



# **MEN IN PROCESS**

Delighting in the  
Privilege  
of Masculinity

*prepared by  
Peter Howard-Browne*

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**“His life was so gentle, and the elements  
So mixed up in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, ‘This was a Man!’ – William Shakespeare**

**“I looked for a Man.” - God  
(Ezekiel 22:30)**

**“When a man abandons himself wholeheartedly to the processes of  
God in his life, all those who love him rejoice, and the world is made a  
better place, because he was whole and because he walked this  
way.” – PH-B**

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# Recommended Reading

## **Point Man**

**Steve Farar**  
Multnomah Books

## **Finishing Strong**

**Steve Farar**  
Multnomah Books

## **There's no place like home**

**Gordon McDonald**  
Tyndale

## **The Effective Father**

**Gordon McDonald**  
Highland Books

## **Maximised Manhood**

**Edwin Cole**  
Spire Books

## **Wake up Men!**

**Fred Littauer**  
Word Books

## **Men and Masculinity**

**Roy McCloughry**  
Hodder & Stoughton

## **Healing the Masculine Soul**

**Gordon Dalbey**  
Word Books

## **Wild at Heart**

**John Eldredge**  
Thomas Nelson Publishers

## **The Male Temperament**

**Tim LaHaye**  
Revell

## **What Men Want**

**H. Norman Wright**  
Regal Books

## **She calls me Daddy**

**Robert Wolgemuth**  
Focus on Family Pub.

## **Manhood**

**Steve Biddulph**  
Hawthorn Press

## **When Men think Private Thoughts**

**G McDonald**  
Nelson

## **Boys to Men**

**S. Lee / C Clark**  
Moody

## **Strong Men in Tough Times**

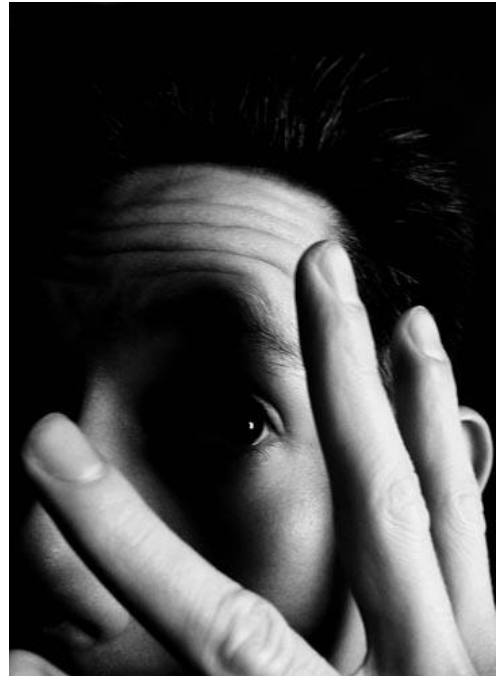
**Ed Cole**  
Word Books

## **The Intimate Husband**

**Richard Furman**  
Harvest House

# THE PRIVILEGE OF MASCULINITY

I wonder if we realise what a *privilege* it is to be male? What an incredible thing it is to be a man, a husband, a father, and a son!! In the midst of a society that is desperately trying to *throw out the family, trivialise marriage and play down gender differences*, Christian men need to **re-discover** and **celebrate their masculinity**.



**There is a desperate need in this day for us to come to terms with who we are as men, what our role is in the family, in society and in the Kingdom of God.**

- Are men *revelling in the privilege of being men?*
- The passion for and the initiative in the Kingdom at large, is markedly Feminine.
- In many instances men resent having to be breadwinners and feel trapped and unappreciated.

*“Men are a problem to women but rarely is this intentional. They are to an even greater degree a problem to themselves. The gender debate raged for twenty years, often fruitlessly, before we woke up to the fact that men are not winners. There are very few happy men. Women had to overcome **oppression**, but men’s difficulties are with **isolation**.*

*The enemies from which men must escape, are: loneliness, compulsive competition and lifelong emotional timidity.”*

**Steve Biddulph: Manhood PG 5.**

**Biddulph** (who is not a believer), **says the 7 Steps to Manhood are:**

1. “Fixing it up with your father”,
2. “Finding sacredness in your sexuality”,

3. "Meeting your wife on equal terms",
4. "Engaging actively with your kids",
5. "Learning to have real male friends",
6. "Finding your heart in your work",
7. "Freeing your wild spirit."

### What does it mean to be a man?

Being **MALE** is an issue of CHROMOSOMES (biology).

Being **MASCULINE** is an issue of CHARACTER (choice).

### Application:

▶ **How was "being a man", described in your context growing up?**

1. Cowboys don't cry, 2. Be emotionally aloof, 3. Sexual and / or boozing prowess, 4. Capacity for violence, 5. Christ-likeness, 6. Never discussed, 7. Other:

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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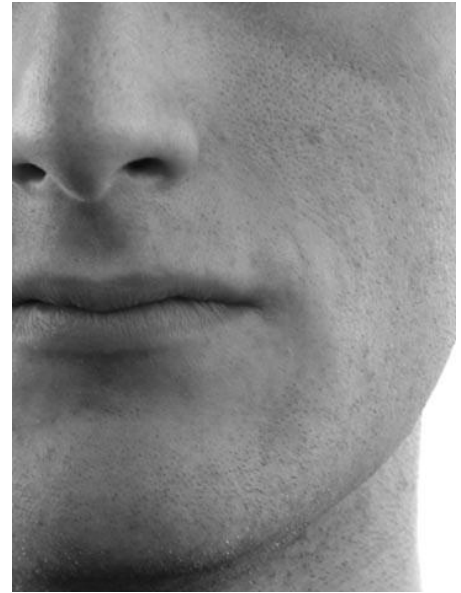
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Note:

- **Putting Points on the Board:** what do I need to do in response
- **The High Up and Under:** taking responsibility for where I am now relative to the issue discussed
- **The God Thought For Me:** one thing I feel God is talking to me about in this section

# FIVE GREAT PRIVILEGES



## THE PRIVILEGE OF LEADERSHIP

God in His sovereign plan made men head of their families.

- You get to lead from the front.
- You get to set the tone in your family and in the Kingdom.
- You get to leave a legacy and you get to make a difference.
- Your privilege of leadership goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

*And the male abdication of leadership goes all the way back to Eden as well.*

**You get to lead your family. Q: Are you leading? Are you exercising your privilege under God?**

*"The greatest disappointment in my lifetime of ministry," a friend and fellow pastor in his late fifties once declared to me, "has been that I just never seemed able to draw men into the church." He paused and sighed, confused and frustrated. "Sure I've gotten males, - but frankly, they've been mostly quiet and withdrawn guys with strong dominant wives. I just wish I could get some real men into my church." **Gordon Dalbey - "Healing the Masculine Soul" p174.***

### Million \$ questions:

- Who sets the spiritual tone in your house?
- Who rallies the family to the gathering of the believers?
- Who says, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord?" – Your wife???
- Who is usually out of step with what the elders are trying to do? You or your wife?

- Who has to be dragged like a reluctant horse to apostolic participation in the life of the Kingdom – you or your wife?

**Evelyn Christianson:** “*What happens when people pray?*” Publishers changed the title – “*What happens when **women** pray?*” Because their research indicated that women (!) pray – sold over 2 mil copies.

One of the problems in the modern church has been the **feminisation of the church**. Brought up on a steady relentless diet of Camel Man propaganda, men have associated the Gospel’s call to meekness as a call to “weakness”. Men have interpreted the call to submission as a symbol of feminine bridle.

You get to lead and that is a huge privilege. Let me ask you again, **are you leading?**

<b>The High Up And Under:</b> 1   2   3   4   5
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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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## THE PRIVILEGE OF INITIATING

God has given us the privilege of being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Like icebreaking ships we forge ahead and cut a path for those following behind us.

**“There is therefore no more *unmasculine behaviour* than passivity and a refusal to walk boldly into the future.”**

Even the Hebrew word for man insists we *embrace this call to initiation*. **Man** in Heb: “*the Piercer* and word for **Woman**: “*the Pierced one*”.

**He is the one who breaks through, the womb opener, and the catalyst to fertility, the seed bearer, the visionary, and the warrior-pioneer.**

He is the one *privileged* to initiate lovemaking, giving expression to the insistent expectation of his physiology.

Our children – especially our sons – long for us to lead the way into the future, cutting a path in the undergrowth of confusion and chaos.

They watch us and long for the day when we stand and *deliberately declare* our undying allegiance.

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## **THE PRIVILEGE OF AGGRESSION**

Aggression in itself is not a problem - the issue is channelling. Where does our aggression flow? Jesus was 100% man - nothing weak or flimsy about Him!! Aggression is a good term to describe Jesus' sense of mission on the earth. Again, it is the type of aggression and the place to which it was directed that is the issue.

“Men have not channelled and harnessed the aggression positively. The stats speak for themselves. *Men, on average, live for six years less than women do. Men routinely fail at close relationships. (40 % of marriages break down, in 70 % of cases women initiate proceedings). Men will carry out over 90 % of convicted acts of violence, 67% of the victims will be men. 90% of children with behavioural problems are boys and 80% of children with learning problems are also boys.*

Men comprise of over 90 % of inmates in prison. Men are also 74% of the unemployed. The leading cause of death amongst men between twelve and sixty is self-inflicted death. (Males commit suicide four times more frequently than women.) In 1996, 6 000 Britons committed suicide, over 75 % were males." Steve Biddulph: **Manhood** PG 6-7.

**Incorrect channelling of aggression into:** sports, workaholism, adolescent sexual paradigms, marriages, wife abuse (physical and emotional – through neglect and indifference), passing on of AIDS to their sons (Acquired Inadequacy Disorder Syndrome), intimidation and control, and given the above stats, themselves.

In the world men pay big bucks to go find their "Wild Man", scream like prehistoric cavemen for the weekend.

