

# GROW MEN

## FORMATION OF BIBLICAL MANHOOD



# BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

## *A Message from Pastor Jason and Pastor David*

If you're in a FOURmation Group or even just opening this guide, let me begin by saying this: **God is up to something in your life.** We are living in a cultural moment where biblical manhood is both deeply needed and deeply misunderstood. Confusion about what it means to be a man does not stay theoretical—it shows up in marriages, families, churches, and communities. God is calling men to step off the sidelines and into the purpose and identity He has given them. A disciple, as Dallas Willard so clearly put it, is “a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn to live the way Jesus said to live.” Following Jesus is not partial or convenient. It is a surrendered life. At Revolution Church, we often talk about abiding in Jesus because formation is unavoidable. The question is not *if* you are being formed, but *who* is forming you. Biblical manhood begins with identity in Christ. You cannot rightly lead, love, provide, or protect unless you first understand who you are in Him. This is more than studying the Bible. It is a practical game plan for shaping a **Rule of Life**—a way of ordering your life around Jesus in community. You were not created to fight alone. Growth happens best alongside other men. Don’t just read this—let it read you. Let it expose compromise, challenge passivity, and point you back to Jesus, the perfect model of manhood. A lasting legacy begins with daily faithfulness.

— **Jason Gerdes, Lead Pastor**

Revolution Church exists to love Jesus and grow people. That’s our mission. We want to give you the tools, like creating a **Rule of Life**, to help you follow Jesus in community for the purpose of loving your neighbors. Discipleship is the lifelong process of learning how to live in the new family of Jesus—becoming more like Him in our thoughts, desires, and actions. A vital part of that process is understanding who God created you to be as a man. The Bible presents four foundational callings that help describe God’s design for biblical manhood: **Lover, Leader, Provider, Protector**. Most of us have not faced a physical war like World War I or World War II, yet we are all living in the midst of a cultural and spiritual conflict that seeks to hollow out biblical manhood. This battle targets identity, responsibility, and faithfulness. History reminds us that societies rise and fall in large part based on the role their men embrace or abandon. When men disengage, families weaken. When families weaken, churches and cultures follow. This is not a call to aggression, but to obedience. Scripture calls men to stand firm, to love sacrificially, to lead humbly, and to trust God fully. This guide exists to provide a clear strategy and practical tools for pursuing authentic biblical manhood—together. The sessions that follow are built around the core competencies of biblical manhood. Move at a pace that allows for honest conversation and real change. The goal is not completion, but transformation. You cannot change yourself or your family by sheer effort. Only God brings growth through His Spirit and His Word. Sow faithfully, seek Him daily, and trust Him with the results. Or as Pastor Jason says: “Trust God and take a nap.” Special thanks to our friends at Crosspoint City Church for their guidance and sharing content with us.

— **David Stein, Discipleship Pastor**

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed for **FOURmation Groups** of men walking together in intentional discipleship. Remember, a **DISCIPLE** is someone who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn to live the way Jesus said to live. In the context here at Revolution, it's someone who is:

**Grounded in the Gospel**

**Rooted in Relationships**

**Operating in Obedience**

**Walking in Good Works**

If you are just starting a FOURmation Group or you already have a FOURmation Group, use this as your guide in addition to working your Rule of Life. Move at a pace that fits your group—8 weeks, 16 weeks, or longer. The goal is not speed, but obedience and growth to become men who live out faithfully their identity in Christ.

Each session follows the same rhythm starting with scripture, commentary on the session topic, and followed by the REAP method:

**READ** – What does God say?

**EXAMINE** – What does God mean?

**APPLY** – What does God want us to do?

**PRAY** – Respond to God's Word using scripture to pray

Each session also includes application for your **Rule of Life** you created in the ABIDE Cohort.

