFY ONE AREA IN WHICH YOU STRUGGLE WITH OBEYING GOD AND SEEK THIS WEEK TO COMMIT TO OBEYING GOD IN THIS AREA.

NOW, BE WARNED: THIS CAN TURN LEGALISTIC QUICKLY! KEEP IN MIND THAT OUR GOAL IS TO SEE LIFE TRANSFORMATION. YOU'RE TRYING TO PURSUE A CHRIST-CENTERED MASCULINITY. WE NEED TO SEE PROGRESS IN LOOKING MORE LIKE CHRIST. BUT REMEMBER THE MOTIVATION: "IF YOU LOVE ME, OBEY ME." THE MOTIVATION FOR SEEKING TO BE MORE COMMITTED TO OBEEDIENCE THIS WEEK IS NOTHING SHORT OF YOUR LOVE FOR CHRIST, NOT A MISGUIDED ATTEMPT AT PLEASING GOD THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS (IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY!). SO, OUT OF YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS, SEEK TO BE MORE OBEIENT TO GOD THIS WEEK.

SESSION 7: COMPASSION

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 79-89 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. Were you able to identify an area in your life where you needed to be more obedient? Were you able to follow through with your commitment to obedience in this area? How did it feel? What were the results?

THEN, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week before spending a few minutes reviewing what you have learned in the previous week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **Was this a tough week for you? Many guys struggle with being compassionate. It's just how we are wired. What did you learn about compassion that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question about showing compassion to those around you that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with your group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have about being a young man who consistently shows compassion to others? Was there anything you didn't understand or disagreed with?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in Compassion. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 2.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Colossians chapter 3. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.
- **When Was It Written?** Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).
- **Why Was It Written?** Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything.

NEXT, read Colossians 3:5-17, paying close attention to verses 12-14. Paul does something here that he does often. Here we see Paul contrasting a life lived apart from God with a life lived in relationship with God. Verses 5-9 paint the picture of what it looks like to live as someone who does not know God. In verse 12, Paul transitions to what it looks like to live as people who love God and seek to have this love expressed in their every day lives, especially as it pertains to living alongside other Christ-followers.

Note that as Paul makes this transition, the first thing he mentions is the word compassion. It serves as a powerful intro into the entire section. Compassion is the foundation of everything Paul says here. Let's see how we can apply this as men/young men seeking to model Christ's sense of compassion by discussing these following questions:

- **Paul is using a little bit of a metaphor in this passage that can be hard to pick up at times. He is suggesting that as new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), that we have a new wardrobe. We "put on" these characteristics like we might put on a coat. So the idea is that people see us and they see these characteristics as something that is a part of us. Quick question: do people look at your life and see these characteristics as a daily part of life that you "wear around"?**
- **Paul does something interesting here. In verses 12 and 13 Paul puts the emphasis on us being patient and**

SESSION 7: COMPASSION

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 79-89 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION* DEVOTIONALS.

forgiving with others. He doesn't ask us to wait until those things are shown to us. What does that tell us about how we're supposed to treat the people we do life with?

- As a young man, what does it look like to have a compassionate heart? How does this practically look in your life? How does it affect the world around you, such as your family, other teenagers at school, or your friends?
- How do you come to grips with the fact that as a young man, having a compassionate heart may be something that is challenging for you? How do you begin to grow in Christ-likeness in this area in your life if it's something you're not naturally inclined to do?