But aggression is the quiet determination that *"as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. I will come under the easy yoke of the One whose burden is light. I will submit myself under His mighty hand in reverential awe."*

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**THE PRIVILEGE OF PURPOSE**

Regardless of where you find them, when you do, you'll find men **hungry for purpose and meaning**. We were born with greatness in mind. We were born with destiny in mind.



“Not long ago, three military recruiters accepted an invitation to address the senior class of a local high school. Graduation was only a few months away and the principal wanted his two hundred young men to hear the options available in the military. The assembly was to be 45 minutes in length. It was agreed that each recruiter would have 15 minutes to make his pitch and then have another 20 minutes in the cafeteria to meet with interested boys. The Army recruiter went first and got so excited about his speech that he went over 20 minutes. The Navy recruiter, not to be outdone, stood up and also spoke for 20 minutes. The Marine Corps recruiter, realising that his 15-minute speech had been cut to 2, walked up to the podium, and spent the first 60 seconds in silence. Wordlessly he gazed over the group of high school seniors. They knew he was sizing them up. After what seemed to be an eternity, the recruiter said, “I doubt whether there are 2 or 3 of you in this room who could cut it as marines. I want to see those three men as soon as this assembly is dismissed. He was mobbed by a herd of young men when he arrived in the cafeteria.” Steve Farar: **Point Man** - Save the Boys – PG 47

Give your boys a dream to live by. Give your daughter a benchmark against which she can choose her life's partner. Call your children to greatness by living a life of purpose. By living a life ON purpose.

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## THE PRIVILEGE OF PASSION

*"The great traditional religions of the world have much that is liberating and life-enhancing, but their image has become enfeebled in the modern world. Christianity – ideally a powerful and revolutionary force in society – is today most visible in TV commercials for chocolate biscuits and frozen dinners. The image most people recognise is of neutered vicars and doddering old ladies."*

Biddulph PG 193



Passion has less to do with a successful erection than you think. Passion is much, much more than sex and even romance.

**Passion:** "the ability to feel deeply."

- Passion is the ability to feel there is something worth living and dying for here.
- Passion is the thing that gets me out of bed and into the marketplace of life.
- Passion is the thing that makes me want to rewrite my personal records and break new barriers.
- Passion is not only a male privilege – but it's the Biblical equivalent of the Wild Man thing.

*"Going to church"*: so gobsmackingly tame and banal. You are called to advance the Kingdom, as a soldier, a warrior for the King of Kings.

### KINDS OF PASSION MEN NEED TO LIVE IN:

**1. PASSION FOR THE FATHER:** if the research is correct then men need to *take care* of their relationships with their earthly fathers if they are to *adequately relate* to their Heavenly Father.

When we have a revelation of sonship – *that we are no longer orphans* – that we have a place in the Cosmos – we can only but respond passionately to the Father.

**Popular myths men perpetuate re relating to God:**

1. "I don't have the time like my wife does".
2. "Women are more intuitive and thus easily spiritual."

**Response: You learn more about a man from the nature of his excuses than you do from any other observable behaviour.**

There is nothing better than passionate male worship. Wide-mouthed cacophony of praise and adoration. Deal with the male clumsiness & coyness in your emotional vocabulary with God. Have you noticed the comparative ease with which most women express their heart to God? And the masculine dis-ease with it?

<b>The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5</b>
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**2. PASSION FOR THE KINGDOM:** there is a DESPERATE NEED for men to embrace the Kingdom WITH BOTH HANDS.

- To embrace the entire Kingdom.
- To subscribe to and live by – and to actually order his life around - Kingdom values.
- To order his inner and outer world around the demands of the Kingdom.

We don't BOLT the Kingdom onto our lives – it IS OUR LIFE. We *live* by Kingdom values, we *invoice* by Kingdom values, and we *lead* our families by Kingdom value. We support the vision of the local congregation – ALL OF IT. We don't pick and choose and hang around the edges of church life like reluctant schoolboys or sulk like ninnies when we don't get our own way.

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**3. PASSION FOR COMMITMENT:** the culture says *men don't know how to commit* – which is probably true. Or if they do, then it is on their terms. True men know *how* to commit – but – more importantly, men really *want* to commit. The Gospel is about commitment – God committed to us when He sent Jesus. Jesus committed to us when He died and rose again for us. He committed to us in sending the Holy Spirit to us. **Commitment is a God-thing.** It's not a subversive device designed by women to trap men into doing that which they don't want to do.

Real men **WANT** to commit. They need to learn the art.

World War II pilot, George Leonard, asked a group of **U.S. Army Green Berets** to define the “ideal warrior”.

*“They cited loyalty, patience, intensity, calmness, compassion and will. They agreed that the true warrior knows himself, knows his limitations. They said self-mastery is a warrior's central motivation. He is always practising, always seeking to hone his skills, so as to become the best possible instrument for accomplishing his mission. The warrior takes*

*calculated risks and tests himself repeatedly. He believes in something greater than himself: a religion, a cause. He does not worship violence, but is at home with it. He may snivel (their term for complain), but he is not a victim."*

**Masculine men answer hard questions like:**

1. When did I last demonstrate loyalty to someone or some cause greater than myself?
2. When did I show patience during trial, disciplined intensity in a task, calmness "under fire"?
3. What skills am I working to hone?
4. When did I last take a calculated risk and test myself?
5. When did I take the initiative and right a wrong?
6. When last did I demonstrate compassion by taking action on behalf of another person?

**Leonard** continues: *"We need passion. We need challenge and risk. We need to be pushed to our limits. And I believe this is just what happens when we accept a warrior's code, when we try to live each moment as a warrior, whether in education, job, marriage, child rearing, or recreation. The truth is that we don't have to go to combat to go to war. Life is fired at us like a bullet, and there is no escaping it short of death. All escape attempts – drugs, aimless travel, the distractions of the media, empty material pursuits – are sure to fail in the long run, as more and more of us are beginning to learn."*

Jesus is the Authentic Warrior – the ultimate in masculinity – the role model of strength under control, power and authority, discipline and determination, tenderness and compassion.

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**4. PASSION FOR PURITY:** we are not the sum total of Men's Health, Playboy and Cosmopolitan's expectations and pronouncements on what it means to be male.

We are not horny animals who are out of control. We do not have sex *drives* (which assumes we're out of control); we have sex *appetites* (which we feed / regulate) that are under our control.

- Submit daily to the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
- Present your body as a slave to righteousness.
- Anticipate the rapids to temptation beforehand.
- Live in covenantal accountability with other brothers.
- Live *in* the Kingdom – you need a compelling affection.
- Renew your mind regarding sexuality.

*“The problem with the topless bars and the pornographic literature of our day is not that they emphasise sexuality too much, but that they do not emphasise it enough. They totally eliminate relationship and restrain sexuality to the narrow confines of the genital. They have made sex trivial.”* **Seeking the Kingdom**, Richard Foster PG 105

**PORNOGRAPHY** – “The problem with pornography is that it comes looking for you.”

“Men are always in search of the ultimate experience and one of the characteristics of male pornography is its addictive power. Men who read or view pornography are in search of the ultimate without the intimate. This search causes men to be driven by sex rather than liberated by it.” **Men and Masculinity** Pg 173

\$13 billion industry in USA per annum. The fastest growing segment is child pornography. Hardcore porn grosses \$8 billion p.a.



**The Problem with Pornography:** Def: “Literature or art calculated solely to supply sexual excitement, obscene literature or art.” “Writings, pictures, films etc. that are designed and intended to stimulate sexual excitement or desire.” Includes print and film media, sex chat lines / SMS lines, provocative poses.

**Three Elements that concoct a vicious brew:**

1. Body beautiful culture, 2. Males are visually stimulated, 3. Greed (money making).

**Three Levels of pornography:** 1. Soft core (magazines, film), 2. Hard core (anything sexually explicit, simulated intercourse), 3. Perversions (homosexuality, bestiality (sex with animals), child pornography, snuff porn (porn actors murdered on film), necromancy (sex with corpses).

The *Law of Diminishing Returns* (a bigger secondary investment is needed to surpass the primary experience) and the *searing of conscience* provide accelerating momentum on the road to addiction.

As addiction increases, conscience decreases. Mass murderer Ted Bundy shared with James Dobson on the eve of his execution that every man on Death Row with him who were there for violent crimes had been deeply addicted to pornography.

### **Ramifications of pornography:**

1. It displeases God,
2. It results in interpersonal dysfunction (it distorts sexuality and the way men perceive women) and destroys marriages, and
3. It results in bondage.



### **Getting free:**

1. Confess (agree with God's opinion) and,
2. Repent (turn away from it),
3. Burn bridges (destroy videos, magazines, disconnect the Internet),
4. Be vulnerable to a brother.

### **Staying free:**

1. Make God your greater and compelling affection,
2. Submit daily to the Holy Spirit's work in you,
3. State daily "*I reckon myself dead to sin but alive to God.*"
4. Invest yourself in your marriage,
5. Watch your media intake (know your vulnerabilities),
6. Flee (like Joseph in the O.T) from sin,
7. Guard your thoughts,
8. Watch out for self-pity.

**Masturbation:** *the stimulation of genitalia.* Sexual expression is intended for marriage. Masturbation is a self-directed act, a selfish act. It also goes hand in hand with mental images of lust. The prospect of simultaneous husband and wife climaxing in a future marriage context (if single) is diminished, because the man is programmed for a quick ejaculation and lacks the stamina and sensitivity to delay ejaculation in his wife's favour. (Wham bam thank you Ma'am syndrome.)

<b>The High Up And Under:    1 2 3 4 5</b>
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For a more thorough handling of the topic refer to the essay by Michael Cassidy (reprinted below) and the Sexuality Series available on CD from Glenridge Church, Durban, RSA (E-mail: info@gci.za.org).

