

Introduction



The church is in dire need of men who will take the charge of leadership and direct the church for the twenty-first century. We are at war with Satan claiming his victims and many of us are standing around powerlessly apathetic living life the way we think it should be led. In the meantime God has authored a book that has principles for us to learn from as men of God. These principles were either recorded in the form of commandments or exemplified through the daily actions of biblical characters. It is my goal to direct your minds towards qualities I think God's word contains. I believe the ramifications are great if we do not become men of God as the incessant immaturity will bring the church down. This is not a minister making an exaggeration to emphasize a point it is a man of God calling you to serious arms. If you cannot see that there is a struggle then your eyes are blinded and you might be a part of the problem.

We are called to be knights of Christ and soldiers. I am told that the story of knights originated with Charlemagne who had elite soldiers trained so they could go into the fiercest battles and reign victorious no matter the foe. Knights began their careers as "pages" and would witness the chivalry of trained knights. They would develop trades in learning how to make weapons and to use them. The page would then become a squire

who would serve a lord in whatever capacity the lord desired. It was under the tutelage of the lord where the squire learned the skills needed to be a knight. Skills like weaponry, riding a horse but also the finer aspects of life like dancing, learning how to dress and even how to hunt.

“After an entire childhood dedicated to acquiring the skills of knighthood, a squire was finally knighted when he reached his late teens and early twenties, if he could afford it. Those who couldn’t afford the weapons, armor, and other trappings of a medieval knight either became bachelors until they could afford to maintain their status as a knight or found employment in the courts and entourages of other knights and lords. There were plenty of jobs available for trained squires and men of court.”¹



In essence the title of a knight was earned...not given. It took years of learning, training, sacrificing and commitment. The same could (and should) be said of Christians. Yes, the hard part of Jesus dying on the cross is once and for all accomplished but the moment we come out of the waters of baptism is the moment where our knighthood begins. The lifelong journey of

¹ From <http://www.medievalry.com/history/knightlife.htm>

manhood continues each moment we build our character. The study, the preparation and the execution all add to our repertoire of skills needed to bear the right of being called “men of God!”

Each lesson is prepared in three sections. The briefing section introduces the lesson either through questioning, a game or some sort of probing thought. The battle section is the “meat” of the lesson where we take on the task of the particular quality of manhood and a Biblical character who emphasizes that characteristic. The debriefing section closes the lesson with a challenge and an assignment to prepare for the next week.

The question then remains, “Are you ready to be a man?” You will not be a man over night as it takes practice but do you even have the desire to be a man? Do you have what it takes? Commitment? Courage? Chivalry? If you have what it takes and you stick with the lessons then you will make it to the Knighthood Ceremony! I hope you are ready to prepare yourself...the world needs you!

Veni, vidi, vici – “I came, I saw, I conquered”

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robbie Mackenzie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large, connected letters.

Robbie Mackenzie

LESSON #1: The Call to Manhood



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

- ✂ Go up to the board and draw a line in the middle.
- ✂ On the left side go to the board and ask the students to list characteristics of men they would consider who are “manly men.” It might even help to list some “manly” movies (e.g. Braveheart; Gladiator, etc.) and talk about qualities of the main character in that movie. Write the qualities on the board (you can always ask for a volunteer).
- ✂ On the right hand side ask them to give characteristics of men they would consider who are “godly” men? It might even help to remind them of biblical characters like Samson, David, Elijah and others.
- ✂ What I want you to notice is if there were any differences between the two categories. If there were glaring differences ask them why they suppose there are differences.

What is manhood? Dictionary.com defines it as the
*“the state or time of being a man or adult male person; male maturity.”*²

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE MANHOOD?



² <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/manhood>

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

The need for manhood seems to be more prevalent now than ever before. Our prisons are filled with male inmates who never knew the concept of manhood and because of that they are reaping what they have already sowed. The U.S. Census Bureau said that there are over 14 million single-parent homes today.³ Of the 14 million homes, 86% of those are single mother's homes!!! **12 million homes do not have a father. 12 MILLION!!!** That is unacceptable. Children deserve to have a father who desire to be with them, lead them and watch over them. I understand there are extenuating circumstances like sudden death but a majority of those are fathers who cannot man-up and stay with their families. It comes back to proper training and leadership by their parents. Most often we rear our children the way our parents reared us. If the model was poor to start with most likely they result will be poor as well.

Look at this quote from John Eldredge in his book *Wild at Heart*:

Have someone read the quote aloud.

"Society at large can't make up its mind about men. Having spent the last thirty years redefining masculinity into something more sensitive, safe, manageable and, well, feminine, it now berates men for not being men. Boys will be boys, they sigh. As though if a man were to truly grow up he would forsake wilderness and wanderlust and settle down, be at home forever in Aunt Polly's parlor. 'Where are all the real men?' is regular fare for talk shows and new books. You asked them to be women, I want to say. The result us a gender confusion never experienced at such a wide level in the history of the world. How can a man know he is one when his highest aim is minding his manners?"⁴

DO YOU AGREE WITH HIM? WHY OR WHY NOT?

³ Statistics found at <http://www.singlespouse.com/statistics.html>

⁴ John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001): 6-7.

I am afraid the church has not done a good job either as many of our leadership classes have come in the form of teach young men how to lead songs, read Scripture, word a public prayer and deliver the occasional message from the pulpit. Don't get me wrong or misunderstand me—all of that is excellent work but when it comes to teaching boys how to be men we have not done a great job. Quite honestly we have done poorly.

*"And then, alas, there is the church. Christianity, as it currently exists, has done some terrible things to men. When all is said and done, I think most men in the church believe that God put them on earth to be a good boy. The problem with men, we are told, is that they don't know how to keep their promises, be spiritual leaders, talk to their wives, or raise their children. But, if they will try real hard they can reach the lofty summit of becoming...a nice guy. That's what we hold up as models of Christian maturity: Really Nice Guys. We don't smoke, drink, or swear; that's what makes us men. Now let me ask my male readers: In all your boyhood dreams growing up, did you ever dream of becoming a Nice Guy? Walk into most churches in America, have a look around, and ask yourself this question: What is a Christian man? Don't listen to what is said, look at what you find there. There is no doubt about it. You'd have to admit a Christian man is...bored."*⁵

"Every man dies, not every man really lives!"

William Wallace in the movie *Braveheart*

DO YOU AGREE WITH HIM? WHY OR WHY NOT?



⁵ Ibid., 7.

Turn to 1 Samuel 16. To set the context we are in the section of Scripture that address Israel as a monarchy or under the reign of one king. That king's name was Saul but because of his ongoing disobedience the Lord told Samuel that someone else would be chosen as king. Samuel was told to not pay attention to the outward appearance of a man but the Lord "looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Why would God say that to Samuel? Because Saul was chosen by the people because he was a handsome man and was tall in appearance and "no one was more handsome than he" (1 Sam. 9:1-2).

Translation—Saul had it going on when it came to good looks. He was the man's man and everyone wanted to be him, look like him and live like him. But good looks are deceiving (see Prov. 31:29) and God wanted a person for his heart and that kind of person was David, son of Jesse.

David was chosen to be the next king of Israel but first he had to serve Saul for Saul was tormented by an evil spirit (1 Same. 16:14). A servant found David and look at the qualities Scripture records about David:

"One of the young men answered, 'Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.'" (1 Sam. 16:18)

LIST THE QUALITIES AND DISCUSS WHAT THEY MEAN

This section is blank in the student books.

- ✂ Skillful (David had skills that God blessed him with that he used to help others)
- ✂ Man of valor (David had honor and a sense of duty about him)
- ✂ Man of war (David was courageous when it came to battles. A good verse to use is 1 Sam. 17:34-36)
- ✂ Prudent in Speech (said the right things)
- ✂ Man of Good Presence (he made other people feel comfortable)
- ✂ The Lord was with him (perhaps this is the greatest quality. He had the Lord's presence with him which enabled him to do the will of God)

You could say that outwardly David did not look like a man of God but inwardly he had all of the characteristics of what it took to be a man of God.

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

Hand out the PERSONAL INVENTORY and give them a few moments to fill it out. Allow them to think about what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong.

We are going to take a deep look at developing our character and ways in which we can mold ourselves into being not children, not boys but men, Men of God.

Soldier's of Christ, Arise! Put your armor on!!!!

HW ASSIGNMENT: This next week think about a time when you did not tell the truth. Think about why you did not tell the truth and be honest about the reasons. Be ready to share next week in class.

PERSONAL INVENTORY

Directions: Place a checkmark beside each characteristic whether you are poor, fair, good or excellent.

