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Noblemen: An Introduction

Are the men in your ministry truly men of influence?
Do they struggle stepping up to lead?
Do they lack deep, authentic relationships with other men?
Has fear defined them more than courage?
Do they have the confidence and skill to lead other men?
Is anyone following them?
Are they plagued by their struggle with impurity and shame?
Do they lack peace and intimacy with God?

These are questions that haunt every man.

Deep down in every man’s soul is a longing to change the world. And the world is in desperate need of men who have what it takes to change the course of history. Yet for most guys, the world is changing them more than they are changing the world.

The Noblemen program is a 12-week rite of passage to true biblical manhood that provides answers to the above questions. It is a life changing experience designed for young men who want to truly know what it means to be a man from a biblical standpoint and how to emulate that within their own sphere of influence. It doesn’t end there though. Everything taught is designed to be passed on as we learn to help those around us flourish, so that they can do the same for others. As men, there’s nothing we want more than to positively impact the world. That’s God’s desire for us as well. Simply put, the men who complete Noblemen are transformed and God uses them to transform their world.

The Results

Expect to grow in the following areas:

- Courage
- Fear and Passivity
- Identity in Christ
- Intimacy with Christ
- Purity
- Wisdom
- Work Ethic
- Discipleship
- Authentic Friendships
- Relating to Women
- Accepting Responsibility
- Teachability
- Evangelism
- A Vision for Spiritual Generations
- Consistency in the Scriptures
- Leadership skills
- Servanthood
- Evangelism
- Vision of the Role of Husband/Father
Who is Bryce Bouchard?

Bryce Bouchard and his wife Susan have been on staff with the Navigators since 1996. They have 4 children and a passion for collegiate ministry. Bryce has been a Campus Director, a Campus Director Coach, a liaison between Headquarters and field staff, and a national conference speaker. He began Noblemen in 2004 and spends much of his time coaching and training staff and students through the Noblemen course.

When he came to know Christ at the age of 18, Bryce was radically changed. Compelled to reach college students with the Gospel, he left his full-time job in the workplace and has been reaching and discipling students ever since. Bryce met his wife, Susan at Glen Eyrie during a staff conference. Together, they have worked to reach Greeks, athletes, and students in the dorms at Virginia Tech, Penn State, University of Arizona, University of California Davis, and The University of Oklahoma.

Bryce's personal mission statement is, "I recruit, inspire, and equip spiritual revolutionaries that reproduce reproducers who reach those without Christ and help instigate worldwide revival." He enjoys restoring old cars, hanging with Susan and the kids, and cycling long distances. His life verse is Acts 13:22b "...I have found David, son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do."

The History of Noblemen

Bryce did not grow up in a home where a clear picture of a godly life was modeled. Surrounded by a culture where masculinity was increasingly obscured, he realized he didn’t have a compelling definition of what it meant to be a man. Nor did he have a path to get there.

In 1998, Bryce and Susan were married. Bryce quickly realized he needed a clear picture of what it meant to be a man. In many ways he felt like a boy, incapable of loving selflessly and leading skillfully. For five years Bryce studied the Scriptures searching for direction. He read or listened to anything available and asked older men for their input.

During that time, one conclusion stood out to Bryce above all others. Being a godly man was not simply knowing what to be and how to live, more importantly, it was about acting on that knowledge. He watched college men struggle to transition into strong, courageous men capable of impacting the world. Bryce decided to create a course that would both offer a clear and compelling vision of what it meant to be a man, and a workable path to become a man. In 2004, Noblemen was born.

What started with 24 college men at the University of Arizona has now evolved into a 12 week course being offered at ministries around the country. Countless men have joined a brotherhood whose hearts are set on walking passionately with God. Noblemen is far more than a course, it's an experience. It offers a rite of passage that God has used to change men, laying a foundation for life.
Commitment

1. Time

For the men who participate, Noblemen is a 5-7 hour per week commitment. There are 12 weeks and all assignments and sessions are mandatory for participants. For a leader hosting a Noblemen course, expect this to take 5-10 hours per week for your first year leading a course.

2. Money

Noblemen will typically make money for the ministry within the first 3 years. The cost of your course will be determined by the size of your class. The more men, the less you can charge. You may want to subsidize the first year’s course.

Charging $175 per man should allow you to break even. This will cover the cost of the LAUNCH Trip, BOOST Trip, materials, FORT week snacks, Graphic Designer for crests, and Ceremony costs. We encourage you to offer scholarships to those who need them. We encourage the men who complete Noblemen to consider giving back to Noblemen every year after completing the course. ($15 as a student, $100 as an alumni are the suggested donations.)

Access to the website is an additional $5 per participant, and $10 per host/lesser. This is charged upon sign up.
Noblemen: Quick Start Guide

Timeline

We have found that Noblemen fits very well into the Spring semester for students. It is helpful to determine by **November 1** if you are going to implement a Noblemen Course so you can begin recruiting in November. Here is a basic timeline:

**November**

1. Put Dates on the Calendar
   a. Determine your start date
      i. It is best to determine your ceremony date and work backwards 12 weeks, keeping in mind calendar interruptions like Spring Break, Easter, and Midterms. Typically, you are going to need to start the first or second week of classes in January.
   b. LAUNCH Trip date
      i. Your LAUNCH Trip is best placed the weekend of your first week’s meeting. So if you meet on a Tuesday, they will then leave that Friday night for Launch Trip. The first week’s meeting is a “Taste & See” session. Then, they have until the weekend to decide if they are going to be a part of the course. If so, they are expected to go on the Launch Trip. This is important to tell them before Christmas break so they can plan accordingly and aren’t hearing about the trip just a few days before.
   c. BOOST Trip Date
      i. This is best placed about six weeks into the course as a 24 hour bonding retreat.
   d. FORT week and Ceremony dates
      i. As the pinnacle of the course, you want to ensure these dates are free of any potential calendar issues.

2. Cast Vision to your Ministry Team
   a. Explain to your staff team or leadership team what Noblemen is and why you are implementing this in your ministry. Get these men on board and excited. Show them the promo video. If they are excited, they will recruit passionately to the course.

3. Build a Leadership Team
   a. Appoint a staff member or man you respect from church to be your co-leader for Noblemen. (In your second year of Noblemen, you will invite a team of 4-10 men who went through the course to come back and help lead the next year.) They will keep track of all recruiting lists, ensuring that by December every man on your recruiting list has had a personal invitation and been personally followed up.

4. Build a Recruitment List
   a. Create a list of every man remotely connected to your ministry.
5. First Promo Video  
   a. The second week of November

6. Second Promo Video  
   a. The third week of November

7. Noblemen Interest MEATing  
   a. The fourth week of November or first week of December

**December**

1. Continue Recruiting.  
   a. Every man connected to the ministry should have heard about Noblemen, watched a promo video, received a personal invitation, and been followed up with.

2. Publicize your start Date and Launch trip dates.  
   a. Since these are required if you want to participate make sure these are well publicized.

3. Determine location for Noblemen meetings.

4. Determine a location for LAUNCH Trip

5. Build your budget.  
   a. Examine the example budget and scale for your ministry. Decide how much you can offer in subsidies and break down the specific needs.

6. Begin reviewing the teaching material

**January**

1. Have your team reconnect with every recruit.

2. Begin Noblemen Course  
   a. Print binders for the guys

3. Go on Launch Trip

4. Give LAUNCH Trip Evaluation

5. Start planning Boost Trip  
   a. Determine location/activities

**February/March**

1. Go on Boost Trip

2. Give BOOST Trip evaluation

3. Begin planning FORT Week  
   a. Determine location for housing  
      i. Preferably all Noblemen will move in together for the week  
      ii. Plan the Sunday night start as well as the Thursday night cross carry  
      iii. Purchase the materials for the daily challenges

4. Begin planning the Ceremony  
   a. Confirm location  
   b. Begin planning the stages and acquiring the necessary materials
April

1. Host FORT Week
2. Hold Ceremony Ceremony
3. Give Full Course Evaluation
4. Plan post course Bible studies/sexual wholeness studies and next steps
Recruiting

Noblemen will help you reach men in your community. Many men are confused, lost, broken, lonely and addicted. You will find that Noblemen is not only very easy to recruit to, but that you will be able to recruit men who may not otherwise interact with your ministry. Accordingly, we want to encourage you to recruit widely, tenaciously, and competently.

Noblemen requires a lot of work. It will have a large impact on your men and your ministry so you will want as many men as possible to be a part. We’ve never had a Noblemen class that was too big.

Similar to other events that you recruit for, you’ll want to employ both an “aerial assault” and a “ground game.” Just like in war, one without the other is often insufficient for successful recruiting. It has been said that just when you feel like you are being redundant, your people are starting to catch on to what you’re saying. Your aerial assault is accomplished by things like the promo videos, announcements at your large group meetings, and emails. The ground game is accomplished by you and your team sharing more specifically in Bible Studies, small groups, and one on one meetings. Both recruiting focuses will be addressed with important details to consider as you get started.

Aerial Assault Recruiting

1. Promo Video

There are the videos that we encourage you to show at your large group meetings in early to mid November. Don’t bother prefacing the video, just launch it. Have an emcee or staff member follow up the video with an announcement. Something like this…

“Hey guys, we are excited to announce a new course that we are going to be offering to all of our men next semester. It is a discipleship course on Biblical Manhood called Noblemen. If you’re even remotely interested, we are passing around a sign up sheet, and some Noblemen promo cards. This is your invite to the interest MEATing on ___date at time___. This is going to be an informational meeting with a ton of meat and you’ll get to hear more about Noblemen.”
2. Interest Sign-up Sheets

You will want to print off at least a few of these and hand them out after you show the promo video. Let the guys know that this is not a commitment to the course. Rather, we are wanting to get a feel for who is interested. Encourage them to put their name down if they are even remotely interested. Make sure to collect these sheets. We have found that when a man puts his name down on the sign-up sheet, he’s more likely to consider doing the course.

3. Create a Recruitment List

Take your sign up sheets and create a Noblemen wide-net recruiting list In addition to these names, go through with your leadership team and brainstorm any other men who are remotely connected to your ministry through Bible Studies, relationships etc.

Consider dusting off all of those contacts from previous initiatives or people who have visited your ministry in the last 6 months. Again, you’d be surprised how many men are interested in doing Noblemen when they hear about it and are personally invited. Continue to pray through and update this list over the next weeks.

4. Salty Cards

You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink, so they claim. If however, you give the horse salt he will drink freely. In the same way the questions on these cards are designed to generate a perceived sense of need. Simply read through it with students you are recruiting, share which questions speak to you and ask them which questions speak to them.

We provide these cards as examples. Feel free to change the back of these to accurately represent your meetings. We encourage you to make 2 versions. The first Salty Card is for your Interest MEATing and has an invitation to your Noblemen Interest MEATing. The second is just a basic salty card for recruiting Salty Card. You will want to have enough of these printed for each man in your ministry. Print at least 5 for each man who is with you in your ministry and encourage him to personally invite friends to the Interest MEATing and/or first Taste and See Session when the course begins. You can edit these in Photoshop or most equivalent software.
5. **Interest MEATing BBQ**

Plan your BBQ to be within a week of your initial announcement about Noblemen. It works well to have the MEATing be after your large group. (If you are doing a New Eve course for the women, they can also do an Interest meeting somewhere at the same time as your after large group activity. Otherwise, don’t forget to plan in something special for the ladies to do!)

As the name implies, you will have a lot of meat! Consider looking into a nearby farm or somewhere you can have a big bonfire. Bring a grill or two and bar-b-q a lot of meat. Often times whoever hosts your event would be happy to help do all of the meat for you. Keep in mind that grilling often takes much longer than anticipated. You’ll want whoever is in charge of grilling to have all of the meat ready to eat as soon as the guys arrive.

If this is the first time that you have offered a Noblemen course in your ministry you obviously won’t have anyone available to share about how Noblemen has impacted them and why it’s worth it. Next year, you will have a large group of men who will be able to come share about that. For now, your main focus will be sharing about why you have decided to do this course and why you feel like it is worth it.

**Goals:** Give men a better picture of what Noblemen is, why you’ve decided to offer the course and why you would like each of them to be a part of it.

**Schedule:**
- Eat and hangout around the fire for 30 minutes or so.
- Give each guy the Recruiting Trifold or if you can’t afford to print that give them a Where Men Are Graphic. Pick some select statistics from this trifold ahead of time and share about how the world is in need of strong, humble men who have the heart, vision, character and skills to rise up and lead in our generation.
- Print off and give the guys each a copy of the Interest MEATing handout. Read through the Creed out loud. Ask, “Can you imagine the impact that even just a small group of men would have on the world if they really decided to live out this creed for the next 50 years of their lives?!” Ask, “Which things stand out to you that you like about the Creed? Give time for several men to answer.”
Share the following: (feel free to just read or paraphrase)
Over a thousand men have completed the Noblemen course and are living out the creed around the world. Paul told his young protégé Timothy to train himself to be godly. Noblemen is designed to aid you as you train yourself to be godly.

Like anything that is worthwhile, Noblemen is costly. It will take effort and it will surely stretch you. Noblemen is a 5 hour per week commitment. There are 12 weeks and all assignments and sessions are mandatory for participating students. But, you probably have more time available to you than you think. Just take a look at a breakdown of a students discretionary time.

Noblemen will hit on the many areas we have already been focusing on in our ministry, but will do so with an intense focus and effort that will fortify you as a man in significant ways.

Expect to really fortify the following areas of your life:

- Identity in and intimacy with Christ
- Deeper friendships
- Sexual Purity
- Work ethic and faithfulness
- Relating to women well
- Evangelism and Discipleship skill
- A passion for spiritual generations
- Consistency in the Scriptures
- Prep to be a godly husband and father
- Leadership skills

Have them get into small groups and discuss which each of them would say is a strength and which is a struggle. This is really helpful at them feeling like they got a chance to process and contribute. In some ways it gives them a taste of what Noblemen will be like. This part keeps the night from just feeling like they got information.