### **PORNOGRAPHY – A Social Peril by Michael Cassidy**

Is pornography, as some would argue, part of an individual's right to "freedom of expression" or does it go beyond that to challenge our responsible obligations and commitments to each other as relational creatures and to the wider community? In other words, is pornography indicative of a mature and healthy society or an irresponsible and decadent one? Let's begin by defining what we mean by pornography, then look at some of its effects, and finally see how Scripture addresses these sorts of activity.

#### **Definitions**

Pornography, also known as Sexually Explicit Material (SEM), has been defined as all material which is sexually explicit and intended primarily for the sexual arousal of the reader or viewer. This takes in a wide

range of materials or activities but, with former United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, I believe we can say that it is difficult to define, but we know it when we see it. I think most people would agree with that.

Though terms used to describe the content of SEM may be considered vulgar in themselves to many, if we are even to begin to grapple with the depths of perversity involved, we must have some understanding of what we are talking about. Dr Angelo Grazioli, professional South African sexologist and Director of the Sex Education and Dysfunction Unit of South Africa, describes the content of SEM. These include, in decreasing order of frequency, the portrayal of nudity, heterosexual sex and oral sex, group sex, homosexual and bisexual behaviour, violence (i.e., rape, simulated incest, torture, physical bondage, sometimes even murder), pedophilia (includes rape and sodomy of children), bestiality

(animals), sadomasochism (whipping, beating) along with other almost unimaginably degrading and vulgar activities beyond the telling here.

### **What Are the Effects?**

While some scientific studies claim it is difficult to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that a cause-effect relationship exists between pornography and violence due to the variety of unknown environmental factors that might also impact the results, it is also said there is a link that, if not directly measurable, is a likely contributory influence. As with the link between drinking and driving and increases in accidents, the data resulting from the link of users of pornography and its negative impacts shows consistently a relationship which paints a clear and disturbing picture that takes it beyond being merely a religious or moral issue to one concerning worldwide public health and safety. Cynog Dafis, a former Welsh MP, stated in the British House of Commons in July 1996 that "...what people watch, listen to and read influences their attitudes, values, psychological make-up, behaviour and the quality of their spiritual life – particularly during their formative years. This is nothing more than common sense."

Grazioli takes the matter further and says that the *effect* on any individual of SEM is determined by five variables:

1. *The motivation to process the material.* This can range from general curiosity to entertainment to desiring a positive sexual stimulation for arousal.

2. *The ability to process the material.* Individuals vary greatly in their ability

to process SEM. Arguments around "free speech" and the constitutionality of SEM are grounded in the presupposition that all individuals have the ability to process effectively the SEM they choose to view, without consequent harm or danger to themselves or others. This is *not* a predictable factor and therefore one fraught with hazard.

***"Pornography is remarkably difficult to define, but I know it when I see it."***

– U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart

3. *The nature and content of SEM.* Contrary to popular thought, increased exposure to SEM does not lead to indifference but rather to a desensitisation which in turn demands greater and greater stimulation in order to derive the same excitement or pleasure. Another impact is the "body beautiful" portrayal that distorts reality, often leaving the viewer unaroused or even repulsed by their spouse's physique. Further, the relational art of love and loving is replaced by the impersonal and mechanical performance of the sex act alone.

4. *Pre-established vulnerability.* Much opposition to SEM is based on the fact that the exposure to SEM for some is addicting, desensitising, and a major factor in the propensity to commit crime. The degree to which an individual is consciously or subconsciously affected by it is determined by the pre-established vulnerability of that person. And none of us can know who will be radically and who minimally affected. Hence the peril.

5. *Co-existing persuasion forces.* This has to do with those other influences that draw one to SEM. A concern of Dr Grazioli is that, in South Africa, as large sectors of our society transition from a rural to an urban setting, from lower to higher socioeconomic status, and from disempowered to empowered class, the hunger for success can make one particularly vulnerable to symbols of freedom, independence and maturity, which the acceptance and use of SEM seems to reflect. It looks sophisticated and mature, so we pursue it unaware of the immense personal, marital and moral dangers.

Grazioli is further convinced that every person exposed to SEM will be affected to one degree or another, consciously and unconsciously, the negative aspects far outweighing any constructive aspects. He also considers South Africa to be relatively more vulnerable to the harmful effects than fully "firstworld" societies. His conclusion: "SEM is extremely harmful to the welfare of individuals and relationships in my society."

Interestingly, statistics in South Africa as well as other countries show that since pornography became increasingly available, *all categories of serious crime have risen dramatically.* This cannot be ignored.

#### **A Four-Step Pattern**

Dr Victor Cline, an American clinical psychologist who has treated hundreds of sex offenders who had intensive exposure to hardcore pornography, believes there is a near-universal four-step pattern leading to these aberrant behaviours.

1. Pornography can be *addictive.* An exposure can trigger a peculiar combination of chemical, biological, psychological and spiritual factors that begin an addictive process that virtually rules their lives.

2. The addiction is *progressive,* escalating in need for more powerful doses to attain the same sexual stimulation.

3. A *desensitisation* develops over time so that what was once taboo, repulsive or bizarre becomes acceptable and commonplace.

4. Finally, there is an increased tendency to *act out* what is seen. Thus fantasy becomes reality, and the cycle continues its downward spiral with consequences beyond the imagining.

When I was on sabbatical in Cambridge, England, in May and June 1999, I met a young ordinand who had been an attorney in London working mainly with criminal sexual offenders. He was now working as a chaplain in a prison for sexual offenders, so I asked him whether his experiences suggested a direct link between pornography and sexual crimes. "Unquestionably," he stated. "Both as a lawyer and a chaplain I discovered that with almost every criminal sexual offender pornography had been both the initial trigger and the ongoing stimulus."

As with alcohol and alcoholics, not all who are exposed to SEM become addicted, and not all those who are addicted turn to the more violent aspects. But some do.

A 1998 study in the United States shows the average first-time contact among sex addicts was age 11. Male teens are the biggest purchasers of hard-core pornography and, of an estimated 3 percent to 6 percent of the population who are sexual addicts, 96 percent of them are male. Addicts can include teachers, lawyers, doctors, salesmen, engineers and even pastors.

### **The Internet**

Sexual addiction is expected to escalate alarmingly because of increased availability of pornography on the Internet. In late 1998, again in the USA, it was estimated there were about 50 million users online worldwide, with 40 million Internet pages containing at least one million sexually explicit photos. Many of these websites offer free material. The Internet, in fact, has become the largest pornography store in history with the child pornography market rapidly expanding. In fact, so horrendous are the effects of child pornography and sexual exploitation of children that a clear line must be drawn in the sand preventing and forbidding such proliferation.

### **Other Impacts of Pornography**

Charles Colson of the United States has noted: "The spread of pornography is evidence that a society has lost its sacred respect for human life." Beyond the individual, how does pornography impact our families, communities and nation?

Studies of repeated exposure by individuals to pornography reveal some common results:

1. A serious misinformation about sexuality, resulting in confusion and distorted perceptions of oneself and others.
2. An unhealthy and totally false model for sexual behaviour.
3. An exploitation of men who are particularly vulnerable to becoming lust-driven.
4. An increased exploitation and callousness toward women and children, who are seen as objects for sexual enjoyment.
5. The acceptance of the "rape myth", namely the belief that women enjoy forced submission.
6. Rape is considered a trivial offense rather than a serious crime.
7. A definite increase in rape and sexually related crimes. One study found that non-violent pornography and violent pornography substantially increased the likelihood of rape and other forced sexual acts *to the very same extent*.
8. A dissatisfaction with one's sexual partner, their performance and physical appearance.
9. An adverse affect on marital and family ties: as sexual intimacy and bonding in relationships are significantly disturbed.
10. Monogamy and marital faithfulness are devalued. No monogamous relationships are viewed as moral and valid.

11. Unwanted pregnancies, increased abortions and the spread of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and HIV.

12. Changed and hardened attitudes about sexual practices, showing less concern about the harmful effects on others and society.

13. Religious and spiritual values start to become inconsequential and irrelevant.

***“As Christians, we celebrate wholesome sexuality which reaches its highest purpose in the mutually committed marriage relationship between a man and a woman.”***

#### **Not a Single Redeeming Feature**

Iain Benson, a research fellow in Canada, has said that “contemporary approaches to ‘rights’, unhinged from any concomitant moral vision of the person or community, are capable of furthering extraordinary fragmentation at the personal and social level.”

We can see from all that has been said here that there is not a single redeeming feature about pornography. It is a social menace of the first order calling for responsible governmental bodies to act against it. The city council in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the United States did act and outlawed pornography. Sexual crimes against women and children decreased in the city by 27 percent the next year.

However, in the area round about, the increase was 22 percent,

reflecting an overall variance of 49 percent! I find that pretty persuasive.

#### **The View of Judaeo-Christian Faith**

When God created Adam and Eve, which He did in His own image, He blessed them and said: “Be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:28). So sex, marriage and family were God’s ideas! And what He created was good.

As Christians, we celebrate wholesome sexuality which reaches its highest purpose in the mutually committed marriage relationship between a man and a woman where love is the foundation. It is an intimacy based on trust and respect. Sexuality is not essentially something we do but is something we are. It is intrinsic to us. That’s why the biological side of sex can never be isolated and viewed impersonally because it is but one aspect of the whole, indivisible person.

God wants us to honour and respect this union which He has bestowed upon us. And He warns us against defiling and degrading by unholy abuse what He has created in holiness. Hebrews 13:4 says: “Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” In fact, we are to *flee* from sexual immorality and honour God with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Jesus tells us we will be tempted in life, but not by God, for God does not tempt anyone. Then this warning: “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that

person through whom they come” (Luke 17:1-2). What a word to the perpetrators of pornography and to those who allow them to flourish!

In the Sermon on the Mount we also have Jesus’s incredibly powerful warnings about the perils of lusting through the eyes, which He equates with adultery. Here are His words: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28).

