

# **The King's Men**

Engaged but not Entangled

By Joe Waresak

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## **Dedication**

“Iron sharpens iron,  
And one man sharpens another.”

Proverbs 27:17 NASB

I dedicate this project to the many men that God has used to be “iron” in my life. While the complete list would fill many pages, God has used the following men at different times in my life to impact me in a very particular manner for His eternal kingdom.

Francis Waresak, my father  
Frank and Mike Waresak, my brothers  
Pastor Kenn Orndorff  
Roy Jacobs  
Paul Buettell  
Pastor Doug Messerall  
Dr. David Plaster  
Dr. Jeff Gill  
Dick Seidel  
Keith Watson  
Paul Slozat  
Pastor Ron Moore  
Jonathan Dingeldein  
Jeff Bogan

I would be remiss not to also mention the many men within our family/prayer groups, the prison ministry, and the writing ministries of such men as John MacArthur, John Piper, James Boice, A.W. Tozer, Jerry Bridges, and Charles Spurgeon.

## Foreword

We live in a day of staggering breakdown in life's most important relationships.

Is there anyone who has not been touched, directly or indirectly, by significant youth rebellion, infidelity or divorce? These and many other evidences of breakdown in the home have eroded the effectiveness of the church fulfilling the Great Commission.

In my 17 years of helping church leaders strengthen relationships in the church and home, I have seen God work in extraordinary ways to remedy these breakdowns and restore health to life's most important relationships.

There are a number of significant, but overlooked or deemphasized biblical principles that when rediscovered, move the church back to vibrant health. One of these principles is the role of heads of households as the spiritual leaders of the home. Because of their highly connective role in home relationships, men are more like "middle managers" in the local church. They are indispensable. This role is pervasive in God's redemptive plan throughout scripture and thus the equipping and living out of this role should be a central focus in the overall ministry design of the local church.

Men of Exception are required if we are going to heal the painful breakdowns in relationships and ultimately

accomplish the Great Commission with vigor. Joe Waresak understands this. Since meeting Joe three years ago, I have been personally encouraged by his heart for men to rise up from the mire of the status quo to become servants of exception.

Much well-intentioned effort to encourage men fails to engage them because it is presented by someone who “regular men” cannot relate to, or it is presented in such a way that is so arduous that it effectively buries any hope for change. This leaves men frustrated and further from exception. The approach Joe takes in this book is different.

First, men at all levels of spiritual and practical understanding will find Joe easy to read, understand and relate to. He is clearly a man writing from the trenches, not from an ivory tower.

Second, and most important of all, Joe makes sure Christian men understand that they are *already* exceptional by virtue of what Christ has done for them. Far too many men approach this challenge in their own strength as if it were totally dependent upon them to do what they are completely incapable of doing on their own. The process of “becoming exceptional” is a daily work of faith and repentance that is in every way a matter of applying what Christ has already done to their pursuit of the exceptional. This offers men tremendous hope in the process of moving forward.

The church and the home need exceptional men seeking to live in the strength of THE only Exceptional Man: Jesus Christ.

This book is profoundly encouraging. It is immediately practical. Church leaders would do well to read this book and commit to studying and discussing it with all of their men, including singles and youth.

Equipping today's—and tomorrow's—men to be exceptional will enable the church to reverse the dreadful trends of breakdown and restore life's most important relationships for God's glory and the furtherance of His kingdom. Soli Deo Gloria.

Eric E. Wallace  
President, Institute for Uniting Church and Home



## Introduction

As a pastor once shared with me, the speed of a leader will determine the speed of the team. Nowhere is this more applicable today than in the context of men leading our homes and churches. Yet, the King's men have largely left their posts. Very sadly, in many cases they have committed spiritual desertion and have fled from the battlefield.

Yet, in Christ, the King's men are set apart to become men of exception within the hands of an exceptional God. There is no enemy or life circumstance that our King cannot overcome. In a very real way, Christ has already fought the battle and won. We are now called to follow Him where He has gone.

I pray this study will take you beyond where you have been to a place that God has destined you to arrive. It is a journey of faith where self must die and Christ must live, a place where *The King of kings* reigns and His men live to worship and serve Him alone.

For God's Glory,

Joe Waresak, Director  
Seek First Ministries—Matthew 6:33  
[www.seekfirstmin.org](http://www.seekfirstmin.org)

**Within His sovereign governance over the affairs of mankind, God has divinely chosen each of His men that would one day bow a knee before His heavenly throne through His Son Jesus Christ. Simply put, God has created us for Himself. To know and love God is to be known by God (1 Corinthians 8:3).**

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## **The King's Men Defined: Becoming a Man of Exception**

It is the ultimate tipping point for any man, a climactic moment when God reaches into the depths of a man's heart and takes hold. Time typically seems to slow down and life's urgencies tend to soften in the midst of His glory and grace. A sense of newness overcomes one's being as life takes on a greater perspective and purpose. It is at this time that a man of exception is made—secured within the hands of an exceptional God. Do you know the exceptional grip of The King of Glory and Grace?

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

*Ephesians 2:4-10*

From before time, God had a plan that included you and me. It is an elusive truth for a finite mind to grasp, yet it is still nonetheless true. God, who abounds in mercy and grace, has chosen to love us in spite of ourselves.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...”*

*Ephesians 1:3-4*

Before the first ink blot of your life was recorded in the history of time, God knew you. He fashioned you first in His infinite mind and then with unparalleled skill formed your most inner parts within your mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13-14). Just think, the same “hands” that created the vastness of the galaxies made you and me. This alone should cause us to walk with an ever-present awareness of awe and wonder.

Within His sovereign governance over the affairs of mankind, God has divinely chosen each of His men that would one day bow a knee before His heavenly throne through His Son Jesus Christ. Simply put, God has created us for Himself. To know and love God is to be known by God (1 Corinthians 8:3). No matter what angle you look at, our relationship with God pivots upon His love for us, a love that is supersaturated with His enduring mercy and ever-flowing grace. As the King’s men, this is our starting point as well

as our every day battle strategy: We humble ourselves before God and He lifts us up (James 4:10). We, in and of ourselves, can do nothing of merit to justify our standing before His perfect and holy throne. It is only here, in His grace-filled grip, that we recognize our need to turn away from our sinful lives and rest completely in the work of the cross of Christ.

*“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?’”*

*Luke 9:23-25*

*“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God...But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

*Romans 5:1-2, 8*

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”*

*Colossians 2:6-7*

I cannot over emphasize at this point the totality of God's perfect essence and absolute holiness. It represents the finest mirror of reality. As we stand before the majesty of our King, we become undone regarding our own imperfect nature, our lack of holiness. It is a place where God both justifies us and sanctifies us. The prophet Isaiah experienced this first-hand within a divine vision as outlined in Isaiah 6:3-5:

*“And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."*

*“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

*Romans 3:23*

As such, it is God's perfect nature that compels our need for the cleansing touch of His mercy and grace. Like Isaiah, our reconciliation with God can only occur with the removal of our sins—we must be made pure before our perfectly righteous King. As Scripture has shown us, this is only accomplished by the touch of the redeeming work of Christ. Like Isaiah we must hear, “...Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged” (Isaiah 6:7). This is our point of conversion; it is the cross-shaped doorway that leads from death to life where the righteousness of Christ prevails.

Equally, it is our continual walk of sanctification where self becomes less and Christ becomes more (“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” 1 John 3:3). Yet, it all starts with a man falling to his knees and calling upon the name of His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10). God has chosen us and now we must choose Him as well.

From his book, *Tender Warrior*, Stu Weber remembers entering into God’s grace-filled grip:

“Our guys loaded up the wounded, collected the dead, and began to build the camp all over again. Somehow, for some reason, I’d been handed yet one more chance to wake up and open my eyes. And this time, I did. I began rethinking my life... The faith of my father and grandfather had sent pilings deep into my soul. I realized that Jesus Christ was exactly who He said He was. He became very real to me. And life changed from that day.”

To say yes to Christ and no to self is taking a God-directed step that defies the natural order of this world; it is a willingness to condemn the ungodly self and the accolades of men and embrace a new order of life where humility, grace, and honor of our King reign supreme. The “Christ decision” is entering by the narrow gate, a pathway that few choose yet none will regret.

*“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are*

*many who go by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

*Matthew 7:13-14*

It is a one-time life decision of surrender and then an all-out life pursuit of humility where God’s Spirit renders a man’s soul to Himself. It is not just an “event,” but the beginning of an eternal relationship where the “old man” dies and the “new man” in Christ comes alive.

*“...I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart...But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”*

*Ephesians 4:17-18, 20-24*

This is, indeed, the apex of all tipping points in the life of any man. It is the pinnacle point in time when The Exceptional One makes you one of His men of exception and then day by day clothes you with the attire of His royal righteousness and supreme holiness.

You now stand before His glorious presence bound to His throne of glory through the eternal covenant of His Son. You are no longer burdened by the weight of your sin. Rather, your yoke is lightened by the extreme grace of your king.

“Let us pray over this in detail, throwing ourselves at God’s feet and meaning everything we say. No one who prays thus in sincerity need wait long for tokens of divine acceptance. God will unveil His glory before His servant’s eyes...” (A.W. Tozer, *Restoring the Creator-Creature Relation, The Best of Tozer/book two*)

In Christ, when God looks at you, He now sees the atoning work of His Son. Your sin debt has been paid in full by His sacrifice and you are now divinely branded with the holy seal of His deliverance. You are no longer a slave to the sins of your past and limited by the sins of your present and future. You are set free to serve and now secured for eternity to your King within the divine refuge of His redeeming love. Within His hands there is no fear of man, no fear of failure, and no fear of the unknown. In Christ, you are a man of exception called to live in the reality of the excellence, splendor, and grace of your exceptional King.

*“And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

*Joshua 24:15*

*“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*

*Titus 2:11-14*

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

*Ephesians 2:8-10*

By the grace of God we are saved, and by that same grace God purifies for Himself a special people made to serve and worship Him. To be one of the King’s men through Jesus Christ is to know a power and a purpose that transcends the ordinary and compels the extraordinary. It is the most profound tipping point that takes a man beyond himself and into the hands of His exceptional God. Do you personally know the grace-filled grip of The King of all Glory?

### In Summary:

1. We all fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23).
2. While we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).
3. Jesus Christ paid our sin debt at the cross (Hebrews 10:14).
4. It is only through Christ that we can truly know God (John 14:6).
5. To choose Christ as our Lord and Savior is to have eternal life (1 John 5:11-12, Romans 10:9-10, Luke 9:23-25).
6. Salvation in Christ is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8).
7. In Christ, we now live for Christ to bear His fruit, to do His work, and to display His glory (Philippians 1:21, John 15:5, 8, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Cor. 10:31), a journey paved by grace and the work of God's Spirit within us.

### Making it Real:

1. Do you know God's grip of grace through Jesus Christ?
2. Did you ever think God's redeeming love was dependent upon your worthiness? If yes, do still believe this?
3. After reading this chapter, how would you define a "man of exception" before God?
4. How has the fear of man, the fear of failure, and the fear of the unknown held you back from walking within the reality of being a man of exception?
5. Are you bearing the fruit of your King?
6. Take a few minutes this week to prayerfully consider where God is at work in your life. Are you willing to submit where God is leading you to go...within every area of your life?

**Men, it is time that we  
regain our true identity in  
Christ as *The King's Men*,  
an honorable quest granted  
to us by our King to  
serve Him with unwavering  
loyalty and honor.**

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## Are You on The Battlefield?

*“Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, {and} to keep the LORD’S commandments...”*

*Deuteronomy 10:12*

Every man that calls upon the name of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior is one of the King’s men. To wear the King’s emblem is to carry the seal of the Holy Spirit on one’s heart (Ephesians 1:13-14). It is a gift of grace from our King that signifies His ownership of our lives (Ephesians 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). It is a guarantee and promise of the eternal hope secured through the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:23). *To be one of the King’s men is the highest honor bestowed upon man. Yet, to whom much has been given, much is required.*

*“...everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.”*

*Luke 12:48*

*“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”*

*1 Corinthians 4:1-2*

I recently listened to a friend teach on the subject of loyalty. Within his lesson, he commented on the sad reality that the term loyalty has turned into an obscure and seldom embraced ideal. In today’s world, the principles of commitment through suffering and faithfulness through adversity are often avoided at all cost. Let’s be real. For many men, they are more loyal to their sport teams than they are to their God, churches, wives, and children. Where are the *King’s loyal men*?

This is similar to a man that was an avid fan of his local major league baseball team. Like many men, it is not an exaggeration to say that this man truly loved his team. Unfortunately, he was not as loving to his own wife or children. A very telling sign of this sad truth was rooted in his willingness to forgive. He often would become very upset at his team when they let him down. Yet, he would always come to the conclusion that he would forgive them because they were “his” team and he loved them...regardless if they won or lost. However, he was not so considerate to his wife and children. Until one day he was confronted by a close friend who asked him this simple question: If your love of God and others define your most important life legacy, why is your greatest life passion focused on something else rather than the most important relationships in your life?

Are we really much different from this man? How many of the King's men are failing to live for the most important things in life and as a consequence have removed themselves from the battlefield? Where are you?

*“Whom have I in heaven {but You?} And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever...the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.”*

*Psalm 73:25-28*

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”*

*Ephesians 5:25*

*“My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains around your neck.”*

*Proverbs 1:8-9*

*“Bear one another's burdens...”*

*Galatians 6:2*

Men, it is time that we regain our true identity in Christ as *The King's Men*, an honorable quest granted to us by our King to serve Him with unwavering loyalty and honor. In Christ, we are created as His men to do His good work (Ephesians 2:9-10). It is foremost a matter of being and then

a life of doing, a mode of *Coram Deo* living (before the face of God).

It is here within the realm of our King's service, and only here, that we can pursue a missional life that seeks His glory (1 Cor. 10:31). As we consider the characteristics and priorities of the King's men, we will draw near to our King to gain a deeper understanding as to *His* character. Inasmuch, it is our King's character that will define and validate the value of our character, our purpose, and our priorities. Apart from God's compelling work that consists of His perfecting love and effectual grace, our character will be grossly flawed, our purpose will be greatly lacking, and our priorities will be out of order.

As the King's men, we are summoned to live a life worthy of our calling in Christ (*"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received"* Ephesians 4:1). As His soldiers, we are commanded to pursue a life that stays focused on the battlefield before us. It is a life of godly discipline that looks past the temporal circumstances and sets its eyes upon the eternal horizons.