- Have them take the NMAT if they haven’t already. Again, make sure to go to noblemenministries.org in order to take it. If you have already administered the NMAT, take some time to share with them some of the results of your ministry’s NMAT. Highlight areas of strength you’re proud of and areas of concern that you look forward to growing in.
- Cost. You can charge however much you’d like. We encourage you to charge $175 per man with a $50 scholarship if they need it. This will allow you to stay in the black. It’s not a bad idea to subsidize the first year and charge $100-$150 for the course. Know that in future years, Noblemen usually brings in revenue whereby you will be able to recoup the money you subsidized the first year. For most men, $175 will not be a problem. Let them know that if they need more than a $50 scholarship that they can request that. We encourage you to not fully scholarship any of the men. It’s good for them to pay at least $25-$50.
they will be hearing about the course a month in advance it should be possible for most to come up with the money.

- Tell them when your first session will be as well as when your LAUNCH trip will be. Explain that the first session is a Taste & See meeting. That is, they can come and see what they think without having to commit to the rest of the course. You want to strongly encourage every man to at least consider coming to this first meeting.
- Print out and pass around your Noblemen wide-net recruiting list and encourage them to sign up. It’s okay if you’ve passed this around before. Tell them to each look through and make sure their name is on the list if they plan on at least coming to the first Taste and See meeting.
- Remind them of what night you are meeting, when and where the first meeting will be and to plan on doing the Launch trip and the date for that.
- Close in prayer
- Make sure to follow up with every guy who came to the Interest MEATing before they leave for Christmas Break.

**To buy/bring:** Food (buy at least 1/3 to 1/2 pound of meat per man) Plates, napkins, plastic utensils, drinks, ice and cooler for drinks, trash-bags, flyers, wide-net recruiting list, pens

**Ground Game Recruiting**

1. **Bible Studies & Small Groups**

   Every Bible Study or small group has some men who don’t come to your large group. When these men hear about the opportunity to do Noblemen in a more personal setting, they will seriously consider joining. Appoint a staff or leader to go to each Bible Study and small group to share about Noblemen. Pass around a Noblemen Interest Sign-up sheet that you have printed off and given them. Make sure to get these back right away and add them to your wide-net recruiting list as they often get misplaced.

2. **Personal Invitation**

   Take your Noblemen wide-net recruiting list and divide this up between your staff and/or leaders. For all of those who are undecided, set up a one on one appointment to tell them more about Noblemen, answer any questions, and give a clear, personal invitation asking them to join. You will want to make sure that each man on your list who is still undecided has been met with before January.
Inevitably, we find that there are numerous men who have heard about Noblemen multiple times but need a personal invitation before they join. For those whom money is an issue, many will not have realized there are scholarships available. Let them know that you want them to do the course and they can pay what they are able.

During this meeting, we want to encourage these men to be a part of Noblemen. But, like any other thing we are recruiting for, we want to do so without undue pressure. If they say no, honor that and let them know if they change their mind you’d still love to have them join.
The Noblemen Creed - Interest Meeting Handout

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously— doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.

I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.

I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving, and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.

Key areas fortified through Noblemen

- Identity in and intimacy with Christ
- Deeper friendships
- Sexual Purity
- Work ethic and faithfulness
- Relating to women well
- Evangelism and Discipleship skill
- A passion for spiritual generations
- Consistency in the Scriptures
- Prep to be a godly husband and father
- Leadership skills
Discretionary Time Available to the Average College Student

At UC Davis, where the average student admitted has a 4.3 GPA entering college, statistics show that each week they spend:

16 hours in class and 13 hours studying.

Divide by 5 = just over 6 hrs. per day of class and study.

24 hours in the average student’s day:

- 6 hours of class and study
- 8 hours sleeping (you’ve gotten this much sleep once in college)
- 3 hours eating (nobody takes this long to eat!)

= 7 leftover hours of free time per day to invest in your relationship with God, developing your character and helping others know and walk with Jesus.

You have a part time job or are ROTC or Greek? That probably takes about 21 hours per week. So that’s 3 hours less per day than the average student but still leaves you 6 hours every day to know Jesus and make an indelible mark on eternity!
LAUNCH Trip: An Explanation

The purpose of the LAUNCH trip is to allow significant bonding among your Noblemen class. The 24-48 hour is designed to literally launch your men into the Noblemen program, giving you a month of progress in a weekend.

We recommend getting away with your entire group the first weekend after your taste and see session. In regards to location, get far enough away from your immediate locale in order to turn focus towards the group. We also recommend that you don’t skimp on food. There is nothing a large group of men appreciate or bond over more than good food.

In regards to content, on the way to bolt trip have every man listen to to Tim Keller’s Hero of Heroes sermon. It’s about 50 minutes long. Therefore you will need to be traveling for at least 50 minutes! This sermon is accessible via the website. Also accessible through the website is the release of liability form you need to have each student fill out. While they do that collect their father’s name and address discreetly. You will need the information later to send out letters to their fathers.

When you arrive cast vision for the weekend. We are here to pursue God as a brotherhood of men. Give out the Proverbs reading guide and have them start reading Proverbs in the morning. Also have men select their first wingman in order to begin connecting over the course content, sharing what they are learning. In regards to small groups, if you already have a previous structure keep it. The important thing is that men are broken down into groups of no more than eight!

During the weekend, plan plenty of free time and fun activities. We suggest various manly games, sports, and movies like Courageous. However, during this weekend you do need to plan time to cover both sessions 2 and 3. You can do these anytime you want. We recommend doing them Friday night and Saturday night.

Keep this in mind. Wherever you stay, clean it diligently. Use this as a teaching moment to show that godly men leave a place and people better than they found them.
BOOST Trip: An Explanation

The LAUNCH trip and FORT week are two significant bookends in the Noblemen experience. We’ve found over the years that excitement about the course begins to wear off after about 4 weeks. The goal of the Boost trip is to encourage men to persevere.

Though it is natural to have a few guys either drop out or at least consider dropping out before they make it to FORT week, you want to do everything you can to help these men finish the course. General MacArthur rightly noted that “Age wrinkles the body, quitting wrinkles the soul.” Finishing the course will dramatically change your men who are considering quitting if they stick with it. For many of these men who are part of a “I want the summit without climbing the mountain” generation, it will also be monumental for them to finish something that’s difficult.

The Boost trip is an opportunity to do just that. It’s meant to Boost you to FORT week. It’s a 24 hour trip where you get away together for bonding, fun and to renew the vision and commitment to the course and to completing it together. Camping is a great option.

Include whatever you would like in the Boost Trip, but make sure to incorporate the following elements:

- Study on a Biblical passage
- Boost Trip Illustration
- Group Discussion about what you are getting out of Noblemen so far
- Talk by leader about why it’s essential to not quit
- Fun games where you compete as small groups against one another

Ideas for the Boost Trip to consider:

- Cold weather camping
- ZOTS
BOOST Trip Content

We are at the halfway point in Noblemen. This is the point where it gets easy to slack off because you’re overwhelmed with life and all the assignments and work that go into Noblemen. If you didn’t believe that this program would be hard you’ll start to believe it around this point. Just so you know that’s normal. My encouragement to you is don’t stop now! Your generation has a lot of stereotypes and a lot of them are false. One that I believe is true is that this generation wants to take the summit without climbing the mountain. You will distinguish yourself from most of your peers in your generation if you make a habit of not quitting even when things get hard.

To finish something you have started adds one more brick in the wall of becoming a faithful man. To quit something that you have committed to is not like taking one brick out, it’s like removing 10. Choosing not to follow through with a commitment, any commitment that you make, is significant. If you want to set yourself apart from your peers not just with God but also in the workplace, you can start right now. Choose to cultivate faithfulness right now to show your peers and your boss that you are different. Psalm 37:3 says “Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.” That doesn’t come naturally for most of us. You have to cultivate faithfulness in your life. Work at not committing to something unless you’re going to finish. Each of you signed a contract at the beginning of this course that said you were in. A Nobleman gives his word and his word can be counted on.

It’s not just that I want you to finish Noblemen. I want you to be a faithful man who everyone around you can count on! Every one of you wants that as well, but only some of you will be willing to pay the price to become a man of your word. Your wife, your kids, your friends, your church, your colleagues, and this generation needs you to be a faithful man. You will want to quit. You will want to give a half-hearted effort. Don’t do it! Cultivate faithfulness. Spur each other on. Don’t let one another quit. Call the men around you to faithfulness.

Consider these words from Tom Yeakley, a prominent ministry leader:

“The world is in crisis today. It is not a political crisis, though it has political implications. It is not an economic crisis, though economics are affected. It is not a social crisis, though all levels of society are impacted. It is a spiritual crisis brought on by the people of God themselves. There is a spiritual poverty, a lack of vitality in the believer’s walk and talk that has led to mediocrity in the Christian world today. This mediocre life of the believer has left the Christian world with a muted witness and an emasculated impact on society. What is needed is a transformation in the Christian world. What is needed is a generation of believers who will live a radical life (radical in the eyes of the world, but not to God); a life that seeks the world to come, not this world.”

The word “mediocre” finds its origin in two Latin words meaning “halfway” and “mountain”. Mediocre means to only get halfway up the mountain. A mediocre Christian life is one that begins its journey aiming for the top of the mountain, but then settles for only halfway to the summit. What is needed today is a generation of young people who will decide to reach for the summit in the Christian life and settle for nothing less until they reach it. There is no room for compromise along the way. There will be opportunities to bow out, to give in to the tide of the world, but this generation needs to set their face like a flint and go for broke. They will be satisfied with nothing less than God’s best—serving Him with their whole heart!
Luke 14:28-30 says

"28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

Don’t commit to doing something if you’re not going to follow through. Psalm 15:4 speaks of the man who keeps his oath even when it hurts. Be that man! Men, you are Noblemen. Noblemen are faithful men. Cultivate faithfulness!

Unfortunately, a lack of faithfulness doesn’t only affect you! Deuteronomy 20:8 says,

“And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own.”

Here Moses gives the Israelite people terms for battle. The soldiers are commanded to weed themselves out before heading to the battle. Can you imagine being in a wartime situation where a man you thought had your back deserts you! This is unacceptable! In the same way, as we grow together on the path of manhood, we need other men who we can lean into and depend on in good faith. Ultimately it is only God who will never abandon us. However, we are called to faithful.

For a final example lets consider Caleb and the 12 spies in Number 13:1-3, 25-33.

Here we something something very unique happen. God tells Moses to send spies into the Promised Land to view what He would give the people of Israel. Moses obediently send out the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. Look how these leaders respond when they return! We find out that only Caleb and Joshua believed they could seize what God promised them. The other 10 all succumbed to fear saying “we are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are”

In a similar way, God calls us to take hold of our role as a man. This can be horribly intimidating especially as it reveals how inept we are. Remember the question that haunts every man? Apart from Christ we cannot answer it in a way that brings life!

As a group of men we have to be faithful to follow God in obedience, believing He will give us the strength to accomplish the mission before us. Let’s pray we are men like Joshua and Caleb. Men of faith and faithfulness, trusting God to be who He says He is and trusting Him to do what He says He will do.

(Optional lesser sharing time)
BOOST Trip Commitment Illustration

The primary focus during Boost trip is two fold: continued bonding and reaffirmed commitment to the course. The goal of this illustration is to show the consequences of committing to Noblemen and then withdrawing when it becomes difficult. Quitting the course not only reflects on your integrity, but it also harms the other men who are along side you.

This illustration should be conducted as follows:

- Divide your men into groups of 10
- Give each man a number from 1-10, each will have specific instructions.
- Every 45 seconds read off the instructions of a new number
- Starting off: Number 1 – You will be held by horizontally by the other 9 men. Lay on the ground flat, with your arms across your chest. Other men, lift him up as a team.
- At 0:45 seconds: Man Number 2 – Noblemen is turning out to be far harder than you anticipated, you are no longer interested in maintaining your commitment. Go sit down.
- At 1:30: Man Number 3 – You are beginning to be stressed by your other commitments, work, school, family, friends. You choose to stop showing up rather than ask for help. Go sit down.
- At 2:15: Man Number 4 – You stay up all night chasing your hobbies, instead of tending to your responsibilities. You are now only using one hand to help lift your team mate.
- At 3:00: Man Number 5 – You are no longer doing any of your Noblemen assignments but you are lying and saying you are. Get on the back of one of the other men.
- At 3:45: Men Number 6 & 7: Discouraged by the other men quitting around you, you two decide Noblemen is no longer worth your investment. Let go with one hand.

At this point it should be impossible to hold the man up. If they are doing fine, continue by asking a man to leave every 30 seconds.

Potential Discussion Questions Post Illustration:
1. For the man being held: How did it feel as increasingly fewer men were there to support you?
2. For the men who left: How can you relate to some of the excuses you heard?
3. What did this exercise teach you about the importance of individual commitment in a group?
4. What are some ways you have seen yourself struggle in your commitment to Noblemen?
5. How can we encourage one another?
BOOST Trip: ZOTS Flashlight Game

Where: Ideal location is a large hill that’s at least 100 yards long and is grassy without thorns or too many obstacles. You can play in a wooded area but that will increase the chance of injury.

Strategy: Get someone from the bottom team to touch a person from the top team without being spotted by a light and their name called.

How the game is played: Break your group in two and send half to the top of the hill, each with a flashlight, and the other half to the bottom without flashlights.

Those at the top spread out and once they choose their respective locations, they are not allowed to move from that spot. When they are all ready, whistle or yell to the bottom team to begin. Each player at the top is allowed to turn their flashlight on for 2 seconds at a time and then has to count to 10 Mississippi before turning on again. They do not have to do so as a group, rather individually. When they do turn on, they are not allowed to scan. They point their light and hope to hit someone. When they do see a person, they have to have a light on them and call their name, one time per flashlight blast. You cannot call out several names per flashlight blast.

If the light flashes on you and your name is called, you have to turn around and go all the way back to the bottom and start over.

The round is over when someone from the bottom successfully reaches the top and touches any one member of the top team without having the light shined on them and their name called. At that point, the two teams trade sides and repeat the process for as many rounds as you’d like.

