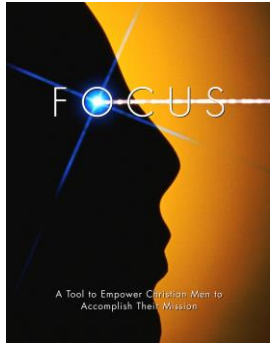
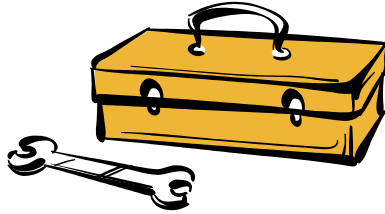


Men Need Tools to Get the Job Done



The **FOCUS Notebook** is the ideal tool to help Christian men stay focused on their calling as men. The contents of this notebook were developed by Pastor Gary Yagel, a busy church planter and father of 5, to use in his own life to help him stay focused on Christ's mission for him. After a thorough study of Scripture, he realized that the mission of Christ-following men fits into three general categories

Called **TO Christ** (to enjoy a love relationship with him)
Called **TO BE LIKE Christ** (to holy, Christ-like character)
Called **TO EXERCISE DOMINION FOR Christ** (to implement Christ's righteous agenda as husband, father, church member, employee/employer, steward of resources, and ambassador of the kingdom—every sphere of life.)

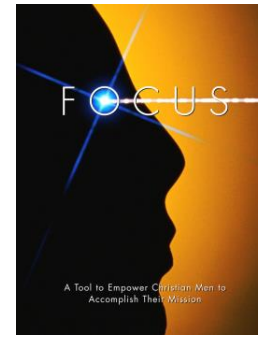
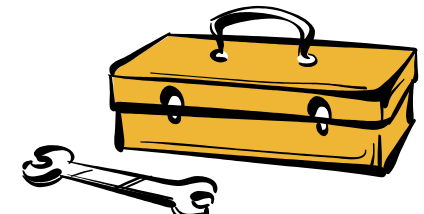
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What is Being said about the **FOCUS Notebook**.

"This FOCUS Notebook is the tool that every Christian man needs." Stacey Rawlings VP Travelers Insurance

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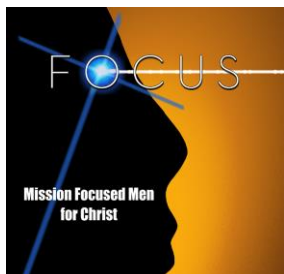
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Weekly Podcast to

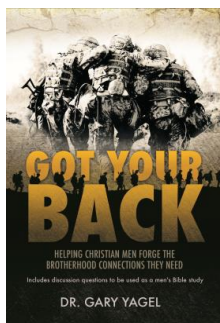
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ECNCOURAGE men when they fail.

ENERGIZE men because their spiritual tank is often on "E."

EMPOWER men to stay focused on honoring Christ with their lives.

This 20-minute podcast, based on the material in the FOCUS Notebook, is the perfect tool to keep men motivated to stay focused on their mission from Christ. It is **biblically based**, **grace-centered**, **kingdom-focused**, **application-oriented**, and **encouragement-driven**. Best of all, it fits into men's busy lives because it is right on their phones. MFMfC is available from Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, iHeartRadio, Google Podcasts. Or, you can also listen to it at forgingbonds.org. Over 6500 episodes were downloaded in the first year.

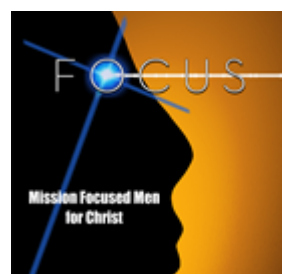


Got Your Back

Helping Christian Men Forge the Brotherhood Connections They Need

--Print, e-book, & audible at Amazon
--To see interviews with men and church leaders about how GYB is changing lives go to gotyourback.info.

About the Author. Gary Yagel is known for his life-related teaching, encouraging heart, and commitment to helping men fulfill their calling to godly manhood. He is a former PCA church planter and senior pastor, the Executive Director of *Forging Bonds of Brotherhood men's ministry*. He served with *Man in the Mirror* staff as a presenter of the *No Man Left Behind* seminar and over 10 years as his denomination's Men's Ministry Consultant. He is the author of ***Got Your Back***, as well as ***Anchoring Your Child to God's Truth in a Gender-Confused Culture*** (both available at Amazon) and has taught his seminary course, Making Missional Disciples as a guest professor at RTS DC.



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Mission

Defining Our Mission

- Scripture Reveals 3 Aspects to Our Mission
- The 3 Parts in More Detail

Accessing the Power to Achieve Our Mission

- Walk Daily With God
- Fight By Praying

Staying Focused On Our Mission

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Defining Our Mission

(Podcast Season 1 Episode #2 11/17/19 The Right Mission Energizes Men)

No matter what lens we look through, Scripture reveals the same 3 parts to our mission.

Through the lens of our calling, we are called:

To Christ (to a love relationship with him)
To be like Christ (to holy, Christ-like character)
To exercise dominion for Christ (to bring about Christ's agenda in each sphere of life)

Through the lens of historic orthodox Christianity, our mission is:

To enjoy God
To imitate God
To serve God

Through viewing Christ's ministry to us as the anointed one:

As PRIEST to unite us to God
As PROPHET to make us holy
As KING to establish the righteous rule of God on earth

Through the lens of our moral responsibility:

Love the LORD your God with all your heart
Seek first the righteousness of God
Love your neighbor as yourself

(Note: These three aspects of our mission conform to the tri-perspectival view set forth by Dr. John Frame, Professor of Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando in his work, The Doctrine of God.)

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Our Mission Viewed Through the Lens Of Our Calling

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1)

"Answering the call of our Creator is "the ultimate why" for living, the highest source of purpose in human existence...Calling is the truth that God calls us to Himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out as a response to His summons and service." Os Guinness, The Call

A. The 3 Dimensions to our Calling:

- There is the call **to himself**
- There is the call **to become like him**
- There is the call **to rule for him**

1. The **CALL TO HIMSELF**

- "God, who has called us into fellowship with his son, is faithful (I Cor. 1:9)
- "I have called you by name, you are mine (Is. 43:1)
- "That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness" (I Pet. 2:9)
- "He calls his own sheep by name...and his sheep follow him because they know his voice...I am the good shepherd. (John 10:2ff)
- The greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and strength
- Phil. 4:4 makes it clear that God wants our relationship with him to be a source of great joy. "Rejoice in the Lord always; Again, I will say rejoice."

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2. The **CALL TO BECOME LIKE HIM**

- “For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his son**...and those he predestined, he also **called**.” (Rom. 8:29-30)
- “Finally all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil for evil or insult for insult, but with blessing because **to this you were called**. (I Pt. 3:8-9)
- “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one **who calls you** is faithful and he will do it.” (I Thes. 5:24)
- “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children...” (Eph. 5:1)

3. The **CALL TO RULE every domain of our lives FOR HIM**

- “We constantly pray for you that our, God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill **every good purpose of yours** and **every act** prompted by your faith.” (II Thes. 1:11)
- “Urging you to **live lives** worthy of God” (I Thes. 2:12)
- “Who has saved us and called us to a **holy life**” (II Tim. 1:9)
- According to Genesis 1:26-28, we were made in God’s image, not to be passive, but **to rule EVERY DOMAIN of our lives for the King** in response to God’s call upon our lives
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- The term for this position is vice-regent.
- The term for this calling is “The Cultural Mandate.”

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Our Mission Viewed Through the Lens Of the Westminster Confession

God's Purpose for Man

"Man's chief end is to **glorify God** and to **enjoy him** forever." (Question # 1, The Westminster Shorter Catechism.) Jesus was very clear in teaching HOW we can best glorify God. **"By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."** (John 15:8.) Biblically, there are 2 categories of spiritual fruit, our **inward attitudes** and our **outward actions**. Galatians 5:22-23 makes clear that **spiritual fruit** is **Christ-like character**: **"The fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Colossians 1:10 makes clear that **spiritual fruit** also includes our **actions**: **"So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord, and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work..."** Therefore, we have 3 parts to our mission.

Our 3-Fold Mission

To **enjoy God**—both now and throughout eternity
To **imitate God**—glorify him through godly character
To **serve God**—glorify him through godly actions

Scope of Our Mission

To **enjoy God** addresses the issue of our **heart**.
Where am I to set my affections?
To **imitate God** addresses the issue of **character**.
Who am I to become like?
To **serve God** addresses the issue of **action**.
What am I to do?

Strategy to Accomplish Mission

Seek to **enjoy God** by cultivating a love relationship with him.
Seek to **imitate God** by growing in godly character.
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Our Mission Viewed Through Christ's Ministry to us as the Anointed One

Through the three offices to which our Lord was anointed, prophet, priest, and king, he demonstrates not only his intercessory ministry to us, but what redeemed humanity is to look like. In Christ, we are:

Priest: The priests were those who ministered in the **presence of God himself**, and their ministry was to restore God's people to an intimate, **personal relationship with him**.

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests..." Rev. 1:5-6

Prophet: The prophet's role was to reveal God's law and to call his covenant people to **holiness of character**. Jesus is the final revelation of that Word, the perfect embodiment of holiness in his attitudes.

"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do."
1 Peter 1:15

King: Adam and Eve were created to be king and queen of creation—to **exercise dominion over the earth**. When they rebelled, their kingdom was taken from them and made subject to Satan, sin, and death. Jesus Christ, the second Adam defeated this evil triumvirate at the cross, and restores us to our role as kings and queens who are called to **exercise dominion over every sphere of our lives for our king**.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness." Matt. 6:33
"Pray then like this...may your kingdom come..." Matt. 6:10

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Our Mission Viewed Through the Lens of Our Moral Responsibility

We are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart: Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is. He answered:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” Matt. 22:37-38

We are commanded to make the pursuit of righteousness top priority:

“Seek first the righteousness of God.” Matt 6:33

“Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” Rom. 12:9

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Matt. 5:6

We are commanded to love those around us:

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is, but he seemed to want to make a point about the second greatest commandment as well:

“And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matt. 22:39-40

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Our Mission: To *Enjoy* God

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” (Phil. 4:4)

- A. It addresses the core issue of the heart
- We're to set our affections on the things above (Col. 3:1)
 - We are to have no other Gods, allowing no idols to usurp the rightful place of God as first in our affections (Ex. 20)
 - We were made for God and he is the answer to our deepest longing (I Cor. 6:13)
- B. The strategy to achieve this mission objective is to cultivate our love relationship with God
- C. There are many ways to grow in our relationship with God. Here are some to consider:
1. Knowing God: *“So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD...” (Hosea 6:3) “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)*
 2. Delighting in God: *“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:4) “I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.” (Ps. 34:1)*
 3. Loving God: *“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deut. 6:5) “If anyone does not love the Lord-- a curse be on him.” (I Cor. 16:22)*
 4. Trusting God: *“These (trials) have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (I Pet. 1:7) “Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.” (Job 13:15)*

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5. Offering Ourselves to God: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship.” (Rom. 12:1)

6. Abiding in God’s love: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now abide in my love.” (John 15:9) “As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.” (Is. 62:5)

D. This relationship, like all relationships, can only grow through regular time spent together.

1. This regular, daily time with God has often been called a “Quiet Time” (QT.)

2. Insights for establishing a regular QT with God:

- Remember you are meeting a person, not completing a task. The goal is to connect with the Lord, not get a certain number of verses read.
- The key to having a morning quiet time is getting to bed early. The key to having an evening quiet time is heading to bed early.
- Don’t be discouraged when your schedule is thrown off track. That’s the way life is. The key to self-discipline is NOT avoiding interruptions in the routine. It is getting back to the routine quickly after the interruption.
- Don’t become legalistic, but recognize your need of spiritual nutrition. After missing 2 or 3 **physical** meals we experience a certain “urgency” to get the nutrition we need. It should be the same if we miss 2 or 3 **spiritual** meals.
- A prayer journal, which enables consistent prayer and increases awareness of answers is a vital tool.

E. Quiet Time Plan

- When and where will I have my quiet time?
- What help will I use or passage will I study?
- Whom will I ask to hold me accountable?

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- What help will I use or passage will I study?
- Whom will I ask to hold me accountable?

Our Mission: To *Imitate* God

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness...so that through them (his great promises) **you may participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (II Pet. 1:4)*

A. It addresses the issue of our inner attitudes.

- God wants us to imitate his moral attributes, not his power or position. Satan got it exactly backwards.
- Imitation is the highest form of compliment. It greatly honors Christ when we want to be like him.
- As Christ's ambassadors, we represent Christ to the world in our attitudes and character.
- A consistent attitude is called, "character." If Joe is consistently honest, we say that honesty is *characteristic* of Joe, i.e. honesty is part of Joe's *character*.
- Attitudes are determined by *perspective*. I have a forgiving attitude because I myself am in need of forgiveness. We love others because we have been loved by Christ. We give generously because our treasure is in heaven. An attitude of submission to Christ grows out of our perspective--an understanding of his mercy to us.

B. Jesus taught that his kingdom lifestyle begins with inner attitudes, called the beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:1-12)

C. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that the work of God's Spirit in us is to produce godly attitudes.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control."

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D. One of the best ways to determine which godly attitudes God is seeking to build in you is to look at your trials, i.e. your tests.

- *“All things work together for good for those who love God, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son...” (Rom. 8:28-29)*
- If your trial is a person who continually irritates you, perhaps God wants to teach you to love unconditionally.
- If you’ve lost a job, God may be testing your faith.
- If your trial is the loss of material things, perhaps the Lord is teaching you to find contentment in him.
- If you continue to be hurt by another and can’t avoid it, perhaps God is teaching you deeper lessons in forgiveness.

E. A Plan to Cultivate Christ-like Character

1. Recognize that the goal of God’s Spirit in your life is to produce godly attitudes. Offering God our accomplishments when our attitudes are sinful isn’t pleasing to God.
2. Form a clear picture of what each Biblical character quality looks like.
 - Study texts such as Matt. 5:1-8, Gal. 5:22-23, II Peter 1:5-8, I Cor. 13:4-8, Col. 3:12-17
 - Define each quality and its opposite
 - Look for ways it is illustrated in Scripture
3. Since attitudes are always determined by ***perspective***, list various Biblical truths that are the key foundational perspectives required for each godly attitude
4. Let that clear definition be a plumb-line to expose your character deficiencies.
5. During your Lord’s day reflection and during your daily quiet time, focus on what character quality the Lord is teaching you.
6. Ask God to empower you to produce that godly attitude.
7. Let failures motivate you to acknowledge your dependence upon God alone who sanctifies us, transforming our sinful attitudes into holy ones.