**"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."**

**2 Timothy 2:3-4**

Have you ever considered yourself a “soldier” of Jesus Christ? Now before you answer too hastily, it is necessary that you truly consider what a soldier “engaged in warfare” looks like. From his book, *Tender Warrior*, Stu Weber explains:

*A warrior is one who possesses high moral standards and holds to high principles. He is willing to live by them, stand for them, spend himself in them, and if necessary, die for them. No warrior ever made that more obvious than Jesus (of) Nazareth. He who is the Ultimate Peacemaker will establish that peace from the back of a great white horse as the Head of the armies of heaven (pg. 45, Tender Warrior, 1999).*

As soldiers for Christ, when we engage our battlefield, we become missionaries within our mission field. The more we live the life of a soldier for Christ, the more we see the daily skirmishes that are taking place within our community and even right within the walls of our own homes. As we make our life more about our King, our King, in return, makes our life more about Him (James 4:8). This is the “grace-factor.” As we humble ourselves before God’s will, He imparts His grace and reorients our lives around Him (James 4:6, 10).

It is at this point of greater focus on God’s will that He often works in us and through us to most greatly impact our relationships and resources for His kingdom. And remember, our resources are there for our relationships and not vice versa. To serve God in this manner will place us squarely on the battlefield. Are you ready to go to war for your King?

*“...But for this purpose I came to this hour.  
Father glorify Your name.”*

*John 12:27-28*

As you set your mind on things above, not on earthly things and submit your will to God's, the Holy Spirit will work within you (Colossians 3:2, James 4:10, Galatians 5:22). Yet, be prepared. As you become a real warrior for Christ and step onto the battlefield, the enemy will desire your fall all the more. Point being, you are not a threat to the enemy until you engage Him.

Yet, always remember we wear the armor of The Almighty God. God is not on our side—*we are on His*. To know and be known by an exceptional God is to become a man of exception, made exceptional by the King that lives within us. Such a man is willing to embrace the battle regardless of the cost, not because of who He is but because of the King that fights for him.

This is why it is essential to wear our King's armor every day of our lives. We cannot afford to let a day go by without at least putting on the full body-armor of God.

*“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places...”*

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

*Ephesians 6:10-13*

**“In this war between God and Satan, there is no room for neutrality. You must decide whether you are going to serve God or Satan. There is no middle ground. Holding up the shield of faith provides the confidence that you are on the winning side...”**

Robert Jeffress, The Divine Defense

It is equally as vital that we cover the backs of the men that God has divinely placed in our lives. God has wired us to be connected to Him and to one another (Ecc. 4:9-12). This is an essential battle strategy and truth for the King’s men: We must carry the burdens of others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ. To do any less and we are effectively stepping off the battlefield and creating a gap, a weak point that our enemy *will* attack.

*“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ...Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

*Galatians 6:2, 10*

So much of all of this comes down to this simple premise: We must be men of godly convictions that live with great intentionality and availability to serve our King. If you consider the life of any man or woman that God has used in the course of history, you will likely find an individual of intense devotion and unstoppable drive. We will consider a few of these men in the next chapter. This is an axiom of our faith—God will compel a man that lives for Him. Purpose defines passion and your life passion will dictate your life priorities. Whatever drives you most, i.e. what most defines you, will shape how you live and who you become.

As the King's men, what is our greatest life purpose? This answer is found throughout the Bible and was correctly outlined within the early church: *What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (The Westminster Catechism)*. We see this same truth outlined in Scripture in both the Old and the New Testament.

*“Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified.”*

*Haggai 1:8*

*“I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.”*

*Psalms 145:1-3*

*“Therefore, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

*1 Corinthians 10:31*

If you have humbled yourself before the majesty of The King Jesus Christ and now call Him Savior and Lord, you are His man and part of a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) and are called to walk within the reality of His grace. Just as the Israelites were rescued from Pharaoh to serve and worship their God, we, too, are saved for a greater purpose beyond ourselves. The justifying grace of Christ is not limited to a one-time decision that pivots upon us; rather, it is an eternal calling of love that is most revealed through the ongoing service and worship of our King. Reason being, it is the blood-stained grace of our King that saved us that now sanctifies us for His royal use. In Christ, we are placed onto the battlefield to do His good works and to bring glory to His name.

**That this world is a playground instead of a battleground has now been accepted in practice by the vast majority of evangelical Christians. They might hedge around the question if they were asked bluntly to declare their position, but their conduct gives them away. They are facing both ways, enjoying Christ and the world too, and gleefully telling everyone that accepting Jesus does not require them to give up their fun...**

**—A. W. Tozer, The Quotable Tozer II**

## Making it Real:

1. Do you see yourself actively engaging the enemy for your king? If not, what needs to happen to untangle you from the civilian affairs of this world?
2. How well are you doing from protecting your home against the enemy? (include your wife as you evaluate)
3. What about your brothers in Christ? How are they doing? Don't know? What needs to happen next to make sure they are on the battlefield?
4. Do you carry God's burden for the lost? What are you doing about it?
5. Are you on the battlefield? If yes, when is the last time you evaluated your battle plan?
6. What or who defines your life purpose? What would your wife, children, or closest friends say? Do your day to day priorities match up with your King's?
7. How real is God's daily dosage of grace in your life? Are you being transformed by it?



**It is as if God is saying,  
“I am not limited by who you  
are; rather, I have made you  
unlimited by Who I am.”**

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## **Men of Exception**

*“But My Servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.”*

*Numbers 14:24*

How many of us are living as men of exception? Let’s face it. There are few “Calebs” out there today. Yet, through the course of history, God has used very imperfect men to accomplish great things for His kingdom. The likes of Augustine, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, William Carey, William Booth, William Wilberforce, Charles Hadden Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, George Muller, Jim Elliot and the apostles James, John, Peter, and Paul, to name a few, were flawed men that lived extraordinary lives in the hands of the Almighty God.

Like Caleb, all of these men, apart from God, were incapable of accomplishing the life vision that God had placed on their hearts. Yet, by *fully* trusting God, these men became divine conduits that poured God’s love, mercy, and hope into countless generations that still echo their work today. To be one of the King’s men is to be a man of exception that lives within the reality of who his King really is.

Here is a question for you: When God looks at your life in comparison to the millions of other men, does He say, “But My servant...,” as He did with Caleb? At the heart of Caleb was a man that lived to *fully* serve God. At the heart of the apostle Paul was a man that lived to *fully* serve God. At the heart of D.L. Moody was a man that lived to *fully* serve God. At that core of your heart, is there a man that lives to *fully* serve the God that is enthroned over your life?

We need not look too hard or spend much time studying the world around us to see that there are few out there that possess a different spirit, one that *fully follows God through Jesus Christ*. At the same time, we are at a point in history where the world is in desperate need of men that forsake the standards of today’s culture and pursue the extraordinary of God’s Kingdom, a man that goes beyond the norm to live the exceptional.

What made Caleb live as a man of exception? The answer is rather simple. He viewed life from the vantage of His King’s sovereignty. As such, when other men saw an impossible mission, Caleb saw the mission as possible—nothing was beyond the scope of God’s power and enduring will. While most of the men that surrounded Caleb (10 out of 12) were afraid to pursue the Promise Land because of the “giant” warriors that lived there, Caleb, along with Joshua, were the exceptions:

*“If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us...”*

*Numbers 14:8*

So often when God calls a man to a specific task, He first burdens the man's heart with His own. In a very real way, God moves a man's heart toward a deeper understanding of God Himself and what it really means to fully follow Him. It is an awesome point of divine vision when the King's man begins to see the world around him in the same manner as His King.

It is a calling toward total abandonment of self, a life consumed with one greater purpose: To see God's glory revealed through a life that is totally devoted to Him. Outside of one coming to Christ as his Savior, it is the most life-changing tipping point experienced by any man. It is a summit point that God alone positions a man that he may see beyond the norm of today to catch a glimpse of the exceptional. No longer is the man of exception bound by the circumstances of his life; rather, he is empowered beyond himself to see the impossible become possible in the hands of God. It is as if God is saying, "I am not limited by who you are; rather, I have made you unlimited by Who I am."

*"Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.'"*

*Mark 10:27*

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

While many of us may know, or even have Proverbs 3:5-6 memorized, few of us truly own it as our own. To be men of exception is to truly acknowledge God in all our ways. Like Caleb and the other men of exception that God has used to pave the path before us, we, too, must come to a point of total submission, a place of complete trust, to realize the exceptional that God has waiting for us. This is where our faith becomes real—when we decide to walk in it (2 Cor. 5:7).

George Muller was a very lacking man in many regards. However, he was a man of exception in the hands of an exceptional God. In that, his trust in God was complete—he fully followed, in faith, where God led. With approximately fifty cents to his name, he opened his first orphanage. Regardless of the many men that told him his God-driven calling was impossible, Muller knew that with God all things were possible (Mark 10:27). Over the years his orphanage ministry would impact “at least one hundred thousand orphans” in England alone (Pierson, *George Mueller*). How many of us, like Mueller, are willing to see a God-sized vision of what the Lord can do with a man that is wholeheartedly His?

Are you a man of exception? If yes, what, by faith, is God calling you to pursue? First things first, if you are married, you have an opportunity to be an exceptional husband during a time in history when few marriages are truly exceptional before God or man. Do you have children or grandchildren? Are you a man of exception when it comes to raising your children for the Lord? As the King’s ambassador, how is

your life imploring others to be reconciled to God?  
(see 2 Corinthians 5:20)

If you know Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are called to be a man of exception in the hands of an exceptional God. He has made you, gifted you, equipped you, and positioned you to live an exceptional life for His glory revealed. In Christ, the power of an exceptional God lives within you and is working through you to move you to a place of exception (Philippians 2:13). Like Caleb, are you ready to fully follow Him and become the man that God has called you to be?

As we begin to personalize this idea of becoming men of exception, it is imperative that we recognize and *pursue* the calling for the King's men to be sanctified (less of us and more of Christ). Within our earthly walk in Christ, sanctification is the greatest work of God that ultimately displays the reality of His ownership over our lives. It is a vital tenant of our faith that calls us to die to self in order to reveal Christ Jesus within us. This divine process is driven by the constant interaction of humility and grace. As the German pastor and theologian Bonheoffer expressed, "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." In so doing, our lives become entrenched within the reality of our standing in Christ Jesus (Colossians 2:6-7 and John 15:5).

*"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

*Galatians 2:20 (my emphasis)*

*“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*

*Colossians 3:3*

If you are in Christ, you have gone through the most sacred ceremony that a person can ever experience. You have been regenerated, justified, and now are being sanctified by your Heavenly Father, with the promise of one day being made complete and *glorified* in the Son’s image. Your life has been made consecrated, made holy through grace, and you now have the opportunity to live a consecrated life of grace (*The Consecrated Life*, J. Waresak).

For the King’s men, our walk of faith is a sacred pilgrimage of sanctification, or at least it should be. To be in Christ compels a radical reorientation of one’s life. In a real way, “self” is crucified with Christ and one’s will is now surrendered unto his Savior (Gal. 2:20). This is an essential principle associated with our walk in Christ—*it is not about us*. Rather, our sanctification is all about revealing God’s fruit in our lives for one purpose—*His glory*. Consecration, death to self and alive in Christ, is something God does to us that unequivocally demonstrates that He is at work in our lives.

As we become more God-oriented, rooting our lives in His Word, we are sanctified by His truth and bear His fruit (see John 15:5, 8; 17:17). As we reveal His fruit, we, in fact, share His light in a darkened world. This is our life purpose, passion, and pursuit—that God is glorified in our lives.

*“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

*Matthew 5:14-16*

*“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

The King’s men are men of exception that live each day in the hands of an exceptional God for one greater quest: For His Glory Revealed. In Christ, we are literally conduits of His grace and glory. Yet, are we? Our King has bid us to come and die. How have we responded to date?

Making it Real:

1. What does a “man of exception” look like in today’s terms?

2. Consider a man of exception within the following roles as a...Husband, Father/Grandfather, Friend, Employer/Employee, Church Member, and Neighbor (*Attempt to find a Scripture verse that gives specific instructions within the various roles of a man— for example: Husband—Ephesians 5:25*).
3. How does our culture make it hard to be a man of exception? What are the barriers?
4. What are some important things that need to happen in a man's life to move him toward living as a man of exception?
5. What two goals can you establish at this time to assist your pursuit to live as a man of exception?



***“Iron sharpens iron, and one  
man sharpens another.”***

***Proverbs 27:17 ESV***

## Staying Focused on What Matters Most

*“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

*John 13:34-35 ESV*

Have you ever seen the inside of a submarine or fighter jet? Somewhere on the main deck or cockpit is a radar device. It is there to assist the tracking of objects that come within a certain distance of the submarine or plane. Not only do they know where these objects are located, but they also can readily calculate where they are headed. When we consider the relationships that God has placed within our lives, it is essential that we grid them on our own personal radar screens. Before God, it remains our highest priority to know where people are, and as important, the direction they are headed.

I have often found myself wanting to be more vertically effective in my relationships with others; meaning, I want my interactions within my God-given relationships to continually move others closer toward Christ. Whether it is my wife, my children, or the delivery guy I see every two weeks, it is my desire that God will use me to impact them for Him. As such, it is vital that I actively discern where others are within their walk with God. Much like the objects on a radar, I want

to pinpoint where people are in their relationship with God, and by His grace be used to move others closer to Him.

*“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”*

*Proverbs 27:17 ESV*

Approximately eight years ago God brought me to a personal tipping point within my walk with Him. Up to that point I had failed to see the true scope of what it meant to be one of the King’s men. For all practical purposes, I was a one-man army for God. Consequently, my impact for His kingdom was greatly lacking and my love for others was, at best, words with little God-driven action. I was living a selfish life, thinking little of the men, women, and families that surrounded me on the battlefield of life.

Consider your immediate family and several other individuals or families that God has placed in your life. Do you know where their hearts are before God? It is not an easy thing. Yet, it is the stuff that makes up an authentic Christ-centered relationship. It is time that we begin to most value what God values most—people.

When I consider the ultimate soldier for God’s kingdom, I think of the King Himself. Jesus Christ, exuding God-Himself in everything He did, was the perfect kingdom-focused warrior. He lived the ideal, a *beyond-one-self* life, as He *always* looked to connect His relationships vertically with His Father. **It was His life-focus because it was His life-mission.**

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

*Mark 10:45 ESV*

As we glean from our King’s life and His missional focus, each one of us must come to our own spiritual tipping point where we, as the King’s men, embrace His larger mission to serve for His greater glory. As we see in the life of Christ, this translates into a life of humility where God and others come before self. When we begin to see the battlefield from our King’s perspective, we immediately recognize the many gaps that go unmanned. Consequently, many of our brothers’ flanks are exposed before enemy attack.