There are no out of bounds. The bottom team can approach the top from the front back or sides. A few helpful strategies for the bottom team are to:

- Change clothes to throw off the top team as they try to guess names
- Rush the top in a single file line and as the front person gets picked off, the line keeps moving
- Spread out your group and have people attack from different directions

Additional considerations: If possible, scout out the land in daylight and warn of any locations where poison ivy or other hazards exist. If the top team is getting tagged too quickly or it’s taking too long, consider adjusting the amount of time they count between flashes.
Building a Noblemen Budget:

1. Go online to noblemenministries.com and download the budget calculator
2. Or go to https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T05bvt47Il5_zdCpiv2zJueSaRpg-Y92ycRKaRTYHvk/edit#gid=0

Noblemen Promo Video Links

1. Go to noblemenministries.com and download or access the video
2. Or for promo video 1 go to the Noblemen YouTube channel:
   a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3b-iyQU8YJw&t=2s
3. For promo video 2 go to the Noblemen YouTube channel:
   a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnes7Y3jvIA

Noblemen Recruitment Spreadsheet & Signup

1. Go online to noblemenministries.com and download the Wide Net Recruiting Spreadsheet & Signup
2. Or go to:
   a. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16bkBQpbLhx560l9x-a2m0wJW22mxEXP8nqEbjYzDFO/edit?usp=sharing
   b. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N0HQIb9s9QK_3WaC_nqgjMFc8sicAUMXA/view?usp=sharing

Noblemen Recruitment Tools

1. Salty Cards - Download at noblemenministries.com
   a. Or go to: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X8Kn2vkT1z7dv-2CnuZHC0iNzPwb9Wj/view?usp=sharing
   b. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BvUNLUCxBzSZYktv9SVRTnZUKMW9E/view?usp=sharing
2. Recruiting Trifold - Download at noblemenministries.com
   a. Or go to: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1- zw1ohkCCgdoIGfE_hs5aD15dRlxcf1H/view?usp=sharing
3. Where Men Are Graphic - Download at noblemenministries.com
   a. Or go to: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-7VEXduoY5f2ft1dRwlXB6ecnPHFO7t/view?usp=sharing
Noblemen Point Values

- Everyone starts with 100 points.
- You must have at least 75 to enter FORT week.
- All points are on your honor.
- Keep track of your points on the Noblemen Website

- Point Deductions are as follows:
  - **D** = Daily
  - **W** = Weekly
  - D - Miss a daily reading (-1 point)
  - D - Miss Wingman call (-1 point)
  - W - Miss memorizing verse by meeting (-1 point)
  - W - Miss doing weekly Bible Study (-1 point)
  - W - Can't quote Creed portions by meeting (-2 points)
  - W - Missing or imperfect weekly assignment (-10 points)
  - W - Miss a session (-20 points)

- Extra Credit opportunities are as follows:
  - Read *Shadow of the Almighty* by Elisabeth Elliot and write a 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  - Read *Silence of Adam* by Larry Crabb and write a 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  - Listen to *Love Songs* by Tommy Nelson (the full sermon series) and write a 1 page paper about how you will apply this to your life (+10pts)
  - Pre-approved community volunteering opportunities (+5pts)
  - Make up one missed session and write 100 word paper summarizing what you learned (+3 points)
Noblemen FAQs

Background

Q: Where does the term Noblemen come from?
A: Isaiah 32:8 “But the noble man makes noble plans and by noble deeds he stands.

Q: What are the desired outcomes of the program?
A:
- Vision and equipping for walking intimately with God and making disciples
- Greater love for the Word and more consistent time in it
- Greater dependency on the Lord
- Renouncing secret and shameful ways
- Growth in sexual purity and freedom
- Deeper relationships with other men
- Wisdom and godliness in relating to women
- Stronger work ethic
- Greater teachability
- More engagement in evangelism
- Increased confidence in leading courageously, skillfully, humbly
- Deeper relationship with parents
- Greater integrity and strengthened convictions
- Growth in servant-hearted leadership
- Greater ownership and engagement with ministry

Recruiting

Q: Who should I target for this?
A: All the men connected in any way with your ministry. Begin with those most connected and move to those who are more on the fringe. The course is appropriate for Believers and seekers.

Q: How do I get them commit?
A: Explain to them ahead of time what they will get and what it will cost them (see desired outcomes). Help them understand their personal need for growth in the topics discussed in Noblemen.

Q: What is an ideal size for a class?
A: The bigger the better, because they’ll learn from each other, too.
Planning

Q: What material resources, classroom and training spaces, and personnel support will I need?
A: Reserve a meeting space. If you’re a campus ministry, ideally on campus or at least within walking distance. For the first weekend of the course (Launch Trip) you’ll want a location (church, house, camp, etc.) where you can away from campus. For the last week of the course (Fort week) you’ll want a church or house where you can all sleep from Sun pm through Fri am. Church classrooms work well.

Q: Where do I get the lesson plans and training content?
A: There is a teaching video available at Noblemenministries.com. The lesson plans will also be posted on the website if you desire to teach the material yourself.

Execution

Q: What does a typical meeting look like?
A: 1.5 hours total
15-20 minutes intro (review verses and creed, announcements, discuss previous assignment.)
40 minutes teaching
5 minutes wrap up and announcements/assignments for next week
25-30 minutes small group discussion

Q: How does Noblemen fit into my current ministry structure (leadership development, discipleship, bible studies, etc.)?
A: Noblemen can run concurrent with leadership team training and Bible Studies or can replace them. After a year or two or incorporating Noblemen into your ministry, most of your men will have gone through it, so it will become primarily for freshmen and transfers. If your Ministry is in its early stages, it may be better to do Noblemen in place of current Bible Studies and leadership teams. Don’t be afraid to cut components from your ministry. The men will get most of the same content but to a much greater degree in Noblemen. And here’s an important consideration: it’s better to do one thing very well than burn yourself out doing 4 or 5 things poorly. Don’t worry about losing some men from the ministry who decide not to do Noblemen. Why hinder those who want to grow by shaping your ministry around those who’ve already demonstrated a low commitment to grow? Do Noblemen and the men who do the course will often reach out to those who didn’t.

Additional Questions:

Q: How much should I charge guys for the course?
A: We set up the course to be a simple base version of Noblemen. We’ll also give you several “upgrade options” that you can add if you like that are not essential but add value. You’d be safe to charge $100-$200 per man to cover your costs for the bare bones version. (For some perspective, guys in fraternities pay $500-$1000 per semester and get far less for it.)
An example “upgrade” that will end up costing more is the family crest. One of the themes in Noblemen is the idea of having each man see himself as a patriarch. They may come from a long line of godly patriarchs or may be the first real patriarch in their family line. A crest is a meaningful representation of being a patriarch because it illustrates the values the man wants to carry forward in his family. For generations to come, this man’s children and grandchildren will be able to see that their family desires to live up to what that image conveys. The guys spend time working on the ideas and values and design they want in a crest and we send a sketch or description of that to a graphic designer who charges $35 to create a professional looking crest. I’ll show a few examples here. At the end of the Ceremony, each guy is presented a framed version of his crest. This adds an additional $35-40 to the cost of the course, but you can probably see the value that it would add.

We also offer scholarships and tell them not to let money be a reason to miss the course. It works best to have the guys pay by the 3rd week at the latest. If guys want a scholarship, I ask them how much they feel they can pay and then we cover the rest. Rarely do more than a few guys end up taking the scholarship.

Q: Can outsiders visit Noblemen sessions?
A: I would advise you not to have people visit. Inevitably, a pastor, alumni, supporter or someone is going to hear about your Noblemen course and want to come sit in one night. I politely explain to them that one of our goals is to create a very intimate setting where men feel the freedom to share who they really are and their struggles, and so we don’t open the sessions to visitors (the exception of course is if I have a guest speaker for one of the sessions, but even then, I have them take off after they speak so that the sharing time is private.)

Q: I love the idea of the point system. How do you guard against complaints that it’s legalistic?
A: It is something to watch for. I’ve had a staff person come from another ministry who has not done Noblemen get caught up in “keeping points for my relationship with God”. A few things have stood out to me over the years. Usually these are staff who have a very low bar for themselves and their people and use grace as an excuse for being lazy and not walking in holiness. It’s often couched as a theological problem when it’s really a lack-of-commitment problem.

My ministry is intense, and my expectations are high, but our whole ministry and especially Noblemen strongly emphasizes the need for the Gospel of grace to drive everything we do. Folks who’ve been in our ministry would probably describe it as intense, but far from legalistic. Legalism says, “If you do this, you’ll gain my favor but, if you don’t, I’ll withhold love and acceptance.” There is nothing in Noblemen or our greater ministry that communicates that, so the points idea doesn’t come across as legalistic. The idea is simply that you’re going to have to put in the effort if you want to finish.
In a generation that significantly confuses grace and effort, having a system of points helps them understand this in their own walk with God. As has been said, “God is opposed to earning, but He’s not opposed to effort.” You don’t grow in any area of life or any relationship without effort. It wouldn’t cross a student’s mind to think that they should get an A in a course if they hadn’t put in the effort to complete the course.

I also like to communicate it in a positive way and say something like, “We say that you can take a guy who has finished Noblemen and plant him anywhere and come back a year later and there will be more like him. We want that to be true of every guy who finishes Noblemen. When a guy really gives himself fully to what Noblemen requires, he simply looks, leads, and ministers differently. We don’t want to lower the bar, but instead to help guys see the high calling and privilege we bear as men that God will use to change the course of history.”

Think of it another way. If you were going to war, you’d want to go with men who had developed the necessary mindset, done the training, and put in the effort required to finish boot camp before they joined you in combat. You would care very little about offending a man by expecting him to go through boot camp before joining your team in the field.

A significant problem that many young men face today is that they confuse God’s grace with a license to sin and avoid effort. They interpret love without condition from God as meaning I can put in whatever level of effort I want, and He should have no expectations of me. God’s love is without condition, but not without the expectation that we’ll grow into maturity. One theme in Noblemen is Gospel Identity: because of who I am in Christ by position, I obey him, but my obedience does not affect my security or identity in Christ. We put in the effort, not to earn God’s favor, but because we already have His favor and desire to please Him by growing in maturity. We want our experience of holiness to match our position of holiness.

When we’ve tried Noblemen without points, or without really enforcing them, it has yielded dramatically different results. Planting the seed of low commitment yields the fruit of low commitment. As Leroy Eims used to say, “if you play a boy’s game, boys are all you get. If you play a man’s game, men show up to play.”

Part of this is also simply ensuring that you don’t enforce the point system in a legalistic, authoritarian manner. That’s unlikely to be a problem for staff, but sometimes your older students (especially year two of NM who went through it the year before as a participant) will get on an ego trip and start belittling the guys and barking out orders and becoming legalistic with the points. You counter that by speaking to it and modeling grace. The points are also on the honor system, and good things come out of that. Nobody is checking up in a weird, legalistic way. If they abuse the system, that’s on them.

Q: How much time should they expect to put in outside of the actual meeting each week?  
A: On average, in addition to the weekly 1.5-2 hour meeting, they should expect 1-2 hours of additional work per week. This includes daily readings of a chapter of proverbs, calling their wingman, and doing their weekly assignments. When they begin to lead their Noblemen
Challenge groups, that adds an additional 30 minutes, and then FORT week is pretty time consuming with meetings every night, Sun evening through Friday morning. It’s helpful to show this sheet I put together of the Average College Student's Available Discretionary Time to students considering Noblemen. The 3-5 hours per week is costly but they probably have the time and it’s worth it!

Q: If we cancel our men’s Bible studies, what should we do with those men who don’t want to be part of Noblemen?
A: It’s important to remember that you’re not cancelling your studies, they’re just happening within Noblemen. When they break into small groups for the second half of each meeting, they’ll be in their Bible Study group (maybe with a few new guys who joined Noblemen but weren’t already in Bible Studies).

You might consider having a men’s group meet once a week for all the guys who don’t do Noblemen. An emphasis of Noblemen is the need for them to take responsibility for the men around them, so the hope is that they’ll start reaching out to those men who aren’t doing NM. At week 8, the guys will be recruiting and leading their own Noblemen Challenge groups. They can and should invite these other men into those groups. Basically, just encourage the guys doing NM to reach out and make sure the other guys still feel included.

Q: What do we communicate about this to the women, especially if we don’t have staff to be able to offer them something similar?
A: Often, the women in your ministry will be happy that you’re doing something for their guy friends and boyfriends. Let them know that you’re incorporating a new component into the ministry to get the men going well and that your hope is that we will can offer them a women’s version next. History has shown that we do best by establishing one course at a time.

Q: When we talked about this with our men on leadership and proposed folding Bible studies into Noblemen, the main concern was that it might drive away those freshmen who are somewhat on the fence about Navs.
A: Keep in mind that guys are on the fringe of your ministry for different reasons. Often, it’s because they aren’t very hungry to grow. If you don’t give those who are hungry and eager the food they want to avoid having some feel left out who aren’t that hungry, then you’ve just significantly crippled your ministry. Sometimes guys on the fringe will want to join in when they see the other guys growing significantly. Also, the guys who do Noblemen will start reaching out more intentionally to invest in those on the fringe if they become hungry to grow.

This is also why it’s important for your Bible Study leaders to recruit to Noblemen well. I want them to meet with every freshman guy who has ever come to their Bible Study and explain to them what they’ll get out of Noblemen and why they want them in it. You’d be surprised how many of them will choose to join if someone sits down to personally challenge and invite them. I encourage them to at least come to the first session, which we call a “Taste and See” session. Anyone can come and just see if they want to be part of Noblemen. Every year at FORT week I
have guys say that they came to that first session 90% sure they wouldn’t do it but then thought, “I can’t afford not to do this.”

Will you retain every man on the fringe? No. Do everything you can to try to involve them, but don’t miss a chance to change the lives of the men in your ministry to avoid the risk of driving away a few guys who likely aren't with you anyway.

A suggestion my wife made was helpful. When I visited our men’s Bible studies, I talked about Noblemen but didn’t present it as an option for them to choose or not. I simply explained it as what we were doing for Bible studies next semester, and that we’d even be inviting men not already in our Bible studies to join us. I talked about the first meeting being a “taste and see” and about the high level of commitment it would require. This subtle shift of mindset from “I need to convince them to do this” to “I’m going to cast the vision and tell them this is what we’re all doing” took a lot of pressure off me. And every Bible study guy signed up to come to the first meeting. Some of the senior guys confessed to me that as a freshman, they might not have done it without some healthy peer pressure, so we didn’t complicate it for the freshmen by giving them an option. We’ll let them make the decision after the first meeting and they’ve seen all their friends committed to doing it. - Nick Peterson (South Dakota State)

Q: How many guys who come to the first meeting commit to doing the course?
A: It’s different from campus to campus, but I’d say that about 90% will continue if they come to the first meeting. Our retention rate has risen after the first year because the course picks up momentum when guys start hearing about it their first day on campus from the guys who’ve gone through it. They then anticipate all first semester getting to be a part of it.