His warning here relates most powerfully to what we allow into our minds through our eyes. “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness” (Matthew 6:22-23). In other words, what your eyes see, what you allow to draw your attention, will affect who you are. Pornographic material works its insidious appeal visually via our eyes, registering thoughts and images on our souls and minds. It thus lands itself smack in the centre of a major warning and a dire condemnation from the Son of God Himself.

There is also a further warning in Ephesians 4:18-19, that of “darkened” understandings and “hardened” hearts and people who have “lost all sensitivity” who give themselves over to “every kind of impurity”. How

critically important to avoid the darkened or insensitive mind!

But there is good news. Bondage, whether sexual or otherwise, can be broken. Paul proclaims in Romans 8:1-2: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.”

We can be freed from our bondages and prevented from falling into them by making responsible, moral choices.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

This is the Biblical charter. It excludes everything even remotely related to pornography. And for any already caught up in it, the Scriptures bring the Good News that there’s always a way back through the power of Jesus from the depths of perversity. There’s Life and Freedom and Joy and Peace to be found in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour and life-long friend.

*(This essay may be reproduced provided that the author and African Enterprise are acknowledged.)*

## **Recommended Reading**

Think Before You Look –Daniel Henderson Living Inc Books & Pub,

**5. PASSION FOR FAMILY:**

I am grateful for the unbelievable privilege of being the steward of a wife and children entrusted to me by God. They are not a burden, nor a chore. **They are my exceedingly great and glorious privilege.** Living intelligently and in understanding with my wife (1 Peter 3:7), giving her Godly and gracious leadership (Eph 5:25-33). Not exasperating my children (Eph 6:4) but bringing them up in the ways of God, modelling a passion for the King and His Kingdom for them to emulate. Men should willingly lay down their lives for their families (Eph 5:25). TITANIC: for every 1 woman saved, 13 men died. SOMALIA FERRY SINKING: most number saved were men. Things have changed – now it is every man for himself.



(1 Thess 2:11) *“For each of you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, ENCOURAGING, COMFORTING AND URGING you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His Kingdom and glory.”*

“comforting”: “parakletos” – to come alongside, showing you step by step.

<b>The High Up And Under:    1 2 3 4 5</b>
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▶ **The God Thought For Me:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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**6. PASSION FOR WORK:** *"I owe, I owe, it's off to work I go."* Men were created with labour in mind. Adam tended, looked after, and worked in the Garden of Eden BEFORE the fall. (2 Thess 3:10) *"If you won't work, you won't eat."* But it's not just about eating. It's what people call finding the "heart in your work." *Your sense of passion is in direct proportion to your motive for working.*



- Work is worship – it is sacred, not secular. (Col 3:23)
- Work is the place where men work out the call of God.
- Work is a privilege, not a punishment.
- Work was designed for man as one way to reflect the nature of a God Who is always working.
- Work is an opportunity to add value to the world.
- Work is a privilege-avenue to *joyfully* provide for our families and others.
- Work gives man a chance to stretch his limitations and be creative.
- Work gives me a vehicle to fund the advance of the Kingdom.

**Someone said there are 9 levels of fulfilling work:**

1. Do you do your share?
2. Can you support yourself?
3. Is your job one that allows you to improve the lives of others?
4. Are you a provider for others?
5. Does your work provide an infrastructure for the work of others?
6. Do you train and develop other people, enhancing their lives and futures?
7. Does your work help protect the earth, its people and its life?
8. Does your work use your innate abilities and talents so that it is unique and powerful in its effect on the world?
9. Are you using your work to advance the Kingdom?

<b>The High Up And Under:    1 2 3 4 5</b>
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▶ **The God Thought For Me:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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### **PRAYER REFLECTION**

Lord, thank you for making me male – I accept it and want to learn to rejoice in it.

Lord, thank you for enabling me to lead my wife and family, to lead myself.

Lord, help me to live passionately – for You, for my marriage, my children, my purity, my work, the Kingdom.

Lord, take from me the fear of commitment and teach me to bear my responsibilities with joy and gratitude for the privilege I have in bearing them.

Lord, help me to do something measurable about “the high up and unders” and the God-thoughts You shared with me.

In the Strong and Matchless Name of Jesus. Amen

### **ASSIGNMENT**

1. Go through this chapter *twice* this coming week – prayerfully and intentionally putting it into practice.
2. Read the next chapter *before* our next session.
3. Share your self-rating and what you plan to do about the above revelations.

## CAT'S IN THE CRADLE – Harry Chaplin

A child arrived just the other day  
 He came to the world in the usual way  
 But there were planes to catch and bills to pay.  
 He learned to walk while I was away  
 And he was talkin' fore I knew it  
 As he grew he said,  
 "I'm gonna be like you, dad,  
 You know I'm gonna be like you"  
 "When you comin' home, dad?"  
 "I don't know when, but we'll get together then,  
 You know we'll have a good time then."

My son turned 10 just the other day  
 He said thanks for the ball dad,  
 come on let's play  
 Can you teach me to throw  
 I said not today, I've got a lot to do  
 He said: "That's OK."  
 And he walked away but he smiled  
 As he grew he said,  
 "I'm gonna be like you, dad,  
 You know I'm gonna be like you".

Well he came from College just the other day  
 So much like the man I just had to say  
 Son I'm proud of you  
 Can you sit for a while  
 He shook his head and he said with a smile  
 What I'd really like dad, is to borrow the car keys,  
 See you later,  
 can I have them please.

I've long since retired, my son's moved away  
 I called him up just the other day.  
 I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind".  
 He said, "I'd love to, dad, if I could find the time  
 But my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu  
 But it's sure nice talking to you, dad  
 It was sure nice talking to you."

As he hung up the phone it occurred to me  
 He'd grown up just like me.  
 My boy was just like me.

# MALE BY BIRTH – MASCULINE BY CHOICE

## CHROMOSOMES & CHARACTER

Being **male** is a psychological / biological / physiological reality –



is CHRO

Being **masculine** is an attitude, a choice – the issue is *CHARACTER*.

Character we choose.

Chromosomes are thrust on us.

**We** decide about the character issue.

**God** has already decided on the chromosome issue for us.

The opposite of masculinity is not femininity. Femininity is a word of strength that describes the woman who is whole.

The opposite of masculinity is wimpininity – describing the male who is not free yet.

### How Healthy Are We?

Psychology Today published an article by James Levine in which he reviewed three books on the subject of manhood in transition. This is his opening paragraph:

“After countless books about the condition of women that have been published in the last decade, we are now getting a spate of studies about men. One theme comes through loud and clear: **the male is in crisis**. Buffeted by the women’s movement; constrained by a traditional and internalised definition of “masculinity,” men literally don’t know who they are and what women want from them, or even what they want for themselves.”

German psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich wrote:

“Society has torn the soul of the male, and into this tear demons have fled – demons of insecurity, selfishness and despair. Consequently, men do not know who they are as men. Rather, they define themselves by what they do, who they know, or what they own.”

## THE COMPOSITE PICTURE OF MODERN MAN

Recognise any of these men? Met any? Are you one of them?

**The Silent Buddha** - who, emotionally speaking, reminds us of the Great Wall of China, a bank vault and Mount Everest all rolled into one. He retreats into his protective silence to cover up a sense of helplessness and deep inferiority. He is emotionally inaccessible to his children and wife. See TODAY I MET A MAN, BUT NOT REALLY.

**The Frozen Iceberg** - his coldness is his defence, a mechanism to freeze out the emotions he so desperately thinks he wants to avoid. He is married to a needy, neglected woman.

**The Almighty Patriarch** - enthroned on his physical strength and ability to dominate, he rules ‘ex cathedra’ - “*from the throne*” - his wife and children are merely supporting actors in his private movie that he is writing, directing and producing.

**The Superfluous Male** - (“*useless, unassuming*”). He lives on the fringes of his family, looking on as his wife and children enjoy a degree of fellowship from which he feels excluded. He is a passive spectator in life – not making the contribution he was destined by God to make in his world.

**The Condom Man** - who buys into the notion which says that he's the sum total of his sexual performance. This man thinks intimacy always equals sex. His brains are in his jockeys. Since his teenage years he's felt the need to defend his maleness, often needing to lie about fictitious sexual conquests or worse, actually engaging in them to be accepted. He believes he is the sum total of his ability to sustain an erection and ejaculate successfully.

**The Absent Dad** - rushing around in a frantic frenzy to earn more than is necessary. Or he is home – but he is not there; he is *emotionally absent*. See THE CATS IN THE CRADLE, by Harry Chapin.

The *father* defines masculinity for his sons and endorses his daughter's femininity.

Research shows that absence of a father to be a stronger factor than poverty (U.S. Nat. Inst. of Mental Health). Yale University research: in 48 cultures around the world, *crime rates were highest among children-adults who had been raised solely by women*.

Dr Martin Deutsch found that the *father's presence and conversation* – especially at dinnertime – stimulates a child to perform better at school. A study of 39 *teenage girls* suffering from the anorexia nervosa eating disorder showed that 36 of them had one common denominator: a lack of a close relationship with their fathers. Dr. Armand Nicholi found that *an emotionally or physically absent father contributes to a child's...*

1. low motivation for achievement,
2. inability to defer immediate gratification for later rewards,
3. low self-esteem and
4. susceptibility to group influence and to juvenile delinquency.

The gay lobby would have us believe that biology pre-determines sexual orientation. This is not a medically, neurologically supported claim. Research does tend to indicate a *universal absence of affection and bonding* from same-sex parents, among so-called gay people. The issue may be more an identity problem, and a need for male affirmation of their sexuality, rather than a desire for sexual copulation with the same sex.