*“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

*Philippians 2:1-4*

The reality is this: As God’s men, we are all called to pursue the mission of our King. It is this simple. Yet, how many of us are truly living it? Can we really say that we love others

like Christ loves them (John 13:34-35)? While we may never functionally arrive at this point of perfect love, it is without question that this is the life-mission that our King has given us. Perhaps, the better question is this: How many of us are whole-heartedly *pursing* the King's mission to love Him most and to love others as He has loved us?

As I study the topic of love within God's Word, I am convicted more than ever that a God-driven love will always lead toward action. To say we love someone and fail to act on behalf of that love only demonstrates the *lack* of that love. Point being, to say we love someone, based on our King's love for us, will compel us to act beyond ourselves. In Christ, our vertical relationship with Him will effectively compel a horizontal response within our relationships with others. To know the love of our King will move us to love our brother. **Much like our King, real love is demonstrated when we give ourselves to the ones we love.**

*“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”*

*1 John 2:10*

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

*Romans 5:8*

Inasmuch, to say that we love others the way Christ does means we must act upon that love. This is exactly what God's Word states in Galatians 6:2, "*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ.*" It is not enough to know about someone's burden, we must carry it with them. Yet, the **first step** toward carrying another's burden is to know about it. What am I saying here? Using the radar analogy again, to know where someone is on the radar screen, you must first place them on it. You must value their relationship enough to make them a priority.

One more thing—once you place them within your radar field, or better stated, once God places them within your radar field, they remain there until God removes them. It is never an option to give up on someone God brings into our lives. Remember, our King can save and/or grow anyone at anytime no matter how hopeless it may appear from our perspective. The fact of the matter is, at every point of our walk with God, from the first step of salvation to every step of sanctification and to our culminating event of glorification, God is the one that directs each stride we make toward Him. Remember this—His grace is always sufficient.

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness..."*

*2 Corinthians 12:9*

At this point, using the radar screen as a guide, consider the relationships God has given you within your field of radar, i.e. your mission field. As you begin to pick up the radar blips on your screen, think about formulating some type of grid that allows you to gauge where each person is with their

walk with God, i.e. their point of spiritual maturation. The goal is to see our radar field of relationships in the context of our King's mission: To demonstrate to all people the saving grace found only through the cross of Christ (John 17:23, 2 Cor. 5:20, Acts 1:8, 1 John 5:11-12, Romans 5:1-8, 8:1). This largely consists of two life objectives: To make disciples and then to teach them to be disciple-makers.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

*Matthew 28:19-20*

Over the years I have missed many disciple-making opportunities. This is not to say that God needed me to make His disciples. Yet, it does mean that I failed in my responsibility to be available and intentional with what matters most to my King, and I will one day give an account. However, by God's grace my past does not dictate my future—He does. We cannot allow our past sins to weigh us down, remove us from the battlefield, and keep us from doing what matters most to our King. Satan would love nothing more than to have us live in our past sins while the present opportunities fly right by us. At the foot of cross, we stand in the ever flowing blood-stained grace of our King. Regardless of the circumstances, in Christ, we can truly do all things He calls us to do (“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” Philippians 4:13).

As such, our righteousness before God is not contingent upon our efforts. Yet, our efforts *in Christ* will produce the righteousness of God (a genuine faith produces works—see James 2 and John 15:5-8). As we humble ourselves and cling to the reality of Christ’s Lordship over our lives, He will compel us to stay focused on what matters most. While not easy, it is this simple: As we abide in Christ, He works in us and through us.

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I am him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”*

*John 15:5, 8*

### Making it Real:

1. Develop your personal radar field of relationships, i.e. the people that comprise your mission field (start with your most proximal relationships, i.e. wives and children in your homes and work out from there).
2. Begin to consider where God has each person within the discipleship-growing process. This would include a non-disciple or a non-believer all the way through a mature disciple who is actively making disciples.
3. Now—what is God calling you to do next within these relationships? How well is this need reflected in your prayer life and your interactions with them?

**Here I stand. I can do no other.  
God help me. Amen**

**—Martin Luther**

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## Are You Ready to Run?

*“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:7*

I am convinced that one of the greatest issues facing our churches today is not necessarily a matter of doctrine per se. Rather, it is largely an issue of conviction and priority. Our men have largely stepped off the battlefield. They have failed to see the need for our King's armor, let alone wear it. Men, we have left our posts as husbands, fathers, brothers, and soldiers. The hour is now upon us and the enemy has advanced into our own camps. It is high-time we step back onto the battlefield and engage the enemy. Are you willing to fight the good fight?

*"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."*

*2 Timothy 2:4*

*"Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir. Amen."* ("Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."). These famous words were uttered some 500 years ago. Whether we agree or disagree with the man Martin Luther, it is undeniable that he was seeking God's greater will over his own. He was willing to go where few men have gone. He had taken that step of faith beyond himself and was firmly standing on the battlefield of life in the outstretched hand of God's sovereign plan. His life was no

longer his and as a result, he was allowing God to dictate what would happen next. In the most real way, he was walking by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 2:7). How many of us are willing to pursue God to the point that we rest in His sovereign hand and find contentment no matter the circumstances nor the consequences?

Some 1400 years prior to Luther's day, an aging bishop of Smyrna stood before a Roman governor. Their conversation went something like this:

“Simply swear by Caesar,” the governor pled.

“I am a Christian,” said Polycarp. “If you want to know what that is, set a day and listen.”

“Then I'll throw you to the beasts.”

“Bring on your beasts,” said Polycarp

*(Church History in Plain Language, Shelley)*

Moments later, Polycarp was burned at the stake. He was willing to step onto the battlefield where the war was being fought and gave his life in doing so. In both cases, Luther and Polycarp shared a heart's desire to please God first. Their priorities were in order. Were these men perfect? No. Yet, without doubt, they were the King's men. They lived and died to serve their King. They walked the talk.

How many of us really define who we are based on our standing before our King? While the prophet Jonah often gets much slack for the way he ran from God. I find one of his responses very enlightening. When Jonah was questioned as to who he was he gave this response:

*“I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”*

*Jonah 1:9*

Jonah did not blink an eye as he boldly defined who he was based on his relationship with God. When people question as to who you are and what you are all about, what is your typical response? In the midst of a trial, Jonah gave the correct answer.

By the life you live, are you one of the King’s men? *Has your life declared what your lips have spoken?* Have you truly taken that step of faith onto the battlefield?

When I envision a man stepping onto the battlefield, my mind quickly takes me to a picture of a very young man, some would even call him a boy. It was a defining moment in his life. Even though he was surrounded by men wearing the armor of man, he was the only one wearing the King’s armor. He knew that his strength was not rooted in who he was; rather, his strength was defined and upheld by the King he served.

*“Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag...and his sling was in his hand.” “Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have*

*defied...So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.”*

*1 Samuel 17:40, 45, 48*

Here is a simple yet profound truth. One cannot engage the enemy if he fails to step onto the battlefield. As David **ran** to the battlefield, thousands of grown men wearing armor of steel stood and watched. What were these men thinking? They themselves had listened to the Philistine defy their God for some forty days. Yet, they failed to step onto the battlefield. Some of these men were fighting machines, trained and equipped to kill. They had likely seen fierce and deadly hand-to-hand combat many times over. The question I ask myself is this—how could these men not respond? What held them back?

As I stand on the battlefield and look around me, I ask a similar question—where are the King’s men? What is holding them back?

The war rages...

1. The lost are everywhere.
2. The most helpless are being slaughtered.
3. The Word of God is no longer upheld as truth.
4. The next generation of the church is being lost.

5. The King's men are entangled in the affairs of this world.
6. The enemy is given a foothold within our homes through entertainment.
7. The world of pornography and sports has literally consumed many of the King's men.
8. The world has courted our wives and daughters.
9. The world is shaping the character of our boys and our young men.
10. The name of our King is cursed more than it is praised.
11. The love of created is upheld over the love of The Creator.
12. The love of self is worshipped over the love of God.

Every day the enemy defies our King and is relentlessly attacking our families, our churches, and our communities. What will it take for you to step onto the battlefield and engage the enemy for your king? If you have already taken the step, what needs to happen next to ensure the battle is most effectively fought? Like David, we must be men that take up the armor of our King.

*“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and*

*blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—”*

### ***Ephesians 6:10-18***

It is absolutely necessary that you see the utmost need to wear God’s armor as you fight this spiritual battle. Without it, you will fail. When David ran to meet Goliath, his courage was not based on any man-made ability. Rather, his courage was derived from his assurance in the God that he called King. When Polycarp and Luther stood before their accusers they knew who ultimately held their destiny. They were men that defined their lives based on their King and wore His divine armor.

Our day of trial is upon us. The battle is here. It is within you and surrounds you. When it comes right down to it you have two options. Like the Israelite army, you can just stand

there and watch the enemy defy your God, or like David, you can wear God's armor and run onto the battlefield. Your God-given destiny awaits you. Are you ready to fight the "good fight" and run onto the battlefield? Are you ready to define who you are and how you live based on the King you serve? If so, you must take up His armor and be prepared to use it.

### **Wearing The King's Armor**

Within the previous pages, I have presented my concern over the status of the many men that fill the seats of our American churches: They have willingly removed themselves from the battlefield. Yet, there is by God's grace, a remnant of men that are unwilling to compromise their calling to be soldiers of Christ and have positioned themselves on the frontline. These men are easily distinguished from the others by the numerous battle scars they unashamedly wear. They are not entangled in the world—they are men that are engaging it. These courageous soldiers, positioned to fight the good fight, are the ones that are in most need of the King's armor.

As the apostle Paul notes, it is an epic battle between two kingdoms—God's Kingdom of Light and the devil's Kingdom of Darkness. It is a place of war, where armor of steel and power derived from earthly might or technology means little. This battlefield yields not temporal losses but eternal ones. Our enemy is not a mere mortal man that fights with knives and guns. Our enemy, Satan, is a product of divine creation that cannot go underestimated.

The “adversary” (Hebrew word associated with devil) or “slanderer” (Greek word associated with devil) that seeks our eternal demise was once known as the “star of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12), an anointed angel positioned on the holy mountain of God. As such, we cannot underscore the potential danger that exists for every man that takes a step onto this eternal battlefield.

From his book, *The Divine Defense*, pastor and author Robert Jeffress explains:

“I believe the devil is delighted when people underestimate his power either by denying his existence or by diminishing his potential threat. If we’re going to win this very real battle that threatens everything and everyone important to us, we must understand the ferocity of our adversary.”

This is why Paul stresses up front that our strength is rooted not in man, but in the strength of the Lord our King. Left on our own, the devil will have a field day. Yet, by putting on God’s armor, we become His instruments of divine warfare—now equipped and ready for anything our enemy sends our way.

### **Putting on The Armor of God**

Interestingly, Paul mentions first, **the belt of truth**. Over the years, it has become clearly evident that almost every battle of the heart has a birthplace somewhere in thought process of our minds. That is why verses like Colossians 3:2, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 are vital

if we purpose to position the belt of truth tightly around our waistlines.

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

*Romans 12:2*

*“...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*

*Philippians 4:8*

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”*

*2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

Simply put, we guard our minds by proactively engaging our minds with the truth of our King. Foremost, this must involve daily study and meditation of God’s Word. When we walk in the words of our King, the living and active Word of

of God (Hebrews 4:12), the reality of who we are and how we live is defined by Him and not by the world around us. It is, in fact, taking the sword that bears His name, the sword of the Spirit, out of its sheath and using it for God's glory revealed (Ephesians 6:17).

*“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*

*John 17:17*

By filling our minds with our King's Words, we position ourselves to be His instruments of righteousness.

*“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*

*Romans 6:13*

Consider this question: Is your life defined by seeking your King's righteousness? Do you hunger for it? Before you answer this question, honestly evaluate every area of your life and the relationships that comprise it...your life with your wife, children, grandchildren...your life at work and your life when no one else is looking. Does your character speak to God's righteousness in a regardless kind of way? If not, what does it really mean to you to call Jesus Christ Lord and Savior and to wear **His breastplate of righteousness**?

*“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

Our King has destined us toward two greater life-events during our walk on this earth. He first saves us and then He sanctifies us. He grows us beyond ourselves to reveal Christ within us. God's first task of saving us is something that *seems* to happen on our end in a rather instantaneous manner through a profession of faith (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 10:9-10). Yet, once saved, God's work within us has just begun (Phil. 1:6); He then begins His cleansing process. It is a progressive pursuit, where we become less and Christ becomes more (Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 describe this process well).

As the King's soldiers, we live to pursue our King's greater mission: To glorify God through the redemptive power of the cross of Jesus Christ. In this quest, *we are God's ministers of reconciliation that live to share His message of hope and restoration*, it is who we are and who we are called to be.

*"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."*

*2 Corinthians 5:20*

The gospel message, the evangel, is something we take with us every day of our lives. Think about running onto the battlefield without your shoes. You wouldn't think of it. Yet, how many of us everyday step onto the battlefield of life without once giving a thought as to how we will share the message of Christ? First things first, do you desire to be God's ministers of reconciliation? Next, are you prepared to share **the gospel of peace that your King has given to you?**

*“...As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace...’*

*Romans 10:15*

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...”*

*1 Peter 3:15*

Two of the more prominent pieces of armor are worn on our head and forearm. They are **the helmet of salvation** and **the shield of faith**. While every part of God’s armor is vital, these two items represent the essence of our King’s greatness. Captured within the helmet of salvation is the greatest work of our King; it is the single-most profound act of love ever committed—the giving of Himself (John 3:16).

When we place **the helmet of salvation** upon our heads, we affirm the covering of grace that was given to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The helmet signifies the work that was done by our King to make us His. In a very real way, as we wear the King’s helmet of salvation, His battle has become ours. We are no longer men seeking after the deeds of man; rather, we have become the King’s men seeking after things of His kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

*Matthew 6:33*

*“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

*1 Corinthians 6:20*

As the King’s soldiers, we have been given **His shield of faith**. It is a gift from God, not something we have earned or deserve (Eph. 2:8). In the fullest sense, the shield of faith radiates with His power *as we live* a life that speaks to His Lordship and His glory (John 15:5, 8). To wear the King’s shield is to walk in a manner that reflects His grace and His glory in every area of our lives.

A shield does little good when it is dragged behind you. In order for the shield to do what it was designed to do, it must be held high and in front of you. This is why our shields only work when we *use* them. Also, this is why *faith without works is dead* (James 2:26). To wield the King’s shield of faith, will produce His works and give testimony to His workmanship in our lives.