Q: Is there an ideal size for the small groups after the teaching time each week? Our Bible studies vary in size. One has 13 guys in it. Should we consider splitting the group?
A: Yes, you want to end up with 4-6 in each group, which is probably ideal for everyone to have time to talk. Depending on the dynamics of the small group, you may consider having them number off each week within that group of 13 so they aren’t just getting close with half of their group but get to engage with different men from within their group of 13 at NM small group each week.

Q: Can you explain the FORT week? I’ve had some leaders ask me whether it’s necessary to set aside a block of evenings. Would a final weekend retreat work instead?
A: FORT week is the crowning glory of the course. Over the years we’ve had a couple of guys be unable to make it or drop out right before FORT week for various reasons. For each of them I remember thinking that, although they were only missing one week out of twelve, in terms of what’s accomplished during FORT week, they might as well have missed half the course. It really is that significant.

Noblemen is much more than a course where men are just given information and then a ceremony recognizing they went to all the classes. The strength of it is that it’s an experience,
driven by the Scriptures, that both costs them and changes them if they really give themselves to it.

We added FORT week about the 5th year after starting Noblemen and it significantly enhanced the impact of the course. The idea was to have one week that was dedicated to bonding, fortifying what they’ve already learned and the relationships that have been emerging (hence the name FORT, short for fortify) and to prepare them for the commitments they would make at ceremony.

In almost every culture throughout the world, there exists some type of rite of passage for men. One reason we’ve found young men in America so drawn to Noblemen is that there are virtually no rites of passage in our culture. Noblemen not only offers a picture of Biblical manhood and a path of how to get there, it also gives them a rite of passage that they must undertake. The rite of passage doesn’t make a guy a man, of course, but it honors his desire to feel like he’s driven a stake in the ground regarding his manhood. The closest thing in our culture might be the military or perhaps a fraternity. Bootcamp or pledging is a rite of passage and the final ceremony is usually a meaningful time for the men that they look back on as something that marked their psyche and made them feel like they truly became a man.

Over the years, I’ve been surprised by just how much FORT week and the ceremony means to the guys who go through Noblemen. Part of that is because they’ve really worked for it. They’ve had a compelling and noble picture clearly painted of what they want to be, given a path to work toward it, and felt glory in finishing the course.

It used to be that we made the ceremony difficult. Anyone can endure something for one night and not feel like it was a very big deal. Over time however, we wanted the ceremony to feel more like a celebration and a holy culmination rather than something to merely endure. When we added FORT week, we were able to put the challenging and bonding components primarily in FORT week and then let the ceremony be more of a celebration.

FORT week can be done in a variety of ways. I will describe what we have done in the past and you can decide what you’d like it to look like with your men.

Q: What is ceremony like?
A: Ceremony starts at sundown and ends at sunrise. The men start the time with 2-3 hours alone with God, preparing for the rest of the ceremony. Then, in the same small groups they were in during the course, they spend about an hour at each of the remaining 6 stations working through Scriptures related to the topic and pounding their nails into their wooden blocks.

In the morning, the men summit the mountain, or hill or wherever you have chosen for the final ceremony spot. In future years, many of your Noblemen alumni will come back and be at the top of the mountain awaiting them. The guys all kneel, you present them with their crest and a Noblemen t-shirt and then they head to the fire at the top of the summit for the breakfast feast.
Q: if I am using the course with students can I include non-students in the group?
A: Yes, particularly if they are of student age. Every man would benefit from going through Noblemen, but not every man would be an asset to your group. A good question to ask when considering whether to invite men outside your immediate ministry is, “Will this person be a distraction or a liability to the group bonding?”

I wouldn’t invite non-students the first year or two unless you know they’d be a real asset. In our 8th year of Noblemen at Arizona, I had a guy who had just gotten out of prison who was eager to grow, and I felt like Noblemen would be a huge help for him. I encouraged him to invite a few friends, and I invited a few other guys in their 20’s and 30’s from church and together they formed what we called, “The Old Guy Group.” When we broke off into small groups, they stuck together. They were a great addition to our group and the course helped them tremendously.

In our first year of Noblemen at UC Davis, I invited a friend of mine because I knew the course would help his faith. He’s a world-renowned doctor in his field and a very likeable guy so I knew the college students would respect and bond with him. He told me later that it was the most impactful thing he’s ever done. He spent 4 years very involved in his fraternity as a non-believer in college and said that he felt closer to the young men in Noblemen at the end of 12 weeks than he did to any of the men in his fraternity. Part of the reason he was such a blessing was his humility. Though he speaks to thousands of doctors at a time around the world, he was humble enough to see himself there as a participant who had as much to learn as the college students.

If you have older non-students, let them know that you don’t want them there to act like know-it-alls, telling the young guys how hard life is and giving them pointers left and right. I’ve had that with a guy I invited to join once, and it wasn’t helpful. The students didn’t really respect or connect with him.

Q: What’s the difference between Noblemen and The Noblemen Challenge?
A: Noblemen is the 12-week course that you lead your men through over the semester. The Noblemen Challenge is a mini version of Noblemen that each of the men in your course will recruit and lead with their friends from class, work, dorms etc. One of their assignments every week is to share something they learned in the weekly sessions with men outside of Noblemen. Then at week 8 of the course, the men begin leading their own Noblemen Challenge group with guys they’ve been sharing with and praying for throughout the course. These Challenge groups last for 30 minutes per day for 10 days (M-F, M-F.) They are essentially an IBD (Investigative Bible Discussion) based on Biblical manhood.

Q: What is the structure of LAUNCH trip?
A: LAUNCH trip is usually the first or second weekend of the course.

Q: So how does the point system work?
A: It is important at the first session to explain to the students that the point system isn’t about earning or losing favor with you or with God. It’s simply a way for us to make sure that we all put
in the necessary effort to complete the course, ensuring that our desired outcome of being men who change the world will happen.

As I mentioned in answering a previous question on points, I would HIGHLY suggest incorporating the points for the students. Otherwise, the students just don’t end up doing the work. When guys start getting busy with school and don’t have the motivation and commitment to complete the assignments. Then, a tendency to stop putting in the effort to complete the coursework sets in. Worse still, it becomes contagious: the whole group’s excitement about the course and its impact on their lives is diminished considerably.

Bill Tell has a good illustration about how God deals with us on two tracks that may be helpful for you to share with the guys. One track is regarding our position--our identity, our sonship and our adoption as children. Our behavior has nothing to do with and cannot affect this track. The second track is focused on our experience--our behavior, choices, obedience or lack thereof. This track does not affect our security and position as children of God, but it certainly does impact the quality of our relationship with Him.

Think of it this way: When Susan and I got married, we entered a lifelong covenant; that’s our position. If I don’t spend time with Susan in experience, we are still just as married in position. However, even though the one track (our position as married people) is secure, the second track (our experience as married people) can still impact the quality of our marriage. Even if I was unfaithful to Susan in experience, we are just as married in position. But to say that my experience didn’t impact our marriage would be ridiculous. Not only do I not cheat on her, but I put effort into spending time with and pursuing her, not to firm up or keep our position but because of my position.

Similarly, the point system in Noblemen should be a separate track to your position/security in your relationship with God. It doesn’t have any bearing on your security, but it does affect the quality of your relationship, your maturity, and your ability to be a blessing to other people as a man of God.

- Everyone starts with 100 points.
- You must have at least 75 to enter FORT week.
- All points are on your honor.
- Keep track of your points on the Noblemen Website

- Point Deductions are as follows:
  - D = Daily
  - W = Weekly

  - D - Miss a daily reading (-1 point)
  - D - Miss Wingman call (-1 point)
  - W - Miss memorizing verse by meeting (-1 point)
  - W - Miss doing weekly Bible Study (-1 point)
- W - Can’t quote Creed portions by meeting (-2 points)
- W - Missing or imperfect weekly assignment (-10 points)
- W - Miss a session (-20 points)

**Extra Credit opportunities are as follows:**

- Read Shadow of the Almighty by Elisabeth Elliot and write a 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
- Read Silence of Adam by Larry Crabb and write 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
- Listen to Love Songs by Tommy Nelson (the full sermon series) and write 1 page paper about how you will apply this to your life (+10pts)
- Pre-approved community volunteering opportunities (+5pts)
- Make up one missed session and write 100 word paper summarizing what you learned (+3 points)

**Q: Where did you get the 400 lb. cross described in the Ceremony? Any suggestions on how we might acquire one?**

**A:** The 400 lb. cross is an add on, and not essential, but it does add a neat, challenging aspect to FORT week. We got two railroad ties at Lowes. They are a couple hundred pounds each. We borrowed a chainsaw, cut out a notch in the middle of each of them half way down and then put the crossbar on the main piece and drilled two holes in the middle about 4 inches apart and put a long bolt through each hole with a big washer on each side and a wingnut. This allows you to disassemble the cross at the top and take it back down the mountain more easily. Part of the difficulty of carrying it is not just the weight, but the awkwardness of an 8-foot cross with an 8-foot crossbar. Obviously, put the notch on the centerpiece toward the top third so your cross looks like a cross and not a plus sign!

**Q: Would we have access to the graphic designer you have used to design the family crests?**

**A:** We are working to make a graphic designer available through our website. This is also true of ceremony blocks and other Noblemen specific needs

**Q: Additional Cost Question: Does the $100-200 cover the cost of launch weekend, fort week and the ceremony? I want to just come up with an upfront cost for the guys that will cover these other events as well.**

**A:** Yes, that covers every expense they will have for the whole course. I usually give the drivers to Launch, Boost and Ceremony some gas money from the money collected as well.
Q: Where and how do you factor in content that would have been like Joshua Team or other leadership training courses (like Scripture Memory, learning to share the Gospel, and initiative evangelism)?
A: Everyone’s Joshua team content is different, so it depends on what you typically employ. We don’t use a Joshua Team at OU, but a Freshman Leadership Team that starts first semester where we teach the Bridge and do initiative evangelism every week. They will memorize one verse per week throughout the course, and the Noblemen Challenge is intended to help them reach out to men outside of our ministry (assuming many of these will be non-believers). There’s also one assignment to do heaven/hell surveys on campus.

Q: One of the things that most excited me about Noblemen was the challenge it issues to the men to reach out and start their own evangelistic studies. Can you tell me more about those?
A: Keep in Mind that Noblemen is not going to replace all your other efforts on campus to do evangelism/discipleship. You can certainly have other IBD’s going throughout the year in addition to Noblemen and don’t need to wait for the Noblemen Challenge. Noblemen Challenge groups typically start around week 8, partly because the men are sharing what they’re learning with guys outside of Noblemen every week as part of their weekly assignments. In week 2 they begin praying for those guys by name and sharing with them what they’re learning in Noblemen, in hopes that they’ll join their NM Challenge group. When they do invite these men to their Challenge group, they’ve already been hearing about it for 7 weeks.

Q: Joshua Team has been the main on-ramp for our leadership team in years past. After our 6 weeks of J-Team, we invite them to consider applying for leadership for the coming year. Since our men won’t be going through J-Team this year, and there isn’t a natural break in Noblemen until after Week 12, when do you think it might be best to talk with the men about considering leadership for next year, or how you might incorporate that invitation into the Noblemen material?
A: I’d say go with what best fits your ministry and system, but I would invite the men in the middle of the course to apply for your Leadership Team. You’ll likely find that the NM course will give you a much higher number of men who end up on your leadership team than before you had NM. It really helps the men step up and get serious about their walk with God and taking ownership of your ministry.

Keep in mind that at the end of Noblemen, you’re also going to want to invite a small group of the men who went through Noblemen to be a part of what we call The Fellowship of Lesser Brethren, or Lesser for short. You can employ this any way you want (or not at all) but it’s been a significant part of our ministry success of Noblemen. I typically choose these men a couple of weeks after Noblemen ends. Especially after a year or two of the course getting momentum, the men pick up that it’s a big honor to get to be a part of Lesser. (In a healthy ministry you should not have to beg men to be on leadership. Instead, it should become something they aspire to because there is such respect and admiration for those in leadership.) The men on Lesser at our campus make a yearlong commitment and help lead the whole ministry, not just Noblemen.
Q: Do you have a design from previous year Noblemen T-shirts that we could use if don’t have someone who can design one for us?
A: Yes, look in the website store

Q: What is the Noblemen Mantra?"
A: The Noblemen Mantra particularly comes into play during FORT week.

**The Noblemen Mantra**

Boys Take – Noblemen Give
Boys Consume – Noblemen Sacrifice
Boys say yes to perversion – Noblemen say yes to righteousness
Boys feed their flesh – Noblemen feed their soul
Boys fear men – Noblemen fear God
Boys say no to discomfort – Noblemen say no to compromise
Boys are passive – Noblemen assume responsibility
Boys say ‘by my strength’ – Noblemen say ‘by God’s grace’
Boys are paralyzed by fear – Noblemen do it scared
Boys dream selfish dreams – Noblemen change the world
Boys give up quickly – Noblemen refuse to quit
Boys say no, send another – Noblemen say Yes Lord, send me

Q: When writing a letter to Dad, how would you advise someone whose Dad basically abandoned him? Or who feels like there really wasn’t much positive there?
A: In this assignment, the men write their father a letter addressing two topics:
  1) Here’s what I’m thankful for about you, Dad.
  2) Here’s how I look forward to deepening our relationship.
For the men whose Fathers are not living or not involved in their lives they still write a letter, but they don’t send it to their Dads; it’s for their sake. These men are addressing
  1) Here’s what you missed in my life.
  2) Here’s how I’ve been affected by you not being in my life.
Every year we’ve had at least one guy in this category and the exercise has proven very helpful in processing how their Dad’s absence has impacted them.
Q: I’m curious to know how much you tell guys at this first meeting. My sense is that I ought to tell them quite a bit to help get them excited. Yet because it’s still a bit mysterious, it’s difficult to get the freshmen excited about it, and even some of our leaders are still a bit skeptical (since they haven't seen the final schedule yet). Will we tell them about things like the family crest and some of the ceremony things? I’m mainly curious how to “sell” Noblemen at that first meeting, because we’ve had quite a few guys who seem on the fence but have agreed to at least come to the first meeting.