**The Self-Deposed Leader / The Ahab Figure** - He has abdicated his responsibility. He lives out this tongue-in-cheek comment: *"I make all the big decisions in the family, while my wife makes the little ones. I decide whether we should attack Iran, raise or lower taxes, and negotiate with the Russians or stand firm. She decides where we live, how many children we have, where they go to school, who our friends will be, where we go on vacation, how to spend our money, how*

*much we'll tithe and whether we'll go to church or not."* The church is full of women because someone has to keep the family plugged into God. Too many men sit in church like rebellious schoolboys, longing for the bell to ring, for the benediction to free them for another week of spiritual mediocrity.

**The High Up And Under:**

<b>Silent Buddha</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Frozen Iceberg</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Almighty Patriarch</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Superfluous Man</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Condom Man</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Absent Dad</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
<b>The Self-Deposed Leader</b>	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>

**▶ The God Thought For Me Is:**

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Today I met a man  
But not really.  
Rather, our paths crossed.  
The private paths of our own  
Separate worlds made a juncture  
And we were there.  
We told our impersonal names  
And shook each other's hand  
Warmly and firmly – to convey  
Our interest  
Which wasn't there.  
We shared our views,  
On the weather, politics,  
The latest news  
And other foreign things  
Which were not there.  
And when the conversation lagged,  
We said:  
"Well I am glad to have met you"  
"Same here"  
We lied, smiled and extended our hands  
Again, and parted –  
Glad to be on our separate ways  
From our little meeting.  
Today I met a man  
But not really.  
- Author unknown

## THE MAN WE NEED TO BE - THE FREED MAN

### To be Freed Men we must:

**1. Aim to be like Jesus** - He was the ultimate Freed Man, masculine to the very core. He was committed, single-minded, focused, gentle, kind and meek. He served people and the purpose of His Father. He was aggressive for the government of God, strongly disgusted by hypocrisy, manipulation and unrighteousness. Yet children loved Him, women followed Him and rugged fishermen, astute businessmen and aggressive freedom fighters gave up everything to be with Him.



**2. Aim to be honest** - determine what kind of man you really are. What are those areas in your mentality that prevent your living as a Freed Man? Ask your wife what she thinks about your role in the home. Ask friends what they see in you.

**3. Aim to detach from the past** - while there are many great and Godly things from your past that define who you are, there may be several unGodly patterns passed down to you, e.g. attitudes towards women, to sex, to intimacy, to submission, to work, to family, to emotional self-revelation.

**4. Aim to renew your mind** – (Romans 12:1f) deal ruthlessly with unBiblical mentalities and convictions, wash your mind with large, daily, joyful, hungry doses of the Word of God. The goal of sanctification is total transformation into a new creation. Legally God sees us perfect through the blood of His Son. However, His goal is to transform us into the image of His Son. Co-operate with the transforming work of the Spirit. Einstein: *“The thinking that has got us to where we are is not the thinking we need to get us where we want to be.”*

**5. Aim to study the Biblical pattern for masculinity** – we will never be free until we *really apply* the Word of God to every area of our lives. The Word of God wants to master us. Our rampant egos must – unashamedly and actively - bow the knee to God and to His Word.

▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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### **PRAYERFUL REFLECTION**

Father, I want to aim to be like Jesus - please help me to do that.  
Father, I want to be honest with myself – please help me to do that.  
Father, Help me celebrate the good things from my past and to detach from the bad values / mentalities.  
Father, Please give me a love for Your Word, and a willingness to co-operate with Your Spirit's transforming work in me.  
Father, Help me see all the instances of Godly masculinity in the Word and give me courage to live in that revelation.

In the Strong and Matchless Name of Jesus. Amen.

### **ASSIGNMENT:**

1. Go over the notes at least *twice* this week.
2. Read the next chapter's notes before the next session.
3. Look out for cultural definitions of masculinity, ponder how those values conflict with Biblical views of masculinity.

# THE MAN AND HIS FRIENDSHIPS

## FRIENDLESS MALES

David Smith: **The Friendless American Male** – *“Of course I don't have friends. I'm a man. My wife is the one with friends.”*

For many men, true friendship remains an elusive goal. This could be because:

- No one really schooled us in how to do this
- Many of us had fathers who never had friends of their own
- And if he did, they did not always add value to him
- Fear of homosexual labels made us skirt around developing real friendship



**What do pubs really sell?** They do not sell beer – they sell fellowship, camaraderie, and an opportunity to be real (albeit in an alcoholically-induced and temporary feeling of closeness).

### Why Men Fear Friendships

*“We ended up talking about masturbation which was not a subject that either of us had discussed with anybody else very often, if at all. We had a very animated and mutually affirming discussion. I think we must have been talking quite loudly because we got some sideways glances from other diners and their conversations seemed to dry up quite frequently.*

*At the end of the lunch we had cleared the restaurant and were the only ones there. As we went back to where my car was parked he turned, looked me in the eye and said, ‘I love you.’ He didn't slap me on the back, avoid eye contact, and say, ‘Y'know, I really love you mate,’ which I could have taken with a kind of knock-about embarrassment.*

*At that moment all the hair on the back of my neck stood up on end and I felt like throwing up. It didn't seem to be the kind of thing that men should say to one another and yet I felt very moved by the fact that he had said it in such a direct way. In true Woody Allen style I*

replied, "Well ... um ... (cough) that's really nice of you ... I'm not quite sure I can reciprocate in like manner yet (!)" He waved it away, got into his car and we drove off.

It later transpired that he completely forgot about the incident, which wasn't a big thing for him at all. I drove home sweating profusely. Was this what we meant by intimacy?

If so, I was going to have problems. Part of my problem was that at least half of me was British and it wasn't a very co-operative half.

But I had been firmly put on the spot and didn't know how to respond. Since then I have thought about this a great deal and have changed a lot." Men and Masculinity PG 124-125.

**We Have Not Seen It Modelled As Boys:** Our fathers were not brought up with male friendships as a value. "My father was a pastor, he didn't have friends."

### **Our Concepts Of Masculinity Impoverish And Imprisons Us:**

- Independence and isolation is encouraged.
- Pride prevents us expressing a need for friendship.
- Some fear a homoerotic label in male bonding.
- We fear intimacy and usually define intimacy in sexual terms only. But intimacy is *the capacity to be real and open.*" There are many forms of intimacy – which the average wife / woman knows full well!!
  - Intellectual, ("I think this and this")
  - Emotional, ("I feel this and this")
  - Non-sexual physical, (handshake, smile, wink, hug)
  - Sexual.

### **We Are Ignorant Of The Benefits Of Friendships With Other Men.**

We have yet to learn that other men can *really add value* to us, that they are fellow-strugglers on this road called masculinity. Pubs attest to the fact that there are social needs in a man that can only be met by other men.

*"Until you acknowledge your need for the gift, talents and perspectives of other men in your life, you will never pursue positive, nurturing relationships."* Glenn Wagner

*"I know you are my friend when you can guard my failures, challenge my thoughts and still celebrate my successes."* T.D.Jakes

*“Everyone needs a select group of people to whom they can be totally accountable. This group does not have to be large or influential; rather they must simply care enough to tell you what you need to hear.”* Richard Dortch

*“A man needs other men – especially older men – to bless him, to honour him, to encourage him, to point out his mistakes and to raise his status.”* Douglas Gillette

### **Reflection:**

- Talk about the friendships your father had with other men.
- Which other men, if any, added value to his life?
- What did your mother think of your father's friends?

## **THE BLESSING OF COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Covenants were agreements made by two or more parties in which promises were made, and kept to the death, - vows were made to protect, to honour, to defend one another. In Bible times, covenanting parties would cut a carcass in half, separate the two halves and walk through it in a figure of 8. As they passed each other, they would recite the blessings (in keeping the covenant) and the curses (in the event of dishonouring of the agreement) of the covenant.

### **Lessons From David And Jonathan:**

- **They became one in spirit** - (1 Samuel 18:1).
- **They negotiated their relationship** - (1 Sam 18:1-4). Their friendship was discussed; it did not just happen. They invested themselves consciously in the relationship. Reach beyond the protective veneer of your ego and engage your brother authentically.
- **They looked out for each other's interests** - (1 Sam 19:7)
- **They were willing to pay a price for their relationship** - (1 Sam 20:4) *“Whatever you want me to do. I will do it for you.”* Jonathan was willing to lose the throne, rightfully his, to David.
- **They maintained the friendship** -they reasserted it, invested themselves repeatedly, and reaffirmed the covenant several times.
- **They added value to one another** – Q: Do you add value to your male friends? Describe that value.

## THE PROTECTIVE / RELEASING NATURE OF ACCOUNTABLE INTIMACY

**1. Creates a safe environment to become more your true self as opposed to the cultural posturing of machoism.** *“A man does not destroy his masculinity by rejecting the false macho persona, he enhances it. Masculinity is a healthy expression of the design of God’s creation. A macho man has distorted masculinity. The behaviours of a macho man are a cover-up for fear and insecurity. Becoming aggressive, controlling and power hungry distances other people so they won’t discover our inner insecurities.”* Stu Weber - **Tender Warrior**

**2. You will grow because of the challenge of a more whole brother.** Henry Ford: *“I succeeded because those closest to me wanted me to succeed.”* The best gift I can give my friend is to model myself as a Freed Man. The best gift others can give me is to spur me on to wholeness as a man.

**3. The gift of challenge is a gift we desperately need.** I must be overtly and directly challenged, I must be subtly and indirectly challenged – the first by lip, the second by lifestyle. **Areas needing challenge include:**

1. My lifestyle
  2. My priorities
  3. My excuses
  4. My insecurities
  5. My spiritual growth
  6. My Emotional Intelligence Quotient
  7. The legacy I am leaving my family, my church, the Kingdom of God, the world
- (Prov 27: 5, 6, 9, 17)

▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points on The Board Would Mean:**

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# THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF BLESSING

*“A man needs other men – especially older men – to bless him, to honour him, to encourage him, to point out his mistakes and to raise his status.”*  
Douglas Gillette.