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
HONESTY				
COURAGE				
STRENGTH				
COMPASSION				
COMMITMENT				
LEADERSHIP				
LOVE				
ENCOURAGEMENT				
LISTENING				
GOAL-SETTING				

LESSON #2: A Man of Honesty



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

Last week we learned the call for us to be soldiers of Christ and that the church, as a whole, has not done a thorough job at training young boys to become men. The lesson this week is the most important lesson of the entire series. That is not an understatement as it involves truth. Solomon once said, **“Buy the truth and do not sell it—wisdom, instruction and insight as well”** (Prov. 23:23). A man stands or falls on the words that proceeds out of his mouth. James was right when he said that the tongue is an untamable fire for with it we will bless men or curse men (James 3:6-9).

“No man has a good enough memory to make him a successful liar.” -- Abraham Lincoln

WHAT ARE SOME RECENT EVENTS IN THE NEWS (SPORTS, HOLLYWOOD, ETC.) WHERE PEOPLE HAVE LIED? WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES STEMMING FROM THEIR LIES?

I am reminded of all of the people who have lied in the steroids scandal with Major League Baseball. At the time of this writing one of the biggest frustrations in College Football is the confirmed story that Cam Newton’s father, Cecil Newton, shopped his son to Mississippi State for \$200,000. No money was exchanged but Cecil Newton lied about it to the press only to admit it later.

No doubt you have your own stories of where you did not tell the truth. Put rather bluntly: you have your own stories where you have lied. The

character of a man hinges on his ability to tell the truth. Not only to tell the truth is a manly trait but to love the things that are true (1 Cor. 13:6) is what is important as well.

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

Consider these statistics:

More than two of five (42 percent) said that they sometimes lie to save money. **Again, the male-female difference was significant: 49 percent of the males, 36 percent of the females. In 2006, 39 percent said they lied to save money (47 percent males, 31 percent females).** More than eight in ten students (83 percent) from public schools and religious private schools confessed they lied to a parent about something significant. Students attending non-religious independent schools were somewhat less likely to lie to parents (78 percent).⁶

Did you catch that? Men are more than likely to lie than women.

WHY!?!?



A safe assumption as to the reason why men lie more than women goes back to how God created us. Men are created as wanderers, hunters and

⁶ Statistics conducted by Josephson Institute 2008 Ethics survey. Results can be found at <<http://charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/2008/index.html>>. Something else to note from this survey (in case you may think it is not that bad) they noted: "As bad as these numbers are, it appears they understate the level of dishonesty exhibited by America's youth. More than one in four (26 percent) confessed they **lied on at least one or two questions on the survey**. Experts agree that dishonesty on surveys usually is an attempt to conceal misconduct."

gatherers. Naturally men are prideful and often they will do anything to make sure that pride is intact even if that means lying and cheating.

Before we discuss lying I want to first give a definition of what I think is lying.

LYING: Any attempt to hide what we know is truth either verbally or non-verbally.

You could ask them to come up with some of their own examples.

- ✂ Blatant lies like telling your teacher you were sick at home when actually you skipped school to go to a concert.
- ✂ This includes so-called “white-lies” or half-truths where we tell the truth but leave out important aspects of information. An example of this would be like when you told your mom that you were going over to your friend’s house but you didn’t tell her that your friend’s parents were not home. That, my friends, is deception and ultimately is a lie.

Look at what Scripture has to say about lying...

Colossians 3:9 - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

Leviticus 19:12 "Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord."

Proverbs 25:18 - Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor.

*“A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to put its pants on.”
-- Winston Churchill*

Proverbs 14:5 - A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.

Proverbs 19:5 - A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.

Proverbs 24:28 - Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive.

Proverbs 12:19 - Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

Revelation 21:8 - But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

We know the issues with lying and the Scriptures that do not support but at the end of the day we lie for various reasons. I (Robbie) used to struggle immensely with lying and I did it to impress people. In high-school I lied to a bunch of guys about a girl I said I was dating. I even had a picture of her but the truth was that we were friends but since she was so good-looking I wanted to impress the guys. When the lie was discovered, I had a lot of cleaning up to do.

WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE TELL LIES?

1. It is **convenient**.
2. It keeps us from **harm** or **uncomfortable situations**.
3. It **elevates** our **status**.
4. Sometimes the truth is **boring**.

The fact of the matter is that we must be on a truth quest. Do you honestly (notice the pun) think that women will want to be with you if you are a compulsive liar? Do you think an employer will hire you if you have a track record of telling lies?

Telling the truth creates trust and when that trust is broken it is hard to recover. In ministry I have seen couples lie to each other and it has destroyed their marriage.

The Scriptures talk a lot about truth and the importance of it but when it comes to honesty in Scripture **IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TELLING THE**

TRUTH...IT'S ABOUT BEING A TRUTHFUL/GENUINE/HONEST PERSON.

The Greek word for honesty is *kalos* which means, quite literally, “good.” It means that the whole persona of a disciple should be commendable, good and honorable.

Consider these Scriptures...

Deuteronomy 25:13-16 - You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small. A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the LORD your God.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 - First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Hebrews 13:18 - Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.

WHAT ARE SOME REWARDS FOR BEING AN HONEST PERSON?



Honesty is the best policy. Abraham Lincoln, one of the best presidents to ever lead the United States was known for being an honest person.

Everyone remembers him as honest Abe. You may also remember a president by the name of Bill Clinton who is not so much remembered for his policies more so than him lying to the public about a sexual relationship.

The point? The truth will seek you out so you might as well tell it.

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

Hand out the TO LIE OR NOT TO LIE? and give them a few moments to fill it out. Have them share some answers and reasoning and maybe even some heated debate.

Close with a prayer.

HW ASSIGNMENT: Research characters in Scripture who you think are courageous. Be sure to share your answers next week.

TO LIE OR NOT TO LIE?

Directions: You and a partner pair up and discuss whether to lie in the situation or tell the truth. Be sure to talk about the difficulties of telling the truth and the outcomes.

Scenario #1: You and your girlfriend are out shopping and she is trying on clothes. She comes out of the dressing room and asks you this seemingly harmless question, “Does this sweater make me look fat?” How do you respond?

Scenario #2: You now have kids of your own and Christmas time rolls around. The radio, internet and TV are geared towards the idea that Santa is real and gives toys to little children only if they are nice all year long. You know that is not true but what do you say to your children?

Scenario #3: You are taking a test in Chemistry and suddenly you glance over at Sarah’s test and see her answers and so you copy them down. You didn’t study the night before and you are just winging it. Turns out, you made a 97 on the test and the teacher is singing your praises. You know you did something bad but it feels so good right now. Besides, the policy for cheating is an automatic F on the test and a letter-grade for your final. So what do you do now? You need this score to get a scholarship in college...

LESSON #3: A Man of Courage



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

Last week we learned the call for us to be men who are honest which means not only *telling the truth* but also being truthful people. In this lesson we learn another trait that is embedded in the male gene code that, when unleashed, will allow you to preserve over the greatest amounts of obstacles with ease. The trait is courage. When I (Robbie) think of courage I think of men like Sir William Wallace who fought for Scottish freedom against the tyrannical King Edward I of England. I think of Army Rangers, Navy Seals and Green Berets who use personal mastery on the battlefield to defeat any foe no matter what evil they might bring.

“Courage is resistance to fear; mastery of fear—not absence of fear.”

Mark Twain

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE OF COURAGE WHO DO YOU THINK ABOUT AND WHY?



BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

If you look at the world today there is a loss for people who are courageous. Many people are not risking their necks for others because they want to keep their lives as safe as possible. Even Christian men, who

should be the most courageous men out there, are passive and reluctant about their spirituality and the result is that most churches have women who are better leaders than men. That is a fact! The problem may lie in the concept that we are not raising men but raising boys. Just do a half-hearted tour of the bible and you will come across a litany of men who could be classified as courageous.

- ✂ Abraham—told to pick up his family and go to a foreign place where he would be blessed with a child...he didn't get it until he was 100.
- ✂ Joseph—was falsely accused, carted off to a foreign country and thrown in jail.
- ✂ Joshua and Caleb—spying the land and knowing that it could be conquered.
- ✂ Samson—killed animals with his bare hands (donkey's jawbone).
- ✂ David—protecting his sheep by killing lions and slaughtered a giant all people were afraid of.
- ✂ Daniel—thrown into a lion's den but still was faithful.
- ✂ Jesus—enough said.
- ✂ Stephen—praised Jesus although he was stoned to death.
- ✂ Paul—beaten, imprisoned, persecuted yet still praised God.

These men were so courageous and my question for you is this:

HOW DID THEY DO IT? WHAT GAVE THEM THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT THEY HAD TO DO?



The fact is that most men do not understand there is a battle. Take a look at these verses:

Job 1:7—“The Lord said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered the Lord, ‘From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.’”