As you go through this, it's great to be mindful of one of our Family Culture Statements: We sow. God grows. (1 Corinthians 3:6)

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## SESSION 1: WE NEED EACH OTHER

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

We have something in common. Whether you are aware of it or not, or like it or not, you are engaged in a war. Scripture tells us that as followers of Christ, we have an enemy who is like a roaring lion seeking to devour us and our brothers around the world. The lion always goes after the stray. Thus, we are instructed to be sober-minded and live watchful lives (1 Peter 5:8). The war we find ourselves in is Satan's attempt to hurt God through attacking His imago Dei. God, however, has given us allies and resources to equip, protect, and deliver us. The Holy Spirit, the Word of God, prayer, and each other, to name a few. Sadly, most men go through life foolishly isolated from other men who could come alongside them. And then, when they need a friend, they find it's too late to make one. Men are experts in isolation.

God never intended for us to live this way. We were made from love, for love. We were made for relationships—to help one another, celebrate with each other, encourage and strengthen one another, and carry one another's burdens. In this study, we will look at some key relationships found in Scripture. Our prayer is for your FOURmation Group to be men who will sharpen you, and that you can sharpen just as the scripture says (Proverbs 27:17). Darrin Patrick says it really well in his book, *The Dude's Guide to Manhood Study Guide: Finding True Manliness in a World of Counterfeits*:

*"Cultivate relationships with others before we need them. The best way to grow before our circumstances force us to is to cultivate relationships with others. There is no coachability apart from the risk and accountability that comes with being in relationships with others. Part of the problem is that we have no idea what a friend actually is. A friend is someone who knows your hopes, dreams, and fears. They don't stay on the surface—they go deep. And they are committed to help you conquer your fears, live out your dreams, and grow in your character."*

— **Darrin Patrick**

Biblical manhood is never formed in isolation. God designed men to grow, contend, and persevere together. From the beginning, God declared that it is not good for man to be alone. Brotherhood is not a modern strategy—it is a biblical design. Following Christ places men in spiritual opposition to the enemy, and isolation leaves them exposed. Scripture repeatedly affirms that growth, endurance, and faithfulness happen in community. Men sharpen one another through presence, truth-telling, shared obedience, and mutual burden-bearing. The Christian life is personal, but never private. Men who withdraw from godly relationships do not become self-sufficient—they become vulnerable. God uses other men as instruments of encouragement, protection, and growth.

## READ

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12; 1 Peter 5:8–9; Proverbs 27:17; Hebrews 10:24–25; Genesis 2:18; Galatians 6:2

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- Where are you currently isolated, and what fruit (or lack of fruit) is that producing in your life?
- **Rule of Life application:** Where in your Rule of Life is room to build intentional relationships with other men? How is that going?

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Ask God to expose pride, fear, or passivity that keeps you isolated. Pray for humility and courage to pursue brotherhood.

## SESSION 2: LOVER

*And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.*

*And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

*On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

**Matthew 22:35-40**

Love. Much has been written and sung about love. Old (like, really old) movies, such as *Love Story*, proclaim that love means never having to say you're sorry. We highly recommend that you not look to Hollywood for love advice. *Top Gun* brought back a classic from the 60's "You've Lost That Loving Feeling." The premise of the song is that love is a feeling that you can gain or lose. Indicators that you've lost it include not having tenderness in your fingertips and not closing your eyes when you kiss. Now you probably have that song in your head the rest of the day... you're welcome.

So, what is love? Is it a romantic feeling? Or, is it an action? If you look it up, most definitions relate to a feeling, such as affection or attraction. This, however, misses the mark of what Jesus is describing in Matthew 22 completely. The love that Jesus described is a call to action. We see this throughout Scripture. God demonstrates His love through Jesus laying down His life (Rom. 5:8), the behaviors of love (1 Cor. 13), a husband showing love to his wife (Eph. 5:25), and putting on love towards one another (Col. 3:14).

In this session, we examine scriptures about the call to love and how we can love God and our neighbors, which includes wives, children, families, friends, coworkers, and others. It's an impossible task on our own, but praise God, we have the Holy Spirit, who works God's love into us and then outward to others as we surrender our lives to Him, moment by moment.