*Blessing the next generation was a common practice in Bible times, where the older (usually) father, would lay his hands upon a younger man and bless him in prayer and pronouncement.*

This blessing would be a commissioning for the son, sometimes accompanied by prophetic proclamation, and usually a public endorsement of the son. Jesus came out of the waters of baptism and heard the Father’s affirming voice from Heaven saying, *“This is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.”*

## **Blessing our sons:**

- Raises their status
- Affirms their value and sense of worth
- Endorses their masculinity
- Roots their identity

## **How do we do that?**

We communicate warmth.

We let them know that God loves them and believes in them.

We let them know we love them and that we believe in them.

We remind them that God has a brilliant future for them.

We affirm their gifts and abilities.

We share our feelings, fears, hopes and dreams.

We pronounce the blessing over them.

► **RATE YOURSELF ON THE WARMTH SCALE:**

“I am warm with people”:

**Never**  
(you cold fish!!)

**Sometimes**  
(wussy)

**Often**  
(better)

**Always**  
(much better)

**THE AARONIC BLESSING:** (Numbers 6:24)

“The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: *“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.”*”

**1. This is a *priestly* function** - and the absence of this input into people's lives is perhaps the single most prevalent reason for so much pain, confusion, sexual identity confusion, anger, rejection, depression and suicide worldwide.

**2. This is an *ongoing* function** - not a religious ritual you do once off. Men will always need to be blessed - so do it as a lifestyle. Do it by email, by letter, by SMS, at significant milestones in their lives, by telephone call, publicly and privately.

**3. This is a *father* responsibility** - it is what fathers are supposed to do. You don't have to be a father to father someone, and you don't have to be older than the person to do it. Fathering is about believing in people and letting them know they have incredible value.

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Older men to come to the front, lay hands on the recipients and pray / pronounce blessing over the younger men.

**Blessing will include:**

an affirmation of the man's worth,  
his value,  
and the plan God has for him,  
affirming his masculinity,  
and raising their status.

**How did you feel:** Praying blessing over the recipient? How did you feel being prayed for?

**APPLICATION**

1. Resolve to look at your male friendships with new eyes.
2. Read the chapter *twice* this week and read the next chapter before the next session.
3. Bless at least one man this week - and if you are a father - bless your son and daughter.

# MAN AND HIS GOD



*“The greatest disappointment in my lifetime of ministry,”* a friend and fellow pastor in his late fifties once declared to me, *“has been that I just never seemed able to draw men into the church.”* He paused and sighed, confused and frustrated. *“Sure I’ve gotten males, - but frankly, they’ve been mostly quiet and withdrawn guys with strong dominant wives. I just wish I could get some real men into my church.”* Gordon Dalbey - *“Healing the Masculine Soul”* p174.

**In too many places the reality is that many men live out of and from their wife’s relationship with God – a man-and-his-wife’s-God becomes the issue.**

## **This manifests in:**

1. A wholesale spiritual abdication by many Christian men.
2. Clumsiness in men's ability to enter into intimacy with God.
3. The feminisation of the church.

## **► REFLECTION**

How else does this manifest?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Popular myths men perpetuate:**

“I don’t have time like my wife does.”

“Women are more intuitive and thus easily encounter God.”

“My wife is more emotional and can thus worship more easily.”

▶ **REFLECTION**

What other myths do men perpetuate?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

▶ **The High Up And Under:**

Which myths did you / do you perpetuate?

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Truly **Freed Men** long for authentic encounters with God.

They long to climb out from under cultural baggage that keeps them from enjoying God.

Like women, they will find no rest until they find their rest in God. In fact, many men fight their wives, their families, themselves, their world because they are not at peace with God on the inside.

**PURSUING THE GOD WHO PURSUES YOU**

King David reveals his vulnerability before God in Psalm 23. “*The Lord is MY shepherd.*” Not the “Lord is my wife’s shepherd.” He’s my King, my Saviour, my Redeemer, my Father, and the Lover of my Soul. David knew what it was to really worship His God. He lived with God, and God called him, ‘*a man after My own heart.*’ He was a statesman, a warrior, a king – but none of that prevented his worship of God. His masculinity never got in the way of his worship. He pursued God and God loved him for it.

## FIVE THINGS GOD WANTS TO DO IN MEN:

**1. HE WANTS TO OVERWHELM OUR SUSPICION OF HIS MOTIVES TOWARDS US.** "... when God reveals to us that He is moved by the same dream and the same passion - to give us the Kingdom with light and life and everlasting joy – we hesitate. Something hinders the release of wonder. Something confines our affections. Something makes us fear that this is just too good to be true. Oh, how complex are the obstructions of belief. The way our parents treated us, the cultic curiosities of a grandmother, the deadening forces of poverty or wealth, the anaesthesia of televised worldliness, the boredom of trivial business, the wilderness of lonely wedlock, the heartbreak of wayward kids, the never-ending ache of arthritic joints, the memories of lovelessness and fragile hope – how many ways the enemy of our souls can make us fear that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is too good to be true. **John Piper: The Pleasures of God PG 270**

### **We are suspicious because:**

1. we have had bad earthly role models,
2. we fear we will lose autonomy,
3. our rampant egos do not want to submit to His government.

### **The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5**

#### ▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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#### ▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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## **2. HE WANTS US TO TASTE (DAILY) AND SEE (DAILY) THAT HE IS GOOD.**

God wants men to experience Him. To "taste" something is to experience it long enough to develop an opinion about that thing. Scripture strongly discourages a theoretical knowledge of God. Men must learn to revel in who God is in their lives. (Ps 36: 7-9). The Psalmist

displays great intimacy towards God – based on God's dealings with him.

### The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5

▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points Of The Board Will Mean:**

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### **3. He Wants Us To Understand That He Is Very Accessible.**

Hebrews says He is not like a human father - He is totally accessible to us. We are the apple of His eye, the objects of His incessant affection. His heart is full of pride when He looks at us. He delights in us and over us. God is in our corner with us.

### The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5

▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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### **4. HE WANTS TO TEACH US A WHOLE NEW VOCABULARY OF WORSHIP.**

He wants us to become fluent in the language of love - giving Him and receiving from Him love responses. And He wants this worship to be spontaneous and with abandon. Holding nothing back. Turning nothing down.

<b>The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5</b>
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▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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**5. HE WANTS TO MOTIVATE US TO SPUR EACH OTHER ON IN OUR LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

Men need other men to encourage them to greater levels of authentic intimacy with God. And the best way to do that is to *model it* for other men to see. Our sons and daughters need to see their fathers worshipping God with abandon and with spontaneity.

<b>The High Up And Under: 1 2 3 4 5</b>
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▶ **The God Thought For Me Is:**

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▶ **My Putting Points On The Board Will Mean:**

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**APPLICATION**

- Decide to develop a ready love response to God.
- Start saturating your mind with the Word.
- Develop an eye for evidence of the goodness of God in your life, family, work, and your world.
- Read these notes at least twice this week.

# Finishing Strong - The Ambush of Adultery

*"Truth is heavy, so few men carry it"*  
(Jewish Proverb)

- Approximately 1 in 10 young men who start out zealous and in 'full-time ministry' actually finish strong! Along the way they fall prey to the enemy's ambushes.
- Listen to this sad story:



*"John Bisagno has been pastoring First Baptist of Houston for a number of years. When John was about to finish college, he was having dinner at his fiancée's house one night. After supper, he was talking with his future father in law, Dr Paul Beck, out on the porch. Dr Beck had been in ministry for years, and that was inevitably the subject toward which the conversation turned.*

*"John, as you get ready to enter the ministry, I want to give you some advice," Dr Beck told the younger man. "Stay true to Jesus! Make sure that you keep your heart true to Jesus every day. It's a long way from here to where you are going to go, and Satan's in no hurry to get you." The older man continued. "It has been my observation that just one out of ten who start out in full time service for the Lord at 21 are still on track by the age of 65. They get shot down morally, they're shot down with discouragement, they're shot down with liberal theology, they get obsessed with making money... but for one reason or another 9 out of 10 fall out." The 20 year old Bisagno was shocked. "I just can't believe that!" he said. "That's impossible! That just can't be true."*

*"Bisagno told how he went home, how he took one of those blank pages in the back of his Scofield Reference Bible and wrote down the names of 24 young men who were his peers and contemporaries. These were young men in their twenties that were sold out for Jesus Christ. They were trained for ministry and burning in their desire to be*

used for the Lord. These were the committed young preachers who would make an impact for the Lord in their generation. Bisagno relates the following with a sigh: "I am now 53 years old. From time to time as the years have gone by, I've had to turn back to that page in my Bible and cross out a name. I wrote down those 24 names when I was just 20 years of age. 33 years later, there are only **3 names** remaining of the original 24."

*In the Christian life, it's not how you start that matters. It's how you finish."* (Steve Farrar, *Finishing Strong*, pg 15.)

### **And what is the main way Satan knocks out 9 of those 10 men? What is the chief ambush to watch out for?**

*"Satan's all-time, Numero Uno, time-proven tactic for snaring men and keeping them from finishing strong is sexual immorality. And the statistics prove it."* (Steve Farrar)

### **Listen to this tragic tale of a knock-out due to adultery:**

*"I woke up with a start. Outside it was still dark, I had been dreaming again, but it was not the usual fuzzy type. The dream had been so vivid: A man's hand grasping the gun, his finger ready on the trigger. It was all so clear. Although I had not seen his face. I knew whose hand it was. A cold shiver ran up my spine as I pulled the blankets closer about my neck and tried to get back to sleep.*

*A few days later the phone rang. It was Maurice, the man in my dream. "Barney, I need to see you urgently; could you come to our house as soon as possible?" "Sure I can," I responded and then proceeded to relate to him my dream, ending with, "and the hand holding the gun was yours." He gasped audibly, then his voice quivering with emotion, he said, "If you knew how many times during the past weeks I have put a gun to my head you would be amazed. I just didn't have the guts to pull the trigger."*

*Who was Maurice? An ex-convict? A drug addict? A member of an armed gang? No! He had been a Baptist pastor with a very successful ministry. He was a good preacher with a vibrant personality. On Sunday mornings his church service was packed. Married with 2*

children, he had everything going for him – at least until Liza came on the scene.