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Our Mission: To *Serve* God

“Live as servants of God.” | Peter 2:16

A. It addresses the issue of our actions

- It answers the question, “What am I to do?”
- It asks the question, “What is God’s agenda?”

B. The most fundamental calling of man—male and female is to subdue the earth—to rule under God’s ultimate authority, as the king and queen of creation.

- *“God blessed them and said to them...Subdue the earth. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature.”* (Gen. 1:28)
- We were made in God’s image, not to be passive, but to rule every domain of our lives **for the true King**.
- God has chosen to exercise his rule through us.
- The term for this calling is “The Cultural Mandate.” Every legitimate vocation of man is some expression of this calling to bring order in the world—from scientific discovery of the laws of creation to practicing medicine and law to teaching, being a homemaker, etc.

C. Adam and Eve, like Satan, rebelled against God and chose to rule for themselves.

- As a result, Adam and Eve’s kingdom was given to a triumvirate—Satan, sin, and death to rule.
- Jesus Christ, the second Adam, came to earth to overthrow the rule of Satan, sin, and death.
- The decisive battle for their overthrow took place at the cross. The triumvirate’s power is broken, but the enemies still fight, still opposing God and Christ’s rule.
- Christians today are commanded to *“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”* and to pray, *“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*
- The kingdom of God is best defined as **“the realm where Christ and his righteous standards rule.”**

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D. To seek first the kingdom means to seek to bring about submission to Christ and his righteous standards in every corner of the earth.

- This command is a restatement of the original cultural mandate—but in a fallen world where there is opposition to Christ's rule.
- Nevertheless, the action required is the same.
- That action is to seek to bring about submission to Christ and his righteous standards in every sphere of our lives.
- In those areas where we have control, such as our personal lives and our homes, this means ruling for Christ
- In other areas, it means using our influence to bring others to faith in Christ and thus surrender to his rule.
- It also means using our influence to bring about submission in our culture to his righteous standards
- Unlike Islam, Christianity repudiates the use of force to bring about Christ's rule (during the present age.)
- In the age to come, there will be coercion—*"Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord."*

E. A Plan to Serve God—To Accomplish God's Agenda in Your Spheres of Influence

1. Identify your spheres of influence—the various domains of your life where Christ wants you to seek to bring about submission to him and his standards.
2. Make a commitment to discovering God's agenda for each sphere by keeping a list of Biblical passages that address God's desire for that sphere. For example, in the sphere of work you would list, *"Whatever you do work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."* Col. 3:23
3. Obey God's Biblical commands for every sphere of life.
4. Discover and use your spiritual gifts to accomplish God's unique purpose for your life.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God created in advance for us to do."
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Accessing the Power to Achieve Our Mission

“Abide in me, and I will abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must abide in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:4-5

A. Walk Daily With God

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Matt. 4:4

B. Fight By Praying

*“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **AND PRAY** in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Eph 6:17-18*

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“Give us today our daily bread...” Matt. 6:11

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place to pray” Mark 1:35

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I stay close to you; your right hand upholds me.” Psalm 61:1-8

1. This relationship, like all relationships, can only grow through regular time spent together.
2. This regular, daily time with God has often been called a “Quiet Time” (QT.)
3. Insights for establishing a regular QT with God:
 - Remember you are meeting a person, not completing a task. The goal is to connect with the Lord, not get a certain number of verses read.

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- The key to having a morning quiet time is getting to bed early. The key to having an evening quiet time is heading to bed early.
- Don't be discouraged when your schedule is thrown off track. That's the way life is. The key to self-discipline is NOT avoiding interruptions in the routine. It is getting back to the routine quickly after the interruption.
- Don't become legalistic but recognize your need of spiritual nutrition. After missing 2 or 3 **physical** meals we experience a certain "urgency" to get the nutrition we need. It should be the same if we miss 2 or 3 **spiritual** meals.
- A prayer journal, which enables consistent prayer and increases awareness of answers, is a vital tool.

Quiet Time Pattern

(Taken from Matt. 6:9-15)

► ***Celebrate your heavenly father's wide-open arms to receive you.*** You've been adopted as His son. Depend upon Him. Confess your weakness and sin. Tell Him what is on your heart. Bask in his unconditional love for you. Like the father of the prodigal, His arms are ALWAYS open to you.

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► ***Spend a few minutes honoring God's name with adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.*** Celebrate the beauty of His perfect character. Rekindle your passion for God's honor—to live a life that brings glory to him.

► ***Spend some time in God's Word.*** Think about how you can apply it in your life. Record special insights and lessons you are learning in your Spiritual Heritage Personal Journal.

► ***Anticipate what help you will need from Christ in the day ahead and ask Him for it.***
--your physical, emotional and spiritual needs
--help with difficult relationships
--help with specific temptations you may face

Quiet Time Plan

What time of the day will you meet with God?

Where?

What portion of Scripture will you read?

Who will you ask to hold you accountable to do this?

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(Don't lose the Biblical insights you are discovering, and spiritual lessons you are learning. Record them in this personal journal so that you can remember them and pass them on to your children and grandchildren. Record the date of each entry)

[illegible]

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Quiet Time Journal

Fight By Praying

A. Don't be blind to spiritual realities

1. You and your family have a deadly, unseen, enemy

"Behind the world and the flesh is an even more deadly enemy...one we rarely speak of and are even much less ready to resist. Yet this is where we live now—on the front lines of a fierce spiritual war that is to blame for most of the casualties you see around you and most of the assault against you." Eldredge, Wild at Heart

2. Secularism facilitates his stealth strategy.

- Secularism focuses on this physical, temporal world.
- It views the spiritual world as non-existent or unimportant
- Secularism's offspring are materialism, hedonism, naturalism.
- Satan and spiritual warfare are relegated to the world of superstition and make-believe.
- Or, in some Christian circles there is the other extreme—everything is blamed on demons.

3. This enemy's intent is to destroy you & your family.

"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy." John 10:10a

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." Rev.12:17

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Eph. 6:12

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B. Paul's command in Eph. 6 is to put on your armor AND PRAY.

*"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **AND PRAY** in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."* Eph. 6: 17-18

C. In Mark 9:14-29 PRAYER is shown to be the ultimate weapon in the battle with Satan.

- The disciples are not able to cast a demon out.
- Jesus does cast the demon out.
- When they ask why they could not overcome Satan and cast the demon out, Jesus answers, *"This kind can only come out through **PRAYER**."*

D. Psalm 2 also shows that the kingdom of God prevails over the kingdom of darkness through PRAYER.

- In this Messianic psalm the Father says to the Son., *"Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance."* (vs. 8)
- In other words, the starting point for the Great Commission to be carried out is Christ's intercessory prayer of "asking."
- We are called as co-warriors to join with him in this ministry of prayer, by which the Kingdom is expanded.

Prevailing prayer is God's ordained means for extending His kingdom, for defeating Satan and his empire of darkness and evil, and for fulfilling God's eternal plan and bringing into effect his good will on earth. It is God's means of covering the earth with His blessings. Prevailing prayer is god's priority strategy for our age and dispensation. Wesley Duewel, Mighty Prevailing Prayer

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E. Exodus 17:8-13 reveals the power of prayer in spiritual warfare.

- The Old Testament gives us physical pictures of spiritual realities.
- Israelites did not pick this fight. They were attacked.
- Joshua's success is totally dependent upon Moses' prayer.
- Joshua had to persevere for the Israelites to win.

THE GREAT NEED of our world, our nation, our churches is people who know how to prevail in prayer. Moments of pious wishes blandly expressed to God once or twice a day will bring little change on earth or among the people. Kind thoughts expressed to him in 5 or 6 sentences after reading a paragraph or 2 of mildly religious sentiments, one a day from some devotional writing will not expand the kingdom of God or shake the gates of hell and repel the attacks of evil on our culture and our civilization. Duewel, Mighty Prevailing Prayer

F. Intercessory prayer is a very practical way that believers are called to lay down their lives for one another.

- Jesus said, "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" (John 15:13)
- Your life consists in the number of hours and minutes God has given you to live. To spend those hours and minutes on your knees praying for another is to literally lay down your life for him or her.
- In Galatians 5:13 Paul commands us to be servants to one another in love. Intercessory prayer for another is a profound expression of love.

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G. One of the most important requirements of a spiritual leader is that he prays for those under his care.

- Abraham interceded for Lot (Genesis 18:20-33)
- Job interceded for his children (Job 1:5)
- Samuel said to those under his spiritual care, *“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you.”* 1 Sam.12:23
- Paul was fervently committed to praying for the churches he had charge over, saying to the Colossians, *“Since the day we hear about you we have not stopped praying for you.”* (vs. 1:9)
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- Jesus said to Peter, *“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.”* Luke 22:31

How to Fight: Forming Your Strategy for Prevailing Prayer

A. Specifically, what do I pray for?

Jesus answered this question. When in Luke 11 Jesus was asked by his disciples to teach them to pray, Jesus gave 5 petitions (that are expanded to 6 in Matt 6:9-13.) These petitions represent 6 categories for prayer requests.

1. vs. 9 “**May your name be hallowed (honored.)**”

- Lord, please help Bob and Sue work out their marriage problem so that their marriage will bring honor to you.
- Lord, please help me honor you by the way I do my job, today.
- Lord, you have said in I. Cor. 6:20, “*You have been bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*” So I ask that you help me honor you with my body by helping me be disciplined enough to _____ (work out, eat right, stay sexually pure, etc.) I know this is your will for me and you have promised therefore to answer this prayer.

2. vs. 10 “**May your kingdom come.**”

- Lord, help Jane on the job to live out your kingdom values
- Lord, use Jim in a powerful way for your kingdom in his neighborhood.
- Lord lead me to those in my neighborhood in whose heart you are working to draw them into your kingdom.
- Lord, help my son be bold in standing up for your kingdom values in his classes today

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3. vs. 10b ***“May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”***

- a. God promises to grant our request when we pray according to his will.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. I. John 5:14-15

- b. There are 3 different ways the term **“God’s will”** is used in Scripture.

- His **sovereign plan** Acts 4:28
- The **immanent circumstances** Matt. 26:39
- His **moral, revealed will** (what pleases him) I.Thes. 4:3

- c. Prayer relates to these 3 uses differently

- **Sovereign plan**—prayer doesn’t change it but is part of it. Ps. 139:16, Eph. 1:11
- **Immanent circumstances**—God may change the circumstances in response to your prayer Acts 12:5, II. Kings 20.
- **God’s moral will, i.e. what pleases him**—God **PROMISES** to answer prayers made according to his moral will **as revealed in Scripture** I John 5:14-15.

- d. A parallel verse makes this even more clear:

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. This is to my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” John 15:7-8

- e. A simple way to think of this third use of the term “God’s will” is that it is **what Scripture says should be true of Christians**. Examples: Acts 4:31, I. Kings 18ff

- f. Jesus qualifies “your will be done.”

- So it cannot be understood to mean his sovereign will, which includes sin (which does not exist in heaven.)

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- This clearly refers to his moral, will—may men on earth obey God the way the righteous angels in heaven do.
- g. The moral will of God includes both our actions and our attitudes.
- h. This category is what Paul most often prayed for the churches to whom he wrote. See: Phil. 1:9-11
Eph. 1:16-19
Eph. 3:16-19
Col. 1:9-12
4. vs. 11 ***“Give us this day our daily bread.”***
- This is a way of saying, “Ask God to provide whatever you or your loved one need that day.”
 - Lord, John needs help today remembering what he studied for his test.
 - Lord, my wife is having a tough day. She really needs to be reminded how much you love her. Would you do that?
 - Lord, I need wisdom and in James 1 you promise wisdom to those who ask.
 - Lord, I have too much month left at the end of my paycheck. I’ve been tithing. Please provide for us. You promised in Prov.3:9-10 that if we honor you with the first of our wealth, you will provide abundantly for your needs.
 - Lord, I need the strength to overcome my anger and deal in a godly way with this disagreement with my wife.
5. vs. 12 ***“Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.”***
- Prayers in this category focus on the potential damage of broken relationships.
 - Lord, please forgive me for the way my short temper wounded my son today. Give me the courage to ask for his forgiveness as well.

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- Lord, please forgive my angry, hostile attitude towards my boss. Help me deal Biblically with the way he has mistreated me.
- Lord, Janet was really wounded by the words Billy said to today. Please soothe the wound. Help her to take her pain to you. Help her to forgive him.

6. vs. 13 “*And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.*”

Jesus takes temptation so seriously that he counsels us to make the anticipation of how we might be tempted a regular part of our prayer life!!

- Lord, please help Jim overcome the temptation to lust. Your word says in I. Thes 4 that your will is for your followers to be holy—to control their bodies in holiness and honor not giving in to lust.
- Lord, I know the pressures my wife feels this week will likely cause her to miss time she needs with you. Lord help her to not sacrifice that needed time. (By the way, the Lord may prompt you to take some steps to lighten her load.)

7. Example: Things you might pray for your marriage.

Lord, I pray that:

- Our marriage would bring honor to your name That the way I love my wife would bring great honor to Christ because it is to be a picture of the way He loves us, his bride.
- You will use our marriage in our neighborhood—not that we are perfect, but that the lost could see something special about us as a couple—that you are the center of our relationship. Lord lead us to the couples that might be needing help and are open to you.
- You would help me to be understanding of my wife. I know this is your will because you say that in I Peter 3:8.