A: The salty cards are one of the biggest tools in recruiting your men. The details of what you will be doing aren’t as important as the vision of where you are going and why. Especially helpful is the NMAT diagnostic tool your men can take that is both revealing and convicting. Done anonymously and shown to your male leaders as a group, this can be a powerful tool for identifying the groups weaknesses and pointing towards the goals found in Noblemen.

Q: What have you used to quickly communicate with all the men in Noblemen, either to remind them of assignments or if you need to change locations for some reason?

A: Now we have a website which we highly encourage you to use to its full potential. Group Me and if your group isn’t too big then sometimes just a group text. Creating a private Facebook group is also extremely effective.

Q: Could you post a picture of one of the crests from the past, so I could send an example to the graphic designer I am in contact with?

A: Yep, It’s in the course Session 5 handouts and available online.
Course Overview

Week 1
  Session 1 The problem with men
LAUNCH Trip
  Session 2 The Question that haunts every man
  Session 3 Why she does what she does
Week 2
  Session 4 How to become Noble
Week 3
  Session 5 Noble stages of manhood
Week 4
  Session 6 Noble sexuality
Week 5
  Session 7 Noble sexuality part 2
Week 6
  Session 8 Noble friendships
BOOST Trip
Week 7
  Session 9 Noble patriarchs
Week 8
  Session 10 Noble dating and marriage
Week 9
  Session 11 Noble Leadership
Week 10
  Session 12 Noble Leadership part 2
Week 11
  Session 13 Prepare to launch
Week 12
  FORT Week
  Ceremony
Week 1

Session 1: The Problem With Men.

Key Lesson:
God wants to use us to change the world but this can only happen as we live in submission to Him. People are in bondage all over the world and God wants to use us to reach them and set them free. But we are lost. Many of us are foggy on what a real man should do or be. A real man Walks humbly with God rejects passivity and assumes responsibility.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 1 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Noblemen Contract to sign and tell them to bring it to the LAUNCH trip if they are committed
- Give everyone a Noblemen Course Details handout
- Give everyone a Session 1 Handout
- Give everyone a copy of the Noblemen Creed

Warm-up:
- Go over NMAT results with your students. Point out standout information and stats.

Content:
Tonight is a taste and see session. It will be a bit like drinking from a fire-hydrant. You will get a lot of information on how Noblemen works and we will begin digging into session one of the course.

Introducing the Noblemen Course

The History of Noblemen
Noblemen was created by Bryce Bouchard. Bryce did not grow up in a home where a clear picture of a godly life was modeled. Surrounded by a culture where masculinity was increasingly obscured, Bryce realized he didn’t have a compelling definition of what it meant to be a man. Nor did he have a path to get there.

In 1998, Bryce and Susan were married. Bryce quickly realized he needed a clear picture of what it meant to be a man. In many ways he felt like a boy, incapable of loving selflessly and leading skillfully. For five years Bryce studied the Scriptures searching for direction. He read or listened to anything available and asked older men for their input.

During that time, one conclusion stood out to Bryce above all others. Being a godly man was not simply knowing what to be and how to live, more importantly, it was about acting on that knowledge. He watched college men struggle to transition into strong, courageous men capable of impacting the world. Bryce decided to create a course that would both offer a clear and
compelling vision of what it meant to be a man, and a workable path to become a man. In 2004, Noblemen was born.

What started with 24 college men at the University of Arizona has now evolved into a 12-week course being offered at ministries around the country. Over a thousand men have joined a brotherhood whose hearts are set on walking passionately with God and impacting the world. Noblemen is far more than a course, it’s an experience. It offers a rite of passage that God has used to change men, laying a foundation for life.

- **Why Noblemen**

Why have so many men been interested in doing Noblemen? I think it’s because we are in the greatest masculine crisis our country has ever known. So many men today are confused. Men are addicted. Men are perverted. Men are lazy, abusive and shallow. Men are selfish. Men are stuck. When you look at the most influential men in our day, so many of them are an embarrassment to our gender. Just watch the news. It’s almost daily that their shameful deeds are exposed. They live as little boys in men’s bodies, driven by their sexual passions and lust for power and possessions. They want to be worshipped and served. God has a different plan for men.

Along with the privilege of leading, God has given us tremendous responsibility to love, care for, develop and sacrifice for others. Instead, we use, abuse, and abandon those who need us to lead them. That may not be true of all of you, it is of our culture. The world needs men who will live with godly character, men who will live noble lives.

As it stands, men are confused about their role in the world. Let me give you an example. Take just a moment and jot down the word “man”. Next to that, write “woman”. Under each of those, list 3-4 words that you think should describe their roles in society and in the family?

Was that a struggle? If so, it was because we are products of our culture and our culture tells us there is no difference between men and women. God created men and women equal, but wired us entirely differently to serve different roles. As we have twisted and ignored His design, a sad picture has emerged.

An example of what we are talking about is exposed by Paul writing about gender roles in Ephesians 5. In marriage, some men go with the flow of culture, denying that God has made man and women distinctly different and complementary. This is an abandonment of God’s role for men as leaders. Other men skip over Ephesians 5:21, (where God tells us to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ), and use verse 22, (where God says the wife is to submit herself to her husband), as leverage to justify treating their wives as a doormat. This is an abuse of God’s truth because contextually He commands men to be loving! If we spent more time striving to fulfill our responsibility to love, lead, serve, provide, protect, develop and champion women, perhaps it would seem noble and desirable rather than shameful for a woman to entrust herself to a husband’s leadership.

Men are also wanting to do courses like Noblemen because they are bored with their trivial pursuits. We waste time on our phones and spend hours on T.V. shows, sports, social media, video games, porn, and masturbation. All these are just cheap substitutes for the life of adventure and impact to which God has called us. They leave us empty, lonely and wanting more.
Men are living their lives in opposition to God and His ways. They wonder why they feel so distant from Him. Why they don’t see Him at work in a powerful ways in their lives.

We have today what Robert Lewis refers to as the feminized man. The feminized man:

- Waits rather than initiates
- Prefers group approval
- Shuns risk taking
- Struggles with decision making
- Places an overemphasis on feelings
- Shrinks back from an upset women

Our world is in desperate need of men who have the heart, vision and wisdom to lead with humility and courage! Noblemen is a way to build those things into your life.

- **What will Noblemen do for you?**

Noblemen will help jumpstart and fortify your relationship with God. It will also give you a vision for your life as a man and the skills to love, lead, and equip others to impact the world with you.

*(Optional) Have a Lesser share how Noblemen impacted him*

We say that you can plant a Nobleman anywhere and come back a year later and there will be more like him. Prov 11:30 “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who is wise wins souls”

If you don’t lay the groundwork now for a life of impact, the world will squeeze you into its mold. The world needs men who walk intimately with Jesus and transform the culture around them.

- **Read the creed**

The Noblemen Creed:

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives me my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously - doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.

I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.
I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving, and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.

Can you imagine the impact a man who sets his heart to live out this creed will have? For those who will choose to do so, you can be sure that they will be a powerful force in our generation. But like anything worthwhile, it will come with a cost. It will cost time, money and effort.

- **The Cost: Time and Money**

Time: Noblemen is a 5-7 hour per week time commitment that includes 2 hours of meeting and 3-5 hours of outside readings and assignments.

Money: You course leader will determine the cost of your course. This covers all of your supplies, crest, food, trips, block and ceremony. We encourage you to not let money be a reason not to do Noblemen.

- **The Cost: Effort**

You cannot passively coast through Noblemen by attending courses and doing the assignments when it’s convenient for you. In order to join the brotherhood of Noblemen who are impacting the world, you are going to have to put in the work. You cannot finish the course if you don’t.

I promise it will be worth the effort you exert. There is nothing wrong with putting forth effort in your relationship with God. It has wisely been said that God is opposed to earning but not opposed to effort. You are not earning, you’re learning. And learning takes effort. When I hear a man balk at the idea of putting forth the effort required by Noblemen, saying they feel that they are earning their relationship with God, I often see a man who is putting forth little to no effort to grow and know Jesus. The whole Noblemen course is based on the merit of someone else. We are noble because of Jesus. We live noble lives not to become noble, but because we are noble if we are in Christ.

Can you imagine someone in medical school going to his instructor and telling them, “I feel like you’re being legalistic by giving us grades that reflect the effort we’ve put into learning to operate. I’ll plan on doing the work, but it makes me feel uneasy that you want me to have measures of whether or not I’m getting the material.” You would not want that man performing surgery on you!

Again, Noblemen is not just about learning material, but acting on it. To finish the course you must put in the work. Accordingly, each man will start with 100 points. In order to get into FORT Week, our last week of the course, you will need at least 75 points. If you put in the work, that will not be a problem.

There are daily assignments and weekly assignments all which have weighted values. Most are not particularly hard - but some will really challenge your faith and may expose fears. Like anything, you will get out of this what you put into it. The men who give themselves to it are
transformed. They have vibrant relationship with God, they are humble, they have impact on the men around them, they have confidence and skill to lead and influence, they pursue women with wisdom and godliness, they have integrity, deep friendships, and victory over sexual impurity and addiction. They are men who elicit respect by all who know them.

Session 1: The Problem with Men

- PRAY
- Introduction

Have you ever wished that you had superpowers? Of course you have. And if we’re honest, it’s likely not just a dream that we held as children, but it is still a constant longing. We would all love the ability to be all powerful, or at least all knowing, right? In fact, wouldn’t it be nice if you could just be God or at least have His powers?

Perhaps you remember the movie Bruce Almighty. Bruce Nolan, a frustrated TV reporter played by Jim Carrey, complains to God that He is not doing his job well. God, played by Morgan Freeman, responds by offering Bruce the opportunity to try being God for one week. The events that follow are hilarious and also offer keen insights into the disaster it would be if we were allowed to be God.

As they say, there is nothing new under the sun. This brilliant film, likely unbeknownst to its writers, is just a re-telling of a similar story that occurred at the beginning of the world. This same story has played out over the course of history. Let’s look to Genesis and gain some insights into the character of God, the nature of man, and why we don’t have superpowers.

- Content

We pick up with the story of Creation in Genesis 2:15. Almost all things have been created, plants, animals, and man. God is about to give man His first command and then create woman.

\[
\text{Gen 2:15-3:7}
\]

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

*Ask large group: What are some of your observations from this passage?

Here’s the problem. While it is true that we don’t have a good vision or path toward manhood, an even deeper problem exists in our journey to manhood and it comes from within us.

Satan makes an appeal to us to live life independent of God. We decide that we know better and that we can be like God. Until a man rejects this notion, he will continue to live as a little god. Striving to be worshipped and served.

Author Tony Evans sheds some light onto this story for us, drawing insightful lessons from the original Hebrew language.

Satan’s very first move in the garden was to subtly and deceitfully dethrone the ruler. Before we read about Satan’s approaching Eve in the garden, every scripture reference to God in relation to Adam is made as LORD God. Any time you read the word LORD in all caps, it refers to the name Yahweh used for God. The special title Yahweh means master and absolute ruler and is the name God used to reveal himself in His relationship with man. Prior to the name Yahweh, God had revealed himself as Creator, which is the name Elohim.

However, when Satan spoke to Eve about eating that which she should not, he did not refer to God as LORD God. Satan essentially stripped off the name LORD - removing master and absolute ruler - and instead said, “Indeed, has God said…” Thus Satan sought to reduce God’s rulership over humankind by beginning with the subtle but effective twist of His name. In doing so, Satan kept the concept of religion while eliminating divine authority...When men make decisions based on their own thoughts, beliefs, or values - like Adam - rather than based on what God has to say as Ruler, then men are choosing to rule themselves as Adam did. Essentially, they - like Adam - are seeking to dethrone their own Creator while still recognizing His existence.

Although it is increasingly more common to meet an atheist, most people believe in God or at least some kind of Higher Power. They are fine with the concept of God; in fact, they even like
the concept of a God who will comfort them when they are sad or in need, and welcome them to a “better place” when they die. They don’t like a God who is master and absolute ruler.

To strip God of the title and position of master and absolute ruler in our lives is to forfeit relationship with Him, to give up His leading, and to ignore His protective warnings! All of which is not intended to spoil our fun but to maximize our freedom and enjoyment of life. When we take God, the ruler with absolute authority, and seek to reduce Him to the god who helps me and gives me what I want, we wreck our lives!

Dependence upon God is not misery. It’s release. You don’t have the power to be God. In the story of the prodigal son, his older brother obeys his father in order to get what he has. In contrast the younger brother, at the end of his rope, received relationship when he submitted to his dad. In the beginning of the parable The younger son decided he didn’t want guardrails and gave up relationship. The older son however was so focused on staying within the guardrails that he missed the point of relationship with the Father!

God desires us as men to lead, and is committed to showing us that He is our leader! Just look at Joseph for example. God told him in dreams he would rule over his family. In his pride Joseph missed the point. How shocking it must have been when he was suffering for years in Egypt! God however knew Joseph needed to learn that the only useful man in charge is the one who leads under the authority of God. You would be a fool to ask a woman or anyone else to follow your lead if you are the one at the helm.

- Conclusion

The truth is that something in us all longs to be in charge. This is a God-given desire. God has made us as men to rule the world. But we can only do that well when we place ourselves under God’s rule. When we don’t, we essentially are saying that we want to be God. We want to be served, we want to be worshiped. We probably wouldn’t be so vain as to actually use the word worship. Take just a moment and think about how constantly you are striving, plotting, and scheming to be recognized and respected. You may not consider it worship that you’re after, but if people just happen to see how amazing, how smart, clever, and creative you are, that’d be okay, right? And God forbid, how our egos crumble and our wellbeing goes to pot when someone thinks less of us than we think they ought.

Just like Satan appealed to Adam and Eve to remove God as master and absolute ruler, so he appeals to us. And our fleshly nature is happy to oblige. We want to be God. Or at least we think we do.

The more quickly that we give up trying to be the God of our own lives and acknowledge God as LORD, the master and absolute ruler of our lives, the more quickly we are on the path to changing the world.