Luke 4:13—“When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.”

“God places the heaviest burdens on those who can carry its weight.”

Reggie White

Luke 22:3—“Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.”

2 Corinthians 2:10-11—“Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”

2 Corinthians 11:14—“...for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

1 Thessalonians 2:18—“For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.”

1 Timothy 5:15—“Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.”

1 Peter 5:8—“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Satan is at work gentleman and if you cannot recognize that then you are

blind. You want to know what keeps men from being courageous? Satan's deceitful, diabolical and destructive ways. Renown leadership expert John Maxwell once said: "If we're growing, we're always going to be out of our comfort zone." Isn't that the truth?

Look at these Scriptures and then come up with an appropriate definition for courage:

Deuteronomy 31:6 (cf. Joshua 1:6, 7, 9)—“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Acts 27:21-26—“After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: ‘Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.” So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”

“The true measure of a man is not how he behaves in moments of comfort and convenience, but how he stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

COURAGE (noun) -

Something to note in the Acts verses is that peril was unavoidable. There was no escaping the concept of difficult measures. It was to be expected and to achieve a higher goal than some suffering was necessary. This, in essence, is Paul's mentality when it comes to courage.

John Eldredge, in his book *Wild at Heart* notes this:

Let's say it's June 6, 1944, about 0710. You are a soldier in the third wave onto Omaha beach. Thousands of men have gone before you and now it is your turn. As you jump out of the Higgins boat and wade to the beach, you



see the bodies of fallen soldiers everywhere—floating in the water, tossing in the surf, lying on the beach. Moving up the sand you encounter hundreds of wounded men. Some are limping toward the bluffs with you, looking for shelter. Others are barely crawling. Snipers on the cliffs above continue to take them out. Everywhere you look there are pain and brokenness. The damage is almost overwhelming. When you reach the cliffs, the only point of safety, you find squads of men with no leader. They are all shell-shocked, stunned and frightened. Many

*have lost their weapons, most of them refuse to move. They are paralyzed with fear. Taking all this in, what would you conclude? What would be your assessment of the situation? Whatever else went through your mind, you'd have to admit, *This is one brutal war, and no one would have disagreed pr thought you odd for having said so.*⁷*

Quickly after reading that we can make two observations:

- 1) We have it made in comparison to other generations and,
- 2) We struggle because we do not recognize that there is in fact a brutal war occurring.

It is safe to assume that courage is both natural and nurtured. Some men are born with tenacity and seem to combat every situation with the utmost

7. John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart*, 84.

amount of courage. Others are born timid but learn courage through the tested battles life brings. Whether natural or nurtured there is a common enemy to all when it comes to courage: FEAR!

WHAT ARE WE AFRAID THAT KEEPS US FROM BEING COURAGEOUS?

Some examples of this would be like the fear of failure. The fear of disagreeing with someone or disappointing someone. What if so-and-so does not like me? What if I am labeled as a liberal or as a right-wing conservative?

In speaking about David and his meeting with Goliath John Eldredge writes:

"Being a shepherd, as I explained earlier, is the cowboy stage, and David learned lessons here that would carry him the rest of his life. The life of a shepherd was not a sweet little with lambs around. It was a hard hob, out in the field, months coming out in the wild on his own. And it had its effect. There is a settled confidence in the boy—he knows he has what it takes. But it is not an arrogance—he knows that God has been with him. He will charge Goliath, and take his best shot, trusting God will do the rest. That 'knowing' is what we are after in the cowboy phase, and it only comes through experience. And may I also point out that the experiences David speaks of here (1 Samuel 17:34-37) were physical in nature, they were dangerous, and they required courage."⁸

So how do you become courageous in a society that fosters passivism and timidity? David is a good case in point...he offered a counter-narrative to

8. John Edlredge, *Fathered by God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009): 71-72

the idea that everyone said Goliath could not be defeated. David said this to the mammoth colossal known as Goliath:

“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” (1 Sam. 17:45-47).

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

You want to leave this time at the end but it is a very good worship moment. Have a chain prayer (standing in a circle) where each man shares what they are afraid of (be sure to say that everybody does not have to pray if they are not comfortable) and prays to God about it with the group. Then you, as the teacher, close with a prayer of your own.

IN THE SPACE BELOW WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU PERSONALLY ARE AFRAID OF...BE SPECIFIC. THEN PRAY ABOUT IT.



HW ASSIGNMENT: Read “Scalded for Christ” and work through the discussion questions at home.

SCALDED FOR CHRIST

"Through Athens, Greece, runs one of the world's refugee highways, on which millions of desperate people travel after being forced from their homelands by violence, terror, and persecution. These refugees seek a safe place to end their journey and begin new lives in freedom and silence. In May 2006, a missionary in Athens, Kallie Skaife, reported what happened to an Iranian man identified as "M": In 2003, everything M knew was destroyed by an earthquake measuring 7.45 on the Richter scale. He was tortured by the question of why something like this would happen. He went to live with relatives in Afghanistan, was married, and had a daughter. But he was still filled with despair. Leaving his family behind, M headed west and ended up in Athens, staying with other relatives. Though he and all his family were Muslims, M became interested in Christianity, finding himself strangely drawn to the crosses he saw decorating the Orthodox churches in the city. M was given a Bible and started reading. Since his relatives forbade such a thing, M used a tiny flashlight to read during the night after his uncles were asleep. He studied the Bible this way for two years. Finally, M realized God was calling him to be born again. He contacted the refugee ministry center, declared his faith in Christ, and asked for more information. On Sunday, May 7, 2006, M set his alarm for 6:00 a.m. He wanted to spend time reading his Bible and praying because on that day he was to be baptized at a fellowship with other Iranian believers. But M's cousin had discovered the plan. Before M's alarm went off, the cousin boiled water in a saucepan and poured it on M while he slept, scalding both thighs and one arm. M came to the baptism anyway. Standing before those gathered, the burn on his arm clearly visible, M declared, "No matter what they do to me, I will love Jesus."⁹

Should we, on some level, be suffering for Christ? Why or why not?

In what ways have you suffered for Christ?

What hinders you from being courageous for Christ?

Do you think the church is suffering for not suffering?

Read these Scriptures for further study: Matthew 24:7–14; 28:19; Mark 1:9–13; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 1:6–7.

9. Craig Brian Larson and Phyllis Ten Elshof, eds., *1001 Illustrations that Connect*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008): 444.

LESSON #4: The Call to Passion



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

I was standing on the side of the intramural softball field at Freed-Hardeman University with Heather who was my girlfriend at the time. We

“A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from his passion, not his position.”

John Maxwell

we were talking with our backs to the field while one of the softball teams warmed up fielding grounders and throwing the ball to first base. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I see a ball flying over the fence and before I could say anything (and without any warning from the field) it smacks right in the back of Heather. The

sound is still with me to this day as it sounded like a hammer hitting a piece of plywood. Heather immediately dropped to the ground writhing in pain, tears pouring out of her eyes. I look over to the field and none of them are doing anything about it. They were former FHU baseball players reliving the glory on the intramural team and I was more than furious. I started screaming at the players (knowing full well each one of them could manhandle me on any given day) letting them know the idiocy of them not warning us and what if it hit someone in the head. I was willing to go through walls for Heather because she was hurt. She was my “damsel in distress” and I aimed to help her in time of need.

- ✂ Go up to the board and ask them this question, “What character traits do you think girls look for most in guys?”
- ✂ Allow for some debate about the issue and once you have collected all of the responses number them from least important to most important.

WHAT CHARACTER TRAITS DO YOU THINK GIRLS LOOK FOR MOST IN GUYS?

According to one website¹⁰ here are the top 5 character traits that Christian women look for in guys...

- #5 – **PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS**
- #4 – **PROVIDE A STABLE ENVIRONMENT**
- #3 – **A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR**
- #2 – **HONESTLY SHARE HIS FEELINGS**
- #1 – **PASSIONATE ABOUT HIS LORD**

These are left blank in the student books....

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

When you think of something that is passionate maybe from a Christian perspective passion is something we are at a loss for. I did a Google search for the word passion and the websites that came up were mostly devoted to pornography and other immoral things. I guess we struggle at defining passion because we can be passionate about so many things.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THINGS WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT?

10 . From <http://christian-dating-service-plus.com/what-christian-single-girls-want-in-a-guy.htm>. Not exactly an expert site on statistics but none the less it is something to go by.

Scripture can be just as confusing for the same word used for passion in a bad sense can also be used for good.

***Galatians 5:24 - Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*¹¹**

1 Timothy 3:1 - Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

What you see are two types of desire both from the same source. Both can be powerful but unfortunately lead to completely opposite results.

Passion is something that is strong and embedded in us that consumes us and sometimes gets the better of us. Like most things that God gives us: passion can be used for good and can be used for evil.