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- You would help us experience real closeness—intimacy in our relationship. I know that is your will because Genesis 2 says that the man and the woman were naked **and were not ashamed**. Lord, help us to be soul mates who feel safe and accepted by each other. Help me to meet my wife's hunger for spiritual and emotional intimacy.
- You would help me be less selfish and more willing to serve my wife and put her ahead of myself. I know this is your will because you call me to love her as Christ loved the church.
- You will help us to be intoxicated with romantic and sexual love for each other. I know this is your will because in Proverbs 5:15-19 you say to husbands. *"Rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer, may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated by her love."*
- You would provide the chance for us to get away from the kids some weekend.
- You will help me be a better listener.
- You will help my wife better understand my sexual needs.
- You will forgive me for staying angry with my wife. Lord what she did hurt me but help me to gently explain to her how she hurt me. And help me give the grace to her that I need everyday from you.
- You will give me the courage to talk with my wife about the fight we just had, the patience I need not to get defensive, the attentiveness I need to hear what she was feeling. Help her be patient with me.
- You will help my wife resist temptation. When she wants to yell at the kids, help her. When she doubts your love or my love, help her know the truth. When she is tempted to gossip, help her not to. When she is tempted to feel unloved and worthless, help her resist those lies. When she is overcome with fear or anxiety about finances, help her raise up the shield of faith—help her trust you.

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B. When do I find time to pray?

You don't wait until you can FIND time, you MAKE time if you believe you are called to fight for your loved ones in prayer.

1. God gives you 168 hours per week. Will you love your family and friends enough to invest 1 or 2 of those hours to strengthen them in the battle that really counts.
2. My suggestion is to invest 1 hour Sunday morning before church going through your prayer list and then to spend 5-8 minutes each day as part of a daily time with God praying for a few on your list.
 - Why not give back to God some time from the day that belongs to Him.
 - Most of us could get up an hour earlier on Sunday, still make it to both Sunday school and church, and still sleep in past our weekly time to get up.
 - So it is a win-win situation. Still sleep in, still make church and SS, but steal an extra hour.
 - Another possibility would be to find an extra hour Sunday afternoon or evening.
 - Sunday evening makes a great time to plan your schedule for the week, look at calendars with your wife, and pray with her, as you begin your week.
3. Most men don't have the freedom in their schedule to pray a long time for others during a morning Quiet Time.
 - But a commitment to pray for 5-8 minutes for some of those on your prayer list enables you to pray several times a week for your loved ones.
 - Turning the radio off in the car and spending time in prayer is another great way to make time to pray for others.
 - This approach works better when combined with a disciplined approach to prayer which uses a prayer list.

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C. How do I keep it up?

1. Give some thought to what specific things you should be praying (see A above.)
2. Especially base your prayers on what Scripture says God wants to be true of Christians –God’s moral will, what Paul prayed for.
3. Write these specific requests in your prayer journal.
 - Keep your prayer journal where you can use it when you pray, and USE IT.
 - This enables you to be persistent in asking, which is one of the requirements for answered prayer.

“... yet because of the man’s persistence he will give him as much as he needs. So I say to you: Keep asking and it will be given to you; keep seeking and you will find; keep knocking and the door will be opened to you.” Luke 11:9.

- Most importantly, writing down specific requests **enables you to see the answers to your prayers much more clearly**—and it is seeing answers that is the greatest motivation to keep praying.

4. Review God’s prayer promises often.

“The earnest prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16b

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“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive and your joy will be complete.” John 16:24

5. Remember the story of Joshua fighting in the valley and Moses empower him to be victorious through his prayers

***YOUR LOVED ONES NEED YOU TO BE
A WARRIOR FOR THEM.***

6. Remember that it is your God who has called you to fight in the spiritual battle using the weapon of prayer

God wants your prayer life to be filled with petitions and intercessions for others and for the advance of His kingdom. He wants answers to such prayer to become your thrilling and frequent experience. One of the great joys of prayer is securing wonderful answers that seem so long delayed and so humanly impossible.

God wants answers to your prayers to be frequent and blessed. He wants to prove repeatedly the mighty power of prayer in your own experience. He wants you to become not only a prayer veteran but also a constant victor in situations where the answers bring great glory to God and great consternation and defeat to Satan. Wesley Duewel, Mighty Prevailing Prayer

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Prayer Requests

"If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you." John 15:7

Me

Intimacy with God: _____

Godly character: _____

Sphere of life to be brought under Christ's control: _____

My Marriage

Spiritual/emotional intimacy (Gen 2:23-25) _____

Unselfish love (Eph. 5:25) _____

Understanding (I Pet. 3:7) _____

Captivating love life (Prov. 5:20) _____

My Wife's Needs

Gratefulness for her (Prov. 18:22, 31:10) _____

My Kid's Needs

Love relationship w/ Christ (Eph.3:16-20) _____

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General: _____
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Staying Focused On Our Mission

Establish a weekly “*briefing with the King.*”

1. We need a weekly briefing with our CO to seek his guidance and plan how we will accomplish our mission during the week ahead. Consider the example of Jesus in Luke 4:31-44)
2. A great way to be sure you get this time is to steal some time for a weekly briefing with the King Sunday afternoon or evening

“If you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord.”
(Is. 58:13-14)

3. The FOCUS notebook is designed so that you can personalize it into your mission statement, plan your strategy for accomplishing your mission, and review that plan with the Lord each week during.
4. Unless you clearly define your mission, take time to plan the strategy to accomplish your mission, and regularly review your mission plan, ***it is unlikely that you will be able to stay focused on your mission.*** This weekly time is critical for realigning and refocusing your life around Christ’s mission for you.

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Agenda for a Weekly Briefing With the King

A. ENJOY God

1. Talk to God about what is on your heart.
(Tell God what you are feeling)
 - This might be deep rooted worries and concerns
 - It might be frustrations
 - It might be being tired
2. Spend a few minutes reviewing things you are thankful to God for.
3. Choose 1 or 2 attributes of God's character to delight in.
 - In your mind, define the quality
 - Tell God how you benefit from that quality
4. What adjustments do you need to make to stay close to God during the week?

B. IMITATE God through Godly character

1. Do you need to change any bad attitude at home that is wounding others?
2. Turn to Gal. 5:22-23 or Matt 5:1-12 and identify one godly attitude you think God wants you to focus on. Often the trials he brings help you determine where he is seeking to build your character. Ask for help producing this attitude.

C. RULE each domain of your life for Christ (doing what you can to accomplish his agenda in that sphere of your life)

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1. Prayerfully review the spheres of your life. (These correspond to the tabs in your FOCUS notebook.) Which ones need the most attention in the days ahead?
 - Marriage
 - Family
 - Work
 - Church
 - Commitment to the lost
2. Seek God's guidance to understand his agenda for the sphere by prayerfully looking into Scripture. Many texts are already provided for you in the FOCUS notebook.
3. Pray through the spheres that are heaviest on your heart.
4. Formulate a strategy and from that strategy form an action plan with a few items for the week ahead

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Desires

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Prov 4:23

This section of the FOCUS notebook addresses the first part of our mission—**enjoying God**. It is vital that we set our affections on the Lord as our first love. He is the answer to our deepest longings. We are created to love him with all of our heart and mind and strength. When we are not delighting our heart in the Lord, we are more vulnerable to the pull of other “gods” in the world that promise to satisfy the desires of our hearts.

There are 2 keys to winning this battle for our hearts:

1. We must go on the offensive and delight ourselves in the Lord—i.e. be intentional about **enjoying God**.
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Enjoying God

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” (Phil. 4:4)

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to ENJOY Him forever” (Question # 1, The Westminster Shorter Catechism)

One reason lust reigns in so many is that Christ has so little appeal. You were created to treasure Christ with all your heart—more than you treasure sex or sugar. If you have little taste for Jesus, competing pleasures will triumph. Plead with God for the satisfaction you don’t have. Quote Psalm 90:14, “Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love that we might rejoice and be glad all our days.” Then, look, look, LOOK at the most magnificent person in the universe until you see him the way he is. John Piper

4 Hindrances to Enjoying God

A. Looking for ultimate satisfaction other places

1. Explanation: Because of the fall, our sinful nature directs us to seek heart satisfaction in any place but God himself. Whatever we look to for soul satisfaction become idols.
 - Work provides us with a treasure chest of intoxicating rewards
 - Recognition from coworkers
 - Positions and titles that build our self esteem
 - Authority over others that makes us feel significant
 - Financial rewards that let us wear things, travel places, and buy things that make us feel good
 - Immoral sexual gratification provides fleeting pleasure along with false intimacy

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2. Scripture

- “You were made for God, and He is the answer to your deepest longings” I Corinth 6:13
- “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods.” Ps. 63:4-5
- “You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasure at your right hand” Psalm 16:11
- “You shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3
- “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the father, but from the world.” I John 2:15ff
- “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” James 4:4

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. CS Lewis “The Weight of Glory”

B. Guilt

1. Explanation: Guilt blocks all relationships. Only the offering of forgiveness and the receiving of forgiveness along with genuine repentance can fully restore the relationship.
 - God, in his mercy forgives the sins of those who are in Christ

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- If we do not really understand grace, our shame will cause us to hesitate to come to God
- We will experience distance in our relationship with God if we are harboring pockets of sinful behavior patterns that we refuse to give up.

2. Scripture:

- *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men.” Rom. 1:18*
- *“When I kept silent about my sin my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” Ps 32:3-4*
- *“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.” Psalm 51:7-8*

C. Inability to grasp the truth of our adoption as sons

1. Explanation: Many men have grown up with fathers who have been absent or emotionally distant, leaving them with no pattern for relating emotionally to their heavenly father. Initially, they will have trouble building a personal relationship with God, but if they persevere, the doctrine of their adoption into God’s family as sons will become very precious, as will the privilege of calling God, “Abba.”

2. Scripture:

- *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him, we cry **Abba, Father.**” Rom. 8:15-16*

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- “Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **Abba, Father, he said, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me...**” Mark 14:35-36
- “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God! And that it is what we are!” 1 John 3:1

“Adoption is a FAMILY idea, conceived in terms of LOVE, and viewing God as FATHER. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship, and establishes us as his children and the heirs. Closeness, affection, and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the JUDGE is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the FATHER is a greater.” J. I. Packer, Knowing God

D. Busyness

1. Explanation: No relationship can grow without frequent time together.
 - In a culture dominated by secularism, our focus is constantly riveted to the outer, physical world, not the inner, spiritual, world.
 - You always make time for what is important to you
 - We feel like our heavy responsibilities are an obstacle. The irony is that Jesus prioritized our responsibilities and the very highest is to love the Lord our God with all our heart.
 - All of life is about relationships. We know that, first, because God is the ultimate relational being, existing as a perfect love relationship (God is love) among the 3 persons of the trinity—God the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. His relational fingerprints are all over the universe. Second, God summarizes our covenantal responsibilities in relational terms: (vertically) love

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the Lord your God, and (horizontally), love your neighbor as yourself.

- All relationships die when they are neglected.

2. Scripture:

- *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”* Matthew 22:37-38
- *“If you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, THEN YOU WILL FIND YOUR JOY IN THE LORD.”* Is. 58:13-14

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Path to Enjoying God More

“I will make it my habit each day to desire nothing more than God”

A. Walk daily with God

“Give us today our daily bread...” Matt. 6:11

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place to pray” Mark 1:35

1. This relationship, like all relationships, can only grow through regular time spent together.
2. This regular, daily time with God has often been called a “Quiet Time” (QT.)
3. Insights for establishing a regular QT with God:
 - Remember you are meeting a person, not completing a task. The goal is to connect with the Lord, not get a certain number of verses read.
 - The key to having a morning quiet time is getting to bed early. The key to having an evening quiet time is heading to bed early.
 - Don’t be discouraged when your schedule is thrown off track. That’s the way life is. The key to self-discipline is NOT avoiding interruptions in the routine. It is getting back to the routine quickly after the interruption.
 - Don’t become legalistic, but recognize your need of spiritual nutrition. After missing 2 or 3 **physical** meals we experience a certain “urgency” to get the nutrition we need. It should be the same if we miss 2 or 3 **spiritual** meals.
 - A prayer journal, which enables consistent prayer and increases awareness of answers is a vital tool.

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B. Cultivate a vital prayer life.

“Be joyful always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thess. 5:16-18

“In your presence is fullness of joy.” Ps 16:11

1. There are few experiences of life that bring greater joy than seeing God answer a very specific prayer in a way that you know it is Him!
2. It doesn’t appear to be accidental that Paul links joy with constant prayer and a grateful heart.
3. The joy of answered prayer will come only if we answer the call to enter the spiritual battle and fight by praying.
4. It is extremely helpful to keep a prayer list to be consistent in making specific requests and in noticing specific answers. (see earlier)

C. Establish a weekly “*briefing with the King.*”

1. We need a weekly briefing with our CO to seek his guidance and plan how we will accomplish our mission during the week ahead.
 - Consider Jesus’ example in Mark 1:29-39
 - A great way to be sure you get this time is to steal some time for a weekly briefing with the King Sunday afternoon or evening

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“If you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord.” (Is. 58:13-14)

2. This is also a great time to carry out many of the activities listed in “D” below, “Other Ways to Enjoy God more.
3. This FOCUS notebook is designed to be used for this meeting. See your mission tab for more information on this vital Sunday meeting with your Lord.

D. Be intentional about “abiding” in God’s love.

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain (abide) in my love.” John 15:9

Ecstasy and delight are essential to the believer’s soul and they promote sanctification. We are not meant to live without spiritual exhilaration...The believer is in spiritual danger if he allows himself to go for any length of time without tasting the love of Christ. Maurice Roberts, The Thought of God

What do these verses teach about enjoying God, and especially basking in his love?

Psalm 63

Is. 62:5

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Psalms 16

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E. Give your treasure to God.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matt. 6:21.

“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship. Rom 12:1

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Whether it is **material treasure** or the more valuable **treasure of our time**, there is a critical principle that involves the heart. That is the principle of giving to God the first-fruits. Not only does God promise us rewards for doing so, but Jesus tells us that **our hearts will follow our investments**. Giving to God the first portion of our paycheck and the first day of the week will cause our hearts to deepen their delight in God. Specifically, giving God the first day of the week is associated in Isaiah 58 with joy.