Let’s face it, we are not good at being God! In and of ourselves, we don’t have the ability to love and lead others. The sooner that we realize and submit to that fact, the sooner we’ll be able to find relationship with God. Then we will be able to really love and lead the people around us.

This weekend at LAUNCH Trip we will go further into this passage and look at the question that haunts every man.
- **Assignments**: I mentioned earlier that there will be daily and weekly assignments and points for those. Let me explain:

- **Daily Examples**:
  1. Daily Devotionals in the Scriptures.
     For many, they develop and fortify a consistency in the Word through these daily times that will last them for the years after the course. We will start with reading through the book of Proverbs. I'll hand out a guide for reading Proverbs that you'll find helpful. This guide will help you begin to master the Proverbs. Most godly, influential men have steeped their lives in this book. Soak it up! I also encourage you to consider inviting your Father or brothers to do the Devotional readings along with you throughout the course. This is a great way to connect with and spur on your family. Throughout the course we will also read the Gospel of Mark, Ephesians and Galatians.

  2. Memorize the Noblemen Creed
     The Creed reflects truths from almost 100 verses. Start working on memorizing the Creed every day. Many men who have completed Noblemen share how years after completing the course that the Lord will often bring portions of it to mind as they make decisions and as they lead their family.

  3. Connect Daily with your Wingman
     Getting used to connecting with and depending on other men is a key practice that Noblemen helps facilitate. Accordingly, each week you will pick a different Wingman. Try to pick someone who is not in your small group so you get to know the other guys in your class. Call one another daily and do the following: Quote the Creed from memory; Quote the verse for the week; Share what stood out to you in the daily devotional time. Feel free to talk longer, but on days one or both of you are busy, you can have this conversation in less than ten minutes.

- **Weekly Examples**
  1. You Can’t Miss Any Sessions.
     If there is a problem that arises with that, let me know ahead of time.

  2. Family Crests.
     We want you to be a patriarch with vision and direction. (Show example crests and explain

  3. Interview a Man Over 60
     The goal is to interact with and learn from an older and wiser man

  4. Memorize the Weekly Verse
     We have selected a verse per week. There is also an additional optional verse for each week that can be memorized for an extra point if memorized word perfectly.
• Points
  • Everyone starts with 100 points.
  • You must have at least 75 to enter FORT week. (This is the climax of the course that FORTIFIES everything you’ve learned and helps prepare for the commitments you’ll make at ceremony)
  • All points are on your honor.
  • Keep track of your points on the Noblemen Website

• Point Deductions are as follows:
  • D = Daily
  • W = Weekly
    • D - Miss a daily reading (-1 point)
    • D - Miss Wingman call (-1 point)
    • W - Miss memorizing verse by meeting (-1 point)
    • W - Can’t quote Creed portions by meeting (-2 points)
    • W - Missing or imperfect weekly assignment (-10 points)
    • W - Miss a session (-20 points)

• Extra Credit opportunities are as follows: (Examples)
  • Read Shadow of the Almighty by Elisabeth Elliot and write a 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  • Read Silence of Adam by Larry Crabb and write 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  • Listen to Love Songs by Tommy Nelson (the full sermon series) and write 1 page paper about how you will apply this to your life (+10pts)
  • Pre-approved community volunteering opportunities (+5pts)
  • Make up one missed session and write 100 word paper summarizing what you learned (+3 points)

As you can see, you can lose points really quickly! So, don't slack. The difficulty level of FORT Week is determined by your score. You don't want to scrape by! There will be a few opportunities to score extra credit along the way.

(Optional) Intro this year's Lesser
• Important Dates
  
  • LAUNCH Trip Date: ____________

LAUNCH trip is designed to jump start learning and bonding for your Noblemen class. If you are committed to do the course come to LAUNCH with your signed Noblemen Contract.

  • BOOST Trip Date: ____________

A short twenty four hour retreat in the middle of the course to bond as men and build momentum toward FORT week.

  • FORT Week Date: ____________

Fort Week, short for Fortify is an opportunity to fortify everything you’ve learned throughout the course and to prepare for the commitments you will make during ceremony.

  • Ceremony Date: ____________

A twenty four hour rite of passage ceremony that crowns FORT week and ends the course.

• In Closing

Noblemen has an impact because it is a course on Biblical Manhood. And the Bible paints a picture of good news for us. In this book, we find not just the answer of how to live, but we find the One for whom our soul longs.
Assignments:
- Begin daily Proverbs reading at Launch trip
- Choose a wingman and begin connecting daily to discuss Proverbs and recite the Creed at Launch trip
- Begin tracking points daily at Launch trip
- Memorize the first paragraph of the Creed perfectly
- Memorize Isaiah 32:8 (optional Psalm 27:8)
- Bring Commitment Contract to LAUNCH Trip

Small Group:
- What do you think of today’s content? What stood out to you?
- How do you relate to the feminized man? (Waits rather than initiates; Prefers group approval; Shuns risk taking; Struggles with decision making; Places overemphasis on feelings; Shrinks back from upset women)
- Satan offered an erroneous picture of the character of God— that the Lord was out to ruin Adam and Eve’s lives, that God was holding out on them. Do you ever feel like that? How so?
- In the Garden, Satan’s primary strategy was threefold. He cast doubt on the character of God (God is holding out on you), the Word of God (Did God really say?), and the consequences of sin (you won’t surely die!). His strategy with us is the same. How do you see yourself believing lies about the character of God, the Word of God, or God’s commands?
- Do you think God would say that you live with Him as the master and absolute ruler of your life?
- What are ways that you can see that you’re wrecking your own life by not having God in charge?
- Are there ways that you’ve seen yourself trying to have people worship and serve you?
- Are there any practical steps that you can take today to put God on the throne of your life that He deserves?
LAUNCH Trip

Session 2: The Question That Haunts Every Man

Key Lesson:
The question that haunts every man at his core is “am I enough?” After original sin, God cursed man with an eternal, corrective struggle to prove himself and fail. This struggle causes us as men to either abuse our role, or abandon it entirely. Finding our identity as men in Christ through the gospel frees us to walk in courage and obedience.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 2 Handouts)
- Give out Binders
- Give out link for Tim Keller’s Hero of Heroes sermon
- Print out Session 2 handouts
- Award points for cleaning up if appropriate
- Make sure every man signs a waiver. Obtain accurate phone and address for their parents.
- Send Proverbs reading guide
- Determine which guys weren’t able to make LAUNCH trip. Arrange for them to watch the session videos

Warm Up:
- On the drive to your location have everyone listen to Tim Keller’s Hero of Heroes sermon

In Small Groups Pre-Content:
- In your own words, how would you define courage?
- What causes courage to fail or to prove successful?
- What is something courageous you have recently done?

Read Genesis 2-3 and answer the following questions:
- Where was the man made?
- From what was he made?
- For what was he made?
- In what arena did God curse him?

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13.
- NASB - Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
- NIV - Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.
- What are your observations? What do you like about that verse? Why?
Content:

- Intro: Courage

What did you notice about 1 Corinthians 16:13?

13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

This is an amazing verse that specifically talks about being manly but I’m going to ruffle your feathers a bit. This would be great verse for us if I wasn’t talking to a bunch of sissies.

Before you start arguing with me about how courageous you are I’ll tell you how I know you’re all sissies. I’ve read the accounts of Biblical heroes and their struggles with cowardice. I’ve read countless historical accounts that speak to the same theme. I’m also very aware of my own daily struggle with fear and courage. Basically what I’m trying to say is that it takes a coward to know a coward.

I’m aware of my own struggle with trying to figure out how to live out a verse like 1 Corinthians 16:13. It tells me to act like men. I want to act like a man, but my sin nature within me holds me back. If I’m only trying to become a man by acting like one I’ll never become a godly man that can change the world. We have an identity issue. You will never have a secure identity if you are only acting like a man.

It’s not enough to tell men to act like men. You must take this verse in context of all of the Scriptures. Otherwise, you are just believing in the power of positive thinking. I’m not a sissy, I’m not a sissy. Something within us clearly keeps us from acting like men. So something has to transform within us if we are going to be able to act like men consistently.

Most of man’s efforts are spent in two ways: trying to work harder at prove they’ve got what it takes, or living defeated because they realize that they don’t have what it takes. Neither options are viable if you want to be a man who can change the world. Tonight, we’ll look at the root of why we live defeated and why working harder at being courageous doesn’t work.

Imagine a time when you were really successful at something. It could be an event, a task, a responsibility—something where you had what the task required—and you shined. What was it? How did you feel? You probably felt pretty good because the circumstances made you feel like you had what it takes to be a man. We equate being successful with being courageous, or at least with not being a sissy.

At times we all can find a sweet spot where we have what it takes. where we’re able to perform. Now think about the number of times in your life when you didn’t, or when you shied away from areas where you couldn’t perform. Now think about a time where you failed dramatically. What are you feeling now? You probably feel shame. You probably were thinking not only that you messed up, but actually you are messed up. This shakes our identities to the core. We have so much data on our failures in life that we are haunted by the question, “Am I enough”.
Where does this question come from? Why does it seem to follow us all the days of our lives? Why does it not seem to haunt women the way it haunts us? (Women have their own questions that haunt them, a few of which are, Am I desirable? Am I worth being pursued?).

No man seems to be immune. Even those whom we see as successful, and who seem to actually be “enough,” are haunted by the question, “Am I enough?” For them, like us, there’s always someone smarter, someone more gifted, someone more driven, someone more athletic who will prove to them that they aren’t enough. Why couldn’t Kobe be happy with five championship rings? Well, perhaps because Michael Jordan has six. And how sad to watch Michael Jordan’s arrogance and insecurity on display for all to see as he boasted of how great he was at his induction to the Hall of Fame? Here is the greatest player of all time was clearly still being chased by this nagging question of “Am I enough?”

Let’s think about our NBA friends for example for a moment. What are two questions that the person interviewing the MVP always asks after winning a championship? Question 1. How does it feel? (Translation: You just showed that you were enough! Tell us how it feels.) Question 2. Do you think you will be back next year? (Translation: You were enough this year, but will you have what it takes to be enough next year?)

These same questions have been asked to each of us since we were boys.

*Share a personal example*

This isn’t only true of us as kids, these questions appear in every area of our lives. Anything we do comes hand in hand with the insecurities of not being enough and so this verse that we looked at shows us our insecurities even more. It commands us to act like men. So, we either step up to the plate paralyzed and unsure if we will hit the ball or strike out, or we only move toward things that we are good at so we can shine despite our insecurities. Neither of these are courage! Neither of these are acting like men!

You’re not going to impact the world if you only move toward areas where you shine and spend your life faking that you’ve got what it takes. If you want to live a Supernatural life, you’re going to have to repent of looking to yourself for your source. Remember last week, we looked at how we are not God and that it is a release for us when we are willing to repent of trying to be. It turns out that this question that haunts every man has been haunting every man since Adam, the first man, ate the forbidden fruit. Let’s look at creation and the fall of man to get a better picture of why we do the things we do.
- Adam and the question that haunts every man

Let's establish some context. In Gen 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. Back in Genesis 1:28 God commands Adam to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” then He creates a helpmate for Adam though Eve.

In Gen 3:1 Satan subverts God’s intended order and incites the woman to lead and to provide for herself and ignore God’s protection. Like we talked about last week, Satan tells them that God doesn’t have their best in mind and that they should be God.

In Gen 3:6 it says, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” It was Adam’s responsibility to care for the creation and Eve and when she needed his leadership most he sat passively by.

1 Tim 2:14 tells us “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” He was passive. He should have stood up but chose to be passive. After this we see in Gen 3:10 that fear, shame and hiding comes on the scene never to leave.

As a result of the sin of eating the fruit that God told them not to eat, God curses both man and woman. We will talk about the curse on woman in our next session but to understand this question that haunts men we will look at man’s curse tonight.

Gen 3:17

17 And to Adam he said,
   “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
   and have eaten of the tree
   of which I commanded you,
   ‘You shall not eat of it,’
   cursed is the ground because of you;
   in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
   18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
   and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face
   you shall eat bread,
   till you return to the ground,
   for out of it you were taken;
   for you are dust,
   and to dust you shall return.”

To be very clear, the curse is not work but rather, work is cursed. God had already given the command to work before the curse came. Cursed is the ground, through painful toil you will eat
of it. It will produce thorns and thistles. Work comes by sweat of your brow. Work used to be good and satisfying. God created an agricultural society to be satisfying for Adam but now in our context, after the curse, work is not ultimately fulfilling.

Adam was made in the wild, from the dirt, for the dirt, to work the land, and God curses the very thing He was made for, God cursed work. He cursed him in accordance with how he had sinned, passivity. Now men will have a bent toward passivity. Life won’t work for you. You make something, it rusts. You design something, it becomes outdated, you win something one year, only to be beat the next year. After the curse, we are constantly being faced with the fact that we are not enough. It’s a though God has now hard-wired sissiness into us!

Now we can look at this as a punishment but that is not what the curse is for. God giving the curse is a corrective, disciplinary measure to show us that we can’t live without Him. Remember last week how we talked about God not wanting us to live lives independent of Him? Adam and Eve chose to live lives independent of God and God responds with a curse that says “you will be incapable of living without Me.” The curse leaves us with a question that will haunt every man from the time he’s a boy until the time he dies, am I enough? And the answer is an emphatic NO! You may be enough for a short time, or in one arena, but not in everything.

Until we begin to acknowledge that we are not enough, and that we are cursed to be empty apart from God, our well being and our very identity will be constantly in jeopardy and defined by our ability to perform. How you answer the question “Am I enough” will determine your character, your destiny, your ability to love, to lead and ultimately the legacy you will leave. If you don’t answer this question well, it will be a wasted life spent trying to convince yourself and others that you are enough. In life, in work and in relationships, the curse is very real and the curse will affect you more and more as life goes on. It will become more and more obvious that you are wrestling with this question. There will be numerous experiences that show you that you’re not enough. This will reinforce tendencies to work harder or to be more passive, to fake it more or to hide.

- The Curse: Abusing and Abandoning

To use other terms, because of the curse we tend to either abuse or abandon. This is seen most apparently in relationships. When a man tries to convince himself and others that he is enough, he becomes painfully unaware of his folly and utterly incapable of loving, protecting, and caring for other people. He could start to physically or psychologically abuse others, trying to intimidate them into believing he is enough. He uses force to try and prove to others that he is enough. This could lead to physical or emotional abuse in the family and it is incredibly destructive. Some of you grew up in this, where your dad was wrestling with and haunted by this question.