*“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without words is dead also.”*

*James 2:26*

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

*Ephesians 2:10*

Men—our King has given us His armor for a purpose: To wear it on the battlefield. Prior to Paul’s discussion regarding God’s armor, he walked us through the sovereignty of our King (Eph. 1). Next, he shared the means and the purpose of our salvation (Eph. 2-4). He then communicated the specific application of our purpose within the most proximal earthly relationships in our communities and families (Eph. 5.). The reality of God’s sovereign election, the deliverance of His grace, the gift of our faith, and the purpose of our sanctified lives are all brought to reality as we put on the armor of our King.

One last and important point—Paul concludes God’s list of armor with these words:

*“...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”*

*Ephesians 6:18*

It should humble us all when we consider that God, The Son, made prayer a priority within His earthly ministry.

*“Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here, while I go over and pray.’”*

*Matthew 26:36*

How important is it for us to be men of prayer? I do not believe Paul was speaking of event-driven prayers, meaning prayers around our meals, gatherings, bedtime, etc... Rather, Paul was speaking of a prayer that was and is an ongoing conversation with God. Jesus demonstrated a life that was lived within this context, one that was woven within an ongoing dialogue with His Heavenly Father. Prayer was a matter of necessity even for our Lord and Savior. In the most precise and perfect example, Jesus the Son walked with God the Father through a life devoted to prayer and fellowship.

As such, when Paul says “always” and “being watchful with all perseverance,” he is making a strong point that prayer needs to define our day-to-day and moment to moment lives. Always means always. He also makes it a point for us to pray for our fellow soldiers on the battlefield and for the ones that are still watching from the sidelines. How is your prayer life? What would your King say?

**“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,  
in everything give thanks; for this is the  
will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

## Making It Real:

1. Who owns you, i.e. who or what defines your life?
2. What convictions truly guide your life?
3. Are you on the battlefield yet?
4. How well are you daily putting on the King's armor?
5. What disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, Scripture memorization) compel a life that wears the armor of God? Which of these disciplines are needed most in your life?
6. Are you praying as if your life depended upon it? How about the lives of others?
7. With who are you going to share this message?

One last question: Are you willing to come alongside a brother in Christ and share your convictions *to live* as a man of exception? If yes, make a commitment to one another to go beyond the superficial of today. As the King's men, what matters most to God needs to take precedence in your lives. As such, at the core of your friendship will be the necessity to build Christ into one another—for God's glory. Overtime, a friendship rooted in Christ will have a profound impact on your life and the lives that surround you.



**Therefore, when God looks at  
a man's heart, He is seeing the  
reality of the man's character,  
i.e. who he really is.**

## First Character then Competence

“...knowing that tribulations produces perseverance,  
and perseverance, character...”

Romans 5:3-4

What is character? For the purpose of this study, we will define character as the accumulative sum of a person’s convictions that define the way he or she lives. As such, it is a true statement that one’s character is the same regardless of circumstance. Simply stated, character reveals what a person really looks like on the inside at any given time in any given situation, self without the front. Character does not care ultimately what others think; rather, it is the driving force behind what a person does in spite of what others may think.

From God’s perspective, the only character of value is a character that is *in Christ*—being refined and shaped by the presence of the Holy Spirit into the image of our King. Character and not the competence of man is of the utmost importance before God. Point being, *before God*, character is a prerequisite to competence, without character competence means nothing.

Many have noted in the past that the true character of a man comes out when he is placed into a time of trial and/or suffering. This is true. However, is equally true that genuine character that is rooted in Christ will not only shine during the difficult times, but will also be the beacon that directs

the man of God during the so-called good times. During the aftermath of “9/11,” there was a “spiritual” awakening within America that was clearly evident from shore to shore. From churches being filled on Sundays to middle of the week prayer meetings, people were, in fact, seeking to turn to God and renew their relationship with Jesus Christ. It seemed as if the true character of America was shining in the midst of a tremendous trial. However, after all the dust settled it was literally only a matter of months before people returned to living their lives very much apart from God.

I have met many men that are leading successful lives from the world’s perspective. Based on the standards of man, these men are, indeed, “good men.” For many years, this was the life I lived. Yet, like most of the men out there, I was looking at the world’s definition of success and attempting to merge it with God’s. As such, I was compromising the integrity of my foundation in Christ as my cornerstone. Too often, *we fail* to base our judgment of character on the standard of Jesus Christ alone. Rather, we look at each other and the world around us and in the process lose our plumb line. As men of God, our character and measurement of it must unequivocally and in totality be defined by our Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

The Greek word used to communicate the understanding of character in the New Testament is dokime (dok-ee-may) and is used in the verse, Romans 5:4. During the ancient times that gave birth to the meaning of this word, they used a currency made from metal. Given that metals used in the

money making process were relatively soft, people would often shave away as much of the metal as they could in attempt to cheat the system. It was so rampant a practice that in Athens alone more than 80 laws were made to stop the circulation of the shaved coins. Yet, there were a number of honest men of that time that would not allow the shaved coins to be used. These were upright men that held to a higher standard of morals and were called “dokimos” or approved (*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*- G1382-1384). From a biblical standpoint, inherent within the word character is the concept of being approved, *having passed the test of the scales and found authentic* (not a shaved coin and/or counterfeit, but the real deal).

*“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried (approved), he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.”*

*James 1:12*

Why should the character of a man matter so much to us as Christians? It is because the character of the man provides the most absolute demonstration of what is controlling the motives of the man. It is a matter of the heart. Therefore, when God looks at a man’s heart, He is seeing the reality of the man’s character, i.e. who he really is (Proverbs 4:23). It is unlikely that we know the true character of most the men around us. We may have a good handle on a few of them; yet, when push comes to shove, they will often surprise us. At the same time, we, ourselves, may surprise them.

Again, it is not necessarily the huge trials that reveal the godly character of a man; rather, it is the day in and day out tests that often reveal the real make-up of a man. If character remains constant regardless of circumstances, we can expect that a godly man will pursue a walk of life that remains God-focused *no matter what, no matter where, and no matter how much*.

Jacob's son Joseph is an excellent example. Joseph's character clearly revealed a heart that sought to please God in every area of his life. While some could say he lacked tact as a young man (or common sense) as he explained his dreams to his brothers, it is without question that most of his life, as recorded in Scripture, exemplified a character consistent with a man seeking God's honor and glory.

*“So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.”*

*Genesis 39:10*

Regardless of *what* temptation came before Joseph, such as Potiphar's wife, or *where* it took place, in Potiphar's house—likely with no one else looking, or *how many times* tempted, as Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph multiple times, Joseph was focused on pleasing God as his highest life-pursuit. His character was weighed on the scales of his trials and found to be authentic.

This in no way suggests that Joseph was perfect. However, it does demonstrate that Joseph was a man committed to the God he served. He was a man of exception that lived out His convictions in the hands of an exceptional God.

As the King's men, men of exception, our character precedes us. It is not enough to say who we are—we must live it. Like Joseph, regardless of the circumstances, we must remain faithful and committed to our King. As my father often told me when I was growing up, “It is not enough to ‘talk the talk,’ you must walk it.” It is in our perseverance through trials that faith is made real and God produces character.

So often the “pull” that Satan uses to compromise our character pivots on the approval of man versus the approval of God. Even when we are doing the “right thing,” our hearts can often drift toward a desire to see ourselves uplifted and not God. From his book, *Pleasing People*, author Lou Priolo effectively communicates this idea:

Even those things that are religious in nature (such as prayer, fasting, and giving) can be done with a hypocritical motive to gain man's approval (Matt. 6:1-5)...He is a Pharisee at heart. His service to man and to God is contaminated by impure desires. His religion is more external than it is internal. What he does is done outwardly, with his motive being a strong desire to draw attention to himself. His first thought is not ‘How will God be glorified by what I am about to do?’ but rather ‘How will others perceive me when I do what I am about to do?’”

Character in Christ at its core is all about God's glory being revealed. To know Christ as your King is to seek His fame in all you say and in all you do. As His men, simply put, the glory and grace of our King defines the foundation of our character. It is at this point of recognition, that we see our tremendous neediness before God. Apart from clinging to who He is, we can never be a man of character.

While competence is an outward production of a given skill set or genetic make-up, character is the inward reality that defines one's being; godly character drives godly competence and not vice versa. As such, the cliché "practice makes perfect" is suitable when discussing the outward performance of one's competence. However, while putting into practice one's character in and of itself is a good thing, it alone will not produce "more" godly character. Regardless of the number of "character" push-ups you do, you will never attain Christ-like character in your own sweat and effort.

There is only one way to develop the character of our King. While it is not a character formula per se, it does involve a common thread of disciplines that ultimately rest upon this simple idea: ***Our lives need to be totally surrendered to our King.*** I recently touched upon this subject in a devotional entitled, *The Disciple's Prayer: Make Me Nothing.*

To be a follower of Christ, one must choose to become nothing that Christ may be everything. It is a one-time decision and a life-time pursuit. It represents our starting point of faith as well as our daily pursuit to grow closer to our Lord.

Man's chief end is to glorify God through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Romans 8:29). As such, it is only through Jesus Christ that we can glorify God. When we live our lives apart from God's glory being revealed through Jesus Christ, we are holding onto something and failing to make Christ everything. At this moment, we have stepped down from His altar (Romans 12:1) and we have detached ourselves from the cross (Galatians 2:20). We are no longer a living sacrifice for God, dying to self and living for Christ; we are now living for ourselves and our own glory. It is no longer about God's will be done, it is all about our will be done—for our name and not God's fame.

We can only grow closer to God and reveal His glory through Jesus Christ as we become nothing and He becomes everything. This involves a one-time decision and then a life-time pursuit. It is the point of justification, being made right before God through Jesus Christ as well as the practical means of sanctification, less of us and more of Christ each day.

*"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30*

Will you pray The Disciples' Prayer today...and every day until God calls you home? What would happen to your life if you truly "owned" this prayer before God? Would people begin to see in your life more of Christ and less of you? How much more would God be glorified by your life if you truly lived

for His name sake and not your own? How could God use you to impact the people within your mission field?

The Disciple's Prayer: "Lord, make me nothing that You may be everything."

As the King's men, our character is defined by the King we serve. Wrapped up within the heart of character is a combination of purpose and passion. As our character is defined by our King, He will shape and compel our life goals and our day to day decisions. While it is very easy as men to focus on our competence over our character, godly character is something that is not easily made and will not always evoke accolades from the world around us. It takes sacrifice, time, and a willingness to go against the mainstream of culture. Yet, once established, godly character is like divine granite; it is eternally solid and dependable. It will continue to stand when everything else falls and in the end, we will become who we already are—men of exception in the hands of an exceptional God.

Making It Real:

1. How do you define character? (Any Scripture to support your answer?)
2. Why are we currently lacking men of character?

3. How important is it to you to build relationships with men of character?
4. If a father or grandfather, how are you building character into the hearts of your children and/or grandchildren?
5. What would you say is the most important thing to ensure Christ-like character?

How are you doing within this most important area of your life?

**If the enemy succeeds here, in diverting our hearts and minds away from our King and our King's greater mission, he has already beaten us before we have even taken a step onto the battlefield (i.e. mission field).**

## Engaged—but Not Entangled

“Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it spring the issues of life.”

Proverbs 4:23

Over the past several chapters, we have looked carefully at what it means to be one of the King’s men. We have reviewed some of the foundational truths of our faith and the greater plan of our King. We, as God’s men, are saved by Christ to serve and worship our King. Our identity, i.e. our character, needs to be totally and radically dependent upon Jesus Christ, God’s Living Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As noted previously, God often works through men to bring about a spiritual growth-change in the lives of other men. God sets us apart to worship upward and then to reach outward, all for His glory. It is a missional life, where we are placed into enemy territory to engage an eternal and often invisible battle.

*“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”*

*2 Timothy 2:4*

Yet, how do we most effectively engage ourselves within the battle-field without becoming entangled in it? What are the specific battle-tactics that God calls us to use? Within John Calvin’s commentary on the verse cited above (2 Tim. 2:4), he denotes, “It is as if (Christ) is saying,

‘The rule of military discipline is that as soon as a soldier has enrolled under a commander he leaves his home and all his affairs and concentrates only on the war. In the same way, we also can only be devoted to Christ if we are free from all the world’s entanglements’” (1, 2 *Timothy and Titus*, by John Calvin, Crossway Books, 1998).

While Paul is giving specific pastoral instructions, there is a great universal application for all of the King’s men. We cannot effectively serve within the eternal ranks of God’s army if we are caught up in the temporal affairs of mankind. From our King’s perspective, to engage others on the battlefield, we must be actively fighting the war. Are you entangled or engaged? The term “engaged” is a military word that implies active service. It is the same root word found in 1 Timothy 1:18 (fight) where Paul provides Timothy the charge to “fight the good fight.”

As Paul scribed these words, he knew, too well, how easily the world’s affairs can spin their web around us. Before we know it, we are no longer engaging the enemy but have become entangled by him. At the point of disengagement from the war, we are snagged by the enemy and held captive by the fleeting idols of our hearts (read 1 Corinthians 10:21-22 and 2 Samuel 11:1-4). For all practical purposes, we have discarded the King’s armor and have put on the civilian clothes of our enemy. We become mere spectators, busy being entertained and failing to engage. It should come to no surprise that Christ prayed specifically for us in this regards:

*“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world,*

*but that You should keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15).*

This is why it is most vital to our mission that our greatest effort and highest priority be directed toward guarding our hearts and minds (*“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it {flow} the springs of life”/Proverbs 4:23- NASB*). If the enemy succeeds here in diverting our hearts and minds away from our King and our King’s greater mission, he has already beaten us before we have even taken a step onto the battlefield (i.e. mission field).

### **Battle Tactic #1: Guarding Your Heart and Mind**

**Guard your hearts and minds by keeping focused on Christ (Hebrews 12:2).** It is apparent from Scripture, and validated by the lives of men, that whatever controls our hearts and minds will dictate who we are, what we do, and ultimately, who we become. In light of Paul’s instructions to Timothy and Christ’s prayer to God the Father, it should be apparent that our lives are not lived within a realm void of evil. As such, if we are not intentionally renewing our minds and hearts, the enemy is doing it for us. If we are not actively growing closer to God, we are, indeed, moving away from Him. There is no state of spiritual neutrality. **God must have our hearts and minds if we expect to have any eternal and lasting impact on the battlefield.** In light of this, I encourage you to memorize the following verses:

*“Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

*Colossians 3:2*

*“This Book of Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.”*

*Joshua 1:8*

*“Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”*

*Psalms 119:11*

*“And do not be conformed by this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

*Romans 12:2*

*“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”*

*2 Corinthians 10:4-5*

It is this simple. What we take in on a regular basis will shape who we are and how we live. That is why the first battle tactic/discipleship tool is the most critical. If the upward (vertical) aspect of our faith is not real or continually diverted, the outward reaching toward others (horizontal) will ultimately fall short in our own efforts. To have our hearts, God must have our minds and vice versa.