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F. Cultivate your love for God

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deut. 6:5

- a. **All your heart**-- wanting to please him, wanting his name to be honored
- b. **All your soul**--
 - praising and valuing him with your **mind**
 - surrendering to him with your **will**
 - sharing with him your **emotions**
- c. **All your strength**-- loving him with focus, energy, endurance

G. Get to know God and delight in his attributes.

“So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD...” (Hosea 6:3)

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

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:4)

“I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.” (Ps. 34:1)

But the most obvious fact about praise—whether of God or anything—strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise....The world rings with praise—lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside..... I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but COMPLETES the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. C. S. Lewis, “Reflections on the Psalms”

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To enjoy God more, look up the following verses and answer the questions:

A. James 1:17

What does this verse tell you about God's nature?

Tell God how you benefit from this/these attributes.

B. Psalm 119:89

What does this verse tell you about God's nature?

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C. Matt. 21:12-13

What do these verses tell you about God's nature?

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D. Heb. 13:8

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E. Ps. 93:1

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F. Matt. 9:36

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I. I John 4:6-12

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O. II Cor. 5:10 & Eccles. 12:113-14

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What do these verses tell you about God's nature?

Tell God how you benefit from this/these attributes.

T. Psalms 145

What does this psalm tell you about God's nature?

Tell God how you benefit from these attributes.

Mapping the Masculine Heart

From Scripture, it appears that God has shaped the masculine heart with the following yearnings, which lead to the given roles, and when redeemed, to the following passions.

<u>He Yearns For</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Passion</u>
A <i>KING</i> to <i>HONOR</i>	Servant/Vice Regent	Christ's honor
A <i>SPHERE</i> of earth to <i>SUBDUE</i>	Hunter/Provider	Kingdom to advance
A <i>BATTLE</i> to <i>FIGHT</i>	Warrior/Freedom Fighter	Defeat of evil
A <i>BEAUTY</i> to <i>LOVE</i>	Lover/Pursuer	Love wife as Christ loved Church
A <i>BROTHER</i> to <i>LABOR BESIDE</i>	Faithful friend	A friend who is a brother in arms
A <i>HERITAGE</i> to <i>PASS ON</i>	Leader/Shepherd	Godly descendents who love Christ

Beneath these desires of the heart are longings that we seek to satisfy the wrong way. A central part of our fallen nature is to look to various idols to satisfy these heart longings.

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A **KING** to **HONOR**

(Podcast Season 1 E #41 8/16/20 The Hunger of the Masculine Heart for Approval: **A King to Honor**)

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them... Rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Gen. 1:27-28

Heart Longing: **Affirmation from his heavenly Father**

His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant."
Matt. 25:23

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17

Role: Servant/Vice regent to rule for God

Character: Covenant loyalty

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." John 21:15

Redeemed Passion: Christ's honor

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Matt. 6:9

His master replied, "Well done good and faithful servant."
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Idols: Whatever gets us the approval of the world
(There is room below to identify these idols)

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A ***SPHERE*** of ***EARTH*** to ***SUBDUE***

(Podcast Season 1 E #42 8/23/20 The Hunger of the Masculine Heart for Impact: ***A Sphere to Impact***)

Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Gen. 1:28, 2:15

Heart Longing: **Significance**

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matt. 6:19-21

Role: Provider/Ruler, King of Creation

Character: Zeal

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Col. 3:23-24

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matt. 6:33

Redeemed Passion: Kingdom to advance

May your kingdom come. Matt. 6:10a

Idols: Whatever makes us feel significant

- Prestige
- Position
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A **BATTLE** to **FIGHT**

(Podcast Season 1 Episode #43 8/30/20 Called to Be Fierce Protectors and Warriors: **A Battle to Fight**)

*Remember the Lord who is great and awesome, **and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.***" (Neh. 4:14)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Eph. 6:12

Heart Longing: **Winning, Achieving, Conquest**

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now, there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day. II Tim. 4:7-8a.

Role: Warrior/Protector

Character: Strength/Endurance

Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aaram and completely destroyed it. But now, you will defeat it only three times."
II Kings 13:18ff

Redeemed Passion: Defeat of evil

May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matt. 6:10b

Idols: Whatever helps us achieve success

- Job or promotion
- Education that we must have
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A **BEAUTY** to **LOVE**

(Podcast Season 1 Episode # 44 9/6/20 God's Design for Fulfilling Romance: **A Beauty to Love**)

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Eph. 5:25-27

Heart Longing: **HUMAN CONNECTION**, belonging, intimacy, to love and be loved, sexual fulfillment

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Gen. 2:23-24

Role: Lover/Pursuer,

Character: Initiates sacrificial love

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. I Cor. 13:4-7

Redeemed Passion: Love wife like Christ loves the church

Idols: Illicit sexual experience

- False intimacy and sexual pleasure outside of marriage
- This happens through illicit sexual encounters, use of pornography, fantasizing, etc.
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A BROTHER to LABOR BESIDE

(Podcast Season 1 E #45 9/13/20 Building a Strategic Friendship:
A Brother to Labor and Fight Beside)

“A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Prov. 18:24

Heart Longing: Companionship with a friend who is brother in arms

“How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights! I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother. You were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of a woman.”
2 Sam. 1:28-29

Role: Faithful friend

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” Prov. 17:17

Character: Faithfulness

“Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but a faithful man who can find.” Prov. 20:6

Redeemed Passion: Connection to a band of brothers

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Rom. 12:10

Idols: Whatever it takes to have the “right” friends

- Personality
- Athleticism
- Wealth
- Status
- Position
- A home in the right neighborhood

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A HERITAGE to PASS ON

(Podcast Season 1 E #46 9/20/20 A Hunger for Impact that Outlives
Them: **A Heritage to Pass On**)

Hear O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road; when you lie down and when you get up. Deut. 6:4-7

Heart Longing: **RESPECT**

*Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed...Surely he will never be shaken; **a righteous man will be remembered forever.** Ps. 112:1, 2, 6*

Role: Leader/Shepherd

Character: Servant's heart

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many Matt. 20:28

Redeemed Passion: Godly descendants who love Christ

For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God... showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Ex. 20:5-6

Idols: Whatever makes us feel respected

- Power
- Building an empire
- Always wanting more

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CHARACTER: Accomplishing Our Mission to Imitate God:

A Plan to Cultivating Christ-like Character

- A. Step 1: *Recognize that the goal of God's Spirit in your life is to produce godly attitudes.*
- B. Step 2: *Form a clear picture of what each Biblical character quality looks like.*
- C. Step 3: *Since attitudes are always determined by PERSPECTIVE, list various Biblical truths that are the key foundational perspectives required for each godly attitude.*
- D. Step 4: *Use that clear definition to be a plumb-line to expose your character deficiencies.*
- E. Step 5: *In your daily quiet time, focus on one Specific character quality for the day.*
- F. Step 6: *Ask God to empower you to produce that righteous attitude through his Spirit at work in you.*
- G. Step 7: *Let failures motivate you to acknowledge your dependence upon God alone who sanctifies us, transforming our sinful attitudes into holy ones.*

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*Current Action Plan to Focus
on the Character Qualities
God is Building in Me*

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Poor in spirit (Matt. 5:1-12)

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Poor in spirit (Matt. 5:1-12)

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Those who mourn

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Those who mourn

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

The meek

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

The meek

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Those who hunger and thirst for
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Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Merciful

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Merciful

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Pure in heart

Definition:

Opposite:

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Further Insights:

Pure in heart

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Peacemakers

Definition:

Opposite:

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Further Insights:

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Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Those who suffer persecution

Definition:

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Those who suffer persecution

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Love (Gal. 5:22-23)

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Love (Gal. 5:22-23)

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Joy

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Joy

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Peace

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Patience

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Definition:

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Kindness

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Further Insights:

Self-control

Definition:

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Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

Further Insights:

Wisdom (Prov.3:13-18)

Definition:

Opposite:

Parallel Teaching and Examples:

Further Insights:

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Definition:

Opposite:

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Further Insights:

Strength (Joshua 1)

Definition:

Opposite:

Mental Perspective Required for this Quality:

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Courage (Joshua 1)

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Further Insights:

Sexuality

Called to Be Men

Masculinity Lived Out

**Why Can't I Win the Battle
With Lust**

**Winning The Battle With
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"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27



FOCUS
Subdue=Conquer



- Adam was created in the wilderness; Eve was created in a beautiful garden. (Gen. 2:8, 21)
- Adam is brought to the garden "to work it and take care of it." Eve however is brought to the man to be a "suitable helper" for him. His focus is the world. Her focus is her husband and eventually her family. (Gen. 2:15, 18)
- After their sin, Adam's punishment concerns his primary task—cultivating the garden, and Eve's punishment concerns her primary task caring for her husband and children. (Gen. 3:16-19)
- Both Adam and Eve are called to subdue the earth—to be the king and queen of creation. Adam's orientation in this subduing is conquering the world. Eve's orientation in this subduing is ordering her family and home. (Prov. 31:1-31)

Masculinity and Femininity: Perfect Compliments to One Another

Masculine Orientation

To **initiate**
To **lead**
To **provide**
To **protect**

Feminine Orientation

To **respond**
To **assist**
To **nurture**
To **beautify**

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Masculinity Lived Out

Take Initiative

C. S. Lewis wrote, “*God is so masculine that all of creation is feminine by comparison.*” God uses almost exclusively masculine terms for himself. In everything that God does, he initiates, we respond. The essence of masculinity is taking the initiative. It is the opposite of passivity. Masculine passivity is a sinful violation of the created order.

From 1 (poorly) to 5 (pretty well) rate yourself on each of the following:

- _____. Do you initiate agape love in your marriage, looking proactively for ways to meet your wife’s needs?
- _____. Do you pursue your woman romantically, or passively wait for her to initiate lovemaking?
- _____. When there is a distance in your relationship with your wife or kids, are you the one who steps up, pursues the one who is distant, and resolves the problem?
- _____. When there is a problem in your home, do you step up and deal with the issue, or remain passive until it explodes?
- _____. Do you initiate constant warmth and affection for your family?
- _____. Do you take responsibility for the discipline of the kids when you are with your wife?

Lead

In I Timothy 2:13, Paul restricts leadership in the church to men. He argues, “*Adam was formed first, then Eve.*” In I Cor. 11 as well as Eph. 5 he tells us that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. Men are assigned the leadership role in the home and church.

The difference between “taking initiative” and “leading” is that you can take initiative but have no place you are going. Leaders have a destination, a goal, a target, and a plan to get there. They are proactive. They are taking their families

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The difference between “taking initiative” and “leading” is that you can take initiative but have no place you are going. Leaders have a destination, a goal, a target, and a plan to get there. They are proactive. They are taking their families

somewhere. Specifically, they are leading each family member to be a fully sold-out disciple of Jesus Christ. The opposite of leading is reacting our way through life, having no clear goals and no plan to take our family anywhere.

Rate how well are you doing the following: 1 (poor) to 5 (pretty well)

- _____. Establishing specific goals to pursue that will deepen the intimacy of your marriage and learn to better meet your wife's needs?
- _____. Accomplishing your plan to train each of your kids to be a fully devoted, mature, believer?
- _____. Working your game plan to pass on your spiritual heritage to your children?
- _____. Implementing a strategy to build relationships and share Christ with those non-believers God has put in your circle of relationships. (If not, what are you teaching your kids about evangelism?)
- _____. Operating from the same page with your wife as far as the discipline of the kids? Do you discipline the kids when you are home?
- _____. Giving overall spiritual direction to your family?

Provide

In Eph. 5:29, Paul explains to husbands that it is their responsibility to provide for their wife's needs. Genesis 1 also assigns the task of earning a living (cultivating the garden) to Adam. We men need to realize that God is pleased when we "bring home the bacon." This is just as much God's sacred calling as his call to a pastor or evangelist.

We also need to remember that, **as providers**, we are called to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of our wives and children, not just their need for food, clothing, and shelter. Providing is in essence, loving—giving to the needs of another. Its opposite is selfishness—being too self-focused to notice what others really need.

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Rate how well are you doing the following:

- _____. Understanding your wife's emotional needs?
- _____. Providing financially for your family?
- _____. Providing emotional strength and support for your wife and children?
- _____. Giving your family lots of your time, attention, and affection?
- _____. Providing the firm, fair discipline your kids need?
- _____. Providing the praise and affirmation your wife and children need to have a strong self image?

Protect

Nehemiah appealed to the men of Jerusalem, "*Don't be afraid of them (their enemies.) Remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.*" (Neh. 4:14) Most men would run into a burning building to rescue their families or take a bullet for them. But what is harder is the grind of fighting a daily SPIRITUAL battle on their behalf.

Jesus was very clear. You, your wife, and your children have any enemy who "*comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy*" (John 10:10.) His name is Satan. Yes, he is on God's leash, but that doesn't mean he won't bring great harm and destruction on your family. Paul warned us that we are in a spiritual battle and then commanded, "***Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints***" (Eph. 6:18.) The opposite of protecting our families is, in many ways, being naïve about the way they are being harmed. It is being a fool.

Rate how well are you doing the following:

- _____. Protecting your wife's health and safety?
- _____. Protecting your children's health and safety?
- _____. Helping your wife fight her spiritual battles through fervent prayer for her? (Do you even know what your wife's spiritual battles are?)
- _____. Helping your kids fight their spiritual battles through fervent prayer with your wife for them?
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Why Can't I Win The Battle With Lust?

1. God made sexual release the greatest form of physical pleasure there is. *"During sex, chemicals called endorphins and encephalons rush to the excitement center of a man's brain...making his brain and body feel their absolute best."* (Dr. Doug Weiss, Sex, Men, and God) When we are down, tired, lonely, angry, or bored, we want to feel good, and sexual release makes us feel very, very good, momentarily.

2. God created men to be sexually stimulated visually, by looking at the naked female body—no relationship necessary. Thirty years ago there were fewer than a thousand X rated movie theaters in America. Now they are a click away in nearly every home via the Internet. There used to be social barriers to hinder the pursuit of pornography—going to a sleazy part of town and asking the drug store clerk to give you Penthouse. Those barriers are gone.