DISCUSS SOME WAYS PASSION CAN BE USED FOR BOTH GOOD AND EVIL. YOU CAN EVEN DISCUSS INSTANCES IN HISTORY.

The word “passion” comes from the Greek word *pascho* meaning “to endure or to suffer.” In many ways we struggle and suffer for those things we are most passionate about. For example, say you are passionate about the University of Alabama (bless your heart) football team. When they lose (hopefully to the University of Tennessee) a game often you become

11. Cf. Romans 7:5; 1 Cor. 7:9, 36; 1 Thess. 4:5; Titus 2:12; 3:3.

enraged and upset. In a sense you are suffering for something you are very passionate about.

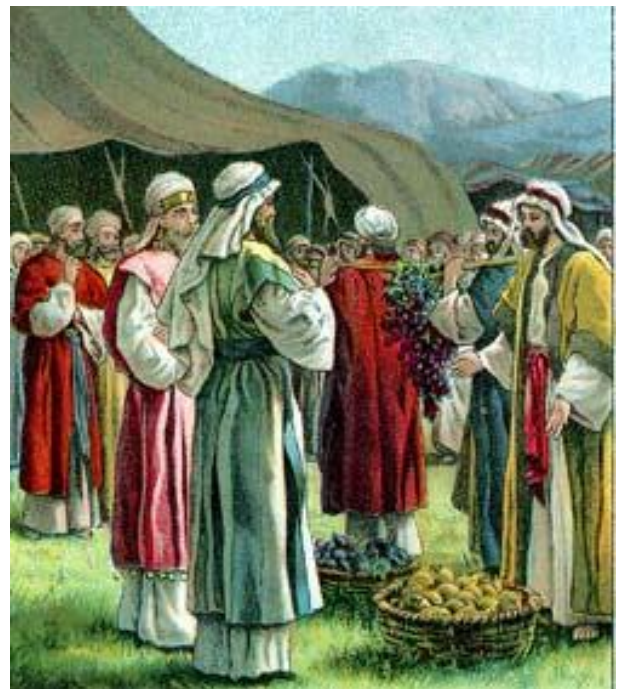
WHO ARE SOME PASSIONATE PEOPLE YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED?



Two of the most passionate people in Scripture (you could make a case for more but these are the ones that come to my mind) are Joshua and Caleb.

The people of Israel fled Egypt and wandered in the desert (wilderness) for a period of forty years. God told them, as early as Leviticus 20:23-24 that he would give them a land that flows with milk and honey. All the people had to do was follow the instructions God gave them and they would inherit the land. So they get close to Canaan and the Lord asks for spies to be sent out and Moses instructs a spy from each tribe is to go spy out the land (Num. 13:1-16). These were the instructions:

“When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, ‘Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or



poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.’ (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)” (Num. 13:17-20).

Sounds like a pretty easy task right? If you are a spy and have listened to Moses then you already know that the land is yours. The time of forty days passed and they returned to Moses with this report:

“We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan” (Num. 13:27-29).

What a bummer. Their reaction to the land is not that it is barren or unfruitful (“...here is its fruit”) rather they looked with their eyes and saw the vast numbers of people. Fear paralyzed them and because they were afraid and lacked passion they gave a horrible report. Caleb, however, disagreed:

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it’” (Num. 13:30).¹²

The people then said that there were too many people and that there was no way that they could possess the land. Moses and Aaron get caught up in the majority and start mourning because they too believe the land cannot be possessed (Num 13:31-14:5). The response by Joshua and Caleb is what you might call EPIC.

“Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, ‘The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk

¹² . Coincidentally, the words used in Caleb’s statement are also the same words used when God stated that they could “go up” and “possess” the land (see Ex. 3:8, 17; 33:3; Lev. 20:17).

and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them” (Num. 14:6-9).

The damage is done and the result is that only Joshua and Caleb get to enter the land. Moses, the leader of the Jews, would not even live to see the Promised Land but instead died on the wrong side of the river.

“The central rebellion, and thus the central sin, of Israel in Numbers is this anxious fear, which leads them finally to reject God and his plan for them. It is not a prideful rejection of God but something else. The sin in the Garden



of Eden is often interpreted to be a form of pride. Adam and Eve sin in response to the serpent’s lies (“you will not die.” “you will be like God”) and his implication that God did not have their best interests in mind when he forbade them to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:4-5). Lack of trust and pride when hand in hand with the garden. But the sin in Numbers, while sharing many features with the sin of Adam and Eve, is different. God is leading his people back to a place that has many analogies to the garden. Like the garden, the Promised Land is a fruitful place, a place where God and Israel will dwell again together in harmony. And like the garden, lies poison that harmony, but now, it is the scouts who lie, and the lie is not “you

will not die” but “you will die.” Because of their resulting lack of trust in God’s care they are unwilling to possess the land and take hold of its fruit. And yet, while they despair of God’s plan for them, they do not do nothing; instead they think that their own plan to return to Egypt will be better.”¹³

You might say that the central issue with Israel is that they lacked the passion to serve God with all of their hearts.

13. David L. Stubbs, *Numbers*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009): 130.

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

Allow some time for them to brainstorm...

WHAT WOULD YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE IF YOU LIVED A PASSIONATE LIFE? HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT? HOW WOULD IT BE THE SAME?



LESSON #5: The Call to Nobility



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

I was eating dinner at a restaurant one night when I noticed a teenage couple on a date together. It's funny to watch how teenagers react to one another because it turns out to be a socially awkward event because most of them are still unsure how to relate to the opposite sex. Specifically peaking my curiosity was the couple's lack of interest in each other whatsoever. Both of them were texting other people while eating their food. I assumed they liked each other because they were eating dinner together but other than that they did not act like they were interested. I continued watching as the couple got up and proceeded to leave the restaurant and the boy left first and did not hold the door for the girl and it almost hit her because she was texting...the entire time. I thought about how ludicrous it was for the boy to do that to the girl but then again, if she was texting the entire time and did not say one word to me then I would probably let the door hit her as well. Pretty harsh but both did not seem to be that "in" to each other.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD SPECIFIC LESSONS ON HOW TO TREAT WOMEN? FROM WHO? DO YOU THINK THAT IS IMPORTANT? WHY OR WHY NOT?



BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

What are you willing to do for the potential woman of your dreams? Scripture is not silent about men who did everything they could for the woman of their dreams. Joseph accepted ridicule for Mary because of her virgin conception and Abraham lied (totally not cool but noble) to protect his wife from Pharaoh. These men were noble in their efforts to seek the welfare of their women.

BUT WHAT IS NOBILITY? AS A CLASS COME UP WITH A DEFINITION OF NOBILITY THAT WORKS FOR THE CLASS.



There is a story in the Old Testament that bears witness to the fact that men of old were willing to do anything for that special someone even if that meant sacrificing for a period of time.

In Genesis 28:1-7 Isaac sent Jacob off to find a woman. Isaac was very old and his health was failing him and he wanted Jacob to be blessed and so he sent him to the house of Laban to take one of the daughters there to be his wife. So Jacob set out to find this woman and God came to him in a dream...

“Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There

above it stood the LORD, and he said: 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven'" (Gen. 28:10-17).

So Jacob went to the place his father told him to go and met the man he was supposed to meet. Look at what transpires next...

"While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd. When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. He had told Rachel that he



was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father. As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. Then Laban said to him, 'You are my own flesh and blood'" (Gen. 29:9-14).

First of all, I do not recommend you weeping the first time you kiss your wife but the emotions were too much for Jacob to handle. This was the

woman, literally, of his dreams and he would do anything for her...little did he know he would have to do everything for her. What happens next is sad for Jacob and for everyone involved.

“Laban said to him, ‘Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.’ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, ‘I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.’ Laban said, ‘It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.’ So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her.’ So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when

“Put more trust in nobility of character than in an oath.”

Solon

evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant. When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?’ Laban replied, ‘It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.’ And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years” (Gen. 29:15-30).

Tragic...Leah is caught in the middle of a diabolical scheme from Laban who uses all parties involved to his advantage. That is another lesson but what I want to discuss is Jacob. Jacob has the option of leaving. He did not have to stay but decided to do so. He loved Rachel far more and was willing to serve for her seven more years. Laban lied to him and now Jacob

is caught in a family feud which is what he was trying to run away from with his brother Esau trying to kill him.

HOW COULD JACOB BE DESCRIBED AS A PERSON OF NOBILITY?