## **Battle-Tactic #2: God’s Power Through Jesus Christ**

**We must rely on the power of God—the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit, and His Living and Active Word to guide our every step. Practically speaking, this tactic must consist significantly of dedicated time in prayer and devoted time in God’s Word.** It is the all-important reality that God’s power is just that—God’s power. While God graciously uses His men as His instruments, we remain mere vessels that display His power and His glory. Yes, God has wired us, gifted us, equipped us, and even positioned us to serve Him. Yet, God’s Word clearly points to our source of power.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

*Romans 1:16*

*“For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

*Hebrews 4:12*

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus...”*

*2 Timothy 1:7-9*

While attending seminary, a story common to many in ministry was told about a Chinese pastor that visited an American church. Throughout his visit, the American pastor assigned as the guide noticed that His Chinese brother saw much but said very little. Just prior to his departure, the American pastor could not take the silence any longer and candidly asked his quiet brother from China what he thought of his church. The Chinese pastor, with a solemn look upon his face said, “I am astonished at all your church accomplishes...without God.” Upon hearing this story, a Korean pastor in our class shared the differences he also has seen since coming to America. Simply put, it appears we strive to be more “professional” than “pastoral,” more “corporate-like” than “church-like,” and more focused on each other than God.

How many of our lives are consumed by efforts void of the power of God? How many times do we counsel our families and friends yet fail to consider God’s Word? Men, without God we are nothing and our efforts will always fall short. With God we have everything we need and our efforts are His to do as He wills.

Without God, our eternal impact is always limited by who we are. With God, our impact on eternity becomes unlimited by Who He is. In our own efforts, we walk onto the battlefield with a pea-shooter. With God, we are armed with nuclear warheads. As one of the King's men, you have been given the power of God through His Son Jesus Christ, the indwelling of His Spirit, and His Living Word. You have been assigned to a specific platoon, comrades that share the power and the mission. As you strive to engage the battlefield around you, it is imperative that your source of power comes from God Himself.

*"...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior..."*

*Titus 3:5-6*

What is truly wonderful is that God has provided us with the greatest living example in the ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ. Throughout the life of Christ, we are given the perfect representation of what a God-dependent ministry should look like. Christ clearly demonstrated the power and authority of God's Word as He rebuked the devil's temptations...

*"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

*Matthew 4:4*

*“It is written, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”*

*Matthew 4:7*

*“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*

*Matthew 4:10*

Christ was able to use God’s Word to combat Satan because He *knew* God’s Word. The Old Testament was His Bible—*the sword of the Spirit*, and He continually used it. In the days of old, prior to the age of gun powder, warriors and knights would always have their swords by their sides. They knew that to engage the enemy without their swords was a fatal mistake. As the King’s men, how well do you know His Word, i.e. your sword? Are you using it as God intended?

As expressed in an earlier chapter, our greatest example of a devoted prayer life is found in the ministry of Christ. He literally walked in prayer with God the Father. Prayer to Christ was more than a conversation, a mere exchange of information, it was a means to achieve a greater depth of fellowship with His Father. Because of His love for God the Father, prayer was an absolute necessity.

*“...and I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”*

*John 8:28-30*

The reality of walking within the power of God comes from a life that is profusely filled with prayer. As such, to the extent we pray reflects the authenticity of our love for God and directly correlates with our dependency upon Him. From God's perspective, prayer is a means to which He imparts grace to His children that are surrendering their will to His. In this way, prayer should always be transforming, we yield and the Holy Spirit works. Prayer is powerful.

“We are never so bold in prayer as when we can look in the face of God and say, ‘My Father, I do not pray for myself in this thing, and I do not want my will done. I want thy name to be glorified. Glorify it now in my situation, in my life, and do it in such a way that all will know it is of thee.’”

*(Foundations of the Christian Faith, J.M. Boice)*

### **Battle-Tactic #3: Repentance and Renewal**

Christ's prevailing message of repentance and renewal was a continuation of the prophets of old and of John the Baptist: “*From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ Mt. 4:17.* Where there is genuine repentance before God there is renewal, and with renewal comes revival. **As the King's men, we should take note of Christ's resounding message of repentance and realize that it is this message, fueled by the power of God's redeeming grace in Christ that gives birth to reconciliation and continued growth.**

When we truly repent, we turn away from ourselves and our sins and set our eyes, hopes, and trust upon Jesus Christ.

*“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted...”*

*2 Corinthians 7:10*

Jesus Christ is Lord, and when a man is willing to do His will, he is repenting, and the truth flashes in. For the first time in his life, he finds himself willing to say, ‘I will do the will of the Lord, even if I die for it!’ Illumination will start in his heart. That is repentance, my brethren—he has been following his own will and now decides to do the will of God!

—A.W. Tozer

**As Christ did, we must explain and present the need for repentance.** The doctrine of repentance is rarely spoken in many churches largely because of two reasons:

1) We lack a genuine fear of God, and a natural byproduct of number one is 2) We think too highly of ourselves. When we revere God little our tendency is that we think too much of ourselves. With proud hearts, the likeliness of denying self and taking up one’s cross daily is highly unlikely (Luke 9:23-25). In this fashion, we cheapen the blood-stained grace of Jesus Christ and we fail to recognize the ongoing sin pattern in our lives. The outcome is always the same—without repentance and the grace that comes from it, there is no growth.

This matter reveals an escalating problem within many church ministries today: We tend to focus more on the horizontal (connecting with one another) than on the vertical (connecting to God) and in the process we compromise our relationship with God in order connect with one another.

Sadly and ironically, in its attempt to achieve cultural relevance, mainstream evangelicalism has become essentially irrelevant. As Os Guinness points out, the seductive promise of relevance is, in reality, the road to irrelevance. When the church markets itself like the world, the distinctiveness of its message is lost and the gospel is irretrievably compromised (*Preaching The Cross*, Crossway Books, ©2007).

As suggested, when we walk in a manner that fails to consider God's glory, we will live in a way that places too much emphasis on ourselves. Inasmuch, our perception of reality is greatly skewed. Instead of humbling ourselves before a perfect and holy God, we swell with pride in the presence of people and miss out on growing within God's grace (James 4:6). Sadly, we live most of our lives looking outwardly with little to no recognition upwardly.

*“And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”*

*Isaiah 6:4-5*

As Christ's ambassadors, our greatest testimony to others is when we stand before God's throne of glory and grace. Often God will use our personal journey of humility and grace to impact others for His kingdom. He uses the fruit He bears in our lives as a source of light to those that are held captive by the darkness (2 Cor. 5:19-20, 2 Cor. 4:14-18). **As the King's men, our daily demonstration of repentance and renewal, indeed, shines as a beacon of hope within a darkened world.**

*"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you..."*

*1 Peter 3:15*

#### **Battle Tactic #4: Urgency**

I had the fortunate opportunity during a retreat to spend a few days with some very missionally-minded families. By God's grace, these men and women are impacting remote tribal communities where the language has yet to be formulated in written structure. In the truest sense, they are on the cutting edge of global missions. To say it was exciting is an understatement. Yet, as I contemplate more deeply my weekend experience, I see now with even greater clarity the widening gap between the King's calling to serve as His witnesses and the overall response by His men.

As we consider further the issue of engaging the people of the world while not becoming entangled in it, I was reminded again this weekend that the pursuit of engagement without

entanglement is foremost *a matter of urgency*. What we focus on at any given time directly reflects, at that exact moment, the most urgent matter in front of us. Incased within its meaning, urgency implies great importance and/or insistence. In the most practical way, urgency induces greater focus. Now this is not to say that urgency always correlates with our priorities. Yet, in some way there should be some type of significant relationship between the two. *If something matters most, there needs to be a strong and compelling sense of urgency to see our highest priority achieve a state of fruition.*

*“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, **having conduct honorable among the Gentiles...by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**”*

*1 Peter 2:11-12 (my emphasis)*

**As the King’s men, our lives should always carry some greater sense of urgency regarding our calling in Christ (to live as His ambassadors).** What matters most to God must matter most to us. Our character in Christ needs to define how we interact with our external circumstances and not vice versa. Meaning, our circumstances do not define who we are, what we do, and how we do it. Christ does. If, as God’s men, our highest priority is to live for Him, this needs to be our most urgent life-focus.

When we consider Peter's instructions as outlined in 1 Peter 2:11-12, we see the necessity to live as "sojourners and pilgrims." In essence, we need to live within the reality of our heavenly citizenship, i.e. **our identity in Christ**. As we identify ourselves as people not "of" this world, mere pilgrims, we take on the role of a true missionary, one that is sent outward to deliver a message.

Here again, we see Christ as the greatest "sent one" that lived the life of a sojourner on an urgent mission.

*"...For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth..."*

*John 18:37*

*"And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'"*

*Matthew 8:20*

*"...I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."*

*John 5:30*

Jesus knew why He was sent and He knew where His focus needed to be. This means we must continually renew our minds to the fact that our lives are not our own and this world is not our final home (Romans 12:1).

We were bought at a price, the sacrifice of Christ, and we now are called to live for Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). This is our most urgent calling and rightfully so, needs to be the compelling focus of our lives. As such, we must be intentional and available to pursue the most urgent matters in this life.

*“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also...”*

*John 12:26*

Is there anywhere in Scripture that suggests Christ ever became entangled in the affairs of this world while He engaged it? I am not suggesting that we will ever walk as perfectly as Christ did. He is God. Yet, as the God-man, fully God and fully man, He was and is our greatest life-example. He is the model of a man that we must strive to be like as we pursue His mission (Romans 8:29). It is our highest life ambition to surrender our lives to Christ to the extent that we no longer live, but He lives in us. As noted, He was and is The Exceptional Son of Man. As we become so hidden in Christ, in His will and not our own, He will move and grow us beyond ourselves (Col. 3:2-3, Gal. 2:20, 5:22). In the most real sense, it is a place where self dies and Christ truly lives.

In Summary:

I have heard it said that your best defense is a great offense. This same idea holds true when it comes down to spiritual warfare. One of the best battle-tactics that we can employ to engage the enemy is to live with an overriding sense of urgency to please our King. It is a Christ-centered, Word-

driven, Spirit-led life that directs our life-purpose, our life-passion, and our life-priorities. The more we guard our hearts and minds for our King, the less we grasp aimlessly at the wind around us (Ecc. 1:17) and take hold of His greatness before us. As we rely on the power of our King, our King will supply our needs (Phil. 4:13-19) and continually move us from entanglement to engagement.

### Making it Real:

1. Evaluate your current use of the battle-tactics and prayerfully consider where more attention is needed.
2. What typically carries the greatest urgency in your life? Why?
3. What are you most focused on in your daily activities?
4. Do you see the gap between where God wants your life-priorities and where they really are?
5. Where are you “entangled” within the affairs of this world? (where God receives no honor and no glory)
6. What must you do today to be more engaged and less entangled?
7. Is there an overriding sense of urgency to please your King? Do you believe there should be? Does it, the urgent calling of your King, compel you to live for Him?



**Love is NOT merely something we feel. Rather, love is a choice rooted in the volitional act of giving oneself to another. It is the willful intent to deny self to seek the gain of others. In the truest sense, to love our wives is first and foremost an act of submission that translates into obedience and worship before our God.**

## Loving Our Brides

*“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*

*Genesis 2:24*

Throughout this study, we have acknowledged an overriding problem within the ranks of the King’s men that may best be summed up as follows: Overall, the King’s men lack commitment to their King. Nowhere is this more greater seen than in our marriages. God has given us very explicit instructions on how we are to live as husbands with our wives. Yet, like many other areas of our lives we have allowed the prevailing cultural mindset of the world to influence us more than God’s Living Word. As the King’s men, it is vital that we refocus our minds and hearts upon our King’s desire for our marriages, we must return to His blueprint of what love really means.

Much of the problem of our failing marriages begins with our improper understanding of what “love” is. Love is NOT merely something we feel. Rather, love is a choice rooted in the volitional act of giving oneself to another. It is the willful intent to deny self to seek the gain of others. In the truest sense, to love our wives is first and foremost an act of submission that translates into obedience and worship before our God. Our greatest example of this is found within the most profound act of love ever, when

Christ, God Himself, gave of Himself for the world He loved (John 3:16).

To love as God intends is to willingly transfer one's joy that is rooted to self and plant it within the heart of another. As such, our love is most real when *our greatest satisfaction* is based upon the joy we bring to others. It is a deliberate choice to derive one's greatest delight in the giving of oneself to God and to others. Regarding our wives, we love them most effectively when we place their interests before our own.

*“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant...”*

*Philippians 2:3-7*

As the King's men, everything we do and everything we think should demonstrate our ultimate goal to please God. As such, every act of love we pursue should bring honor and glory to our King. Foremost, the sacred union of marriage should reflect this. In the past, I have explained it like this. Love should always be an upward and then outward pursuit.

The two greatest commandments found in Mt. 22:37-39 demonstrate this divine truth. Everything we do within the context of our marriages should reflect this pattern of love. As we submit our will to God, He works in us and through us in order that we may share His love with others (John 13:34-35). It is the effective “love blueprint” that God has given us. We first submit ourselves vertically to God and then God compels us to submit our lives horizontally to others.

Men: Are we living God’s model of love within our most sacred earthly relationship...our marriages?

The bottom-line is this: How you love your wife is one of the greatest life testimonies that validates your commitment to God—your King. When Christ was questioned regarding the practice of ripping apart the bond that God joins through marriage, He responded saying, “...Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Here we are given God’s explicit will regarding the permanency of marriage. It is this simple. Do you want to pursue God’s will for your marriage? If yes, your definition of love must include the words “regardless and until death do us part.”

In the spring of 1519, Spanish Conquistador Hernando Cortez led an expedition to Mexico. Shortly after arriving, Cortez gave a command to destroy the ships. While historians debate the specifics and intent of Cortez, it is clear that he intentionally removed a potential escape in order to focus with total singularity on the attainment of their goal.

At that point the ships were destroyed, Cortez and his men had only one option: To pursue with absolute focus what they had set out to do.