If we don’t abuse we will abandon. The call to love, lead, serve, provide and protect the people around us takes a backseat when we look at all the data points of failure. Past experience
proves to us that failure is imminent so we won’t even try. To do so would just be another painful reminder that we’re not enough. And so we resign to passivity. The hard conversation that we need to have, we won’t have it. We may resort to some sort of passive aggressive comments, but we won’t step out and say the things we should.

The man who abandons is incredibly passive. An example where we see this is in relationships. If there’s a girl this guy likes the first thing he will often do is check with her friends and put out feelers just to make sure the girl will respond well. If he gets rejected that would absolutely ruin him. From the first day to the end of the relationship this man is cautious and refuses to lead because of fear of being rejected. This makes him a responder rather than an initiator. The problem is that the way that God made women doesn’t line up with this. A godly woman wants to be pursued and led.

For the job he desperately wants, he won’t put himself out there as he needs to because the thought of rejection is too painful. To the best friend that he wants and prays God would give him, he won’t find him and will sit by lonely, willing to just have a bunch of acquaintances he calls friends because he doesn’t want to take the chance of getting burned by someone making him feel undesirable. This person does whatever he needs to do in order to fit in and be accepted. Passivity leaves us hiding from God and other people because we don’t want to be reminded that we are not enough.

Most men answer this “Am I enough” question horribly. We will never get men to do anything if they don’t answer it well. The curse plays out terribly in relationships. It’s not that men are workaholics because they love work so much, it’s just that work is an area that they can control more easily than the relationships with their kids and wife. When he gets home to a complicated wife and children who don’t do what they are supposed to do and he doesn’t feel respected, he will often just escape to the couch and watch TV and choose to be passive.

We will talk about wives in our next session but a nagging wife makes it worse. She is haunted by the question “am I worth fighting for and being paid attention to?” When she doesn’t feel that, she will begin to look to you to be what only God can be for her. And so the cycle gets worse.

Of course you can’t be all she needs in your own strength and ability, so you stop trying. This is part of why men are so susceptible to affairs. They think that this other woman who hasn’t seen that he’s not enough will make him feel as though he is enough. This is why watching porn is such a safe option because there’s no chance for rejection and it takes no effort.
- **A Third Option: Christ is our Courage**

So where does this leave us? Cursed? Not enough?

No! Praise God for Jesus! As Tim Keller beautifully pointed out in the Hero of Heroes sermon we listened to, just like David, Christ went across the valley, faced the most ruthless enemy, and fought not just for us, but indeed even as us. It’s not so much about emulation and trying to be like David, but it’s about imputation. We are actually not like David in this story, we are like Saul. We are sitting, waiting for someone to fight this enemy that we couldn’t even dream of defeating, and we are hopeless until Jesus steps up to fight for us.

So what? When we acknowledge that Jesus stepped up to fight for us, we can admit the fact that we are a bunch of sissies. Remember when God told Moses that He wanted to use him to rescue the Israelites? Moses wrestles with this question and he asks God, “who shall I say sent me?” God replies “I AM sent you.” The truth is that we will never be enough but God says, “I AM”

It’s like God looking at Gideon hiding in a winepress and saying “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior. Now go and fight” God called Gideon a mighty warrior while he was in hiding. Gideon wasn’t mighty because of who he was but because who was fighting for him.

Let’s look at Jeremiah 17:5-8. This is a recipe for courage.

> Thus says the LORD:
> “Cursed is the man who trusts in man
> and makes flesh his strength,
> whose heart turns away from the Lord.
> 6 He is like a shrub in the desert,
> and shall not see any good come.
> He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
> in an uninhabited salt land.
> 7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
> whose trust is the Lord.
> 8 He is like a tree planted by water,
> that sends out its roots by the stream,
> and does not fear when heat comes,
> for its leaves remain green,
> and is not anxious in the year of drought,
> for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Confidence is not just in the Lord, confidence IS the LORD, Him fighting on my behalf! So it’s not even about how much I can muster my confidence in the Lord. It’s that HE is my very confidence.
Webster defines courage as: “The attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult, or painful. Or the quality of being fearless or brave.” That’s just trying to convince ourselves we have the courage of David. It’s not true! Here is our Noblemen definition of courage: “doing what is right in spite of my fear or lack of desire to do so.”

Our mantra in Noblemen is “Timentes Id Agite”, which is Latin for “We do it scared.” This comes from a man who was absolutely terrified of leading a Bible study in his dorm and was trying to get out of it. Looking for any opportunity to get out of it he asked an older Believer for advice and was told, “Just do it scared.” When we admit we are terrified and rely on God for our strength a significant transaction takes place. It’s the transaction that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 12:9,

“But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

We need to cultivate a climate of courage. It’s something that is cultivated daily and weekly. Learning to be weak and move forward in fear and dependence on God needs to be a consistent practice.

To grow in courage, there must be growth in both what we believe and how we act out of that belief. The Greek word in the phrase “Act like men” from 1 Corinthians 16:13 is andrizomai (andrid’-zom-ahee). This is a middle voice verb that means to act manly. The middle voice in the Greek makes it a verb that you do to yourself. To be a man of courage is not just to believe in a new identity in Christ, but to actually live out of it.

*Hemorrhage: Share a recent example of “doing it scared”*

Maybe for you it’s sharing shameful sin with someone else, maybe it’s the scary conversation with a family member that you need to have. Maybe it’s going back and making something right where you lied or cheated. Maybe God is asking you to share Christ with someone or identify with Him at work. You’ll never do this if you are trying to do it in your own strength. But when your identity comes from Jesus, everything changes. We have one who is not only with us, but has already fought for us, even as us. Which means we can submit to Him and obey.

Wrestle through your identity and allow God to pull back the curtains and show you how you’ve been faking it or how you’ve been hiding in passivity. Ask God over the next 11 weeks to work on this issue of identity, to make you a secure man who is okay with admitting, “I’m not enough,” and allow Him to begin to grow you into a man who can impact the world through your weakness and through His strength.

We will end with an explanation of the Noblemen Challenge. This week one of our biggest conclusions is that we need to act on what you believe about our identity in Christ. I believe that you can take a Noblemen and put him anywhere and come back a year later and there will be
more like him. I really believe that God wants to use you to change the world. If you just take in information and never do anything in response you won't start reaching other men. So we will be doing the Noblemen Challenge. This is an opportunity to reach out to and lead other men in your own version of Noblemen.

The Noblemen challenge will start with what we call sharing salt. What do I mean by that? You’re familiar with the phrase that says, “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.” Turns out you actually can. If you give a horse salt he will drink. Tonight we will individually make a list of men to begin praying for; asking God to move in their lives. Week 6 you will introduce them to the idea of a Noblemen Challenge group and you’ll invite them to be a part of your Noblemen Challenge. What you’ll be doing between now and then is praying every day that God would show them that they’re not enough, make them tired of the life that they live and make them thirsty for God. Throughout the weeks you'll see on your assignments that you will be sharing salt with at least one man. This is one of the coolest things that we do in Noblemen. Each of you will be shocked by what God will do in them.

Assignments:

- In your groups create a list of 20 men who you could ask salty questions. Put a couple guys who would scare you to death to ask.
- Do something scared before the next weekly meeting.

Small Group:

- What really hit home in this session? Explain
- What are you hoping to get out of Noblemen?
- In what ways, areas or circumstances do you find yourself not feeling “enough”?
- What are ways you try to hide from God and others?
Launch Trip

Session 3: Why She Does What She Does

Key Lesson:
The curse God pronounced in Genesis 3 effects women in a conflicting way to men. Women were cursed to both seek their fulfillment in and seek to dominate men. This is contrary to what God has designed. When women find their identity in the gospel it frees them to be fulfilled solely by God. It also allows them to fulfill their role as helper, submitting in the power of Christ.

Leader:  (See Appendix, Session 3 Handouts)
- Pass out Session 3 handout

Warm Up: NA

Content:

*Optional: Lesser Shares, "Here's who I really am"

- Going back to the Curse

This session is titled “Why she does what she does”. We looked at the curse and its implications for men, now we will look at women and how the curse affects them.

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said,
“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

To Eve, God’s curse is twofold. First, she will have increased pains in childbearing. That includes the whole process, not just delivering a child but everything that happens in a woman’s body to be able to have a child. It’s interesting that of any animal, humans have the most pain in childbirth. That wouldn’t have been true if the fall hadn’t happened.

The second part of Eve’s curse is that her desire will be for her husband, but he will rule over her. The interpretation of this part of the curse is not easily discerned in English. However, a deeper understanding is revealed when one looks at the situation as described in the original language of Hebrew.
The Hebrew word for “desire” carries with it a few concepts. This specific word is only used three times in the Old Testament: here, Genesis 4, and Song of Solomon. The first implication of this word “desire” is a head stretched out, looking and longing for something. Instead of living dependent upon God, Eve and women will have a longing and propensity to look to her husband to be for her what only God can be for her.

Women are made with legitimate longings to have someone perfectly love, desire, delight in, pursue, lead, and protect them. Only God can do these things perfectly. As a result of the curse, there will now be a tendency to secure these longings outside of God. Remember that the curse is not a punishment but a corrective discipline for what happens when we live independent from God.

Sometimes a woman will ignore or suppress these desires. Usually though, she will look to a man to fulfill them. While God has designed a man to meet them in part, no man has the power of God to do these things perfectly. Remember, we are not God! Part of the problem with man ruling over her is that he is now a sinful man, prone to serving self.

This leads to another implication that becomes more clear in the Hebrew. The word “desire” in Hebrew carries with it the idea of control. She will be tempted to control her life, her husband, and her children. It is the same word in the next chapter of Genesis, 4:7 where God is talking to Cain about sin. It says, “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Sin desires to control you but you must master it.

It could be translated, “You will want to control your husband.” Just as God hard-wires sissiness into men, God now hard-wires in women a desire to control. Eve’s sin was that she took over. Rather than trusting God to fully meet her needs and to have a healthy relationship with her husband, Eve usurped Adam’s place as leader and chose to be in charge. Today, in relationships, this often looks like a woman nagging or manipulating to get what she desires and employing self-protecting strategies to avoid getting hurt.

You remember we talked about how man was made from the dirt, for the dirt and God cursed us in the area that we were created for. It is worth noting that woman was made from a person for a person and that the area which she sinned was in relationship with a person. Consequently, God cursed the area that she was made for, and did so in relation to the way that she sinned. She tried to take over, so God hard-wired a natural tendency in all women from that point forward to want to take over, controlling and look to others to meet needs that only God could meet.

When a woman fears losing control, she will often employ any number of strategies to avoid looking to God for security. Fear mixed with emotion can lead to irrational thoughts and behavior. When you combine man’s natural tendency toward abusing and abandoning with woman’s natural tendency to nag or manipulate, you have a pretty clear explanation of why so many relationships are such a mess.
Incidentally, when a woman gets what she thinks she wants, a relationship where she calls all the shots because she has a passive husband or boyfriend who is willing to let her do so, she usually lacks respect for the man and ends up resenting him. She will often feel as though she is simply taking care of a little boy. Her sincere attempts to “encourage him to lead” only remind him that he’s not enough. He may try to meet her demands but usually will simply fall into consistent passivity, working to pacify the woman and not upset her. Sometimes, a low-lying resentment at being controlled develops and often results in an outbursts of anger when he is pushed to the limits by a woman who is controlling him. Perhaps you saw this play out in your house growing up? Maybe you see this in relationships of friends around you or even your own relationship.

But when you find a woman who chooses to find her identity, her protection, and her deepest longings in God, you find a woman who is able to be a tremendous blessing to all around her. She has settled in her heart that God will take care of her. She does not give way to fear because she trusts that ultimately, it is God who is looking out for her. This frees her to trust a man to lead her, provide for her and protect her.

It’s important for us to recognize that even though God has given man the responsibility to lead, woman are not denied the chance to give input or help lead. Men do not have all the answers. It’s not because men are smarter or more spiritual that God has given them responsibility to lead. It’s because anything in nature that has two heads is called a monster. There has to be headship. But, Headship does not mean I call all the shots and you have to do whatever I say.

As we will continue to see in Noblemen, a good leader sacrifices their desires and preferences for the sake of those they lead. With the privilege of leading comes the responsibility of sacrifice.

We as leaders sacrifice for you. This is true in marriage also. The husband is called to be the garbage man and sacrifice for the flourishing of his wife. Any husband will tell you that in areas where he didn’t take time to listen to his wife or seek understanding there was a significant amount of pain.

God will use your wife’s strengths and weaknesses to grow you in patience and wisdom. Pay close attention, your wife's needs, concerns, limitations and counsel are all things we men need to listen to carefully and weigh heavily as we lead. Write that down because you’ll need it when you get married. Your wife's needs, concerns, limitations and counsel are all things we men need to listen to carefully and weigh heavily as we lead.

While we will always be affected by the curse as an ongoing reminder of why we must live lives dependent on God, the good news is that we no longer have to be dominated by the effects of the curse. When a man submits himself to God and a woman submits herself to God, a healthy relationship has the freedom to grow.

Let's look at this in Ephesians 5:22-33 to see what this looks like when you have a man and a woman submitted to God.
22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Two commands are given to both the man and the woman. The man is commanded to love sacrificially and lead biblically. The commands to the woman are to respect her husband and to submit to him.

Your responsibility as a leader is to sacrifice for your wife. But when you abuse your privilege as leader to serve yourself women are unable to respect the you. When you don’t see your wife giving you respect do you think you will love her and sacrifice for her? Of course not. If you aren’t loving and sacrificing for your wife, why in the world would she submit to you when you use your position for yourself instead of caring for her. When she doesn’t submit to you, you thinks, “why would I provide for and protect her? I’m just going to serve myself.” This is a vicious cycle and you see it in relationships all over.

1. We are passive
2. The woman has to step up to lead
3. We Abuse or Abandon
4. The women nags or manipulates

So what’s missing? If you put Christ into that relationship they are living in submission to God in relationship with Him within the boundaries that He’s given, they are no longer looking to their spouse to meet these needs. Their needs are being met by God. When that happens, even if a wife isn’t respecting and submitting, the husband can still chose to provide, protect, and sacrifice for his wife. And even when a husband is not obeying God with what He commanded him to do, she can still respect and submit to a sinful and fallible man and that is when beautiful things happen.