Nobility of character means you do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

- ✘ Opening the door for women...all of them. Treating that significant other like she is a princess is a character of nobility. Men, this woman is a woman to be rescued and you are her knight in shining armor so act like it. Who cares if guys laugh at you? Go for it! Then when you have her...protect her.
- ✘ Being polite and respectful to all people with “Yes ma’am and Yes sir.” I see boys who are so disrespectful to those who are older and it is a sign of insolence. If I ever showed disrespect to my grandparents or anyone who was older my parents would rearrange my hide and make sure I understood what respect was.
- ✘ Standing up for what is right even when your friends are doing the wrong thing. This is a tough one but must be done because so many people at work and school are, for a lack of a better term, Christian posers. They act all Christian-like when it’s convenient but when their roll is called in difficult circumstances their relationship with God fails.

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

We have talked a lot about nobility in relationships but there are so many different areas in which we need to be noble.

WHAT AREAS IN LIFE DO WE NEED TO BE MORE NOBLE?



HW ASSIGNMENT: Go to <http://www.makeyourcoatofarms.com> and design a coat of arms to be used for the youth group men!!! This is very important because it will allow us to have certain values but also a plaque to commemorate our manhood and be a sign for men to come. Come up with a cool phrase to be put on the coat of arms. Print it out (it's free) then bring it next week and we will vote on our favorite one.



Figure 1 Mackenzie Family Crest

LESSON #6: The Call to Loyalty



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

- ✘ Hopefully the class has done their homework otherwise the point of last week's lesson will be moot.
- ✘ Before class gather materials to hang their crests on the wall. Allow each student to share their crest one-by-one and explain the meaning behind the symbols and why they chose what they chose. After each student share's their crest allow them to hang it on the wall to serve as a reminder for the rest of the class.
- ✘ Feel free to talk about lessons they learned from the coat of arms exercise.

Loyalty may seem like a characteristic that is not usually associated with a manly man but take a glance at Scripture and you will find that loyalty is a quality for men beyond most other qualities.

WHAT IS A GOOD DEFINITION FOR LOYALTY? WHAT ARE SOME SYNONYMS FOR LOYALTY?



In this lesson we will look at some qualities of those who are loyal by

looking at one of the most loyal characters in Scripture...Paul, the Apostle. But before we do that I want to ask you something...

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

WHEN YOU THINK OF LOYALTY WHO, IN YOUR LIFE, DO YOU THINK OF? WHY ARE THEY EXAMPLES OF LOYALTY?



Consider the Apostle Paul for a second. This man was called by Jesus soon after Paul had his part in the death of Stephen. That was not all as Luke records for us that Paul had a tenacious tendency to “destroy the church” that Jesus had died for (Acts 8:3). So why would Jesus choose the leading persecutor of the church to be the leading preacher for the church? My guess is that Jesus saw his loyalty and knew that if he could channel that loyalty to the kingdom of God then the benefits for the church would grow leaps and bounds.

“Loyalty is a feature in a boy's character that inspires boundless hope.”

Sir Robert Baden-Powell

Leaps and bounds it did grow as Paul was responsible for the growth of Christianity in much of Asia and present-day Europe. Look at some of the passages in Paul’s letters that show his devotion—his loyalty to Jesus Christ.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Rom 1:16).

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God” (2 Cor. 3:5).

“And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day” (2 Tim. 1:11-12).

Paul was a man who stood tall in difficult circumstances because of his loyalty. Consider this litany of suffering Paul endured...

“Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly



on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often

gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?” (2 Cor. 11:23-29).

What leads a man to suffer like this? It might be safe to say that Paul's

sufferings do not lead him to loyalty but Paul suffers because of his loyalty.

Charles Swindoll records a couple of outcomes of Paul's loyalty and his ability to stand tall but one resonates for this lesson:

"...when you stand tall you're so focused that you feel invincible. Now don't allow that thought to slip past too quickly. You may have never experienced that sort of bold abandon because you've not allowed yourself to be in a challenging situation. Most play it safe. It's more convenient to let someone else do the talking. It's easier to let another climb to the heights and risk falling. However, when the day arrives and you decide to stand tall for what's right, your focus on that all-important issue will give you a feeling of invincibility. The odds will mean nothing. You will be unimpressed with other folks sitting or standing in front of you. Neither credentials nor titles will intimidate you. Your convictions will carry you forward in a strength not your own. Like Paul, you will have become God's voice for that hour."¹⁴

WHO OR WHAT SHOULD WE BE LOYAL TO/FOR?

Obvious answers are God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Try to get them to go deeper than that especially in the context of men. Specifically who should men be loyal to?

Paul was not without his enemies when it came to loyalty. In 2 Corinthians 12:8 Paul says that a thorn in the flesh was given to him which he describes as a messenger of Satan. In Romans 7 Paul talks about the war between what he should not do and what he should do and how often he finds himself doing the things he should not do and not doing the things he

14. Charles Swindoll, *Paul*, Great Lives from God's Word Series, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002): 282.

should do. In other words, there was always something to stymie his loyalty or there was always an attempt by Satan to thwart Paul's dedication.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT GET IN THE WAY OF OUR LOYALTY?



So what can you do to become more loyal, more dedicated, more steadfast to God, to family and to others? Three things...

1. **FIND YOUR WEAKNESS** – What are you weakest in is probably where your loyalty disintegrates (Heb. 12:1-2).
2. **FORTIFY YOUR FAITH** – What good is a car that has no fuel in it? Make sure your faith is consistently nourished by the word of God (Matt. 4:4).
3. **FELLOWSHIP WITH FRIENDS** – Make sure you have friends who are loyal too and feed off of them and allow that to challenge and mold you (Prov. 18:18; 27:17).

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

We have talked a little about loyalty but there needs to a time of realization. A confession time if you will. Read the illustration below and then answer the question.

Jim and Phillip did everything together when they were kids. They

even went to high school and college together. After college they joined the marines together. They were both sent to Germany, where they fought side by side in one of history's ugliest wars.

During a fierce battle, they were given the command to retreat. As the men were running back, Jim noticed that Phillip hadn't returned with the others. Jim begged his commanding officer to let him go after his friend, but the officer forbade the request, saying it would be suicide.

Jim disobeyed and went after Phillip. His heart pounding, he ran into the gunfire, calling out for Phillip. A short time later, his platoon saw him hobbling across the field carrying a limp body in his arms. The commanding officer shouted at Jim for his outrageous risk. "Your friend is dead," he said. "There was nothing you could do."

"No sir," Jim replied. "I got there just in time. Before Phillip died, he said, 'I knew you would come.'"¹⁵

— John C. Maxwell and Dan Reiland,
The Treasure of a Friend (J. Countryman, 1999)

SAY CHRIST WERE WAITING ON YOU TO COME WHEN HE NEEDED YOU MOST, YOU WOULD YOU BE THERE TO ANSWER HIS CALL? ARE YOU LOYAL ENOUGH TO ANSWER YES?

YES NO

If no, why not? _____

15. Craig Brian Larson, Phyllis Ten Elshof, *1001 Illustrations that Connect*, 231-32.

LESSON #7: The Call to Encourage



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

I (Robbie) have a massive folder in my office that is on the floor beside my chair. In it are notes I have accumulated over the years from students, parents, and all sorts of people since I have been at Main Street. I keep them to remind me of how much I am loved so that in the dark days of my spiritual journey I can read these letters over and over to become encouraged by my impact on others. Here is an example of one-such letter:

Hey Robbie! I just wanted to thank you really quick for everything you have done for me over the last 5 years! Time has flown by so fast! I've had so much fun getting to know you and growing closer to you. I don't know how I would be right now if you weren't at Main Street. You're such an amazing youth minister and I'm so appreciative of you. Love, _____

That kind of thing keeps me going and when I am in the valleys it is letters like those that bring me back up.

TALK ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU WERE ENCOURAGED. WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES? HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL AFTERWARD?



BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

It is said that for every negative criticism you say about a person it takes (at least) three positive compliments to make up for that criticism. I am not sure if that is accurate but if you think long and hard in the deep recesses of your memory you probably can recall most of the negative things people say about you before you can think about the positive things people say.

WHY DO WE REMEMBER THE BAD MORE THAN THE GOOD?



Often our painful circumstances keep us from encouraging others. We often become bitter, cynical and somewhat sarcastic towards people instead of lifting them up and encouraging them.

WHAT ARE SOME REASONS AS TO WHY WE DO NOT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE LIKE WE SHOULD?



Jealousy? Anger? Selfishness? All of these are reasons we may not encourage others but are they biblical reasons for not encouraging someone?

Here's an interesting thought question: **IS THERE A BIBLICAL REASON FOR US TO NOT ENCOURAGE SOMEONE?**

- YES NO NOT SURE

Where in Scripture? _____

WHAT DOES THE WORD “ENCOURAGEMENT” MEAN?

Easy way to define it is to break the word apart. “To give courage!”