Rick Warren says that people often come to him and say, "Rick, my problem is I don't love God enough." He says his response is always, "Your problem is not that you don't love God enough, it's that you don't understand (or haven't grasped) his love for you." The starting place of loving God is recognizing and receiving. His love for us by repenting and trusting in Christ alone for right standing with God. This is where it begins, as declared in John 3:16.

Biblical love is not defined by feeling but demonstrated through Christlike, sacrificial action. Culture treats love as emotion or attraction. Scripture presents love as obedience, commitment, and self-giving action. God defines love by what He does—most clearly in Christ laying down His life. Loving God begins by receiving His love through repentance and faith. From that foundation, love flows outward toward wives, children, neighbors, and even enemies. This love is not manufactured by effort but produced by the Holy Spirit in surrendered lives. Love is proven not by intensity of feeling, but by consistency of obedience.

## READ

Matthew 22:35–40; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:14; John 14:15

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- Where is God calling you to move from verbal affection to visible action?
- Which relationship currently requires sacrificial love shaped by Christ?
- **Rule of Life application:** Identify one daily or weekly practice in your Rule of Life (prayer, Scripture, presence, hospitality, service). This week, intentionally practice it as an act of love, not duty—toward God and toward others.
- **If you are not married or a father:** loving others well now is preparation, not delay. Faithful love toward friends, family members, coworkers, and the church forms habits that carry into future callings.

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Thank God for His initiating love. Ask the Spirit to form obedient, enduring love in you.

## SESSION 3: LEADER

*But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you.*

*But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

**Matthew 20:25-28**

Leadership. Greatness. Celebrity status. There is something that seems so appealing about these. Perhaps it's the reward or recognition we perceive that accompanies them. The apostles weren't exempt from the allure. Luke records an incident in his Gospel (Luke 22:24-30), in which a dispute broke out among the apostles about which of them would be regarded as the greatest. Some 2,000 years later, we look back on this incident and chuckle at the absurdity of the scenario. Think about it, twelve grown men, first-hand witnesses to miracles, teaching the likes of which no one had ever heard, doing life with the Son of Man Himself, arguing amongst themselves as to which of them would be regarded as the greatest. Jesus, the greatest who would ever live, turned the argument into a teachable moment that would define leadership and greatness for all time. Greatness and leadership are directly tied to service. To be a great leader, you must become a great servant. In other words, he who serves best leads the best. Just a guess, but upon hearing this, the apostles got quiet in a hurry. They probably never argued over who would be the greatest again (assuming that Mark and Matthew's gospels record this same encounter).

It's not about who will be the best leader or the greatest. It's about being the best leader you can be in the spheres of influence (husband, father, work, friend, neighbor, volunteer) you have been given.

How do I lead well? Start by leading yourself well. To do this, you must be following Jesus. Ministry happens out of the overflow of what He is doing in our own lives. So to lead well, follow Him always.

In this part, we examine the keys to effective leadership: following Him, walking in humility, and serving. When it comes to serving, a good question to ask yourself in every encounter you have is, "What is God doing in this person's life, and how can He use me to help?" One of the greatest impacts we can have in any relationship is to serve that person by listening to them and encouraging them. This is especially true when it comes to spouses. Newsflash, fellas, your wife does not want to be fixed. She wants to be heard and then comforted or encouraged. A good question to ask her is how can I help? I don't know why this is so hard for us guys but it is. Stop trying to be "Mr. Fix-it" and begin to practice being present, then listening and affirming. This is a great practice for wives, kids, employees, neighbors, etc.

Biblical leadership is servant leadership that flows from following Jesus faithfully. Jesus redefined leadership. Greatness is not found in authority, recognition, or control, but in humility and service. Biblical leaders lead by example, not domination. Leadership begins with leading self. Men cannot lead others where they are unwilling to go themselves. God forms leaders through obedience,

faithfulness, and humility long before influence is visible. Men lead in every sphere they inhabit—home, work, church, and community—whether intentionally or passively. The first step is to lead yourself. How you steward responsibility today shapes your capacity for leadership tomorrow.