3. God has designed us so we sexually glue to whatever we are looking at when we have a sexual release—a fabulous idea if we never have a sexual release except with our wife. That way we would never tire of sex with our wife nor lose interest when she loses her youthful beauty. But in a fallen world, we fantasize and look at porn for sexual release. This behavior addicts us slowly to porn, instead of addicting us sexually to our (future) wife. *"When a man ejaculates, his brain receives its maximum chemical reward. Whatever he looks at while having an ejaculation is what he will sexually 'glue to. **Whatever his eyes focus on when he sexually releases—a person, image or object—will become etched in his brain as a photographic attachment towards that person, image, or object.** I call it 'sex glue."* (Ibid) Repeated use of porn along with masturbation glues us (binds us) to desiring sexual release through porn and fantasy. This bondage explains why 99.9% of married men who had regularly used porn while single return to it after marriage.

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4. Sexual impurity is a deep-rooted idol that enslaves the heart, and buries it in shame. Many Christian approaches to the battle with lust are more about behavior modification than heart transformation. They may work for a while but the old surrender to lust soon comes back. Breaking the slavery of lust is possible, **but it will only happen through a process of heart transformation.**

Heart Transformation To Win The Battle With Lust: A Five Part Strategy

1. **It begins with building a deep rooted understanding of grace.** Shame is the biggest weapon in Satan's arsenal to keep men enslaved by sexual lust. Shame convinces us that God may tolerate us, and even forgive us because of Christ. But he really doesn't like us that much. ***If I believe that God's basic attitude towards me is disgust—I will never want to draw near to Him to have my deepest need for love and intimacy met.***

The gospel of God's grace is the only antidote strong enough to overcome men's toxic shame over their sexual lust. It is the only motivation compelling enough to pick fallen men up, when lust has bloodied them, and send them back into the arena to fight again. It is the only force potent enough to change the heart desires that lead us into sexual sin. As Tim Keller points out, ***"We can only change permanently as we take the gospel more deeply into our hearts."***

At our website (www.forgingbonds.org), you can purchase a **unique**, small-group study that really does enable guys to get free from the slavery of sexual sin. It is unique because it takes a **grace-centered approach** to men's battle with lust, and hearts are only changed permanently as they are transformed by grace. You can also find out more about our seminar that will equip your men with a grace centered approach to fighting and defeating lust.

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2. The second part of this strategy of heart transformation is to delight our hearts more and more in the Lord. As John Piper points out, “*One reason lust reigns in so many is that Christ has so little appeal. You were created to treasure Christ with all your heart—more than you treasure sex or sugar. If you have little taste for Jesus, competing pleasures will triumph. Plead with God for the satisfaction you don’t have. Quote Psalm 14, “Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love that we might rejoice and be glad all our days.” Then, look, look, LOOK at the most magnificent person in the universe until you see him the way he is.*”

When the Apostle Paul is addressing the sexual sin of the Corinthians, his approach is not to simply say, “Stop it!” Rather, he tells them that the answer to their deepest longings is not the false intimacy of sexual sin but true intimacy with the Lord. “*You were made for God and he is the answer to our deepest longings.*” 1 Cor. 6:13. **In my life, I’ve learned that I have to keep drinking gulps of intimacy and love in my relationship with God or else the polluted water of sinful sexual gratification will appeal too much to my thirst.**

We’ve designed a 30 day devotional for men, called ***Allegiance***, which is written ***to deepen their heart connection to their God and love for Him.*** To find out more about it go to www.forgingbonds.org.

3. Part three of a heart-transforming strategy for defeating lust is to guard and protect our hearts. Proverbs 4:23 urges us, “*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*” The motivation to watch over our heart comes from realizing how much sexual sin costs. Sin always costs—the wage is death. Something is lost or damaged when we surrender to sexual sin. It is only when we realize what sexual sin costs that we can hate it, as Paul commands us in Rom. 12:9, “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” Here is just a cursory look at the cost of sexual sin:

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- Surrendering to lust inflames your sexual desires making it harder to resist temptation next time.
- Every surrender brings you closer to the destructive life style of sexual addiction.
- Surrendering to lust damages you spiritually. *“I urge you to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against your soul.”* 1 Pet. 2:11
- Training yourself in sexual indulgence may eventually cost you your wife and children as it has many including King David.
- Pornography inspired masturbation trains and locks a man into impersonal sex, an approach to sex that will eventually be completely unfulfilling to his future wife.

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap life.” Gal. 6:7-8.

4. **The fourth heart-transforming strategy for married men is given in Proverbs 5:19, “May her breasts satisfy you at all times. May you be intoxicated with her love.”** God tells us that when it comes to sexual desire one of the best defenses is a great offense. God not only wants Christian couples to be drunk with sexual desire for each other, but he tells us that is part of his plan to help couples resist temptation.

When a Christian husband and wife are feasting their hearts on emotional and sexual intimacy with each other, they are far less vulnerable to temptation than when there is a loss of such intimacy. But often, there is a gradual loss of such intimacy in marriage. In fact, 83% of men say that their wives don’t understand their need for **sexual intimacy**, and the same percentage (83%) of wives say that their husbands don’t understand their need for **emotional intimacy**.

This intimacy misconnect can send a marriage into a downward spiral with each partner feeling unsatisfied and distance setting into the relationship. A wife needs emotional

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intimacy—feeling close to her husband before she wants sex. But husbands need sex to feel emotionally close and committed to their wives. This problem set into my own marriage. That is why my wife and I wrote a booklet that a couple can go through on 3 dates to help couples work through this issue, better understanding and meeting each other's intimacy needs. It is called **Intimacy, God's Design for Marriage**. For more information about this popular, marriage-transforming resource go to www.forgingbonds.org.

5. The fifth part of the long-term heart transforming strategy for defeating lust is to stop fighting the battle alone. Satan is ravaging our land because his strategy to divide and conquer is working. Joe Dallas is right when he says, *“Sexual sin thrives in the dark. If you're caught up in any sexual vice, one thing is certain; the secrecy surrounding your behavior is what strengthens its hold on you. However ashamed you may feel about admitting your problem to another person, the reality is this: **you can't overcome this on your own. If you could, wouldn't you have done so by now?**”*

All Christian men fight inner battles with their sinful nature. Many times we lose these battles for a simple reason—**we are trying to fight them by ourselves**. Whether fighting in the street or fighting in Iraq, men know they are likely to become a casualty if they fight *alone*. The same principle holds true with the battles of our inner lives.

Tremendous power results from having a brother standing beside you in this battle. We're not talking about an external accountability that uses shame to bludgeon outward conformity but the power of real, heart driven connection as brothers who love each other and are committed to encouraging and lifting each other up in their battles.

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But how do you find a few close friends to help you in your spiritual battles? You may not be able to **find** them. But you can **forge** them. You can build a bond of brotherhood with a few Christian men who will encourage you, love you, and stand with you in your spiritual battles. The 60 page book, Forging Bonds of Brotherhood is written to show you exactly how to do that. Check it out at: www.forgingbonds.org.

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Male and Female: God's Complimentary Design

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Gen. 1:27



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Subdue = conquer
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Provides for family
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(Disclaimer: These tendencies are based upon Biblical teaching about male/female role distinctions and reflect differences that are fairly universally recognized. Nevertheless, we are all uniquely created and these tendencies don't fit all men and women.)

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Needs of a Wife

“Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her...Eph. 5:25

To love with “**agape**” love means to give **sacrificially**, and **unconditionally**, to meet our wife’s needs. Here is a list of 8 foundational needs of wives, along with some practical suggestions for meeting those needs.

Emotional Intimacy With You

Explanation: The need to feel emotionally close and connected to you. Feeling one with you--like there are no barriers between you. Being soul mates and best friends. Accepting, cherishing, and respecting your wife so much that she feels safe enough to be herself and to share her heart.

Meeting this Need:

- Make a commitment to proactively seek emotional intimacy with her. This is what your vow to love her means to her.
- Most of the emotional connection she craves happens just by us listening attentively to her, throughout the day. So:
 - we need to concentrate on what she is saying
 - we need to listen to the feelings behind her words
 - we need to listen with the goal of understanding, not with the goal of fixing the problem. (her need is not to solve the problem; it is to feel understood)

“In order to really understand, we need to listen, not to reply. We need to listen long and attentively. In order to help anybody to open his heart, we have to give him time, asking only a few questions, as carefully as possible, in order to help him better explain his experience. Above all, we must not give the impression that we know, better than he does what he must do. Otherwise we force him to withdraw. Too much criticism will also achieve the same result, so fragile are his sensitivities. Paul Tournier, To Understand Each Other

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- The pace of your life may be such that you need to be intentional about carving out daily “couch time” to hear how

your wife's day went. (for example when you come home from work or right after dinner.)

--Ask your wife if you need this kind of structured "couch" time and, if so, when it would work best in the family schedule

--Be disciplined in setting aside those times to talk. If you let busyness crowd out this time, your message to your wife is, "**You aren't all that important.**"

--If you begin to set aside some "couch time" you can be certain that you will get knocked off schedule within several days. Expect it. Don't let it discourage you. Plan to re-start and re-start until connecting daily at the heart level becomes a habit. Then you won't need the structure.

- Here are some phrases to memorize to help you listen:

--*Tell me about your day*

--*It sounds like you are feeling _____ because*

--*How can I support you?*

- Take initiative to resolve any distance or conflict that sets into your relationship with your wife.

your wife's day went. (for example when you come home from work or right after dinner.)

--Ask your wife if you need this kind of structured "couch" time and, if so, when it would work best in the family schedule

--Be disciplined in setting aside those times to talk. If you let busyness crowd out this time, your message to your wife is, "**You aren't all that important.**"

--If you begin to set aside some "couch time" you can be certain that you will get knocked off schedule within several days. Expect it. Don't let it discourage you. Plan to re-start and re-start until connecting daily at the heart level becomes a habit. Then you won't need the structure.

- Here are some phrases to memorize to help you listen:

--*Tell me about your day*

--*It sounds like you are feeling _____ because*

--*How can I support you?*

- Take initiative to resolve any distance or conflict that sets into your relationship with your wife.

Partnership With You On the Home Front

Amplification: The need to feel like she is not facing her responsibilities alone, but has a companion beside her sharing her cares and load.

Meeting this Need:

Sit down with your wife and ask her these questions: (You might want to record her answers so you remember them.)

- What regular tasks in caring for the family do you dislike the most or find most difficult?
- In what household tasks do you feel most alone?
- What household projects would you most like me to complete?
- In what other ways can I help you shoulder your load?
- What family problems do you feel need to be addressed?
- How are we doing in the discipline of the children? What needs to be improved?
- What character training (discipleship) do you think needs to be our focus right now with each of the children?

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Spiritual Intimacy With You, Her Spiritual Leader

Amplification: A wife not only yearns to connect spiritually with her husband, she needs her husband to carry the weight of spiritual leadership so that she can flourish in her calling to be a suitable helper to him.

Meeting this Need:

- Be an example to her in your commitment to Christ
- Encourage, and pray for her spiritual growth
- Be sure she is spiritually connected to other women for fellowship
- Encourage and assist her to utilize her spiritual gifts
- Pray often with her

Words of Affirmation From You

Amplification: The need to know and hear repeatedly that she is highly valued by you, her husband—that her combination of beauty and feminine virtues is the perfect blend you need

Meeting This Need:

- Read through Proverbs 31: 10-31—the list of feminine virtues identify those for which you are most grateful in your wife. List them here.

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- Read through Proverbs 31: 10-31—the list of feminine virtues identify those for which you are most grateful in your wife. List them here.

- List 5 or 6 other special, unique qualities that make your wife the perfect woman for you.

- Pick a quality and tell your wife how much you appreciate that virtue in her. (You might want to write a little note that she will find.)
- Devote yourself to noticing these qualities in your mate and communicating to her your delight in her.
- Remember Proverbs 31:28-29 ***Her husband praises her; "Many women do noble things, BUT YOU SURPASS THEM ALL."***

Romance

Amplification: In her God-given feminine nature, a woman yearns to be swept off her feet, treated like a princess, and drawn into adventure. Romance to her is feeling, cherished, valued, special pampered. Romance keeps her feelings for you at a constant warm level (which makes love-making easy and natural for her, since going from warm to hot is much easier than going from cold to hot.)

Meeting This Need:

- Never stop dating your wife. Take her out, get her away from the kids, treat her like a princess. You might consider having a weekly date night, especially if you have kids.

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Meeting This Need:

- Never stop dating your wife. Take her out, get her away from the kids, treat her like a princess. You might consider having weekly date night, especially if you have kids.

- Pamper her. The essence of romance to her is making her feel special. Fix a hot bath for her, with candles and soft music. You do the dishes and put the kids to bed.
- Surprise her. Buy cards, flowers (one rose 6 times a year counts much more than a dozen roses on Valentine's Day.) Little, creative, fun things let her know that you think she's special and keep her romantic fires burning.
- Be constantly affectionate in non-sexual ways. Hug her, touch her arm when you are talking, play with her hair.
- Make her feel special when you are arriving or leaving. When arriving home from work, track her down and kiss her. Give her the honored first place of your first few minutes. Kiss her goodbye and goodnight.
- Honor her in public. Praise her in front of friends. If a beautiful woman walks into the room, whisper into your wife's ear, "I'm so glad I'm here with YOU."
- Get her away from the kids and the routine. Plan a couple of weekends away from the kids each year. You take care of all the arrangements, child care, etc. Remember, romance to her is being treated like a princess.

Female Friends

Amplification: Wives, especially with small children at home, need regularly to be free from the kids to have adult conversations with other women. Women are relational creatures; they need meaningful connections with other women.

Meeting This Need:

- Plan to take care of the kids so she can go on various women's retreats
- Be patient with the amount of time she spends on the phone talking to other women
- Pray for God to provide a real soul sister for her
- Encourage her to be in some kind of fellowship group with other Christian women.

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Protection and Rest

Amplification: Your role as her husband is to protect her from spiritual, emotional, and physical harm.