FINALLY, one of the most important things to remember is that compassion is all about how we treat others. It's uniquely about showing real care and concern for those in need. William Barclay says this:

- **"It is most significant to note that every one of the virtues and graces listed has to do with personal relationships between man and man. There is no mention of virtues like efficiency, cleverness, even diligence and industry—not that these things are not important. But the great basic Christian virtues are the virtues which govern and set the tone of human relationships. Christianity is community."**^{XV}

As we seek to be men/young men who practice a Christ-centered masculinity, compassion toward others is something that we simply must have. As much as any aspect of our characters, we imitate Christ when we care for those who most need it. Compassion and patience and understanding may be hard for us to practice. But as people seeking to become the young men God intends you to be, you have to strive to be men of compassion.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SOMEONE IN NEED (THEY ARE ALL AROUND YOU, SOMETHING YOU'LL REALIZE WHEN YOU'RE INTENTIONAL ABOUT LOOKING FOR IT). WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER THEM, EXPRESS COMPASSION BY MEETING THEIR NEED PATIENTLY AND WITH MUCH CARE. IF YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO SHARE YOUR FAITH WHILE DOING SO, EVEN BETTER.

YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO BE A YOUNG MAN WHO MODELS CHRISTIAN COMPASSION TO THOSE IN NEED AROUND YOU. YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW BADLY OUR WORLD NEEDS THIS! FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THIS CHALLENGE THIS WEEK AND SEE HOW GOD WILL USE YOU TO IMPACT THOSE YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH.

SESSION 8: INFLUENCE

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 91-101 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

LOOKING BACK (10 MINUTES)

FIRST, take a moment and circle back to last week's challenge. How did you do showing compassion to someone in need? If you were successful in showing compassion to someone, were you able to share anything about your faith as you did so? How did it make you feel to show God's love and mercy to someone who needed it? If you weren't able to intentionally show compassion to someone in need, was it because you didn't run across anyone who needed compassion? Or because you chickened out? Don't worry! There is always this week!

THEN, follow up on any specific prayer requests from last week before spending a few minutes reviewing what you have learned in the previous week's devotions. We've provided you with a set of questions to help prompt you to think about the past week. If you need a little help getting started, consider reading some or all of the following questions to help guide your discussion about what you're learning.

- **What did you learn about influence that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did this concept make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**
- **Glance back over the five days of devotions from the previous week. Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
- **Share a sentence or two that you underlined or otherwise noted. What is it about this sentence that stood out to you?**
- **Was there a specific question about influence that caused you to really think, or that convicted you? Share it with your group.**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **If you could sum up the week in one word, what would it be?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand?**

Once you've had a chance to talk about the previous week of devotions, transition into your time of Bible study using the *Digging In* activity.

DIGGING IN (10-15 MINUTES)

For this week's *Digging In*, you're going to spend a few minutes doing a deeper Bible study on the passage from one of the devotions in Influence. This week, you'll be digging back into Day 4.

FIRST, grab a Bible or a Bible app and turn to Matthew chapter 9. Anytime we read the Bible, it's important to place the passages in the context of the big picture story of the Bible. Here's what that looks like for this passage:

- **Who Wrote It?** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **When Was It Written?** Probably in the late 50's or 60's AD, or roughly 30 years or so after Jesus' crucifixion.
- **Why Was It Written?** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

NEXT, read Matthew 9:35-38. This passage comes fairly early on in Jesus' public ministry. It comes in a passage where Matthew shows Jesus healing and teaching and performing miracles. It's Matthew's way of saying loudly, "See?! Jesus really IS the Son of God!"

But for our purposes today, we're concerned with the problem Jesus saw, and what His solution was. Jesus saw people who were harassed and helpless. The people Jesus saw were dealing with physical ailments, for sure. But Jesus also took pity on them because their religious leaders were failing them. Jesus saw their spiritual and physical needs and wanted to help. It's interesting that when He looked for help, He looked for us, His children. At first glance, this might not seem like a passage where influence is being addressed. But look deeper and you'll find that it's a central concept to these verses. Think about this:

- **Essentially, Jesus is looking for people who will use their influence to lead people to a saving faith relationship with Himself. That's what this passage is about. Asking God to send out workers? It's about**

SESSION 8: INFLUENCE

THIS SESSION WILL DRAW ON PAGES 91-101 FROM THE *HOW TO BE A MAN* AND *HOW TO BE A MAN: STUDENT EDITION DEVOTIONALS*.

workers who will use their lives to influence people to follow Jesus. Have you ever considered your influence in this manner?