Before getting into the scripture, one more thing. The cost. One of our statements at Revolution is: Leadership is your next step of sacrifice. No matter what you lead, there is a cost. Consider John Maxwell's commentary on Aaron and Leviticus 7:33–35:

*"Aaron, like many leaders throughout history, received a divine calling. God chose Aaron and his sons to serve as Israel's priests and charged them with carrying out rituals and sacrifices on behalf of all Israelites. Scripture gives meticulous detail to their ordination and calling. Their conduct was to be beyond reproach—and God made it crystal clear that failure to uphold His established guidelines would result in death. Numerous accounts in the Book of Leviticus demonstrate the high cost and expectation that goes with a holy calling to leadership positions. As the high priest, Aaron was the only one authorized to enter the Most Holy Place and appear before the very presence of God. The Lord set Aaron apart for his holy work. Despite his high calling, Aaron struggled with his authority and later caved in to the depraved wishes of the people. He failed at a crucial juncture and led Israel in a pagan worship service, an abomination that led to the deaths of many Israelites. Aaron had been set apart for God's service, but he chose to live and lead otherwise. The failure of a leader usually results in consequences far more grave than the fall of a non-leader. On the day Aaron failed, "about three thousand men of the people fell [died]" (Ex. 32:28). When leaders fail, followers pay the price."* — **John C. Maxwell**

## READ

Matthew 20:25–28; Philippians 2:3–8; Luke 22:24–27; Micah 6:8; 1 Peter 5:5–6; Proverbs 16:9

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- **Rule of Life application:** Where is God calling you to lead more intentionally rather than reactively?
- What would change this week if you measured leadership by service rather than results?

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Ask God to remove pride and grow humility. Pray to lead from obedience rather than ego.

## SESSION 4: PROVIDER

*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

**Colossians 3:23-24**

Three things stand out in this verse. The first being the call to work hard. The second is a proper understanding of who we serve (work for). And lastly, an inheritance that awaits faithful servants.

What does hard work look like for you? Adam tended the garden, or at least he was supposed to. My question is, if Adam was doing his job, why was the snake even in the garden in the first place? Noah built an ark. David rallied a nation. Imagine the faith, intellect, and tough skin it took for Noah to build an ark on a land that had never seen rain. The harassment he must have endured from his neighbors is incomprehensible. How did Noah endure the work of building something so meticulous that it likely took 50 to 75 years to build? Two things come to mind. The first is that he believed in God by acting on what God had told him to do. The second is that he believed God's future promise—that he and his family would be saved from the flood.

The word of God is described in Psalm 119:105 as a lamp unto my feet. It's a guide that instructs on how to live a godly life, the importance of friends, financial responsibility, and even how to work effectively. While we all have different talents and skills, we are all called to do our work as unto the Lord, to provide for our family, and to fund His kingdom purposes. Let us be found faithful to His Word and His instructions, and receive the reward of knowing that we are living up to the call of being a provider for our family by seeking and trusting.

In addition to providing financially for our families, there is an even greater need to simply provide ourselves to our families. Tim Challies shares this concept in his article *Leadership in the Home – A Godly Man Provides*.