The Greek word for encourage that is used most often in the New Testament is the word **parakletos**. It means, literally, “a calling alongside of.” So when we encourage we literally are called alongside of someone in their time of need.

WHAT ARE GOOD MOMENTS TO ENGOURAGE SOMEONE?

Consider all of the verses in the New Testament that speak to/about encouragement.

“Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers” (Acts 15:32).

“After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them” (Acts 16:40).

“He [Paul] traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece” (Acts 20:2).

“Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).

“Remember, man does not live on bread alone: sometimes he needs a little buttering up.”

John Maxwell

“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith” (1 Thess. 3:2).

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11).

“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thess. 5:14).

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Heb. 3:13).

Do you get the picture? Encouragement is not only advised but it is commanded. The New Testament church did not grow by criticism and hateful denigration. It grew by the missional efforts of committed

LESSON #8: The Call to Lead



BRIEFING (10-15 MINUTES)

- ✂ Obtain a copy of *Remember the Titans* before class (ask anyone if you can borrow it) and make sure you have a TV and DVD player in class. Talk about the plot of *Remember the Titans* in how Herman Boone (a black coach played by Denzel Washington) is placed as head football coach of a newly integrated high-school to replace the current white coach Bill Yoast (played by Will Patton). The scene is in the racially charged south where blacks and whites are forced to go to school together because of Brown vs. Board of Education. Tensions arise but they must work together for the football team.
- ✂ Start the clip at **0:29:15**/ "All right, man, listen. I'm Gerry, you're Julius." End the clip at **0:34:00**/"And maybe learn to play this game like men."
- ✂ Ask the discussion questions below.¹⁶

JULIUS TELLS GERRY THAT ATTITUDE REFLECTS LEADERSHIP. HOW IS THIS TRUE?



16. Doug Fields and Eddie James, *Videos that Teach 3*, (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2004): 136-37.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE TOP THREE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A LEADER?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

BATTLE (15-20 MINUTES)

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, *“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”* Put into perspective there are two kinds of people in this world:

1. Those that are followers...
2. Those that are leaders...

At any given point a person is either leading or following. The Christian can have it both ways as he or she follows Christ but leads others while doing so.

WHEN YOU THINK OF THE LARGE STORY OF SCRIPTURE WHO ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF LEADERS? WHY WOULD YOU CONSIDER THEM LEADERS?

Probably one of the most revered men when it comes to leadership is the biblical character Nehemiah. The people of Israel went through a long period of disobedience to God and as a result the nation of Babylon came in and destroyed Jerusalem. They took many of the Israelites with them and thus the period of exile started. The walls of Jerusalem were destroyed and everything that reminded them of God was now destroyed.

Sometime later King Artaxerxes who was the Persian ruler let Nehemiah and others return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls (Neh. 2:1-9). It isn't long before Nehemiah encounters his first "haters":

"Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure."

Admiral Arleigh A. Burke

"When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites" (Neh. 2:10).

They could not stand the thought of Hebrews let alone that they come for prosperity. Nonetheless Nehemiah and the people of Israel agree that it is very important for God and for the nation of Israel to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:11-18). More criticism came...

"But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. 'What is this you are doing?' they asked. 'Are you rebelling against the king?'" (Neh. 2:19).

Nehemiah stated that God would see that the work would be done (2:20) and so he assembles the workers (Neh. 3) and they begin the arduous task of rebuilding a wall that would take years to finish. More criticism came...

"When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, 'What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of

rubble—burned as they are?’ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, ‘What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!’” (4:1-3).

Notice that they tried to evoke the power of God against them. They are getting a little desperate. Nehemiah is troubled but continues working without answering their criticism...

“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart” (4:6).

More opposition came...

“But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls

had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it” (4:7-8).

“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.”

John Kenneth Galbraith

The people became bothered but Nehemiah asked that they pray and then devised a plan to where half of the men did the rebuilt the walls and half of them guarded (4:9-23). In the meantime Nehemiah wins the people over with

his courageous leadership by helping the poor (Neh. 5) in their time of need. Realizing their defeat Sanballat and Tobiah devise a plan to capture Nehemiah and distract him from doing the work he was called to do.

“When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates— Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: ‘Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono’” (6:1-2a).

What Nehemiah says is something that should characterize all leaders everywhere. It is a group of words that drives my ministry and creates a passion in me that keeps me focused on what I have to do.

“But they were scheming to harm me; so I sent messengers to them with this reply: ‘I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?’ Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer” (6:2b-4).

There have been many times as a leader I have been criticized for making certain decisions. People say that I cannot do this or cannot reach that person and I am always reminded of the story of Nehemiah and I say to myself: “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down!”

4 qualities of Nehemiah’s Leadership all men need to follow:

1. He was **committed**! He knew exactly what needed to happen.
2. He was **respected**! Why? Because they could trust him.
3. He was **calm**! The fancy term for this is non-anxious leadership. People who are anxious and make rash decisions based on emotions are not effective leaders in the long run. There was much calm in the storm. When people were freaking out Nehemiah brought the people together and said: “Let’s pray!”
4. He was **humble**! It was never about him but about God and what he could do through him.

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

In what areas of the church could you be leaders? I want you to brainstorm both in the public atmosphere and private. Write down some areas where you could use your leadership.



LESSON #9: The Call to Learn



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

One of my favorite movies of all time is *Patch Adams* which chronicles the life of Dr. Patch Adams. Adams graduated high-school in 1963 but never earned a bachelor's degree.

Instead he went straight to medical school and was accepted. He earned his Doctor of Medicine in 1971 from Virginia Commonwealth University then started an institute to give patients free medical care called the Gesundheit! Institute. His dream is to have a 40 bed hospital that is a full-care facility to those who need care but cannot afford insurance. I love Dr. Adams because he is a lifetime learner but uses his learning to help others in the process.



WHAT ARE SOME STORIES OF “LIFETIME LEARNERS” YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED?

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

There is never a point in our lives where we can say that we have learned it all. Eartha Kitt (singer of the song “Santa Baby”) once said, “*I am learning all the time. The tombstone will be my diploma.*” Our lives should be filled with moments where we look back and learn from them. When I think of someone in Scripture who was a learner my first thought is the apostle Peter. Consider some of Peter’s mishaps:

- ***Peter lacked the faith necessary when he walked on the water (Matt. 14:22-31).***
- ***Peter rebuked Jesus because the Lord said he was going to go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed (Matt. 16:21-23). This is where Jesus told Peter, “Get behind me Satan.”***
- ***Peter is apprehensive about leaving everything for following Jesus (Matt. 19:27).***
- ***Peter refutes the idea that he will deny Jesus (Matt. 26:31-35) to the point where he says that even if he has to die with Jesus he will not deny him. What happens next? Peter denies Jesus (Matt. 26:69-75).***
- ***Peter cut off one of the soldier’s ears because they were arresting Jesus (John 18:9-12).***
- ***Peter refused to eat with Gentiles when Jews were around and was rebuked by Paul (Gal. 2:11-14).***

IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE PETER WITH ONE WORD AT THIS POINT WHAT WOULD IT BE?



I firmly believe Peter looked at his past and all of the mistakes and was able, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to write two of the most epic books in the New Testament. Consider what he wrote towards the end of his life:

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins” (2 Peter 1:5-9).

What is the apostle Peter saying? He is saying that based on his life circumstances and hard lessons we should always be in the state of mind where we are adding to our faith.

HOW DO YOU ADD TO YOUR FAITH?



Some of the greatest literature about learning is in the book of Proverbs. Solomon was the wisest person of his day and wrote down thousands of proverbs based on his life circumstances. You could say that Proverbs is his memento to what he has learned that will keep us wise all of our days. How do you learn according to Solomon?

“Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance” (Prov. 1:5).

“Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning” (9:9).

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed” (Prov. 13:22).

“Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke the discerning, and they will gain knowledge” (19:25).

“There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord” (21:30).

“Buy the truth and do not sell it— wisdom, instruction and insight as well” (23:23).

“I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw” (24:32).

“I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday.”

Abraham Lincoln

WHAT DO THE VERSES ABOVE SAY ABOUT LEARNING?



You could say that Solomon knew what he was talking about! Solomon knew about the great things in life but he also knew about the painful things in life.

So where do we learn from? Who are our teachers per se and what are we

supposed to do with our knowledge?