Most recently, I challenged a man to do just that—remove the “exit plan” of divorce from his marriage. Our wives need to know that our love for them is real in a regardless sort of way. **God’s “blue print” of love is commitment personified.** Much like the vows spoken at the marriage ceremony, love perseveres through the good and the bad, regardless of the personal cost. Men, we must delete the word divorce from our personal life-dictionaries. As the King’s men, choose to love your wives regardless, just as our King has chosen to love us in spite of ourselves.

For those of you that have known the bitterness of a divorce, it is vital that you walk within the reality of our King’s enduring mercy and grace. In Christ, repentance will yield forgiveness and hope (1 John 1:9). Yet, this in no way diminishes the perfect will of our King and the blueprint of His love that He has given to us.

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

*Romans 5:8*

Before we “feel” love or “give” love, we must first **choose** love. It is foremost an upward act of submission to our King and then second, an outward expression to others. God’s model of love pivots upon a heart of humility that seeks to

place God and others before oneself. Our greatest example of the true meaning of love is God's giving of Himself through Jesus Christ.

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...”*

*Ephesians 5:25*

Typically, what you hold most precious is what you will love most. What is most precious to you? The Greek word *timios*, translated in Hebrews 13:4 as honor, is most often defined as something that is held as precious or having great price or value. Most married men I know would likely say that they uphold the institution of marriage in honor. Yet, do most men truly act and live as though their marriage is precious?

Recently, I found myself coming under great conviction. Sherry and I are closing in on twenty years of marriage. For most of those years, I have maintained a somewhat consistent pattern of romantic focus to let her know how much I love her. However, it dawned on me that it has been some time since I did something special for her just because she is so special. Later that day I found myself at my local grocery store asking the owner, a close friend of mine, the question, “Do you sell bouquets of flowers here?” His quick response back to me was, “What did you do, Joe?”

That question posed by my friend captures a reality that all too often is true. Men, the large majority of us do not hold

marriage as *precious*. If we did, doing special things for our wives would be a regular habit rather than a “get out of the doghouse” type of thing. When it comes right down to it, we, as men, place more value on things that matter most to us versus the things that matter most to God. Marriage is most precious because it is most precious to God. As His men, we must come to a point of resolution whereby our hearts’ desires become His.

By far one of the most convicting verses for men on the topic of marriage is found in Ephesians chapter five. For many men, this is a memory verse that their wives know as well as they do, and in some cases their wives know it even better. Unfortunately, there are many of us who would choose to focus on the verses just prior to this one that instructs wives to submit to their husbands. Before we consider either of these verses, let’s look at the one that precedes them both.

*“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”*

*Ephesians 5:21*

Before the apostle Paul takes us into the relationship between the wife and husband, he first communicates the necessity to submit to one another out of reverence to God. As such, as you live out your role as a husband you do so in a manner that ultimately speaks to your worship and honor of God. In doing so, you place your God-given role as a husband onto God’s altar. **Everything you do as a husband you do before God as an act of worship.**

*“...by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God...”*

*Romans 12:1*

*“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”*

*Colossians 3:17*

Now we are ready to step into a few specific orders our King has given to His married soldiers:

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”*

*Ephesians 5:25-27*

Here, Paul, under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit gives us a super sentence that is soaked with instruction. As the King’s men, our greatest model of love in action is The King Himself, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His perfect design of love is defined by humility, sacrifice, and honor. Practically speaking, what does this look like? From Stuart Scott’s book, *The Exemplary Husband*, he provides us some very useful ideas on how to love our wives as Christ loved His church.

## **To Love Your Wife:**

1. Prefer her over yourself.
2. Show interest in her interests.
3. Encourage her with words of appreciation.
4. Brighten her day with an unexpected card, note, flowers, or gift.
5. Spend time with her having fun (what she enjoys).
6. Spend time listening with interest to her concerns while showing compassion, giving her encouragement from God's Word, and helping her find a solution; all in that order (trust me!).
7. Show her non-sexual affection (no strings attached).
8. Seek to please and satisfy her during sexual intimacy.
9. Confront her sin in love, pray with her about it and encourage change (...before you hold the "mirror of God" in front of somebody else, first place it before yourself).
10. Pray with her and lead her spiritually (Read Scripture with her). See to it that she is serving and using her spiritual gifts within the (home and) the church.

*(The Exemplary Husband, Stuart Scott)*

When looking at Ephesians 5:25-27 two things jump out at me. **Number one:** Our goal to love as Christ loves is a tremendous life-pursuit! However, it is a command that we were given by Christ Himself that is found in John 13:34-35... a new commandment, *to love one another as Christ loved us*. Here, through God's divine Spirit, Paul places the new commandment dead smack in the most intimate earthly relationship God created. Men, we cannot attempt to water-down this direct order. No compromises and no excuses. Our singular aim is to love our wives as Christ loved us!

**Number two:** Like Christ's love consecrates us, our love for our wives should consecrate them. Consider the Words our King gives us in Ephesians 5:25-28: **sanctify** and **cleanse** her, **washing** of water by the word, **glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, holy** and **without blemish**. When Christ's love is perfected in us, we move closer to God. We should always have this same goal in mind when we love our wives. As we love them, we seek to bring them closer to God and in doing so, bring glory to His name.

These next several verses of focus are as volatile as the Ephesians 5 passage in some circles of Christendom. Some would say to refer to a woman today as a "weaker vessel" is quite frankly, pre-historic and lacks political correctness. Yet, as a King's man we must remember this about our King. His Word and character are not subject to any limitations of time, nor by the fleeting and often changing cultural norms that perverse the meaning of His Words (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

*“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

*1 Peter 3:7*

It is important to place this passage into the *Scriptural* context in which it was written. God’s Word always serves as our primary source of interpreting God’s Word, the most basic and essential truth of hermeneutics (biblical interpretation). Prior to these words in 1 Peter 3:7, Peter had just completed a discourse on the attributes of a godly woman. Within his instructive words to women, Peter outlined the wife’s role and her walk before God and her husband.

*“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so than, 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. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who*

*obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”*

*1 Peter 3:1-6 NIV*

As the King’s men, we must understand the great responsibility God has given us. Based on His design, our King has placed our wives in a position of submission before us. We are charged and commanded to lead them in the same manner Christ leads us; **we lead by loving**. In the context of the above verses, as God’s men, we are given insight into God’s heart concerning our wives. Just as God looked into the heart of David to determine His qualifying character to be king, God also looks into the hearts of our wives to see and validate the reality of their beauty, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.

Pivoting back to 1 Peter 3:7, I want you to realize that our wives were designed by God to be “weaker vessels.” **Yet, make no mistake about it “weaker” does not mean lesser.** All women, in Christ, including our wives and daughters are co-heirs in our King’s kingdom, co-equal in function and value (Galatians 3:28-29). Also, weaker does not mean less capable. Many women I know can outperform me in many areas of life; yet, the point is not whether a woman is more capable to lead—the issue is God’s design and plan. Looking at the preceding verses (1 Peter 3:1-6), by creative design, God has placed our wives in a role of greater dependency upon their husbands. Men, this means you must lead and treat your wives with tremendous honor and grace,

anything less and you bring dishonor and disgrace to your King.

When we consider the above passages we are given insight into some more practical ways we can love our wives as Christ loves His church.

1. Seek to apply God’s blueprint of love within your marriage by placing your wife’s interest before your own. Make it a daily goal.
2. **Delete the exit plan of divorce from your marriage.** If you have never given this gift to your wife, copy a page from your dictionary with the word divorce on it. Draw a line through it and attach it to a note to your wife letting her know the depth of your commitment to both God and her.
3. Lead in a way that encourages submissiveness (do not “lord over” your wife). Like Christ seek to serve rather than to be served- Mark 10:45.
4. **Keep your wife’s purity as a priority.** Men—this includes the entertainment we bring into our homes. Read Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:1-4 and Philippians 4:8 in the context of your pursuit of holiness before God. It is this simple. What is wrong before God is wrong to put before us—any compromise will at some point provide an opening for the enemy.

5. Promote a God-fearing home. Make it a priority to spend devotional time in God’s Word with your wife and children. Take time to pray as a family.
6. Focus more on wife’s inward beauty than her outward beauty. How does the issue of modesty play into this? Think about it.
7. Give the gift of security to your wife by developing a monthly budget and sticking to it.

The King has given clear commands when it comes to loving our brides—we must love them as our King loves us. Like Christ, we lead best by loving most. This means humility, sacrifice, and honor must cover us and go before us. It is our highest goal to see every interaction with our wives as a means to move them closer to our King for His honor and glory. This will only happen as we, ourselves, submit our role as husbands as an act of worship and service to our King.

Making it Real:

1. Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 with your wife.
2. Verbally commit to love your wife as God’s Word commands; it is a one-time decision and then a life-long pursuit (memorize Ephesians 5:25).
3. Destroy the ship called “Divorce” and let your wife know about it.

**God has placed you in the unique and privileged role to lead your children toward Him, a process that He commands and directs. Dads, you cannot be too intentional with the discipleship of your children around and upon the Word of God.**

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## **A Generational Impact**

*“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”*

*Deuteronomy 6:6-7*

One of the most telling studies on the topic of parenting I have seen was conducted by the Barna Group a few years ago. Here is an excerpt from the summary of their findings:

“You might expect that parents who are born again Christians would take a different approach to raising their children than did parents who have not committed their life to Christ- but that was rarely the case.’ Barna explained. ‘For instance, we found that the qualities born again parents say an effective parent must possess, the outcomes they hope to facilitate in the lives of their children, and the media monitoring process in the household was indistinguishable from the approach taken by parents who are not born again...only three out of ten born again parents included the salvation of their child in the list of critical parental emphases’” (The Barna Group, Ltd. *Parents Describe How They Raise Their Children*, Feb. 2005).

The responsibility and privilege of parenting is one of the most important life endeavors we have as Christians. Consider this truth: As parents, God not only includes us within the process of creating eternal beings, He then commends their developmental care into our hands. It is a sad reality that many of us, as men of God, place more energy and focus into so many other things than into the lives of our children.

As the King's men, we must, without compromise, seek to recapture the priority of parenting the next generation toward Christ. Let me emphasize the "toward" aspect of this vital life pursuit. In and of ourselves, we cannot impart the gift of faith into the hearts of our children. Yet, by God's grace, He will use us as the guiding vessels that direct the hearts of our children to receive His gift of eternal life (1 John 5:11-12).

Being used as God's vessels will not happen by accident. Apart from saturating our lives with God's truth (His Word), we will quickly become entangled within the affairs of this world and in the process entangle our children as well. At some point, we must face the fact that for most of us we have been living our "Christian" lives in virtual sync with the world around us, we have lived entangled and conformed lives.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you*

*may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

*Romans 12:2*

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.”*

*1 John 2:15-16*

Men, before we make any attempt to build into the lives of our children we must first make things right in our own hearts before God. We must acknowledge our sins before our King and then seek repentance from them. Consider these questions in your personal evaluation of your heart before God.

1. How does my life demonstrate a love for the things of the world?
2. How pure is my thought life?
3. What sort of images do I allow before my eyes?
4. What pleasures of the flesh do I partake?
5. How have I coveted my neighbor's wife and goods with my eyes and heart?
6. In what ways do I think too much of myself?

7. Who or what defines who I am and what I do on a daily basis?
8. How do I define success (from God's perspective or man's)?

Prior to Hezekiah's reign as king, we are told that the generations before "feared the LORD, *yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children...* continued doing as their fathers did... (2 Kings 18:4). Yet, when Hezekiah became King he did what had to be done. To borrow a biblical counseling phrase, Hezekiah completed a *radical amputation* upon the world's stuff that entangled the hearts and minds of his people.

*"He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent..."*

*2 Kings 18:4*

As the King's servant, Hezekiah did what had to be done to make it right before God. Yet, as we see with Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, the sins of the past, coupled with the sin that dwells within all of us will lead us toward destruction apart from God's direct intervention. However, this does not, in any way, diminish the impact Hezekiah had on God's people. As king, Hezekiah was responsible for the spiritual welfare

of his people and he did whatever he could to ensure their proper standing before God.

As fathers, God will hold us responsible for state of affairs within our homes. In a very real way, the home is a micro-kingdom and God has appointed you as the steward responsible for it. What things have been positioned upon high places within your homes? Is your home a temple of the world or a tribute to the God you serve? To whom or to what have you adulterated your children? As I stand before God, I am greatly saddened over the past times I uplifted the world's idols of materialism and self-centeredness in my own home. What is even more painful is the lack of my King's presence within my day to day endeavors and decisions, a form of ungodliness demonstrated by the lack of God in my life.

Ungodliness may be defined as living one's everyday life with little or no thought of God, or of God's will, or of God's glory...We seldom think of our dependence on God or our responsibility to Him. We might go for hours with no thought of God at all. In that sense, we are hardly different from our nice, but unbelieving neighbor. God is not at all in his thoughts and is seldom in ours (*Respectable Sins*, Jerry Bridges).

Consider this scenario: For twenty years you have been married to your wife. Yet, for many of those days she has lived with another man and, in fact, lived a different life apart from you.

Can you even imagine the deep hurt you would feel everyday she chooses the other man over you? Now consider this. By living our lives apart from God, we are choosing the world over Him. We have constructed our high places, our images, our wooden idols and we have adulterated ourselves before our King that has given us everything. Worse yet, we are taking our children—the next generation, down this same wayward path.

Men—before we can become godly fathers we must become men of God that seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Remember, our King sets us apart, in Christ, **that we may exclusively worship and serve Him**. Our greatest *Christian* teaching tool for our children is, in fact, the lives we pursue before them.

As the King’s men, are you willing to do what needs to be done to ensure your house is in spiritual order before God? If not, are you really one of His men?

*“...Which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God...”*

*Psalm 78:5-7*

While God's Word explicitly points to the greater responsibility of the parents in nourishing and admonishing the children in the way of the Lord, the entire church shares ownership in supporting the overall goal of raising the next generation in a manner consistent with God's Word (Deut. 6:6-7, Matthew 28:20, Acts 2:42-46, Colossians 2:6-7, Galatians 6:1-10, Titus 2:1-8).

This is a foundational principle pertaining to the body of Christ: Within the divine unity we share in Christ, we are charged with the command to sacrificially build into the lives of one another—man to man, woman to woman, family to family, father to son, mother to daughter, older man to younger man, man to youth, and so on...

While no one will ever have it perfect on this side of eternity, we must be willing to admit that we, as the Christian church at large, have fallen greatly short regarding the training and equipping of the next generation. When I speak to Bible-believing pastors they all agree that we cannot continue doing what we have always done. Something must change...and it needs to start with us.