*The godly husband provides himself, which is to say that he provides focused, undistracted time and attention. We are a distracted and busy people who have a difficult time prioritizing what ought to be prioritized. We believe that we are owed endless hours of entertainment—that it is our right to be entertained for hours every day—and we give ourselves to this pursuit. We also recklessly pursue stuff, power, position, prestige and any other number of idols. And often these will come at the expense of your wife or children. As a husband you need to provide time for your wife. Some of this time may be spent watching your “shows” together, but there must be times where you can just talk without distraction, without the need for entertainment. You must provide time for your children, to talk to them, to encourage them, to ask them questions and to answer their questions. Seek to take the lead in arranging regular date nights with your wife; go on “daddy-dates” with your kids as well, finding special things to do with each one of them (alone) on a regular basis (even if that event is no more special than an early-morning breakfast at WaHo. Kids are remarkably unpicky when it comes to time spent with dad. Help your wife arrange similar dates with the kids so she can spend that focused time with them as well. — Tim Challies*

Biblical provision is faithful stewardship of work, resources, time, and spiritual responsibility under God's authority. God entrusted man with responsibility to work, cultivate, and steward His creation. Provision includes financial care but extends to presence, diligence, wisdom, and generosity. Scripture warns against laziness, greed, and misplaced trust in wealth. God is the ultimate Provider, and men are stewards—not owners—of what He supplies. Faithful provision flows from trust in God, not anxiety about outcomes.

## READ

Genesis 2:15; Colossians 3:23–24; 1 Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 13:4; Proverbs 21:20; Matthew 6:19–21

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- Where are you tempted to seek security in provision rather than in God?
- **Rule of Life application:** What is one area where God is calling you to steward more faithfully? Even if you are not providing for a family yet: stewardship is still required. How you manage work, money, and time now reveals who you trust as provider.

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Ask God to align your work and resources with His purposes. Pray for diligence, wisdom, and generosity.

## SESSION 5: PROTECTOR

*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.*

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

The primary duty of a watchman was to be vigilant and alert the rest of the military and citizenry to any impending danger or threat. The secondary role of a watchman was to engage in any attack that was brought to the people or area they were assigned to protect. A point man in the military served a similar role. In war, the point man might be helicoptered behind enemy lines with other men to scout out the enemy. In this way, they alerted the rest of the army to the enemy's location and strength. The risk was significant, for once they were dropped off, they were isolated and had only each other to depend on for survival.

Our society has never needed watchmen and pointmen more than it does today. We desperately need strong biblically equipped men who will stand up against current and future threats, oppression, and evil in our world, our country, our society, our churches, and especially our families. It's not a job for the faint of heart, but then nothing worth fighting for ever is.

The battle against culture requires fortitude and strength. Yet we are wise to remember that, as protectors, we are also called to be tenderly engaged in the home. Here's a question a wise man must ask himself: Am I a safe place for my wife and children? Does my family see me as headstrong, unengaged, critical, and unwilling to take ownership and responsibility? Or am I seen as what Stu Weber calls a 'tender warrior' fighting for them, not against, through listening, understanding, and encouragement?

The call to be tough yet tender is a tall order. It's a contributing factor to the passivity prevalent in many men today. We do have good news, however, God has given us everything we need for this battle. He has given us the most potent weapon we could hope for in the Holy Spirit. He has given us the battle plans and instructions we need in His Word. He has given us a walkie-talkie, prayer, to stay in constant communication. He has given us safe havens, churches, to be restored and refreshed. And He has given us fellow believers to encourage us and to fight the good fight alongside.

So the question we must ask ourselves is: *"will I sit idly by and risk the spiritual death of those God has called me to be a watchman for? Or, will I engage in the battle and risk being ridiculed by a world that has lost its way and given itself over to the enemy?"*

Remember, while the role of a watchman may seem defensive, it is not. To effectively protect ourselves, we must first be aware of our resources and, secondly, the dangers ahead, so that we may fight against them. All the while being a safe harbor for our family. And consider the great enemy of biblical manhood: passivity. Randy Stinson in *A Guide to Biblical Manhood* says,