Meeting This Need:

- Find out what her spiritual needs and battles are and PRAY faithfully for her
- Know your woman—especially her vulnerabilities
- Talk with her enough to know what emotional burdens are wearing her down.
- Ask her how you can help with her load
- Be quick to help her with heavy loads or tough physical jobs
- Make sure you encourage her to get enough rest
- Help her see if she has too much on her plate and help her find a solution to offload things if necessary

A Secure Home and Secure Finances

Amplification: A wife very closely identifies herself with her home. The attention we give to our wife's honey-do-list is to her a reflection of the importance she has in our lives. Also, her security is closely tied to our faithfulness in managing the financial part of our lives

Meeting This Need:

- Make household repairs a very high priority
- Keep her car running smoothly and safely
- If money is tight, take care of the bill-paying yourself, so she is not overwhelmed by it
- Follow Biblical principles of money management (see the various **Stewardship** pages in this notebook, behind the 4th tab)

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Strategy for Meeting My Wife's Needs

*"Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church
and gave himself for her...Eph. 5:25*

Emotional Intimacy

Partnership with You

Spiritual Intimacy

Affirmation/Praise

Wife's strengths:

Romance

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Unique Needs

God's Design for Marriage

A. A fundamental purpose of the male-female union in marriage is to reflect the image of God.

- Man cannot fully bear God's image in isolation
- God exists as the Trinity, the union of 3 persons

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:26-27

B. A second purpose of marriage is to give us a foretaste of the joy we will experience when we are forever united with Christ our bridegroom.

- We, the church, are betrothed to Christ as his bride
- The final return of Christ to receive us to himself is portrayed as the wedding of the lamb
- The richest pleasures of sexual union are a type, a foreshadow of the intense joy that will be ours when we are united to Christ

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church." Eph. 5:31-32

"For the wedding of the lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)" Revelation 19:7-8

C. A third purpose for marriage is revealed in the creation account, where marriage is designed by God to overcome the aloneness of Adam.

- Each part of the creation narrative closes with God's statement: "And it was GOOD," until the creation of man.
- After Adam is created, God says. "It is NOT GOOD that man should be alone.
- In naming the animals Adam realizes that none can be a true partner to him. They cannot overcome his loneliness.
- So, God creates woman to be his partner, soul mate, and lover.

"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" Genesis 2:18

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**D. These 3 purposes come together in a single , clear focus:
God's goal for marriage is INTIMACY!**

- Eve is created with a spirit, heart, and body which correspond to Adam's (She is made from Adam and is bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.)
- Marriage is given as the one safe arena where husband and wife are naked, body, soul, and spirit--laid bare and vulnerable to each other. But within the covenant of marriage, God's design is for Christ-like love to cast out fear. Thus, husband and wife can be naked and not feel ashamed or afraid.
- Adam and Eve's like natures, combined with the experience of nakedness (baring their hearts and bodies to one another) enable them to experience INTIMACY, i.e. oneness of spirit, oneness of heart, oneness of body.
- The goal of marriage is to be able to be naked, body and soul, and be so loved and accepted that you never feel ashamed.

"The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." Gen. 2:25

- It is to be so fully one with each other that you think of your mate as part of yourself.

"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." Eph. 5:28

- **An old-fashioned way to express God's goal for our marriages is the word "intercourse."** Intercourse means, literally, "**connection between persons.**" It is both conversational interaction that connects 2 souls, and sexual interaction, which connects 2 bodies.
- God wants Christian couples to proactively pursue his goal for their marriage—INTIMACY—both the union of soul and union of body.

E. In a God-honoring marriage, husband and wife will proactively pursue CONVERSATION, which leads to oneness of SOUL.

"The first achievement for the condition of understanding is the will to understand. The second condition is expressing oneself...In order to express oneself, there must be a feeling of warm and kind receptivity and of attentive listening." Paul Tournier, To Understand Each Other

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- This requires taking control of our schedule and making time each day to talk with each other.
- This requires active listening, seeking to understand our mate's feelings and ideas.
- It requires overlooking our mate's weaknesses and deficiencies so they are not afraid to be known as they really are.
- It requires making them feel safe, accepted, and valued.
- It is to know the joy of sharing with another the deepest secrets of each other's hearts and feeling understood.
- It is to never feel alone because you are walking through life hand in hand with your soul mate.

"The word, *"intimacy"* comes from a Latin word that means "innermost." What this translates into for those of us in the marriage relationship is a vulnerable sharing of our inner thoughts, feelings, spirit, and true self. Both men and women need to feel secure in this sharing and confident of their spouse's support. This support is achieved through listening, empathy, prayer, or reassurance." Barbara Rosberg, The 5 Love Needs of Men & Women

"Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way...so that nothing will hinder your prayers." I. Peter 3:7

F. In a God honoring marriage, husband and wife will also proactively pursue LOVEMAKING, which leads to oneness of BODY.

"Lovemaking is the most practical, binding, and enriching experience of all married love. There is one person who knows you and wants to know you more, better than anyone but God. And that's why God gave you sex, to interact at the deepest possible human levels. Your sex life as a married couple will make your self esteem go up or down." Ann Ortland, Sex in a Growing Marriage

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- The wine and bread in communion as well as the water in baptism are OUTWARD signs and seals, which point to an INNER spiritual reality. Sexual union in marriage functions in an identical way.
- Just as celebrating the sacraments strengthens our love relationship with Christ, so the celebration of sexual union strengthens our love relationship with our spouse
- Whenever a husband and wife come together in sexual union, they are both renewing and celebrating their marriage vows.
- God urges married couples to enjoy frequent, passionate romance and sex

“In the Song of Solomon, God enters the bridal chamber, where the newlyweds lay entwined in each other’s arms. He raises his hand over them and blesses them. His benediction urges them to feast on the joy of their sexual union. *‘Eat friends: drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers.’*” Dennis and Barbara Rainey, Simply Romantic Nights

“The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.’” Gen. 2:23

G. When a Christian couple STOPS regularly pursuing intimacy of HEART and BODY, they expose each other to the temptation to be unfaithful.

- A woman whose husband is eager to spend time sharing their hearts feels loved. She is very unlikely to stray because their emotional oneness is so fulfilling to her.
- A man whose wife is eager to make love to him feels loved. He is very unlikely to stray because their sexual oneness is so fulfilling to him.

*“For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword... **Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well.** Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. **A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always. May you ever be intoxicated by her love.***

Why be captivated my son by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man’s wife? Prov. 5:3, 15-20

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“The wife’s body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent...so that Satan will not tempt you” 1 Cor. 7:4-5.

H. The Biblical design for intimacy in marriage exalts BOTH oneness of soul and oneness of body. Biblically, the human body is never considered inferior to the soul.

To be naked with another is a sort of picture or symbolic demonstration of perfect honesty, perfect trust, perfect giving and commitment, and if the heart is not naked along with the body, then the whole action becomes a lie and a mockery.

Mike Mason, The Mystery of Marriage

- Joining bodies in sex apart from joining lives in marriage is condemned as wrong. (I. Thess. 4:3)
- Joining lives in marriage without joining bodies in sex is also condemned as wrong. (I. Cor. 7:5)
- Biblically, body and soul belong together.
- Unlike some pagan philosophies, Christianity has always upheld a high view of the physical body and therefore of sexual union.
- God takes as much pleasure in the couple’s sexual union as he does in their spiritual/emotional union.

I. God has perfectly designed husband and wife with different but complimentary sexual natures.

MEN

crave physical intimacy
give love to get sex
body can disconnect from
mind, heart, and soul
stimulated by what they see
recurrent physical needs
cycle
vulnerable to unfaithfulness
in the absence of physical
touch

WOMEN

crave emotional intimacy
give sex to get love
body, mind, heart, and soul
intricately connected
stimulated by what they hear
recurrent emotional needs
cycle
vulnerable to unfaithfulness
in the absence of
emotional connection

Shannon Ethridge, Every Woman’s Battle

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*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, He created him. **Male and female** he created them.”* Genesis 1:27

J. God designed men so that a husband’s strongest yearning is usually for oneness of BODY—sex.

- What makes him feel intimately connected to his wife is SEX

“No matter how many times I hear couples lament their differences in the counseling room, or at conferences, it is the same story. Men spell intimacy S-E-X, and women spell it T-A-L-K” Dr. Gary Rosberg, The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women.

- Her eagerness to make love to him makes him feel loved.
- The yearning for oneness that God put into him is felt by him primarily as a yearning for sexual union.
- For him, sexual union brings back his feelings of closeness to his wife and feelings of love for her.

- A husband needs his wife to (sometimes) initiate sex.
- A husband often struggles with feelings of inadequacy or failure.
- A husband gets discouraged when his wife does not express her passion for him.
- A husband feels as if he’s not important to his wife when she doesn’t take time to make love.
- A husband becomes concerned when life situations (such as depression, grief, and loss) interfere with his interest in sex.
- A husband feels loved when his wife receives him and responds to him sexually.

Dr. Gary Rosberg, The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women

- He needs to make love in order to feel in love. Sexual arousal stirs his feelings for his wife. Her receptivity assures him that he is wanted. Sexual release makes him feel one with his wife. In the aftermath of feeling that closeness to her, he may often open up to her about other things he is feeling.
- God built him with hormones drive him to desire release every 48-72 hours

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, He created him. **Male and female** he created them.”* Genesis 1:27

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A man has 17 sexual glands. Like millions of Energizer Bunnies these glands work day and night, producing semen, which is stored in an inner sack in the testes. When the sack fills up, his testes tell his brain, “Do something quick before I explode.” A man’s need for sex is not all in his mind; his sexual command center demands release from the accumulated buildup. Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus, Intimate Issues

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L. God's design for marital intimacy is perfect!

- Husband and wife feel in love so they make love.
- Making love refills the husband's emotional tank. He feels his love for his woman which helps him think of her, make time to listen to her heart, etc. which makes her feel close to him.
- Her feelings of oneness with her husband awaken her desire to make love, so she eagerly welcomes his advances, etc. This wonderful cycle fills their hearts with love for each other.
- The problem is that in a fallen world, that cycle easily gets going the wrong direction.

(Note: Although these generalizations have proven extremely helpful to most couples, the above husband-wife distinctions won't fit every couple in every detail. For example, young wives with no kids sometimes have stronger sex drives than their husbands. The point is to seek to understand and accept your differences and to work together to insure BOTH sexual and emotional/spiritual intimacy.)

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Real Marriage in a Fallen World

- A. After the honeymoon, busy schedules and long to-do lists replace the delightful hours of sharing during courtship. Intimacy of heart and soul begins to fade.
- It gets harder and harder to find time to talk.
 - Conversation begins to center around the decisions and needs of the family—not the deep feelings of the heart.
 - Disagreements on some subjects place them off limits for discussion, which further contributes to isolation.
 - Career responsibilities increase, demanding greater time and energy.
 - Couples drift more and more into their own worlds.
 - A large majority of female divorcees say that their married years were the loneliest years of their lives. (Steve Arterburn & Fred Stoeker, Every Woman's Desire)
- B. Most husbands don't commit themselves to meeting their wife's need for intimacy of heart and soul.
- 84% of wives report that their husbands don't have a clue how to meet their need for emotional intimacy (oneness) in their marriages. (Ibid)
 - Very few husbands understand their wife's need for emotional intimacy. Most men compartmentalize. They feel close to their wives when they are interested in making love. Otherwise, their wives are rarely in their thoughts.

"A man can be contented with a kind of business partnership in marriage, provided sexual privileges are part of the arrangement. As long as his wife prepares his dinner each evening, is reasonably amiable, and doesn't nag him too much during football season, he can be satisfied... However, this kind of surface relationship drives his wife utterly wild with frustration. She must have something more meaningful. This is why a housewife often thinks about her husband during the day and eagerly awaits his arrival at home. It explains why she is constantly "reaching" for him at home, trying to pull him away from the newspaper or television set." James Dobson, What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women

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- Few husbands have a clue how to listen to their wife. Most men communicate primarily to give a logical explanation or to make decisions. They don't understand that women use words primarily to communicate feelings.
- Consequently, when husbands do make time to listen, their goal is usually to solve their wife's problems rather than to understand how she feels.
- Husbands usually find the world of work enticing. It is the key to their success. They are usually good at their jobs. And their work world makes sense to them.
- In contrast, most men consider themselves poor husbands. They can't figure out their wives and find them far less predictable than the logical world in which they work.
- It soon becomes very easy for husbands to start putting in too many hours at work. They don't feel the same need for companionship that their wife does, so less time at home doesn't show up as a problem on their radar screen.
- Unintentionally, it's very easy for husbands to rob their wives of the companionship and closeness their wives need in order to feel in love with their husband.

What husbands don't realize is that just as their wife's eagerness to make love to him makes him feel loved, HIS EAGERNESS TO LISTEN TO HOW HER DAY WENT makes her feel loved. And just as her lack of interest in sex makes him feel rejected, HIS LACK OF INTEREST IN HEARING WHAT IS GOING ON IN HER HEART makes her feel rejected.

- When a wife has only a superficial relationship with her husband, her feelings for him start to die, even though he may be completely oblivious to the slow decay of their relationship.
- That is why one day, when she tells him she is leaving, he may be in total shock, never having realized there was a problem.
- Nearly 100% of couples that divorce have first drifted apart emotionally.

C. Shortly after the honeymoon, romance and passion begin to cool.

- Especially for wives, busy schedules and tired bodies leave little room for passion.
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“Unfortunately, most couples can sustain passion and intimacy for only a short time. Once the honeymoon phase is over, the lovemaking becomes less exciting, less frequent—the kind of lovemaking that is often described as “married sex.” Many people resign themselves to mediocre sex lives or look for the missing thrills in romance novels, sexual fantasies, or pornography. Others try to find passion in the arms of new lovers.” (Love and Robinson, Hot Monogamy)

- Often, lovemaking slips to low priority. A wife’s sexual desires get burried under the weight of the responsibility she feels for the kids, her home, her career, church, etc.
- When she does carve out time and energy for sex, it often takes on the flavor of one more responsibility—an obligation to satisfy her husband. Sex becomes less and less satisfying for both partners.
- Christian husbands often try to stifle their sexual appetites for a while, but often end up turning to masturbation and pornography for sexual release.
- As lovemaking becomes infrequent and passionless, the husband’s feelings start to die. Interest in sex may decrease even more. Disaster is fast approaching.

“In one survey on the importance of sex for marriage, the results were compelling: Couples who rated their sex lives positively also rated their marriages positively, and those who rated their sex lives negatively, rated their marriages negatively as well. In other words, if couples report that sex is unimportant to them, it is very likely that they view their entire marriage as unhappy. Both the quantity and quality of sex in marriage are central to a good overall relationship.” Drs. Less and Leslie Parrott, The Love List

D. Just as most husbands don’t understand that their wife needs emotional intimacy to feel in love with them, most wives don’t understand that their husband needs sexual intimacy to feel in love with them.