Regardless of your marital status, kids or no kids, or the age of your children, it is critical that every Christian man, young and old, engage themselves in the continual pursuit to build into the lives of our families and youth. In a very real way, your ownership in raising the next generation within your own home and your church reflects your commitment to God.

**The precursor that often gives rise to godly change, i.e. spiritual growth is found within a heart that humbles itself before God’s Word.**

Given our spiritual learning cycle, there will be countless times over our lives where we look back at how we did things and confess that we could have done it differently. As I recently shared with a friend, my two-old year son will have a different father than the one my sixteen-year old son had—same “man” yet a different dad. Was everything I did as a father up until now wrong? No. Yet, I could have done it much better than what I did. And yes, when I say “better,” I am saying more biblical or consistent with God’s perfect will. If we are all “works in progress,” should this not always, to some extent, be the case?

Without question, one of the greatest things we can do for the next generation is to uphold the Word of God in a manner that reflects our greatest life pursuit as we seek to please God. With great zeal and intentionality, we must make reading, sharing, and living God’s Word a daily endeavor that we look forward to each day. Only then, when our Bibles are worn with active and God-fearing use will our children begin to catch the primary passion and purpose of our lives in Christ. Anything less and we will only need to look at Barna’s recent studies to see where we are heading.

What are your children “catching” from you? **Will you commit an hour this week to personally evaluate how you are upholding God’s Word as a place of centrality and/or utmost importance in your life?**

God has placed you in the unique and privileged role to lead your children toward Him, a process that He commands and directs. Dads, you cannot be too intentional with the discipleship of your children around and upon the Word of God. Regardless of the age of your children or grandchildren, you are still called to walk (live) in a manner worthy of Christ. There is nowhere in God's Word that mentions retirement for fathers and grandfathers. As such, the mission to impact the next generation never ends. *Your role over time may change, but your goal remains the same.*

*“And, you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

*Ephesians 6:4*

### **The Father Variable**

A little over a year ago, I started getting more involved in local prison ministry. Every so often I get the opportunity to visit some men that are broken and hungry for something beyond what this world has offered them. Very sadly, nearly all the men I meet in prison are often just following in their fathers’ footsteps. In some of these cases, these men

were “Christians” during their teenage years and/or attended church for a period of time. However, in almost every case their fathers were either drug and/or alcohol addicts, absent all together or just never took the time to build a relationship with their sons. I have met with well over 200 incarcerated men. During that time, I can count on several fingers the men I have met in prison that would say their fathers were a positive influence on their lives. While many Christian men build into the lives of their sons and daughters, the statistics have largely demonstrated that there is little difference in parenting between Christians and non-Christians—especially when it comes to *being fathers and not just fathering the next generation*.

While there are exceptions, empirical statistics over the course of history have conclusively revealed a strong correlation between parenting and the character of the developing child. While my personal findings regarding the men I met in prison were somewhat shocking, it did not take me by total surprise. So often the direction of the father, indeed, determines the direction of the family. As the saying goes, the fruit does not fall far from the tree. As Christians, we know the truth of this ancient colloquialism is inherent within God’s constructive order of the family—**within God’s design, parents, especially men, are called to lead their children and the children are commanded to follow.**

God’s Word, throughout Scripture, makes it clear that God positions the parents in a place of authority over their children (Eph. 6:1-4, Col. 3:20, Deut. 6:5-9, Ex. 20:12, Ps. 78:4).

Within the first seven books of Proverbs, there are 15 explicit father to child directives where the child is being told to listen to his father's instructions. Without question, God has placed children in a role of submission to their parents in order that they may listen, learn, and grow in their relationship with God. I have yet to meet or read about any evangelical pastor that maintains the perfect veracity of Scripture that would not uphold the God-given responsibility that every parent has to teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord.

*“My son, keep my words,  
And treasure my commands within you.”*

*Proverbs 7:1*

Yet, it is now tragically evident that most Christian parents are not engaging their children's hearts for the Lord. Rather than nurture the hearts of our kids for Christ, the majority of Christian parents have committed parental adultery and have allowed the world to capture their hearts. The statistics are overwhelming to such an extent it should drive all of God's people to their knees in fasting and prayer. Here are just a few:

1. Only 36 percent of our adolescents fully believe that the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches.
2. Only a small minority of our children, 19 percent, believe that they have a responsibility to share their Christian faith.

3. Over 80% of teens who claim to be “born-again” do not believe in the existence of absolute truth (Baucham, *Family Driven Faith*).
4. Three out of four young people reject the notion that there is no such thing as God.
5. A Barna survey of “born again” adults revealed:
  - 46% of born again adults believe in absolute truth.
  - 79% believe the Bible is accurate in principle teachings.
  - 40% believe that Satan is real.
  - 47% strongly reject you can earn your salvation.
  - 62% believe that Christ was sinless.

*(Barna Survey Examines Changes in Worldview Among Christians over the Past 13 Years, Revolutionary Parenting, Barna)*

From his book *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna notes:

“The responsibility for raising spiritual champions, according to the Bible, belongs to parents. The spiritual nurture of children is supposed to take place in the home. Organizations and people from outside the home might support those efforts, but the responsibility is squarely laid at the feet of the family. This is not job for specialists. It is a job for parents.”

***Men, the reality is that our children are learning what we are living. They are following where we have already been and likely headed in the same direction where we are going. Are you ready to make God’s Word a central part of everything you say, live, and do?***

Is there consistency with God's Word and how you live in your homes...your marriage...as a parent...at your work-place...as your playing or watching your favorite sport... while watching your favorite movies...etc...?

“Benjamin Franklin defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Today, Christian parents are exposing their children to the same influences as the rest of society - the same distorted public education system, the same lurid popular culture, the same false morality, the same humanistic philosophies - and yet they are expecting different results. Why should we be surprised when Christian youth recklessly abandon their faith in high school and college? Parents have immersed them more in the values of popular culture than in the values of Christianity.” (David N. Bass is a 19-year-old Christian homeschool graduate who has written for World Newspaper Publishing and is a regular columnist at [AmericanDaily.com](http://AmericanDaily.com), [IntellectualConservative.com](http://IntellectualConservative.com) and [RenewAmerica.us](http://RenewAmerica.us).)

## Beyond Culture's Norm

Somewhere along the line, we have believed a lie regarding children and especially our “youth,” i.e. our teenagers. At some point, we made the decision to treat our *Christian children* as if they were “of” the world and not just “in” it. Actually, the journey into this insanity has been a progressive yet ever-quickening process.

I have seen it through the eyes of educational psychology, both Christian and public education, youth ministry, and sadly to say, many Christian parents I have met and known over the past decade. Erroneously, we have identified a cultural norm particular to a certain age group within the world, i.e. prevailing cultural “youth” trends, as a developmental truth. As such, as Christian parents we believe *the development of our teenage youth*, now expanding both to younger “tweens” between the ages of 8 yrs. and 12 yrs. old as well as to the older y-gens or twenty-somethings, is defined by the cultural age-class they share in common with the world around them. Sadly, we are giving our children *that have professed Christ as their Savior and Lord* the world’s waste versus the spiritual nourishment found in God’s Word.

When the children reach high school age, they basically use their home as a refueling pit or base camp for going off and exploring the world with friends. They often enjoy being with their friends more than they enjoy being with parents. Parents should not feel rejected.

***This is a stage of life. When parents rejoice in their teen’s independence, and refuse to get involved in rescuing when they make mistakes, most adolescents***

***will respond by being thoughtful about their actions and appreciative of the independence offered*** (Cline-Fay Institute).

Let's be honest. Most men reading this will likely tend to agree with the above statement and let it go at that. However, there is nowhere in Scripture, *God's plan for His children of all ages* that gives even a suggestion toward treating our youth with such a "hands-off" and laissez-faire mentality. Rather, as I have already outlined with specific verses, God's Word clearly and explicitly commands parents and *more mature* Christians (Titus 2) to teach and train our children (and "younger" Christians) toward the righteousness of God. Left to their own device, our children—much like ourselves will **not** naturally grow closer to God. It involves the intentional, ongoing interaction of sanctification and discipleship, one does not happen without the other.

We must wake-up to the fact that the culture is not just some neutral-free realm of norms, modes of communication, styles, preferences, and/or beliefs. The culture of darkness, i.e. the world around us, is consumed with every shape, form, and kind of evil imaginable with an allurements that constantly pulls us toward the broader road leading to destruction. To willingly clothe oneself with the garments of culture without any filter of biblical discernment, is spiritual suicide (1 Peter 1:14-16, 5:8). Yet, this is exactly what most Christian

children are getting in public schools today and sadly to say, in many of our Christian homes and churches. Without a “biblical” filter (worldview), our children, like any adult that lacks spiritual maturity, are vulnerable against enemy attack.

Many adult Christian men I know left on their own—apart from their families and churches or other Christian men will quickly tend to become entangled in the affairs of the world (most often will be seduced by the world’s sensuality through pornography or the allure of another woman). And these are “mature” Christian men with Christian families. Yet, by examining most “youth” discipleship models in many of our homes and churches, we expect our immature children to succeed where we would fail. Picture a knight, covered in his metal armor bearing his shield and clinging to his sword. Now envision this same knight sending his armor-less page or half-equipped squire to battle his most deadly enemy. This is exactly what we have done in many cases with our youth.

Men—think about what we typically do with our developing youth. At a point when their hormones are peaking, their minds saturated with earthly things, their hearts captivated by the world *under our watch*, and their lips that, in many cases, having already tasted the sweetness of the world’s sensuality, we disconnect them from their parents and the church and place them within a vacuum of peer to peer influence with little to no active involvement of a local church, and we call this “higher education.” In many cases, the institution of higher education is a secular school whose professors want

nothing more than to tear down the “strongholds” of the Christian faith that, for all practical purposes are just taking on a root of their own. With no biblical basis, we then have the audacity to somehow rationalize our actions by believing that we are doing the right thing as parents.

In my life, I have personally met only a handful of mature Christian youth that I would rightfully recommend stepping solo into a mission field for an extended period of time. And when I say “solo,” I do not mean unsupported. It goes without saying that every missionary needs to be surrounded by an infra-structure of support, accountability, and prayer. Yet, as with our missionaries that we eventually send off to another people group, our children must also go through the necessary teaching and equipping process that will most effectively position them toward achieving their mission. Again, God’s Word has declared where and how this should happen—through the entities of our families and our churches.

How does this apply to the way we evangelize and disciple our youth for Christ? As suggested previously, *we must humble ourselves before God and admit that we have done some things wrong*. Next, we must begin to examine the foundation of our disciple-making model at its most basic level, **who we are** in Christ—with a biblical focus and *then* look to develop methodology, **how we do** things. From there, how we do things (function/methods) should never

compromise or contradict who we are (form/principle). Christ never compromised who He was in order to contextualize the message of His Father. *If we truly believe this, that **principle drives method**—the vertical (loving God) drives the horizontal (loving others), it is absolutely necessary that we teach, train, and model our youth in a manner that reflects this.*

As such, everything *we do* in ministry for Christ should be consistent with *whom we are* in Christ. Our youth do not need “cool, culturally-saturated” Christian adults (moms and dads) that blend in with the world. Rather, our youth are in desperate need of mature Christian men, especially fathers, and women, especially mothers, that are seeking God’s approval over man’s. Men and women that are countercultural yet willing to engage the culture with God’s weapons of warfare (love and the fruit of His Spirit and the truth of His Word). Our youth need men and women that will encourage and biblically exhort them to become the next generation of mature Christian men and women to lead and serve within both the body of Christ and the households that comprise it.

As a *father*, there is no higher calling in my life then to see my children reach a point of salvation through Jesus Christ (justification) and then to grow closer to God in Christ and bear His fruit (sanctification). As one of the King’s men, is this not one of our highest callings in life?

It is God’s design that parents nurture and admonish their children towards spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional maturity within their God-given roles. The same is true for the church body and the ministries that flow from it. We have allowed the world to grab a portion of their minds and hearts—and we are reaping what we have sown. Given the current state of affairs, time is of the essence.

From his book, *Bringing Up Boys*, Dr. James Dobson notes:

“Parents...need to ‘play offense’—to capitalize on the impressionable years of childhood by instilling in their sons the antecedents of character. Their assignment during two brief decades will be to transform their boys from immature and flighty youngsters into honest, caring men who will be respectfully of women, loyal and faithful in marriage, keepers of commitments, strong and decisive leaders, good workers, and secure in their masculinity. And of course, the ultimate goal for people of faith is to give each child an understanding of Scripture and a lifelong passion for Jesus Christ.”

The King has given you His orders. He has called your number and wants you to step onto the battle-field to clear a pathway for the next generation. Are you willing to take the lead and start leading where few men have gone?

Pastor Douglas Wilson shares in his book, *Future Men*:

“As parents bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the ethics of childrearing remain constant. But the differences between the sexes require that parents govern children with wisdom. Not only are these children different from another, these differences reflect the wisdom of God, who intends for them to serve Him differently.”

An excerpt from *Biblical Womanhood in the Home* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss reveals the biblical focus on raising our girls to possess a godly beauty:

“First Peter 3:4-5 tells us that our (women) beauty ‘should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.’ Our culture encourages women to cultivate a beauty that is skin deep. God tells us to pursue an inner beauty of great worth.”

Pastor and author John Piper in his book, *What’s the Difference?* provides the biblical basis for role differentiation between our boys/men and girls/women.

“When the Bible teaches that men and women fulfill different roles in relation to each other,

charging men with a unique leadership role, it bases this differentiation not on temporary cultural norms but on permanent facts of creation. This is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 (especially vv. 8-9, 14); Ephesians 5:21-33 (especially vv. 31-32); and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 (especially vv. 13-14). In the Bible, differentiated roles for men and women are never traced back to the fall of man and woman into sin. Rather, the foundation of this differentiation is traced back to the way things were in Eden before sin warped our relationships. Differentiated roles were corrupted, not created, by the fall. They were created by God.”

Men, when it comes to matters of parenting our children our wives should be our number one allies. If your wives are not on the same page regarding your sons and/or daughters, your pursuit of raising a godly son or daughter will be greatly hampered. You may be asking yourself this question right this second: What does this look like? Here are some key ideas:

1. Have a shared developmental plan for your children based on their God-given uniqueness (with their spiritual growth always taking precedent). Does it need to be written out? Written is good. However, the most important aspect is that you have a mutual plan that will steer your parenting. You need to know where you are headed in order to get there.