- What was Jesus' response when He saw the people? How does this relate back to what we've learned about compassion and masculinity?
- This question isn't about influence, but it's foundational for how motivated we are to use our influence. Ready? When Jesus saw needy people, He responded with compassion and wanted to see their physical and spiritual needs met. How do you respond when you see needy people? And how does your response move you to want to make a difference in their lives?
- Define influence. What does it mean to have influence?
- Respond to this statement: "Not everyone is a leader. But everyone has influence." Do you think this is true or not?
- Who do you influence? If you had to make a list of people, who would be on it?
- How do you use your influence? Do you use it for you? Or for Christ?

FINALLY, think about what Jesus did when He looked out at the people. When Jesus saw the needs of the people, what did He do? He turned to His followers and identified them as the solution. The same task extends to us. We are Jesus' Plan A for reaching the world. God wants all people to come to faith in Him. And the primary way He has chosen to accomplish this is through you and every other believer. We are to be Jesus' messengers of the Gospel. We are to use the influence we have to impact the world in Jesus' name.

THE CHALLENGE (5 MINUTES)

Part of being the man God made us to be is being a person who takes action. The Challenge is about highlighting one practical, actionable thing you can do to put what you've learned into action.

YOUR CHALLENGE FOR THIS WEEK IS THIS:

USE YOUR INFLUENCE TO LEAD SOMEONE CLOSER TO GOD THIS WEEK.

SO, HERE'S A TRUTH: VERY FEW PEOPLE ARE INFLUENCE NEUTRAL. THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE EITHER HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS OR A NEGATIVE ONE. LET'S PUT IT IN DIFFERENT TERMS: EITHER YOUR INFLUENCE LEADS PEOPLE TOWARD GOD, OR AWAY FROM HIM. THIS WEEK, THINK ABOUT THE INFLUENCE YOU HAVE OVER OTHERS. THEN, BE INTENTIONAL TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT LEADS THEM TOWARD GOD.

END NOTES

- ⁱ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 179.
- ⁱⁱ Sid S. Buzzell, "Proverbs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 950.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: *The expositor's illustration file* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).
- ^{iv} Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 403.
- ^v Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 354.
- ^{vi} Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, *Study Guide Commentary Series* (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 13.
- ^{vii} Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 396.
- ^{viii} Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 238.
- ^{ix} Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 333.
- ^x A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 10:10.
- ^{xi} Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1983.
- ^{xii} Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, vol. 25B, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 121-122.
- ^{xiii} Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, vol. 25B, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 122.
- ^{xiv} Craig Brian Larson, *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers & Writers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 371-372.
- ^{xv} Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, vol. 8, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 331.

CLOSING

CONGRATULATIONS!

You did it. You completed the challenge. Our prayer is that by doing so, you drew closer to your students and closer to God. And hopefully, your group is collectively further along the path to becoming the men God has called you to be.

The world needs you. Our culture desperately needs men and young men who live like Jesus. So don't let up. Continue to grow in your discipleship, always seeking to embrace a manliness that is informed and empowered by Christ Himself.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Blanks is the Publisher and Co-Founder of YM360, and, along with Rick Burgess, co-wrote *How To Be A Man* and *How To Be A Man: Student Edition*. A former Marine, Andy has spent the last 15 years working in youth ministry, mostly in the field of publishing. During that time, Andy has led the development of some of the most popular Bible study curriculum and discipleship resources in the country. He has authored numerous books, Bible studies, and articles, and regularly speaks at events and conferences, both for adults and teenagers. But Andy's passion is communicating the transforming truth of the God's Word, which he does in his local church on a weekly basis.

Andy and his wife, Brendt, were married in 2000. They have four children, three girls and one boy.

If we can ever do anything for you, please don't hesitate to contact us. Email us at customer@ym360.com or give us a call at 1-888-969-6360. It's our pleasure to serve you.

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