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- Most men will also tell you that ***nothing makes a man feel more loved and confident than for his wife to be an eager partner in love making.***
- To summarize, it seems that God has put enough testosterone into the male body to offset men's natural independence. He is biologically driven to his wife for sex every few days. Her inviting response and surrender to his sexual advances build his self-esteem and makes him feel wanted. Sexual union brings back his feelings of love helping him to stay more focused on meeting his wife's need for spiritual and emotional intimacy.
- However, most wives have no idea that sex is their husband's path back to their feelings for their wife. For them, ***feeling in love*** causes them to ***want to make love.*** They don't realize that for men it is the opposite. ***Making love*** causes them to ***feel in love***
- Without understanding the way God has designed male sexuality, it is easy for wives to develop a negative attitude towards their husband's sex drive. "All he ever wants is sex."
- Christian men, in particular, don't want to be selfish. So, their wife's negative attitude makes them reluctant to ask for sex. As their sexual appetite builds up, they feel they are prisoners of their wife's negative attitude towards sex and may struggle with inner resentment and sexual impurity.

66% of the married men polled by Dr. Archibald Hart in his study for The Sexual Man were unhappy with the frequency of sex they were experiencing in their marriages. And When, in the same survey, men were asked, "Do you feel that women understand a man's sex drive," 83% answered, "no."

- This negative attitude is the opposite of the eager partner in lovemaking who will build his confidence and make him feel loved. He feels **rejected**.

"When a man's sexual needs are not met in marriage, he responds in one or more of 3 ways. He feels rejected. He shuts down (emotionally.) He looks outside of marriage to have his needs met." Dr. Gary Rosberg, The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women

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- Infrequent lovemaking causes his feelings of love for her to cool and causes him to withdraw.

“Some men, when their need for sexual intimacy with their wives is not met, will just shut down emotionally. They begin to withdraw from their wives and isolate themselves. Here are some of the signs.

- He won’t go to bed when you do for fear of another round of rejection
- He will quit trying to romance you with flowers or dates because you’ve sent out the message that when he does that he only wants one thing.
- He’ll work longer hours so he won’t have to think about the emotional distance between you.
- He’ll absorb himself in recreation, activities with the kids, or TV—anything to numb the pain of expectations never fulfilled.

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E. In the real world, conflict with each other also erodes emotional and sexual intimacy.

- Angry words and put downs force spouses to withdraw, put up barriers, and defend themselves.
- Tension in the relationship hinders intimacy and creates a distance because some subjects are too explosive to be discussed.
- Without a Biblical approach to resolving conflict, husbands and wives slowly but surely begin to build walls in the marriage relationship.
- See next section for insights on conflict resolution.

F. Besides failing to meet each other’s intimacy needs, most couples wound each other over sexual misunderstandings in their marriage.

- Sex is about being wanted, being desired. For this reason, wounds in the sexual relationship have potential to deeply wound each other’s dignity and self-esteem.
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- Many couples never talk about sex, so their partners don't know what they like and dislike.
- Few husbands realize how easy it is for their wives to feel used by their husbands in sex.
- Sexual union belongs with emotional and spiritual intimacy. Few husbands realize that if their wife isn't interested in sex, it may be because she doesn't feel there is emotional/sexual intimacy.
- Few wives realize that nothing builds their husband's self esteem as much as her eager responsiveness to his sexual advances.
- Conversely, few wives understand the severe blow to his self-esteem that occurs when those advances are met with coolness.
- The spouse with the stronger sex drive tends to pout when he initiates sex and is turned down instead of dealing with his hurt in a mature way.
- The partner with the weaker sex drive tends to feel trapped. Feeling like she can't say, "no," further erodes her sex drive.

"Inability to work out a compatible sexual relationship is, in my experience, the most common cause of marital conflict and breakup." Dr. Archibald Hart, The Sexual Man.

G. My wife and I have written a booklet entitled *Three Great Dates to Rediscover Intimacy in Your Marriage*, to help couples overcome the obstacles to oneness and experience the spiritual, emotional, and sexual intimacy for which God brought them together. Based on the above insights and many more, here is what we say to couples about the booklet:

- *Take a fresh look on each date, at what Scripture says about God's design for marriage.*
- *Enjoy discussing the questions we have provided to help you apply these principles in your unique relationship.*
- *Renew your closeness as best friends, committed to walking hand in hand as true soul mates.*
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Conflict Resolution in Marriage

(Conflict: A disagreement you both feel strongly about)

- A. Recognize that conflict is inevitable: If you agree on everything, one of you is not necessary.
- B. Try hard to understand your mate's viewpoint instead of defending your own.
- C. Be charitable. Don't assume a selfish motive. "*Love always trusts.*" (I Cor. 13:7) Give your mate the benefit of the doubt.
- D. Avoid character attacks: "*You always...You never...You're just like your mother...*"
- E. Focus on expressing how you feel. "*When you do that, it makes me feel like...*"
- F. Recognize that because you are different, there are some things you may never agree upon. That's okay.
- G. If you can't agree on a decision to be made, pray about it, asking God to tell you what He is saying through your mate.
- H. If you can't reach agreement, put off the decision as long as is reasonable.
- I. If there is no agreement and the decision has to be made, the husband has the final responsibility to make the decision and accept the consequences.
- J. When disagreement provokes anger, follow these steps:
 - 1. When you feel anger rising inside, take a 30-minute time out to let the anger cool.
 - 2. Use that 30 minutes to trace your anger back to the source of pain that is causing it.
 - 3. Once you've identified the source, talk to God about what He wants you to do with your pain. (It may be to express your feelings to your mate constructively, or to learn a lesson about character, etc.)
 - 4. Get back together and take turns talking one at a time for 5 uninterrupted minutes.
 - 5. The other person listens carefully to get his mate's points (not reload their gun.) Pay special attention to the feelings, more than the facts.
 - 6. Try to put yourself in your mate's shoes. Even if you

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 - 1. When you feel anger rising inside, take a 30-minute time out to let the anger cool.
 - 2. Use that 30 minutes to trace your anger back to the source of pain that is causing it.
 - 8. Once you've identified the source, talk to God about what He wants you to do with your pain. (It may be to express your feelings to your mate constructively, or to learn a lesson about character, etc.)
 - 9. Get back together and take turns talking one at a time for 5 uninterrupted minutes.
 - 10. The other person listens carefully to get his mate's points (not reload their gun.) Pay special attention to the feelings, more than the facts.
 - 6. Try to put yourself in your mate's shoes. Even if you

don't agree, listen well enough to be able to articulate HIS point of view.

7. Express back to him what you understand his point of view to be. (I think you are saying that...)
8. Switch roles and follow the same process.
9. When you understand your mate's viewpoint, you may see that you have hurt or wronged him. If this is the case, ask his forgiveness.
10. Decide together how to solve the problem.
11. Ask God to show you if you have fully forgiven his offense.

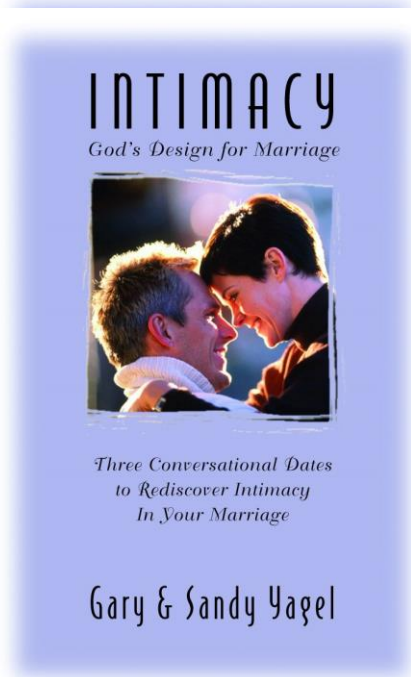
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Overcoming the Intimacy Misconnect in Marriage

Intimacy, God's Design for Marriage

83% of Christian wives say their husband doesn't understand their need for EMOTIONAL intimacy. 83% of Christian husbands say their wives don't understand their need for SEXUAL intimacy. God has designed marriage for BOTH!



Sample Questions

Husband to Wife

- *In what household tasks do you feel most alone?*
- *How can I help you better share your heart with me?*
- *What family problems do you feel need to be addressed?*
- *What are the worries and concerns that are weighing heavily on your heart?*
- *What are 2 things I do that make you feel romantic?*
- *What can I do to help you be in the mood for love making?*
- *Are there things I do that hinder your desire to make love?*

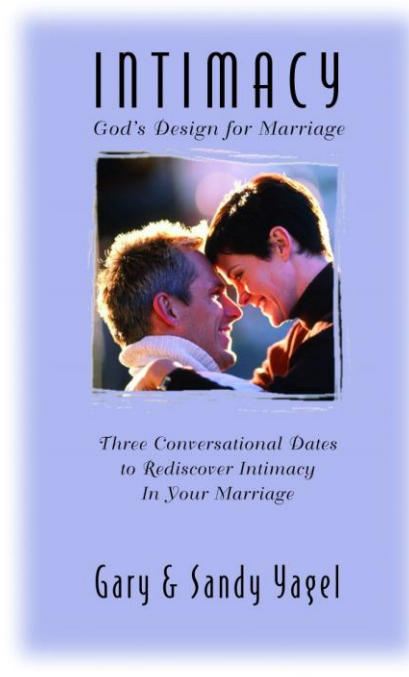
Wife to Husband

- *What do I do that fills your emotional tank?*
- *What gets you down the most at work? When there is something weighing heavily on you, how can I help you share it?*
- *How often do you need sexual intercourse?*
- *What sexual activities do you find most exciting?*
- *If I am not ready for sex at the same time you are, how can I tell you that in a way that doesn't make you feel rejected?*

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BE A FULLY DEVOTED DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

1. Define God's goal of Discipleship

(see *Mission* in FOCUS Notebook)

- A. To serve God—issue of action
- B. To glorify God--issue of character
- C. To enjoy God—issue of affections

2. Form your plan to reach these goals

- A. Nehemiah begins with prayer (Neh.1:4ff)
- B. Nehemiah forms a plan (Neh. 2:11-16)

3. Stay FOCUSED on your plan

- A. Nehemiah perseveres (Neh. 4:1-9)
- B. Jesus stays focused (Mk. 1:35-39)

4. Lead by MODELING this commitment

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- B. Paul (II Tim. 3:10-14)

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BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS

A. Eliminate the following relationship busters

1. A proud refusal to seek forgiveness when you have wronged another (Matt. 5:23-26)
2. A proud refusal to admit it when you are Wrong (Prov. 29:23)
3. A critical spirit (Eph. 4:29)

B. Provide the following

1. **Understanding** (John 1:14)
2. **Affirmation** (Matt. 3:17)
3. **Companionship** (Mark 3:14)
4. **Compassion** (Mark 1:40-42)
5. **Affection** (Luke 18:15-16)
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HELP THEM TO BECOME CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

- 1. Teach them the Word** (Deut. 6:5-9)
- 2. Help them to have Christian friends**
(Acts 2:42)
- 3. Help them discover and get excited
about their unique design and gifts**
(Eph. 2:10)
- 4. Encourage and motivate them** (I Thes.
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Biblical Principles for Training Children

General Principles

1. ***Loving parents firmly discipline their children***
Heb. 12:6, Prov. 19:18, Prov. 13:24
2. ***Discipline requires inflicting pain to benefit your child***
Heb. 12:11, Prov. 22:15, Prov. 29:15
3. ***Correction with no encouragement is destructive***
Eph. 6:4, Prov. 1:1-5
4. ***As children grow older, it is vital to explain the principles behind the rules so they can learn to self-regulate***
Eph. 6:1-3
5. ***Be real with your kids; let them know about your struggles and joys as you walk with Christ***
Phil. 3:17

8 Steps to Discipline Your Child

1. ***Be sure your instruction was clear***
2. ***Consistently enforce the rules***
3. ***Correct behavior; don't attack a child's self image***
4. ***Engage the child's conscience by asking, "What did you do?"***
5. ***Administer punishment that fits the crime.*** (Ideally the consequences of wrong behavior are already determined)
6. ***Then take your child in your arms to comfort him.***
7. ***Thank God for his holy standards and for Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sin so we are all forgiven.***
8. ***Help your child make restitution if necessary***

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Child: _____

Favorites:

Spiritual Gifts:

Strengths:

Heart Passions:

Love Languages:

Goals: Relationship with God

Goals: Character

Goals: Skills

My Focus in helping him/her

Child: _____

Favorites:

Spiritual Gifts:

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My Focus in helping him/her

Character Development Training Plan

1. Teach **attentiveness**
 - Pre-requisite to obedience.
 - When speaking to your child, always require him to look you in the eyes.
 - Teach attentiveness to you.
 - Teach attentiveness to his conscience.
2. Teach **obedience** by **setting limits**. Toddlers need to know that painful punishment will follow if they go beyond the limit.
 - Limits begin in infancy with learning not to touch.
 - “No” means **NO**. Disobedience is punished by a light slap on the hand
 - Limits begin to kick in formally during the toddler years, as children learn they are not the boss. Limits continue throughout childhood and even into the teen years (though the teen should need fewer limits because he is learning to regulate his own behavior.)
 - Limits teach children they are not entitled to whatever they want.
 - Limits give children the structure they need to feel secure.
 - Whatever level of obedience you demand, they will eventually live up to. If you say, “**come**” and they know that they will be punished if they don’t instantly come, they will learn immediate obedience. If they know that your “**come**” does not mean that they must come immediately, they will dilly dally. Kids who don’t come immediately don’t come because they haven’t been required to.
3. Teach **contentment**.
 - Contentment is “**realizing that God has already provide everything I need for my present happiness.**”
 - Teach kids who are bored that they are responsible for their own happiness.