She was sixteen years old and had run away from home because she was terrified of her mother – a spiritualist medium. So, with no home and no one to care for her, room was made for her at the Baptist manse. Six months later Maurice abandoned his loving wife and precious children and took off with Liza. It wasn't long before they had a baby. 18 months later a second one arrived. Finally, Maurice obtained a divorce and married Liza. At this point they moved to Basingstoke. They came to a few of our services but it was too much for Liza; they stopped coming because she wept uncontrollably through each meeting. Months had passed without seeing them until the telephone call. I immediately drove to their home, mulling over in my mind what I might say when I got there. If God had taken the trouble to warn me in a dream, surely he hadn't given up on Maurice. Coupled with this, I had a deep sense that there was some deep cause of Maurice's weakness lurking in his past; some major infection that existed long before Liza came into his life. As I drove along I lifted my heart to the Lord for the key that would unlock the situation; gradually a clear impression settled in my mind. Something had happened to Maurice when he was a young teenager that had severely damaged him. I was convinced it was irreparable unless God supernaturally intervened. It had been a time bomb, slowly ticking away until it exploded.



On my arrival he further explained why he had turned suicidal. Liza had found a new lover; in fact it was a neighbour just a few houses away. He was even willing, if necessary, to share her but she had made it clear she wanted to leave him now and move in permanently with the other man. I couldn't believe my ears. Maurice had fallen from shepherding God's people to sharing his wife with another man. It was incomprehensible. Even as I write this I cannot help but feel dismay. How could a man throw away the high and holy privilege of serving the Lord of heaven

and earth, not to mention forfeiting all the promised blessings of the age to come, for just a few fleeting moments of sexual pleasure? It is beyond my understanding, yet we mortals seem to go on destroying our lives and ministry needlessly.

I related to Maurice my prayer asking God for the key and the subsequent revelation concerning his youth. This was his response. At 13 he began attending a large evangelical Baptist church and soon responded to an appeal to receive Christ as his Saviour. The man who counselled him was the church organist; unfortunately he was also a practising homosexual. After Maurice had finished praying he seduced the lad into committing a sexual act. They continued a homosexual relationship right up to his entrance into Bible College, which meant eight years' indulgence in gross sin. Satan had successfully ensnared a young man, creating in him a character fault which, left uncorrected, was to rob him constantly of his joy in the Lord as the Accuser relentlessly reminded him of his guilty past. Sadly, Maurice rejected my offer of help and friendship." (Barney Coombs, Practical Pastoring, pg 50)

### **Steve Farrar tells another sobering tale:**

"I remember having a lunch conversation several years ago with a very successful, married, 30 something guy who was an active member of a very solid, Evangelical church in the city. He had just read my book 'Point Man' and posed this question to me; "Why did you spend at least 100 pages of your book discussing sexual temptation?" He asked the question as though it was a passing curiosity to him.

"Because I think sexual temptation is the number one issue in the lives of most men, and I think it's the primary way that the enemy picks off Christian men," I replied. "Do you really believe it's that serious a problem?" he asked. "Yes, I do. I think its epidemic." I got the distinct impression he found that hard to believe.

Six months later, a prominent married woman in that church turned up pregnant by the man that asked me that question. And it wasn't his wife. She was some other guy's wife." (Finishing Strong, pg 71)

## Consider these horrifying statistics and true story about pornography at a Christian conference:

*“In regard to pornography, 41% of all men reported having done one of the following in the last twelve months: watching an X-rated movie, visiting a club with semi-nude or nude dancers, purchasing sexually explicit books, magazines, erotic devices or sex toys, or calling a sex phone number.*

*But of course, those statistics have no relationship to Christians who believe in the authority of the bible, are pro-life, and are committed to their families, right? Think again. A number of years ago a national conference for church youth directors was held at a major hotel in a city in the mid-west. Youth pastors by the hundreds flooded into that hotel and took nearly every room. At the conclusion of the conference, the hotel manager told the conference administrator that the number of guests who tuned into the adult movie channel broke the previous record, far and away outdoing any other convention in the history of the hotel.” (Finishing Strong, pg 72)*

## Adultery Insurance?

The central issue in insurance is **risk**. If you were to approach an insurance company about being insured about committing adultery, how likely is it that they would give you insurance? How at risk are you?

Dr. Howard Hendricks surveyed 246 men who were in the ministry and fell into adultery within a 2 year period of time. He found 4 correlations between all of them:

- None were involved in any kind of personal accountability group.
- None were having a daily time of prayer, Scripture reading, and worship.
- Over 80% of them became sexually involved with another woman as a result of counselling them. In other words, they were spending significant amounts of time with women other than their wives.
- Without exception, each of the 246 had been convinced that moral failure “will never happen to me.”

## We need to ask ourselves:

- Do you spend personal time with the Lord in prayer and Bible reading at least 3 times a week?
- Are there at least one or two men in your life with whom you have built friendship based on trust, confidentiality, and accountability?
- Are you currently spending significant time with any attractive women other than your wife?
- Are you absolutely sure that you could never fall?



## If you answered:

- 1 wrong answer = moderate risk.
- 2 wrong answers = serious risk.
- 3 wrong answers = severe risk.
- 4 wrong answers = dead meat!

What level of risk are you at? What are you going to do to reduce that risk?

If you are in the last category, it is not a question of *if* you will commit adultery but *when* will you commit adultery. No 'moral' insurance company would even consider insuring you! You are beyond risk - you are a certain casualty!

## The danger areas

Barney Coombs mentions 3 danger areas; *spiritual affinity, counselling & familiarity* (which may better be described as intimacy). He does such a good job that I will quote the entire extract:

**"I'd like to show three main areas of danger:**

### Spiritual affinity

The first one and probably the most deceptive is spiritual affinity. Sertorius Caputa, a Catholic father made this telling point:

“The devil endeavours first to infuse a love for the virtue of the individual and thus inspire a security that there is no danger. He then excites sentiments of affection for the person and afterwards tempts to sin and thus he causes great havoc.”

*Saint Thomas said:*

“Although carnal affection is dangerous to all, it is yet more so for those who associate with persons that seem to be spiritual, for even though the beginning is pure frequent familiarity is dangerous and the more the familiarity increases the more the first motive is weakened and purity is defiled. The devil knows well how to conceal danger. In the beginning he sends out poison darts but only those that inflict slight wounds and kindle an affection. However, in a short time the persons begin to act toward each other not like angels as in the beginning but like beings clothed with flesh. The looks are not immodest but they are frequent and reciprocal, their words appear to be spiritual but are too affectionate. Each begins frequently to desire the company of the other.”

Involvement in intercession, the participation of musicians and singers in praise and worship ministry and ministry in deliverance are some of the Godly activities where naïve believers have fallen prey to the Enemy.

## **Counselling**

The second danger is that of counselling. Repeated counselling sessions with wives of troublesome, unbelieving husbands or single women (especially those recently divorced or widowed) provide unbelievable opportunities for the devil to trap an unsuspecting leader. Sid Cheal, a real father in the faith, advised, “Never give lifts to women when you are alone unless it is absolutely necessary,” and, “Never counsel women alone. If it’s unavoidable, always leave the door ajar.”

## **Familiarity [intimacy]**

Familiarity with lady members of staff is a very dangerous past time. St Bernhard once wrote,

“To be familiar with a woman and to preserve chastity requires greater virtue than to raise a dead man to life.”

The sharing of marriage difficulties and other family concerns, lunch with your secretary or suggestive or flippant remarks provide a conducive atmosphere for the devil to strike a lethal blow. Lyndon K. McDowell, writing in the USA magazine ‘Ministry’ on the dynamics of ministerial morality, said,

“When any two people of opposite sex work closely together sexual feelings will almost inevitably be aroused.”” (Practical Pastoring pg 55-57)

**We would do well to be very careful of these three areas which are treacherous seas to the ship of our faith.**

### **Time Bombs**

Avoiding these three pitfalls may be hard enough on its own, but if you add the fact that many people have hidden time bombs ticking away; it makes for an even more combustible combination.

What is a time bomb? It is a fuse-line or fault line – a character weakness, unresolved issue, or propensity to sin that we have. These problems may not be immediately evident but with time will explode, wrecking our lives. Examples of time bombs are an addiction to pornography, a deep insecurity that makes you look to women for affirmation, or bitterness and self-pity that looks to illicit sex as comfort.

Listen to these excellent quotes by a seasoned apostle:

*“Jimmy Swaggart, world renowned TV Evangelist, having been caught with a prostitute, blamed his fall and subsequent public disgrace on a secret addiction to pornography that had constantly dogged his path from his early teens. It had been a time bomb slowly ticking away for over 30 years.”*

*“We tend either to be impressed or threatened by one another’s outward success. Yet how many superstars, not to mention the rest of*

*us ordinary mortals, have hidden time bombs ticking away waiting for Satan to detonate them?"*

*"The Christian world is fairly competent at training people academically and theologically but we are not so good at discipling them in godly character. I have become overwhelmingly convinced that before a man is recognised and released into responsible leadership he needs to have been properly and carefully discipled. This entails the discovering and defusing of time bombs in a man's character. It also means that character weaknesses are identified and dealt with."* (Barney Coombs)

### **The world, the flesh & the devil**

This is the terrible trio we all have to face in life! Some people may think they are safe – "I don't have any time-bombs ticking away" – but the fact is we don't need some unresolved issue from our past to shipwreck us! Any one of these three can do it.