*It's a pattern of waiting on the sidelines until you're specifically asked to step in. Even worse than that, it can be a pattern of trying to duck out of responsibilities or to run away from challenges. Men*

who think conflict should be avoided, or who refuse to engage with those who would harm the body of Christ or their family, not only model passivity but fail in their responsibilities as protectors. Running to the battle means routinely taking a step toward the challenge — not away from it. Instead of running and hiding, it means running into the burning building or into any other situation that requires courage and/or strength. It means having a burden of awareness and consistently asking yourself, "Is there any testosterone needed in this situation?" That doesn't mean being a fool who just rushes in, but simply being a leader with the instinct to go where the need is. So show leadership, protection and provision in your family, work, church, and community by consistently moving toward the action. Demonstrate your availability by consistently asking those you encounter, "Do you need anything?" Watch for needs and challenges in whatever situation you're in and cultivate a habit of running to the battle. Keep your head. Whether it was a bear attacking his sheep, Goliath looming in the distance, Saul hurling a spear at him or any other crisis David faced, he moved toward the action with calm resolve. He didn't panic. He was a man of action and engagement. — **Randy Stinson**

We trust that this will ignite a flame for us all to be watchful and to fight the good fight for others and ourselves. Biblical men protect what God has entrusted to them through vigilance, prayer, and courage. Protection is proactive, not passive. God calls men to guard their hearts, stand firm against spiritual opposition, and intercede for others. Biblical protection flows from love and dependence on God—not control, fear, or aggression. Men protect best when they are spiritually alert and prayerfully engaged.

## READ

Nehemiah 4:14; Proverbs 4:23; 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:10–18; Ezekiel 22:30; Psalm 127:1

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- **Rule of Life application:** What area of your life requires greater spiritual alertness?
- What boundary or practice will you strengthen to guard what God has entrusted to you?
- If you are not yet protecting a family: how can learning vigilance over your heart and habits now prepare you to protect others later?

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Ask God for discernment and courage. Pray for those under your influence by name.

## SESSION 6: IDENTITY IN CHRIST

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

**2 Corinthians 5:16-17**

Have you ever spent time with someone that you admire, look up to, even envy a little bit and then find out they struggle with the same stuff you do? It's one of those moments when we think to ourselves, "I thought I was the only one," or "I can't believe THAT guy deals with that, too." This is especially true when it comes to our identities. It's why as men we chase validation in almost everything with the exception of the ONE place (person) we can find it. We are all prone to insecurities. The world tries to conform us into *its* image, and it is constantly changing. This can be true of both the unbeliever and the follower of Christ. The big question is, why shouldn't this be true for the believer? After all, doesn't the Bible tell us we are new creations? The reality is that we live with a hope that is not yet fully realized, in the sense that our future home—a new earth living in the physical presence of Christ, with no more suffering, sickness, or evil—is not yet our present reality. And while we wait, we tend to become forgetful and begin to look to people and things for meaning and significance.

Some might call this forgetfulness temporary amnesia, but in reality, it is more like insanity. Seriously, what child of a King leaves the provision and favor of his benevolent father to live a life seeking to find significance on their own? Yet isn't this the predicament so many of us find ourselves in when we forget *who and whose* we are?

Our daily hope is Christ alone. In this part, we unpack what is one of the most important yet least studied tenets of our faith: our Identity in Christ. If we can get a handle on this, we can save ourselves from a lot of pain that comes from living for the gains of this world, and we can save our family and children from the life-sucking trap of comparison.

A man's identity is rooted in who he is in Christ, not what he achieves or produces. When identity is rooted in performance, men live exhausted and insecure lives. Scripture anchors our identity in Christ's finished work. In Him, men are forgiven, adopted, and made new. Obedience flows from gratitude, not striving. Identity precedes activity. In *Abba's Child*, Brennan Manning presents this exact idea:

*Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion. God's love for you and his choice of you constitute your worth. Accept that, and let it become the most important thing in your life. — Brennan Manning*

Oh, that we wake up everyday mindful that we are adopted sons of the Creator or the Universe and ALL the rights and privileges that The Father gives Jesus are for us, too. Let that sink in as you take a moment before jumping into the scripture.

## READ

2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:3–7; Colossians 2:6–7; John 15:4–5

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- What false identity most competes with your identity in Christ?
- **Rule of Life application:** What practice will help you live daily from gospel identity?