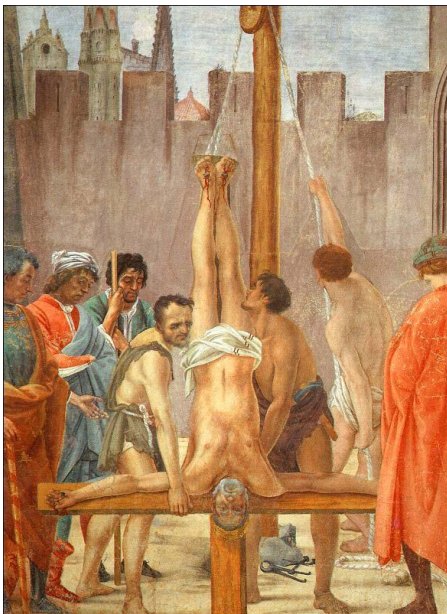
In life circumstances it seems that we learn from three areas:

1. From **direct teaching!** Mentors, ministers, parents and Scripture all are co-teachers in our life classroom. They sit down one with another teaching us about life and how to live.
2. From our **victories!** Great moments in life where we triumphed in the face of adversity will teach to repeat the same procedures that led to the same outcome.
3. From our **mistakes!** Sometimes you may not know what to do but you know what not to do. The stupid decisions of our lives can be learned from in a positive manner that will help us become more mature.

So what do we do with our learning?

1. **Teach!** Everything we do and learn from is a teachable moment to someone who needs it.
2. **Mature!** *“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ”* (Col. 1:28).

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)



Peter was a lifetime learner and paid for it in the most ultimate way. Origen, an early church father, records that the apostle Peter was in Rome when he was crucified. His last request was that he be crucified upside down because he was not worth to die in the way that Jesus did. I think Peter learned until he died. What about you?

LESSON #10: The Call to Purity



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

Dear Teacher,

I know you would much rather skip this lesson and move on to the next. That would be unwise and unhelpful. This lesson will be awkward at best but must be taught. Please do not gloss over the facts and do not devalue the importance of the subject. Men all over in the church are cheating on their wives or engaging themselves sexually before marriage and it is because a helpful theology on sex does not exist in the church. Not anymore. Pray before the lesson...pray during the lesson...pray after the lesson. Be strong...they need you.

Robbie Mackenzie

- “Although only 13% of teens have ever had vaginal sex by age 15, sexual activity is common by the late teen years. By their 19th birthday, seven in 10 teens of both sexes have had intercourse.”¹⁷

- Earlier this year (2004), four students between the ages of 12 and 16 were arrested and charged with lewd and lascivious conduct. A 13-year-old girl had engaged three boys in oral sex on the school bus. Allegedly, these actions were planned several hours in advance.¹⁸

- "Middle School Confessions," an HBO documentary about adolescent life today, reported pre-teens "as young as 11 talking about giving and receiving oral sex."
- A recent article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* quotes a Rutgers University sex educator regarding oral sex, "At the back of the bus, in classrooms, in gyms when no one's around—all over the school it's happening."

17. "Facts on American Teens' Sexual and Reproductive Health," *Guttmacher Institute*, accessed online <January 31, 2011>, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/FB-ATSRH.html>>.

18. Chris Wagner, "Oral Sex IS Sex, and most teens don't know it," *Center for Parent Youth Understanding*, accessed online (January 31, 2011), <<https://www.cpyu.org/Page.aspx?id=77160>>.

- Two Florida high school students were caught having oral sex in the back of a classroom while the rest of the class watched a movie shown by a substitute teacher.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY IS RAMPANT IN OUR CULTURE AND TO ILLUSTRATE THIS I WANT YOU TO RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO EITHER IS OR HAS BEEN SEXUALLY INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE ELSE

Circle the percentage of hands that went up...

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

100%

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

For the most part churches have not done an effective job at training men to keep themselves pure. Typically the church will have a class that talks about sex but in a context where it is negative. A teacher or youth minister will say, "Don't do it!" and nothing good is discussed about sex.

The reality of the situation is that guys have one thing going against them: testosterone. It hurt David...it hurt Samson and it hurts you and me.

Before we begin it might be a good time to ask the basic question that moves into any discussion about sex and purity.

WHY BOTHER WITH A DISCUSSION ABOUT PURITY? IN OTHER WORDS, IS THERE A NEED TO DISCUSS PURITY IN THE CHURCH CONTEXT AND IF SO, WHY?



I (Robbie speaking) that there is a strong need to discuss purity and there are four **MAJOR** reasons...

Number ONE – Scripture Demands it...

Number TWO – Nobody else is talking about it...

Number THREE – We are losing too many men to their lustful pleasures...

Number FOUR – We need to spread the love...

Let's look at what the Scriptures say about purity. Write below each verse what it says about purity.

“Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god” (Psalm 24:3-5).

“Purity of heart is blooming the same colors in the middle of the wilderness when no one sees you.”

Vanna Banta

***“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart”
(Psalm 73:1).***

***“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living
according to your word” (Psalm 119:9).***

*“Purity of heart is to will one
thing.”*

Søren Kierkegaard

***“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will
see God” (Matt. 5:8).***

***“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but
set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in
faith and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).***

***“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith,
love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of
a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22).***

***“Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own
husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they
may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,
when they see the purity and reverence of your lives” (1 Pet. 3:1-
2).***

I know...I know...you probably know all of the verses about purity and you have heard them over and over again.



“They don’t make a difference to me because I still struggle with _____ and I can’t get over it.”

Perhaps you have signed the purity pledge or you have a purity ring, necklace, and wristband but all of them have not worked and you still

struggle.

I think I know why you struggle...

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

It is what you are looking at that kills you...it is a visual problem. That is why Jesus said this...

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

Why would Jesus say that? Because he knows what men struggle with and once a man looks at something it creates passion in his heart that causes him to do evil things. David’s downfall did not begin when he had sex with Bathsheba but when he was watching her bathe from the rooftop (2 Sam. 11:2). Not that eyes is the beginning of the downfall but it was his inward desire.

So what to do?

1. **Release your denial.** What do you struggle with? Sexual Fantasies? Pornography? Masturbation? Oral Sex? Sexual Intercourse? Admit your weaknesses.
2. **Find an accountability partner.** Someone you trust but who is not struggling with what you are struggling with. Two people who are addicted to cocaine will not be helpful partners in accountability. You need someone who is wise and will hold you to your word. It is awkward but what's the alternative? Denial? No improvement?
3. **Sexual passion is not all bad.** You have testosterone for a reason. God made men the way he did for a reason. It is not bad when you encounter a beautiful woman and find yourself physically and emotionally attracted by her. It's not bad when you hold that woman's hand and your blood starts pumping...you start losing your train of thought...and you are consumed by the thought of her. It is bad when you chase that passion down a road God has not blessed.
4. **Everyone has second chances.** You can start over with God. You can do that right now (2 Pet. 3:8).

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

I (Robbie) was talking with a minister who was counseling a couple who were about to get married. He told me that he painted the biblical picture of sex as something that is good and perfect in the confines of a marriage. He talked about Song of Solomon and how much passion the couple in that book had for each other. The minister said he paused and waited for a response from the couple and they looked at each other and looked at him and the woman spoke up and said, "Brother _____, I can't wait to make love with my husband!!!"

That's awesome! She wanted to wait until the right time but the thought of it made her passionate about the journey until they said, "I do!"

Do you think purity is possible with the help of God and others?

Can you do it?

Will you do it?

Read and pray this 15 times before you dismiss...pick a version you like...

Psalm 51:10

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (NIV).

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (ESV).

“Create in me a pure heart, God, and make my spirit right again” (NCV).

“Create pure thoughts in me and make me faithful again” (CEV).

“God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life” (The Message).

LESSON #11: The Call to Humility



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

Growing up I (Robbie) would characterized my life as most teenagers do and that was a life of selfishness and narcissism. There was neither a pleasure I did not indulge in nor a desire I did not quench and my insatiable appetite saw no boundaries or limitations. The same attitude prevailed as I attended college and even though I became a Christian I still struggled with letting my life go to be completely His. Things started to change when I married my wife as she revealed to me my sin of selfishness and greed. Slowly I started seeing that if this relationship was going to work I had to realize that there are more important things in this world than me. Things really started to change when my children came into the world and with each child a layer of selfishness peeled off like layers of an onion. As I am writing this my mind still races towards selfish thoughts and personal gain but there are five other people who depend on me to serve them that will suffer if I am selfish.

WHAT ARE SOME STRUGGLES YOU/PEOPLE HAVE WITH SELFISHNESS? HOW DO YOU SEE IT IN SCHOOLS, WORK OR AMONG YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS?



BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

Pick a Biblical character who struggled and behind every struggle is idolatry. Behind idolatry is the idea of selfishness because we want personal gain from the things we idolize. Take the first sin for example...

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, „Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”?” “The woman said to the serpent, „We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”“ „You will not certainly die,“ the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (Gen. 3:1-7).

What about this action honors God? It was all about her...

“...she saw the fruit of the tree was good for food...”

“...pleasing to the eye...”

“....desirable for gaining wisdom...”