*"Not everyone who falls morally has some deep character fault or time bomb ticking away waiting to explode. No one is excluded from the magnetic pull of sin."* (Barney Coombs)

The *world* is the enticing culture around us that is always promoting sensuousness, lust and illicit sex (1 Jn 2:16). The *devil* is our sworn enemy who constantly tempts us to sin (Gen 3:1-5). And our *flesh* is that fallen part of our nature, our sinful nature that we will carry to the grave (Gal 5:24, Col 3:5).

Once, when I was relating to a friend how a Christian leader we knew had fallen into adultery, he responded, "There's a devil out there!" To which I replied, "And a sinful nature inside!" The point that was made was that we have enemies without and within – and the ones within are worse! No matter how far someone has gone up the mountain of God, or how great their history of holiness, they still carry their worst enemies within them – the evil desires of the flesh, the sinful tendencies that have to be put to death daily.

Regardless of who we are there is no room for complacency. We must be vigilant and guarded.

**“Beware of no man more than yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us.”** (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

***“There is a devil out there and a sinful nature inside!”***

### **3 TYPES OF ADULTERY**

**There seem to be 3 types of adulterous affairs:**

**1. One night stand or fling while travelling** – generally with someone you don't know well, who may not be a Christian and it is purely lustful. It is based on physical attraction and is entirely selfish. There is no long-term relationship.

**2. With a co-worker** – someone you spend a lot of time with and you gradually get too close until you cross lines and eventually fall into adultery.

**3. With an ‘ideal woman’** – someone you may or may not work with who is just what you like: good looking, great figure, a strong Christian, you can talk with for hours, you have a lot in common and you really admire. There is ‘chemistry’ and a strong attraction in spirit, soul and body.

The last two types are more dangerous to the Christian because they may be subtle at first and ‘sneak up’ on the person. This is because there are other factors at work apart from just lust, such as friendship, admiration, shared visions and dreams, godly activities, etc.

These good factors may cause the man and woman involved, as well as their friends, to justify the growing relationship and be a cover for more sinister motives.

### 3 STAGES OF ADULTERY

“Once Christians, especially committed believers, believe they are immune, they easily deny that they are being tempted. The greater the denial, the easier the deception. Little compromises sneak up on them. They treat the snakes as if they were domesticated and no threat at all. In fact, they may not recognise danger until it's too late.”  
(Charles Mylander)

Many Christians do not realise how endangered they are. Their false sense of security and immunity lulls them into complacency instead of vigilance and guarding their hearts. This attitude is extremely dangerous!

From speaking to people who have fallen into sexual sin they often say: “I never thought this would happen!”

#### **1 Cor 10:12**

*So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!*

The other big danger is they overestimate the resistance that the other person will give them. They think the other person is not interested in them or will draw the boundaries, and so they allow the relationship to grow into sin without applying any brakes.

**There are 3 stages that people pass through before they commit adultery:**

#### **1. Conversation stage**

- In this stage the person really listens to them, or they to them. And there is lots of tender talk – and this is generally not happening in the marriage.
- There is emotional delight in one another and innocent touching.
- A good warning is: “If you are looking forward to the next hug you're in trouble!”

#### **2. Friendship stage**

- In this stage the two are getting close but claim; “We're just good friends”. They are living in denial and deception.
- This intimate friendship then grows to the very dangerous next stage.

### 3. Belonging stage

- The couple spend hidden time together – unknown to the spouse and covenant brothers.
- These secret times together are covered up by half truths and lies.
- The two exchange phone calls, SMS's, e mails, cards, notes, and gifts – as well as intimate talks and looks. The two become increasingly engrossed in each other and are constantly on each other's minds.
- The emotional pressure and physical temptation now feel overwhelming. Warning lights are flashing red. Alarm bells are ringing loudly. The couple (what they are now) may even be warned by friends about impending danger; but they don't care. They are intoxicated with lust and infatuation.
- Very soon they begin touching inappropriately, and it quickly spirals out of control into sexual intercourse.
- Eventually the adulterers are found out – your sin will always find you out.
- Very often the adultery ends in heartache, shame and divorce. We read of the tragic end of the adulterer in Prov 5-7.

**Prov 5:3-5**

*“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. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.”*

**Prov 5:8-14**

*“Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house. At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.”*

**Prov 6:25-35**

*“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away; for jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is.”*

**Prov 7:21-27**

*“With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life. Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. 25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.”*

## TIMES OF VULNERABILITY

(2 Samuel 11) is a key passage emphasising the danger of times of vulnerability. "In the days when kings went of to war, David remained in Jerusalem." He sees a woman bathing on a roof ("lust of the eyes"), he sleeps with her ("lust of the flesh") and tries to rectify the situation by killing her husband ("the pride of life").

We need to be aware of vulnerable times in our lives. In these times we are more susceptible to committing adultery:

- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Stress
- Disappointment
- Self-pity
- Complacency – believing that you have graduated from the basics and are beyond temptation.
- Life transitions – especially ones that make you insecure e.g. midlife crisis.
- Travelling
- Pornography
- Unresolved past sexual problems
- Marriage problems – sexual, financial, conversational, etc.

## Intentionally finishing strong

What makes you think you will be the 1 in 10 who finishes strong? When it comes to finishing strong, the odds are against you. If you do, you will be the exception! If you are going to be the exception you are going to have to be *intentional. Deliberate. Determined.*

First you must *want* to finish strong and then you must make some *tough decisions* so that you make it.

Consider this radical action taken by a man who wanted to finish strong:

*A friend of mine, who was a Christian leader but secularly employed as a manager, was travelling with a lady (also a manager) to their company's three day residential conference. She also happened to be a fellow Christian. Half way along the journey she began to express her attraction for him until finally she placed her hand on his knee. He stopped the car at the next petrol station explaining that he needed to make a telephone call. As they recommenced their journey she asked him if the telephone call had been urgent. "Oh yes," he replied, "Very urgent. I needed to telephone my pastor to tell him there was a lady in my car who was trying to seduce me. I needed him to pray for me." The atmosphere grew strangely cool and a dangerous situation was averted.*

*Some people may protest the problem is being over stated. I wish that were the case. Evangelicals retain the notion that moral failures exist to a much greater degree among the Liberals. Pentecostals think they are far more prevalent among the Charasmatics. Sadly, it appears that sin knows no theological or denominational boundaries. 'Leadership', an American magazine for Christian leaders, surveyed its readers regarding moral issues;*

*61% said they fantasised about having sex with someone other than their wives.*

*25% said that this happened daily or at least weekly.*

*23% said that they'd engaged in some form of sexual activity with someone other than wife since becoming a leader.*

*12% said it was adultery.*

*39% thought their fantasising was harmless. (Practical Pastoring pg 54)*

If we are not going to fall into the ambush of adultery, we must keep an appropriate distance from other women – both emotionally and physically.

The story is told by a Haitian pastor of the danger of giving the devil any hold, however small in our life:

In the story a man wanted to sell his house for \$2 000 but a poor man wanted to buy it but only had \$1 000. Eventually after much negotiation, the owner agreed to sell the house so long as he still owned a large nail protruding from the front door. Sometime later, the old owner came back and demanded that the poor man sell the

house back to him. Naturally, the man disagreed and refused to sell. The old owner then went and found a dead dog and came and hung it from the nail above the front door. Eventually the smell of corrupt, rotting flesh was too much to bear and the poor man sold the house back to the old owner. The moral of the story – don't allow the devil even one inch in your life!

**Eph 4:27 “And do not give the devil a foothold.”**

If we give one nail to the enemy, he will use it for maximum advantage. Be ruthless!

**The Golden Rules**

Barney Coombs gives the following ‘Golden Rules’ or ‘nails’ to avoid:

**“I highly commend you for your careful consideration of the seven golden rules:**

1. *Never exchange intimate details with a person of the opposite sex other than your wife.*
2. *Never put your arm round a woman other than your wife or daughter. Psychologically you are offering them security that just happens to answer one of the deepest needs a woman has. [This is not referring to giving a hug, but standing or walking with your arm around a woman for a protracted period of time.]*
3. *Never counsel a woman alone. If that is not possible, keep the door of the room slightly open.*
4. *Never give lifts to a woman unless she is old enough to be your mother or it is a matter of urgency. If possible give your wife a telephone call to let her know what is happening; it all helps to keep things in the light.*
5. *Always ensure your own marriage is in a healthy state – which includes enjoying each other in bed. Prov 5:18-19 “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 captivated by her love.”*
6. *Always deal ruthlessly with any deep character fault and without fail confess your problems to a trusted friend. Ask him to hold you to strict account for your daily actions and temptations.*

7. Whenever you find yourself repeatedly thinking about another woman and enjoying the thought, always seek help from a trusted friend, preferably someone you recognise as having spiritual authority in your life. This applies whether the thoughts are holy or not. It may be that you find yourself longing for their company for whatever deceitful reason your heart may conjure up; or you may find yourself exchanging glances with her. Recognise that you are on dangerous rocks that will wreck your life, marriage, family and ministry – unless you take evasive action.” (Practical Pastoring, pg 57)

### **A model to follow**

Millie Dienert, who worked for 40 years with Billy Graham team for 40 years gives this wonderful testimony:

*“I have always appreciated, from a moral point of view, how the men have been in their attitudes towards the secretaries. The doors are always left open. There is a high regard for the lack of any kind of privacy where a boss and secretary are involved. At times, I thought they were going a little too far, that it wasn’t necessary, but I’m glad they did it, especially today. They have kept everything above reproach. When you are working on a long-term basis with the same person, constantly, in hotels, where the wife is not there and the secretary is, that is a highly explosive situation. You have to take precautions. I have always respected the way they have handled that. It has been beautifully done.”*

May we all receive the same praise at the end of our lives – *“It has been beautifully done.”*

**This is our promise: we can finish strong – if we respond now and make the right decisions. Let’s take action!**

## **Acknowledgements**

Most of the material for this chapter was taken from the following two books, and a few from the third book:

Finishing Strong – Steve Farrar

Practical Pastoring - Barney Coombs

The Christ-centred Marriage – Charles Mylander & Neil T. Anderson