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Thank God for the security of life in Christ. Ask Him to deepen your trust in His grace.

## SESSION 7: LIVING IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

*Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

**Psalm 73:25-26**

Desperation or declaration? What do you hear the psalmist saying in the verses above? It likely depends on what is unfolding in your own life at this very moment. Are you in a difficult season that brings with it questions of: *Why are these things happening to me, Lord? Where are you, Lord? Do you even see me?* Or, are you in a season of seeing the Lord moving and answering prayers, thus strengthening your resolve to live for Him?

When reading or conversing, it helps to know the context to understand what a person is trying to communicate. In the Psalm above, Asaph begins by stating that the Lord is good, but he had almost forgotten this fact because he was so preoccupied with the success of those he lived amongst. Asaph became envious of their prosperity and well-being, though they were living as if there was no God. Consequently, he felt as if his life was being lived in vain.

Comparison weakens the soul. It robbed Asaph of living in the goodness of God and turned his heart to despair. It robs us of the joy of knowing and living intentionally with and for God. It's the reason we must live every moment in the knowledge and acceptance of who we are in Christ. Asaph's tone changes in the second half of the psalm. His perspective shifts from one of desperation to one of declaring God's goodness. He realizes the futility of a life lived without God. In the end, those who live that way will be "destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors." However, those who seek God find His presence, security, counsel, strength in difficulty, and will live with Him forever in glory.

What caused the change in Asaph's heart? We read that when he tried to figure all this out, it became wearisome "until I went into the sanctuary of God." Asaph went to church, and life became clear. This should come as no surprise, for it's in the gathering of believers that we are lifted when we are down. We hear testimonies of how God is working, we are encouraged through faithful teaching of the Word, and we focus our hearts on Him through praise and worship. Church and fellowship with others remind us that one day all will be made right. So until that day, we live confidently in Him and do as Asaph says in the last verse, telling others of all His good works.

The late Pastor Voddie Baucham said this at a funeral once: *"It's always amazed me how people spend their lives not having time for God, being too busy for Him – but hoping to go to heaven for all eternity, and be with the God for whom they had no time for. NEWSFLASH: When you die, you will continue your same relationship with God!"*

Biblical men order their lives today in light of eternal realities. Eternal perspective reshapes priorities. Men who live for what lasts invest in people, faithfulness, and the kingdom of God rather than temporary success. Scripture calls men to finish well—running with endurance and faithfulness until the end.

## READ

2 Corinthians 4:16–18; Matthew 6:19–21; Psalm 90:12; Colossians 3:1–4; 2 Timothy 4:7–8; Hebrews 12:1–2

## EXAMINE

- What is going on in these passages?
- What stuck out to you?
- Where did you see Jesus in these passages?
- Did these verses bring up any questions?

## APPLY

- What temporary pursuits are competing with eternal faithfulness?
- **Rule of Life application:** Who is God calling you to invest in for long-term spiritual impact?

## PRAY

Reference back to the scriptures, using God's words. Pray through them. Ask God to fix your eyes on eternity and strengthen you to finish well.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY STAGE OF LIFE

This optional tool is here to help you reflect on these sessions and answer from your current stage of life (or stages) or from a stage you may be preparing for.

### SESSION 1: WE NEED EACH OTHER

#### YOUNG ADULT

- What thoughts most shape your view of yourself and your future right now?
- Where do you need stronger gospel truth to challenge fear or comparison?

#### ADULT

- How has busyness, responsibility, or pressure affected your relationships?
- What lies about relationships are you most tempted to believe in this season?

#### MARRIED

- How do your thoughts influence the tone and health of your marriage?
- Where do you need to renew your mind with truth rather than assumptions?

#### PARENT

- How does your internal thought life affect how you respond to your children?
- What truth do you need to rehearse when parenting feels overwhelming?

#### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How has your thinking about purpose or usefulness shifted in this season?
- Where is God inviting you to anchor your mind more deeply in His truth?

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### SESSION 2: LOVER

#### YOUNG ADULT

- How are you learning to love others sacrificially rather than protectively?
- What habits now are shaping how you will love in future relationships?

#### ADULT

- Where has love become conditional, rushed, or transactional?
- What would Christlike love look like in your everyday relationships?

#### MARRIED

- In what ways are you actively loving your spouse through sacrifice and grace?
- Where is God calling you to grow in patience, forgiveness, or presence?

#### PARENT

- How are you expressing love and affirmation to your children consistently?
- What does loving deeply look like in this parenting season?

#### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How can you continue to love adult children or grandchildren faithfully?
- Where might God be calling you to extend love beyond your immediate family?

## SESSION 3: LEADER

### YOUNG ADULT

- What does healthy leading look like in your friendships and responsibilities?
- Where do you struggle between independence and receiving help?

### ADULT

- Where do you feel pressure to lead out of guilt or expectation rather than obedience?
- How can you practice leading with wisdom and boundaries?

### MARRIED

- How does your servant posture affect unity and trust in your marriage?
- Where do you need clearer communication around support and expectations?

### PARENT

- How are you serving and leading in ways that build others up rather than deplete you and others?
- Where do you need help receiving help from others?

### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How has your understanding of leading and serving changed over time?
- Where can your wisdom and presence be offered intentionally?

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## SESSION 4: PROVIDER

### YOUNG ADULT

- Who has nurtured your faith, and what did that look like?
- How is God inviting you to begin stewarding your time, talents and treasures?

### ADULT

- Where do you feel stretched or weary in your role as a provider?
- What rhythms help sustain your spiritual strength as a provider?

### MARRIED

- How are you nurturing spiritual growth as a provider in your marriage or home?
- Where do you need renewal to continue providing for others?

### PARENT

- How are you intentionally providing for your children's needs and spiritual growth?
- What support do you need to remain faithful in this calling?

### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How can you continue providing in this season?
- Who might God be calling you to invest in now?

## SESSION 5: PROTECTOR

### YOUNG ADULT

- Who are you influencing through your words, choices, and character?
- How does culture shape your understanding of what it looks like to be a protector?

### ADULT

- Where has fear or comparison muted your understanding as a protector?
- What does faithful protecting look like in your current context?

### MARRIED

- How do you protect your spouse and household spiritually?
- Where is humility strengthening—or weakening—your role as protector?

### PARENT

- What kind of protector are you modeling for your children?
- How can you more intentionally point them toward Christ while protecting them?

### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How has your influence as a protector shifted in this season of life?
- How can you leverage presence rather than position?

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## SESSION 6: IDENTITY IN CHRIST

### YOUNG ADULT

- Where do you struggle most with comparison or competition?
- How does your identity in Christ reshape those struggles?

### ADULT

- How does unity in Christ challenge cultural ideas of success or value?
- Where do you need to pursue greater humility or encouragement?

### MARRIED

- How does being one in Christ shape how you relate to your spouse?
- Where do you need to protect unity more intentionally?

### PARENT

- How are you modeling unity and grace within your family?
- What practices help keep Christ at the center of your home?

### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- How can you foster unity across generations?
- Where is God inviting you to lead through encouragement and peace?

## SESSION 7: LIVING IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

### YOUNG ADULT

- Where is God calling you to step out in obedience or courage?
- What fears most often hold you back?

### ADULT

- How does the hope of eternity shape your priorities and decisions?
- Where do you need greater boldness rooted in faith?

### MARRIED

- How does living boldly influence your marriage and family vision?
- What step of faith might God be calling you to take together?

### PARENT

- How are you modeling courageous faith for your children?
- What do you hope they learn from your obedience?

### EMPTY-NESTER / GRANDPARENT

- What does finishing well look like in this season of life?
- Who are you intentionally investing in for eternal impact?