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4. Teach them the principle of sowing and reaping—***that behavior has consequences.***
 - Praise their positive attitudes and behavior
 - Help them see the benefits of their positive attitudes and behavior
 - Help them see the relationship between bad attitudes or behavior and negative consequences
 - Be firm in your discipline; otherwise you undermine the learning of this Biblical principle
5. Teach ***responsibility***
 - A good definition of responsibility is, “***recognizing and doing what both God and others are expecting of me.***”
 - He should be given small tasks that he is responsible for, even as a pre-schooler.
 - Your child must take responsibility for his attitudes including anger. “He made me so mad” is excusing anger instead of taking responsibility for it.
 - Your child must take responsibility for his own behavior. If he accidentally hurts someone, he is still responsible even if he did not intend to harm that the person.
6. Teach them ***truthfulness***
 - Teach them that God is the God of truth and that Jesus IS the TRUTH—that is how important it is for Christians to be truthful.
 - Teach them the high cost of lying.
 - Plan your punishments and consequences so that the most severe punishment is for lying, and they get a lighter punishment if they tell the truth.
 - Never shame your child over his sins or mistakes.
7. Teach the principle of ***ownership*** and ***boundaries***
 - A child should have things that belong to him
 - He should not be forced to share them with his friends. A better approach is to say, “*John, Billy is coming over today. Are there some toys you would rather not play with while Billy is here? We will put them up in the*

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closet. Now, what toys would you like to share with Billy?"

- Ownership implies taking care of possessions
- Ownership of his body means that no one else is to touch his private parts.
- Teach kids how to actually say no. "No! You may not touch me there!" "No. My Mommy and Daddy said it is wrong to pull your pants down in front of other people."

8. Teach him to recognize the difference between the things he **can control** and **can't control**.
 - He can't control the fact that the swimming trip got rained out, but he can control whether he stays in a bad mood all day because of it.
 - Children must learn to adapt to reality which is the definition of mental health instead of expecting reality to conform to them, which is the definition of mental illness.
 - Teach older children that they must respect the boundaries of younger (weaker) children.
 - Be sensitive to your child's attempt to manipulate you. Maintain strong boundaries yourself. Don't allow yourself to be manipulated into reducing the consequences for your child's negative behavior.
 - Reinforce the fact that he can control how hard he works on the science project, pleasing God and you by that hard work, even though he can't control whether or not he will win first place.
 - Teach him how to respectfully appeal to one in authority when he disagrees with a decision that has been made.
 - Teach him to **go for it** where he has control and to **let it go** when he doesn't have control over a situation.
9. Teach him **respect for others**—to change his mindset to, **"I'm not the only one who matters."**
 - As a family member, he needs to respect the rights of other family members, so he can't leave his shoes in the family room
 - He also needs to learn to respect the property of others

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- Help him begin to put himself in the shoes of others. Ask, how he thinks others feel when he treats them badly
- Good table manners and manners in general are a reflection of our respect and consideration for others.
- Teach him that he is not to talk to his mother or father in a disrespectful manner.
- Orderliness is the result of respecting the rights of others who live in the same house

10. Teach him **gratefulness**—making known to God and others in what ways they have benefited my life.
- Help him see that as sinners we deserve punishment—not the enormous blessing we have received.
 - Model gratefulness—talk often about the many undeserved blessings for which you are grateful
 - Teach him to begin his prayer time with thankfulness. Prompt him to remember some things to be thankful for.
 - You want to undermine an “entitlement mentality”—an attitude of discontent that expects to be given to instead of expecting to give.
 - Remind your child that God says, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

11. Teach him **how to cope with pain**
- Remember that pain is required for your child’s growth—Resist the temptation to rescue him from it.
 - Good pain is the pain of consequences that have resulted from bad choices. **Always be compassionate.** Say to your child—“It really hurts you doesn’t it?” Validate the pain. **But don’t continually rescue your child from the pain** or he won’t learn from it.
 - Part of the pain he endures will teach him that the world isn’t always fair and require him to learn to forgive.
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- Responding to pain in a godly way is a major part of maturing.
- Be alert to pain that can harm. This is the pain of abandonment, lack of love, repeated blows to his or her self esteem. Here your child needs protection
- If kids are to become healthy, parents have to learn the difference between healthy pain and destructive pain. If they remove healthy pain (rescuing) their child will remain emotionally immature. But if they don't remove destructive pain, their child will be injured.

12. Help him move towards maturity ***in his motivations***

- Initially, obedience may result from a fear of the consequences. At this stage, the child needs to see clearly that the consequences are the result of his bad choices not the result of an enraged parent
- As you set limits for your child, you are training their conscience. This immature conscience will mature as your child learns from your example, from reality, and from Scripture. Over time, your child internalizes these factors and a more mature conscience is formed.
- As a child is internalizing the Biblical limits you have set, he must move from the "because Mommy said so" to a Biblical understanding of the principles upon which Christian ethics are based. During this stage, parents need to major on explaining the reasons why.
- Some degree of freedom also needs to be given to teens in order for this maturing process to be complete.
- As your child continues to grow, he will move beyond the ethical question of right and wrong to the motivation of love—loving God and loving others.

13. Help him cultivate the quality of ***initiative***

- Taking the initiative means recognizing and doing what needs to be done before one is asked to do it.
- Generally speaking at the root of every lazy kid is an enabling parent—a parent who never lets his child suffer the consequences of his laziness

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- Help him discover his spiritual gifts and other aptitudes along with the conviction from Eph 2:10 that he was perfectly designed for good works that God planned for him before he was born
- A major cause of passivity in kids is an entitlement attitude—they have succeeded at demanding and getting special treatment
- Help your child take initiative to shoulder his own load. This will strengthen his character and mature him.
- If laziness continues to be a serious problem, you will have to make passivity more painful than activity

14. Help him ***cultivate healthy horizontal relationships***

- One of the most important principles in relationships is direct communication and full disclosure of what is going on in the relationship
- Indirect communication is destructive
- Life is better when relationships are lived out in the light. Most of the time, things are better when they are in the open, even if these things are negative and hurtful.
- Be sure you model forthrightness in your relationships, especially your relationship with your spouse and child.
- Help your child overcome the fears that make him avoid confrontation
- Help him learn to speak the truth in love.

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*Current Action Plan to Apply
These Principles at Work*

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Domain: Work

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture:

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve." Col. 3:23-24

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Prov. 16:3

"One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys." Prov. 18:9

"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way." Prov. 19:2

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Prov. 19:21

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." Prov. 21:5

"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." Prov. 22:1

"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings." Prov. 22:29

"Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations." Prov. 27:23-24

Domain: Work

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture:

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Additional Scripture to look up:

Exodus 18:18

Psalms 90:12

Proverbs 10:4

15:1

15:22

18:9

20:10

24:16

25:19

27:18

28:26

29:11

Ecc. 9:10

Matthew 6:24

6:34

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Luke 14:28

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7 Keyes to Professional Excellence

- A. View your *job* as God's *unique calling* for you.
Genesis 1:27-28
Eph. 2:10
Col. 3:23
- B. Reject *mediocrity*!
I Corinth. 10:31
- C. Pay attention to the *details*.
Prov. 27:23
Prov. 22:29
- D. Always *give* others *more* than they are *expecting*.
Luke 6:38
- E. Realize the Professional Excellence rests on the foundation of *consistent character*, which is called *integrity*.
II. Pet. 1:3-8
- F. Get *connected* to a *band of brothers* who will help you sustain excellence.
Eccles. 4:9-12
- G. See your job as *worship*.
Rom. 12:1-2

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Misc. Domain:

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

My Plan to Apply these Principles

Misc. Domain:

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

My Plan to Apply these Principles

Stewardship of my TIME

Scripture Verses and Insights:

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.” Eph. 5:15-16

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is a Sabbath of the LORD your God.” Ex. 20:8-9

Show me a man’s calendar, and I’ll show you his priorities

Current plan to be faithful to my priorities:

Daily schedule:

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Current plan to be faithful to my priorities:

Weekly schedule:

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Weekly schedule:

Stewardship of my BODY

Scripture Verses and Insights:

“For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” I Cor. 6:20. Although, in context, to glorify God in your body meant to avoid sexual sin, the principle seems broader than just sexuality. We should glorify God by the condition of the temple in which the Holy Spirit lives.

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God has built the principle of needing a Sabbath rest into the very fabric of the universe

Current plan to be a faithful steward of my health:

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Current plan to be a faithful steward of my health:

Stewardship of my MONEY

Scripture Verses and Insights:

“Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.” Prov. 3:9-10

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.” II Cor. 9:6-7

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Current plan to be a faithful steward with my money:

Stewardship of my POSSESSIONS

Scripture Verses and Insights:

“So, if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” Like 16:11

“If someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”
Matt. 5:40-42

Plan to be a faithful steward of my possessions:

What possessions need to be properly maintained?

Plan to insure proper maintenance:

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Stewardship of my ABILITIES

Scripture Verses and Insights:

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
Eph. 2:10

“We have different gifts....If his gift is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of the saints, let him give generously.” Rom 12:

Evaluate what **SHAPE** God has given you:

Spiritual gifts:

Heart passions:

Abilities:

Personality:

Experiences:

Plan to further discover and use gifts:

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Ministry

Within the Church

- Commitment to Relationships
- Commitment to Ministry

Outside the Church

- Outreach Insights
- Lost Friends
- Extended Family
- Neighborhood

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Domain: Church Relationships

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

My Plan to Apply These Principles

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Domain: Church Ministry

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

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Outreach Insights

(From Bill Hybels, Becoming A Contagious Christian)

Formula for Effective Evangelism

High potency + Close proximity + Clear communication =
MAXIMUM IMPACT

Various Approaches to Outreach

Confrontational approach: Peter

Intellectual approach: Paul

Testimonial approach: Blind man

Interpersonal approach: Matthew

Invitational approach: Samaritan Woman

Service approach: Dorcas

Which Approach Fits You the Best?

Current Plan to Reach the Lost Whom God Has Brought Into My Circle of Relationships

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Domain: Extended Family

God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

My Plan to Apply These Principles

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God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

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Domain: Neighborhood

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God's Agenda as Revealed in Scripture

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Domain: Lost Friends

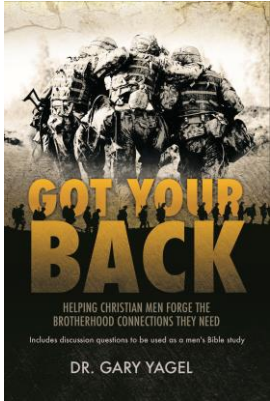
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Domain: Lost Friends

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How to Form a Check 6 Group

1. Begin by reading Got Your Back, the booklet that goes with Check 6 wallet card
2. Take an honest inventory of your life.
3. Be brutally honest about why you have no brotherhood relationships.
4. Decide that you are willing to pay the price for God's best.
5. Prayerfully choose the type of connection that fits you best.
 - Weekly lunch
 - Bi-weekly lunch
 - Part of a couples' Bible study
 - Part of an existing men's Bible study
 - Other time
6. Decide what man or men you want to connect with and give them a copy of Forging Bonds of Brotherhood to read.
7. Get together informally to discuss the possibility of starting a Check 6 partnership or group. Discuss who else you might invite and when to schedule your first meeting.
8. Meet together and complete Check 6 Bible Study #1, "Our Need for Encouragement." Continue meeting.
9. Be sure to find opportunities to reinforce the relationships in the group at other times
10. Persevere. Persevere. Persevere.



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No Man Can Accomplish His Mission Alone

Vietnam Veteran, William Broyles, in his book entitled, Brothers in Arms writes: *A part of me loved war. Now please understand I am a peaceful man, fond of children and animals. And I believe that war should have no place in the affairs of men. But THE COMRADSHIP our platoon experienced in that war provides an enduring and moving memory in me.*

A comrade in war is someone you can trust with anything, because you regularly trust him with your life. In war, individual possessions and advantage count for nothing. The group, the platoon, the unit is everything...A part of me loved war.

You get the unmistakable impression that Broyles has never experienced that kind of tight friendship since then. Yet he longs for it.

A very large poll was taken among Christian men. They were asked, "Do you have a best friend?" 93% answered, "no." When they were asked if they had ever had a best friend, 94% said, "yes." At one time, they had known the kind of tight friendship, which Broyles experienced in his platoon. But close to 19 out of 20 Christian men in our country today are so disconnected that they have no best friend.

Despite the wonderful growth of small groups in the 21st century church, 95% of men are so poorly connected to the body of Christ that they can't name anyone as a best friend. It's time for the church to face the reality that our small groups are not getting the job done.

My experience with various churches has been that more than 90% of small groups are mixed, with less than 10% being men's Bible studies. Most Christian husbands and wives prefer to be in a Bible study with each other. They are away from each other enough, without going to separate Bible

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The reality is that men need other men with whom they can be vulnerable and who can hold them accountable. The church must wake up to the tragic aloneness of today's Christian men—even those who go regularly to couple's Bible studies. We were not created to handle life's challenges alone. We need male friendship. We need iron to sharpen iron. That's why the new "Check 6 Partnership" concept is so needed in today's church.

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Forging Bonds of Brotherhood

Overcoming the Crisis of Male Isolation In Today's Church

When over 120,000 Christian men were asked, "Do you have a best friend, an astonishing 95% answered, "no." 19 out of 20 Christian men in our country are so disconnected that they have no best friend. Yet many Christian men want to know how to form a band of brothers for encouragement, support, and accountability.

This short book is enjoyable and easy reading. It is a tool to explain why Christian men need other close brothers and why they so rarely have them. It tells how to start a Check 6 partnership or group and even includes group Bible studies to use to launch the group.

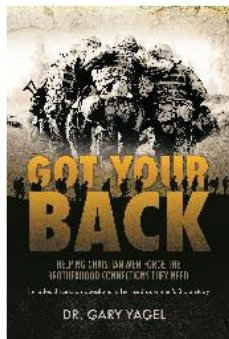


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CHECK 6 QUESTIONS

Check #1: What encouragements or successes have you had this past week?

Check #2: What biblical insight or verse from your quiet time has stood out to you recently?

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Check #4: Personal accountability: Choose what you want your brother(s) to ask you about.

The popular Check 6 wallet card provides the agenda for a one- hour breakfast, lunch or phone call. Each week everyman shares something encouraging, something from Scripture, a character quality to focus on, personal and family accountability, and his prayer requests. Find out more at www.gotyourback.info.



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