It was all about her. It was about what could help her prosper and since it would help her increase in things she saw this as good. Selfishness veered Adam and Eve from perfection...from the Garden and all of humanity is playing catch-up because of this one act.

IN WHAT WAYS DOES SELFISHNESS VEER US FROM THE PATH?



“It is not scientific doubt, not atheism, not pantheism, not agnosticism, that in our day and in this land is likely to quench the light of the gospel. It is a proud, sensuous, selfish, luxurious, church-going, hollow-hearted prosperity.”¹⁹

RESPOND TO THAT QUOTE...DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE? WHY?



Look around you men...do you really see Christians living selfless lives or does selfishness pervade? Be honest!

What do the Scriptures say about selfishness? What do the Scriptures say about selfishness?

“An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels” (Prov. 18:1).

“It is not because the truth is too difficult to see that we make mistakes... we make mistakes because the easiest and most comfortable course for us is to seek insight where it accords with our emotions - especially selfish ones.”

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

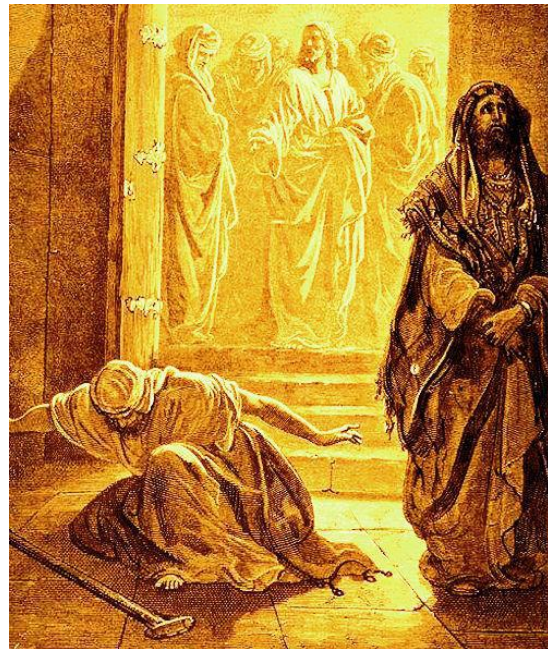
19. Frederic D. Huntington, in *Forum Magazine*, 1890.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” (Phil. 2:3).

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:16).

The problem is that we are human and in every human is the desire to look out for ourselves and to not think of other people. It is our fallen condition. So what do we do?

“Some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: „Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: “God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.” But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 18:9-14).



To be a tax collector in Israel was almost an immediate warrant for a miserable life. People hated tax collectors because they would often cheat people for their own **SELFISH GAIN**. No doubt the tax collector here is convicted about many times perhaps he cheated people. He can do nothing but lower his head in defeat at what he has done. The Pharisee is the opposite who glories in his dutiful accomplishments and brags a little at everything he has done. If there were a person to receive a superlative for

the Most Likely to Succeed in Judaism the Pharisee would put himself at the top of the list.

What does Jesus say? It's not about what you have done but about who you are and how you posture yourself in the face of the Almighty God. I rewrote Luke 18:9-14 maybe in youth group terminology...

Jesus told the youth group a parable because they thought they were amazing Christians. Two teenagers attended worship services at the church one Sunday. James listened to the songs, played on his I-Pod and texted a little bit during the sermon. He thought to himself: "I am good because I go to services three times a week, go to functions with the youth group and even have a little Acapella on my I-pod. Besides, I don't drink and cuss like Greg does who sits in the back of the auditorium once a week. He doesn't even help out with the youth group!!!" Greg was listening to the sermon but he couldn't stand to sit with the youth group because they were a bunch of stuck-up hypocrites. Greg listened as the preacher talked about the grace extended by God on the cross and that no matter what a person does or has done God already forgave them. Greg was convicted one Sunday and went forward and fell on his knees crying asking for mercy and forgiveness. Jesus told the youth group that Greg went home closer to God than James. Whoever quits being selfish will grow closer to God but whoever remains selfish will fall away from God.

A manly man is one who for the rest of his life serves God and serves other people. There is no step-by-step process to humility but it is a daily struggle to say: —God this morning I am alive because of You! I therefore will live for you today!|| Francis Chan summarizes it best:

"To be brutally honest it doesn't matter what place you find yourself in right now. Your part is to bring Him glory—whether eating a sandwich on lunch break, drinking coffee at 12:04 a.m. so you can stay awake to study, or watching your four-month-old take a nap. The point of your life is to point to Him. Whatever you are doing God wants to be glorified, because this whole thing is His. It is His movie, His world, His gift."²⁰

20. Francis Chan, *Crazy Love* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008): 42-43

DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

Read these Scriptures on humility and then after a period of 5 minutes divide into groups of two and pray with another man about struggles of humility or just ask God to make you humble...be careful though...he just might do it.

“You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low” (2 Sam. 22:28).

“Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way” (Psalm 25:8-9).

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Eph. 4:2).

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:10).

“In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, „God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:5-7).

LESSON #12: The Call to Eternity



BRIEFING (5-10 MINUTES)

If we could have all qualities of a manly man listed from top to bottom and then put those qualities on a board somewhere what would you put on the top?



Was it humility? Courage? Passion? Nobility? I recently came across this blog post by a girl who watched the movie *The Notebook* and gave 10 qualities women want in men.²¹

- 1.) Men who are willing to makes fools of themselves to show how much they want to be with you.
- 2.) Men who are persistent.
- 3.) Men who only have eyes for one woman.
- 4.) Men who keep their promises regardless of circumstances.

21. MidoriLei, "10 Qualities Women Want In Men - Based On "The Notebook," *Dating Advice from a Girl*, (Accessed February 16, 2011), <http://datingadvicefromagirl.com/10-qualities-women-want-in-men-based-on-the-notebook_26/>.

- 5.) Men who do the loving thing even when it hurts.
- 6.) Men who esteem themselves not because of worldly accomplishments but in the accomplishment of loving another deeply.
- 7.) Men who really listen.
- 8.) Men who would tell the truth, risk hurting our feelings, and fight with us rather than withdraw and brush issues under the rug to preserve peace.
- 9.) Men who are realists.
- 10.) Men who want us till-death-do-us-part.



WHAT ARE YOUR REACTIONS TO THIS LIST?

A large, empty gray rectangular area intended for the reader to write their reactions to the list.

Aside from the fact that measuring men based on the Notebook is insane there is one key ingredient missing from this list...GOD!!! This list is, in my opinion, a great list and a good springboard for discussion however it is

missing the idea that girls look for in guys everything else other than God.

You're not out of the boat either...don't you do the same thing with girls? A girl that attracts you is probably a girl that is a hottie...just saying. That is not a bad thing but at the end of the day that hottie better have a relationship with the Lord otherwise you want her for all the wrong reasons.

Can I get an AMEN BROTHA?

BATTLE (20-25 MINUTES)

There is no secret to the direction I want to go in that the most redemptive quality a man can have is this: He is a Christian.

If you get nothing out of this lesson I want you to know that the apex, the foundation and the glue that is your identity is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Consider these verses:

“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14).

You have probably heard those verses over and over again from preacher after preacher. What you have not heard is that this comes from a book in the bible called Ecclesiastes. This book is about the vapor of how fast things like money, power, prestige and wisdom pass away. The one thing that **DOES NOT** change, pass away or fade is that God is still in control.

Notice that the duty of all mankind is encapsulated into two things:

1. Fear God...what does that mean?
2. Keep his commandments.

Consider these other verses pointing to the need for men to be concerned about eternal life...

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16).

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day” (John 6:54).

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28).

“Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25).

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:22-23).

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

“Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8).

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12).

“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus,

with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10).

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:7-10).

“Our resurrection is the beginning of the future age and at the end of this one. For in that age, there is neither past nor future, but only the present.”

Methodius c. 290 A.D.

“And this is what he promised us— eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life” (Jude 20-21).

A bit redundant right? A little over the top? What’s the point?

Wait...let me ask you...

WHY SHOULD ETERNITY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOCUS OF A MAN?



Think of all the qualities of manhood we have talked about...

HOW COULD A FOCUS ON ETERNITY IMPROVE EVERY OTHER FACET OR QUALITY OF OUR LIVES?



DEBRIEF (5-10 MINUTES)

Gut check time...where are you at with this quality? As morbid as this may seem...if you were to die tonight would you be safe?



John wrote, as we learned above, that we should know that we are saved and that we have eternal life waiting for us.

We should know.

Perhaps you are not humble, courageous, passionate or any of those qualities because it is just about you. Perhaps it has been just about you all along.

No wonder you can't feel the presence of God because you are not saved. Get saved right now! Either confess and have your sins forgiven or get baptized right now!!! Then you will experience this...

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