2. Regularly pray with your wife for each of your children. Be specific and do not forget to pray for their potential one-day spouses (we pray this prayer often and ask specifically for a spouse that is equally yoked in the Lord).
3. Read a book on biblical parenting together (suggestions—John MacArthur: *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, Ted Tripp: *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Paul David Tripp: *Age of Opportunity*, Andreas Kostenberger: *God, Marriage, and Family*, Gary Thomas: *Sacred Parenting*, James and Shirley Dobson: *Night Lights for Parents*).
4. Study and discuss the specific Scripture verses that touch upon the unique roles of the man and woman. In order to live and share God's design, you must first know it.
5. Work on making your marriage the best possible God-honoring marriage it can be. Men, to most effectively teach our children, we must be seeking to love our wives as Christ loved His church. This will likely be one of the most powerful and influential teaching tools you will ever have for both your sons and daughters regarding their future marriages and relationships.

When it comes to specific teaching methods, I have been a big fan of “one-on-one” time or dates/TWD (Time with Dad) with each of my children as well as family devotional time. Over the years I have seen a significant difference on their willingness to openly discuss many things regarding their spiritual walk with the Lord. This is exceptional time to discuss the gender-specific roles and field any questions that may otherwise be awkward in a group setting with the entire family present.

As far as our sons are concerned, their focus throughout their developmental years (birth to adulthood) needs to stay focused on a picture of a godly man—likely one day becoming a husband and father. This means that his “teenage years” between 14 yrs. old and 19 yrs. old is critical in his overall scope of maturation.

Dads and other mentors, we must come alongside our sons and continue to coach them through these years. Yes, much like a coach on a basketball or football team, you will need to teach, train, and engage your sons differently as they grow and progress in their development. Yet, make no mistake about it. They need you at every stage. This is where the principle of “iron sharpening iron” as found in Proverbs 27:17 needs to create some serious sparks in the hearts of our young men. Don’t be fooled by the world around us—God designed our boys to become men during these vital

years. They can handle it and they absolutely need it!

Equally, our daughters need Dads to help them understand what a godly man looks like—most importantly in character/principle and in method. Fathers play an essential role in affirming what a beautiful woman of God looks like on both the inside and outside. Our young girls are bombarded by the enemy fire unlike we have ever seen. The idea of the “unfading beauty” of a gentle and quiet spirit is quickly becoming extinct in today’s mass media and sadly to say, many church youth groups and homes have lost the depth and appreciation of this biblical truth. Not only this, we also live in a day where modesty is a thing of the past.

Men, you must verbalize in love the true extent of most men’s “visual” problem when it comes to dress. Even if your wife and daughter(s) do not get it the first time (likely will not), you must continually be the set of modesty eyes for both your wife and your daughter. No, it will not be an easy thing to tell your ladies, as lovingly as possible, to return the clothes due to skin showing or tightness. However, what are you saying if you fail to protect them in this important area of purity? (Please consider C.J. Mahaney’s book, *Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World*).

The King has given you His orders. He has called your number and wants you to step onto the battle-field to clear a pathway for the next generation. Are you willing to take the lead and start leading where few men have gone?

## Making it Real:

1. Dads, I urge you to prayerfully lay out a plan for your sons and daughters. Include your wives as you consider before God where He is leading you both as parents—are both you and your wife on the same page?
2. Do you have a personal discipleship plan? If not, it is highly unlikely you will be successful in leading your children through their own plans of spiritual formation. It is an axiom of life: You cannot give something you yourself do not have.
3. Keep it simple (Scripture-based), focused (Christ-centered), and organized (monitor, evaluate, and follow-up). Most importantly, do not put off what needs to happen today. If being a godly father (and husband) really is one of the most important things in life, it needs to happen—now.
4. Two Key Strategies:
  - 1) Be intentional with what matters most and
  - 2) Be available with what matters most

Remember, if we are not taking care of the most important things in life, why are we so busy with everything else?

**In all reality, it is in the fiery furnace of our trials and suffering that our King most demonstrates His enduring faithfulness to His beloved subjects (Romans 5:1-8). This is exactly why it is during our greatest life trials that we can be used by God to reflect His greatest glory. As we cling ever so tightly to the hope we have in Christ, our inner selves are renewed to reveal the glorious splendor of our King.**

**-10-**

## **An Incorruptible Inheritance**

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

*1 Peter 1:3-5*

As the King’s men the above verses should evoke and stir within us a great awakening of gratitude, anticipation, and excitement. To know Christ as your King endows certain kingdom rights that are exclusively granted to the subjects of the Most High. These rights, or perhaps better stated, the inheritance, is guaranteed not by anything we have done or will do. Rather, this eternal, undefiled, and unfading treasure is bound in totality in the Person of our King, Jesus Christ. This should compel us to walk everyday within the reality of our eternal an incorruptible inheritance.

It is within this “living hope,” bound to it by the precious blood of our King Himself, that the certainty of our faith is perfected and proliferated. We are men that possess a divine power and purpose that affords us to live beyond ourselves to reveal a treasure more precious than any earthly riches.

*“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”*

*1 Peter 1:6-9*

There is a direct one-to-one relationship with the inner temperament of one’s soul and the outward expressions that define one’s life. I think many of us can likely relate to working with a person that has little joy in his or her heart. As a direct result, their outward expression is typically consumed with complaints, discontentment, and utter despair. To say the least, the work day for this person is a long one.

As a Christian, one of the King’s men, the above scenario should never be a recurring pattern within our life. Rather, we are called to live in a manner that gives testimony to the light of our King (Matthew 5:14). While working in an office setting many years ago, I worked next to a man that displayed little to no joy in his life. Almost every word out of his mouth was a complaint, a lament, or a combination of the two. Soon after my arrival at this office, I made a commitment before God that no matter how bad the conditions, I would share the inexpressible and untouchable

joy of my King. Now I wish I could say this man experienced a life-changing transformation in light of my example. However, that did not happen. Yet, what I did see was a softening of this man's outward demeanor that I pray reflected a heart that was being softened before God.

Regardless of the trial or suffering we face, we have a seed of joy that nothing of this world can touch—even death itself cannot overtake the power of our King's divine seal (Rom. 8:38-39, 2 Cor. 5:5, Eph. 1:13-14). In all reality, it is in the fiery furnace of our trials and suffering that our King most demonstrates His enduring faithfulness to His beloved subjects (Romans 5:1-8). This is exactly why it is during our greatest life sufferings that we can be used by God to reflect His greatest glory. As we cling ever so tightly to the hope we have in Christ, our inner selves are renewed to reveal the glorious splendor of our King.

**“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’  
...For when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

## Treasure in Jars of Clay

*“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”*

*2 Corinthians 4:7-10*

Even though the world may hate us, despise us, and persecute us they cannot remove, diminish, extinguish, or destroy the surpassing power of our King within us. Yes, we are broken vessels, jars of clay. Yet, in Christ, as the King’s men, we carry with us the power of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His redeeming grace and prolific glory that causes us to act beyond ourselves in a manner that reflects the divine author and finisher of our faith. As the King’s men, it is God within us, the Holy Spirit, which moves us to become truly men of the Most High King, men of exception in the hands of an exceptional God.

*“...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*

*Philippians 2:13*

As the King's men, our past, our present, and our future are cleansed (albeit, not without earthly and heavenly consequences) by His enduring and everlasting grace. In a manner of speaking, our King has covered us with Himself. His righteousness has made us positionally pure before God (justified), growing us into the likeness of His Son (progressively sanctified) and will one day culminate our growth with new bodies that reflect His perfect radiance (glorification).

Yet, within our King's divine providence He has made us with a volitional aptitude of choice. To heed His call, is a one time decision of surrender and then a life-time mission to pursue. However, the assurance of our inheritance is not bound in *our* choice but is defined by *His* election (Ephesians 1:3-23, Romans 10:9-10).

It is in our daily *choosing His will over our own*, that we truly begin to walk with our King and share in the reality of our divine inheritance. In the most real sense, we have crucified self in order that our King may reign within us. It is at this juncture in our lives where faith truly becomes real.

*“...not by works...but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ...by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

*Titus 3:5-7*

*“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

*Galatians 5:24-25*

*“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall live with Him...Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body...but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*

*Romans 6:8, 11-13*

Men, what aspect of your life needs to be put to death in order that you may fully abide in the Vine of your King (John 15:5)? Remember, your King knows your past, present, and future. No sin can escape His righteousness judgment, nor can it withstand the power of His redeeming grace (1 John 1:8-9). He saved us to live in the reality of *His kingdom—starting right now.*

Sadly, many men are paralyzed by their past and present sin life. They have believed the lies of Satan that they are of no use on the battlefield and have abandoned their King’s calling. Ironically, it is not their past sins that ultimately hinder their ability to fight the good fight, it is their present sin of unbelief—the lack of faith in their King.

Yet, this is the potential birth point of authentic faith. God has called you to step into the fiery furnace and to know the suffering of the cross in a very personal way (2 Cor. 5:7).

Even though it goes against your natural tendency, you must die to self. *It does not come easy or without pain.* However, the inexpressible joy of the inheritance of your King awaits you on the other side.

*“...so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

*Philippians 1:20-21*

*“As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

*1 Peter 2:4-5*

As one of the King’s men, when is the last time you considered yourself His priest? Would your family and friends refer to your life as “priestly,” “holy,” or “a spiritual” sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (see Romans 12:1-2)? While our King gives us a breath to breathe, it is our calling to live for Him—for His kingdom and His glory revealed. It is high-time to adorn your life with the message of your divine inheritance and to purpose your life around the mission of your King’s glory and grace. As the battle rages around us—God is calling out to His men to step onto the battlefield and fight for Him. Are you one of the King’s men? What does your life really reveal?

This brings us to a culminating point of closure and of focus as we evaluate our lives as *The King's men*. In speaking with many pastors and surveying our homes and communities, it has become evident that the King's men are almost non-existent and the enemy has gained an obvious foothold. The gaps are huge and the enemy is advancing with each new day. Much like David was not where he was supposed to be when he cast his eyes upon Bathsheba, the King's men have lost their focus and the consequences to our homes, churches, and communities are devastating. It is high time that we get off the roof tops and step back onto the battlefield.

No matter where our King has you, I pray that your pursuit to serve and worship Him has only begun and will never end. We live in a time like no other—some would say the end of times. This should only spur us on more. Our homes, churches, and communities are in dire need to see the King's men take their rightful positions on the battlefield. If we are unwilling to engage the enemy—who will? We must make every day count as we redeem whatever time our King affords. May the power of our resurrected King reign within you as you serve for His greater glory—in the sovereign hands of The Almighty God. Soli Deo Gloria!

*“But seek first the kingdom of God  
and His righteousness, and all these  
things shall be added to you.”*

*Matthew 6:33*

## Making it Real:

1. How does your life speak to your eternal inheritance?
2. Read Matthew 6:19-21 and then consider the following questions: To date, has your life been more focused on the earthly treasures or heavenly treasures? What do you most treasure, i.e. value most in your heart?
3. Are you willing to let go of the earthly treasures to more readily grasp God's heavenly ones?
4. Do you see the battlefield yet? Are you on it?
5. Commit some time this week to lay out and pray out a plan of action—one that will enable you to be the man of exception that God calls you to be. Your discipleship plan will likely touch upon some aspect of the ten chapters in this book and possibly many more. You may use the chapters titles as an outline to your plan. However, do not be limited by them.
6. Share your plan with your wife and/or a close Christian brother. The key to executing any spiritual plan is found through prayer (Spirit-led), devotion to God through obedience to His Word, accountability to His authority and by the fellowship within the Body of Christ. Revisit your plan often, i.e. keep it in front of you daily.
7. As your King grows you, look around to see the other men that God has placed in your life. Are they on the battlefield? If not, humbly ask God to use you to come alongside His men and engage them for His kingdom.

*The Disciple's Prayer: God, make me nothing that You may be everything. Amen.*

## **Additional Resources by This Author:**

### ***The Missional Life***

“What strikes me about *The Missional Life*, written by my friend Joe Waresak, is the challenge to live life intentionally, according to the deepest purpose in life, which is the glory of God...a clear Biblical theology of Christ’s purpose for being sent to earth, our purpose for existence on earth, and God’s unique equipping in our lives to enable and empower us to fulfill that purpose.”

Dr. Jeff A. Gill, Dean of Grace Theological Seminary

### ***The Essence of Everything (Includes family devotions)***

“The sensitive, personal, and timely manner in which Joe calls men to action is obviously a gift from God...Our family and ministry have been blessed and impacted by Joe’s passion and drive to see the Word of God change lives and ultimately the church—permanently.”

Bart Allen, Missionary

To the tribal people of Papua New Guinea

### ***Justin’s Adventure: A Young Knight’s Quest***

“A hands-on story that will both engage and grow your sons for the Lord. Filled with adventure and God’s Word, the story will both captivate and encourage your children to live for the glory of God through Jesus Christ.”

Joe Waresak, Director of Seek First Ministries

## Other Great Resources For Your Church and Small Group Ministries



The glory of God is all around us, but there is a spiritual cancer permeating just about every area of the church. Unveiling-Glory believes this cancer is conditioning God's people to think and act as if life is all about them: their health, their safety, their happiness, and their comfort is God's highest priority, and should be theirs as well! And it's blinding them to the glory of God that is all around them. **Our mission is to unveil God's glory with the church, so believers of all ages passionately radiate His Glory in all areas of their lives and become engaged in revealing it to all peoples of the world.** Visit us at [unveilingglory.com](http://unveilingglory.com) to learn more.



**The mission of the Institute for Uniting Church and Home** is to encourage, inspire, and train church leaders and households to accomplish the Great Commission over generations through gospel-integrated, heart-level, household relationships. This vision is solidly biblical and represents a refreshing contrast to the way most churches approach ministry design. Churches can implement this vision in a unifying, transitional way. Through its resources, including *Uniting Church and Home* and the *Uniting Church and Home Implementation Guide*, its leadership network, individualized assistance, classes, church leader seminars, church-wide seminars, and most importantly, its heart for the Church as the Bride of Christ, the Institute is uniquely prepared to help church leaders in a variety of situations and across denominational lines. Please log onto our website, [www.uchlink.org](http://www.uchlink.org) to learn more. We look forward to serving you!

# **The King's Men**

Engaged but not Entangled

## **A Seek First Ministries Resource**

Pastors: This is a great book for men's ministries, small groups, and/or a special Father's Day gift. Bulk order discounts are available.

Visit [www.seekfirstmedia.com](http://www.seekfirstmedia.com) to view and order additional resources for your homes and churches. Joe Waresak is the author of this resource and available to speak at your church event or other function through Seek First Ministries. Email us at [joe@seekfirstmin.org](mailto:joe@seekfirstmin.org) for your comments and feedback.

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