Ephesians 5 Gives us a different example.
1. Jesus lovingly provides and protects us
2. We honor and respect him
3. He leads us sacrificially with love
4. We submit to Him.
Let’s end with 1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives. 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. 5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. 7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

We see the beauty of marriage here. It is so necessary for both the husband and the wife to be connected to Christ. So the woman is to be submissive. Our culture would say that submit is a dirty word. That is true if you’re submitted to a wicked man, but not if you’ve chose to submit yourself to a godly man. In this passage we see some woman who happen to be married to an unbeliever. She is still called to be submitted to Christ and it can change the man. There are some men who come to Christ because of the humility and wisdom of the wives submitting to their leadership. So the woman is called to be submissive, pure, reverent, called to a beauty that is not outward but a gentle and quiet spirit. This is not a dig on extraverted women by the way. They are submissive and don’t give way to fear.

Men are called to be considerate. We have to listen and pay attention to their needs. We need to treat them with respect. In many cultures including ours, women are treated horribly. Men tend to take advantage as their position of leaders and operate as if women were created to serve us. The way that women have been treated through the ages is incredibly shameful. No wonder the feminist movement has grown so much over the years as has the disgust for submitting to a man. Treat her with respect as the weaker partner. Weaker partner does not mean less valuable or less intelligent or less spiritual.

Can you live in a way that you don’t resent her emotions or her sensitivity? Can you celebrate that for many women God has given them a greater sensitivity? Can you receive both her strengths and her weaknesses? If you don’t, that passage says your prayers will be hindered. You can tell what kind of husband a man is by looking at his wife’s countenance. Countenance is a person’s facial expression that usually reveals what is going on in a person’s heart.
Assignments:
- Continue daily Proverbs readings
- Call wingman (remind your wingman if he hasn’t checked off on the doc.)
- Finish memorizing the first paragraph of the Creed word perfect.
- Do something scared before next week’s meeting.

Small Group:
- What stood out to you from tonight’s session?
- How do you see the curse playing out in the lives of the women you know?
- How do you see the curse playing out in your parents’ relationship?
- Have you ever had a relationship where the curse impacted the way you and your girlfriend related?
- Have you ever tried to be God to a woman and meet needs that only God can meet? How did it go?
Week 2

Session 4: How To Become Noble (You’re not enough but I AM)

Key Lesson:
We do not become noble through our noble deeds, rather, because we have been given nobility through being adopted into God’s Kingdom based on the merit of Jesus, we now live a noble life because of our identity. The gospel makes us sons of God.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 4 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 4 Handout
- Communicate what “sharing salt” means
  - Give an example of how to ask a salty question
- Give Salty Questions handout

Warm-up:
- Recite first paragraph of the Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- Handouts for session 1-3 for those who weren’t here.
  - If weren’t here, we’ll upload the watch session videos.
  - Listen to Hero of Heroes if not on Launch Trip
- Quote Paragraph 1 of Creed
- Where are you on points?
- Sign waivers if haven’t
- Collect Money

Content:

- A “Good” Person

Isaiah 32:8 - But the Noble man makes noble plans and by noble deeds he stands.
If you’re honest, do you consider yourself a pretty good person?

Your answer likely was determined by comparing yourself to something or someone else, wasn’t it? Compared to Hitler, yes, I’m a pretty good person. Compared to Mother Theresa, well, maybe not so much. There’s always going to be someone you can compare yourself to favorably and unfavorably. But compared to Jesus? We are definitely not good.

How about another question. Would you describe yourself as sinful? Maybe it depends on the day and how you’re doing. Let’s say you have an awesome quiet time in the morning, have a
spiritual conversation with a friend, lead a guy to Christ, and it’s only noon! On those days do you think you’re still sinful? Sin is a tricky topic, isn’t it? We all know that this world is filled with injustice and that people routinely do horrific things to each other. But those crimes so apparent in others seem to disappear when we examine ourselves. When we consider our own actions, they seem reasonable and justifiable even if the outcome is harmful to others. The reason we tend to consider ourselves relatively “good people” is because we are all blinded by our own depravity. If we take an honest assessment of our lives, especially in comparison to God’s expectations of us, we realize that we are not at all good people.

In fact, if you see yourself as a pretty good person, you can assume that you probably aren’t! Jesus gives a brilliant litmus test to a group of men who saw themselves as “pretty good people.” In Matthew 9:13 he says,

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Did you catch what Jesus just did there? To say that you’re not sick is to admit to the very fact that you are sick! You see, only a prideful person would have the audacity to say that he doesn’t need God. When Jesus says “I desire mercy, not sacrifice, for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners,” Jesus gives us a great glimpse into how to become noble. A healthy, righteous person is able to bring a sacrifice to God. But a sick and sinful person has nothing that he can give, he can simply appeal for mercy. This is actually what God wants! We see in the Old Testament that God was not satisfied with the sacrifices that people made because they would always need to sacrifice more. The sacrifices of yesterday did not clear you for the sins of today.

To become noble, you have to first admit that you are not noble. You recognize that there is nothing you can bring to God that He needs. You repent of trying to impress Him or atone for your own sin. We typically think of repenting of sin as something along the lines of “quit doing bad stuff and God will accept you.” But, we also need to repent of our own righteous acts. In the story of the prodigal son we see the younger brother need to repent of his sin and the older brother need to repent of his self righteousness.

- **True Nobility**

Let’s unpack this a bit by thinking of the concept of nobility. What does it mean to be noble? Webster’s dictionary describes two paths to nobility:

1. Possessing hereditary rank in a political system or social class derived from a feudalistic stage of a country’s development.
2. Having or showing qualities of high moral character, such as courage, generosity, or honor.

As you can see, we don’t have a chance at either option from a worldly standpoint. You haven’t been born noble. In a spiritual sense, you were born in a long line of sinners who have been separated from God because of our independence from Him. And if we’re honest, none of us
would claim to have such great moral character that we should be considered noble. In fact, using Jesus’ logic, the very fact that we would think for a moment that we are noble would indicate that we’re not!

So how can we become noble? Over the next 8 sessions we will dig into a vision for a noble life and offer you a call to living a life of noble deeds. Noble men indeed change the course of history. The problem is that though the life of a Nobleman is grand, it’s impossible. None of us could ever pull it off. We would fail if we just taught men to accomplish noble deeds. If that was our goal this course would not be worth doing.

Ironically, every man’s attempt at becoming noble in identity by their noble deeds leaves them exhausted or pridefully blind to the fact that they are far from noble. If you try to obtain a noble identity by your noble efforts, you will continue to be exposed as “not enough.” And as that happens, one of three things will happen.

1. You’ll give up the quest for nobility;
2. You’ll lessen the standards of nobility;
3. You will realize that your noble actions alone cannot give you a noble identity, and will look to one who can make you noble, to one who will not just fight for you, but even as you.

Let’s explore what it means to be noble a little more in depth. To develop a noble identity, you must develop an accurate assessment of who God is; who you are not; and who you are in Him.

- **Who God is**

God is perfectly holy. We don’t really understand what holy means in our culture. Every instance in Scripture where we find mortals coming face to face with God, we find them falling on their faces with an overwhelming awareness of how perfectly pure He is and how defiled they are. Consider these next few verses:

Habakkuk 1:13 “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”

Isaiah 59:2 “…your iniquities have separated you from your God; you sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. “

God is pure, and sin separates sinful men from Him.

- **Who you are not**

You are not holy and cannot become holy or noble by any of your efforts. Our sin separates us from God and breaks our relationship with Him.

Isaiah 64:6 “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”
Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of God’s perfect standard.”

1 John 1:10 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

We are not holy in and of ourselves and to try live a holy life for the purpose of pleasing God and absorbing His wrath is simply insufficient. God is pleased by faith and trust not white-knuckling righteousness.

- **Who you are**

If you repent of your sin, and trusting in yourself and your own efforts, and put your trust in Jesus’ death on the cross, you become holy. This is how you become noble. God does not just tolerate you, He delights in you because Jesus drank the entire cup of God’s wrath. You can live now as a child of God because you can become adopted into this family. God credits Jesus’ righteousness, His nobility, if you will, to us.

1 Peter 3:18 “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit…”

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

So, in summary, none of us can obtain a noble identity by our noble deeds. But if we put our faith in Jesus, God’s perfectly noble sacrifice who died a substitutionary death for us, we become noble. We still have a sinful nature, but we have a new noble identity in Christ.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

How could Isaiah rejoice in God? Because God had clothed him in garments of salvation, he did nothing but believe and trust. This is also captured by this song Holy Hands:
Not what my hands have done can save my guilty soul
Not what my toiling flesh has born can make my spirit whole
Not what I feel or do can give me peace with God
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears can bear my awful load

These guilty hands are raised, filthy rags are all I bring
And I have come to hide beneath Your wings
These holy hands are raised, washed in the fountain of Your grace
And now I wear Your righteousness

Thy work alone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin
Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God, can give me peace within
Thy love to me, O God, not mine O Lord to Thee
Can rid me of this dark unrest and set my spirit free

Thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak
Thy power alone, O Lamb of God, can this sore bondage break
Not other works save Thine, no other blood will do
No strength save that which is divine, can see me safely through

I praise the God of grace, I trust His truth and might
He calls me His, I call Him mine, my God, my Joy, my Light
Tis’ He who saveth me, who freely pardon gives
I love because He loveth me, I live because He lives

- How to Live Nobly

Do you feel Noble? Sometimes and sometimes not. Isn’t it based on how you’re doing? What if you could believe the truth of the gospel? It would change everything. If you could be convinced that God doesn’t just tolerate you, He loves you, He’s crazy about you! If we could only stop believing, “God loves me but…” There’s something in us that thinks that if we believe too much that God loves us we will abuse the grace that He’s given us. The first 5 chapters of Romans are all about this, that as he articulates justification by faith some will be tempted to say, “Why shouldn’t we sin more so that grace abounds?” He gets to the answer in chapter 6, essentially saying that we don’t understand the gospel if we ask that question. How can we who have died to sin and have become noble go back to living an ignoble life?

“To see the law by Christ fulfilled, to hear His pardoning voice, changes a slave into a child and duty into choice.” -William Cowper

Your position as a noble and righteous child of God is your new reality. But we don’t always feel that way, right? Your experience is becoming more what you are in position. The act of sinning doesn’t make you any less a child of God just like a quiet time does not make you any more a child of God. We don’t do noble deeds to earn the favor of God. We do noble deeds to live out of the position that we already have. Dogs don’t bark to become dogs. They bark because they are dogs.
Speaking of dogs...Does God have a dog house? You’ve probably heard about a husband being in a doghouse for displeasing his wife. If a husband screws up and misses a date night, he will say he’s in the doghouse. The dog house means sleeping on the couch, and he’ll have to buy flowers to make up for whatever he did. God absolutely doesn’t have a dog house. But when we view our relationship with God through any lens other than the Gospel, we end up living as though we are in his dog house. To believe God has a dog house is to forget how holy He is and how worthless our performance is to save us. Still many think if they’ve been in the dog house long enough God might forget their sin. Some even think they can do enough good things to make God forget about their sin. In this regard a clear conscience is a result of a poor memory. If you have a clear conscience it’s not because you didn’t screw up but because you don’t remember it. In 1 Corinthians 4:4 Paul says “My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent.” The difference between a clear conscience and a clean conscience is that a clean conscience only comes by the blood of Christ. You can have a clean conscience not because of what you are doing but because of what God has done.

Lean into this noble identity. Everything we do comes from our noble identity and whether we believe it or not.

Assignments:

- Memorize second paragraph of the Creed Perfectly
- Share salt with at least one man on your Salty list
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21 (optional Isaiah 61:10)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
- New wing man

Small Group:

- What hit you in tonight’s session?
- How do you find yourself trying to perform for God’s approval?
- Why does it seem to be so hard to rest in Christ’s work for our Nobility rather than trying to achieve it ourselves?
- What do you do when you feel like you’re in God’s dog house?
- How do you need to grow in the process of repentance?
Week 3

Session 5: Noble Stages Of Manhood

Key Lesson:
Using the 6 Hebrew words for “man” Robert Lewis gives a Bible based map for manhood. How we navigate these stages, whether in failure or success, is largely determined by a continued relationship with God. How you mature as a man is measured by whether or not your intimacy with and obedience to Christ morphs to dominate each season in a new way.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 5 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 5 Handout
- Read your letter to your Dad as an example as you explain the assignment
- Remind them the link for “Hiddenness and the Life of Achan” is on the website
- IMPORTANT: Order Batons from noblemenministries.com to give out, one per man, during Session 9

Warm-up:
- Recite first two paragraphs of the Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- Ask about sharing salt
- What's God been doing in you through Noblemen so far?

Content:
This session’s content is inspired almost entirely from Robert Lewis who was an impactful resource in the early days of the formation of the Noblemen course. This session is called the six stages of manhood and we will talk about each stage, how it is unique, new, and challenging and the adjustments it takes to transition to the next stage. Some men get stuck in the first or second stage and never move on and we’ll talk about why that is and how to avoid getting stuck.

There isn’t a clear transition period for each stage and some will overlap so it’s not extremely clear cut. This session will give you a general idea of what is to come in the next stage. During this stage of life you’re all trying to figure out who you are so a lot of guys really like this session because it gives some general goals to hit in this current stage of your life and this will give you a framework.

Issues not handled well from the previous stage will deprive him from growth in the next stage. He will grow older, but not grow up into a real man. We’ve already kind of talked about this, where you feel like a boy in a man's body. Without the right adjustments, a man will experience a deep sense of being lost and confused. In desperation, he will stunt his maturity by suppressing his feelings and medicating the pain with endless coping mechanisms and
addictions until at some point in his life when the pressure gets high enough, the whole thing erupts into a life crisis.

Each of these stages are named after a Hebrew word for “man” with different meanings.

- **Stage 1: Adam (Creational Stage 0-20 yrs. old)**

Adam is a word that represents how we’ve been created. This stage is between 0 and sometime around 20. The key concept is coming to terms with how we’re created. Some big, some small, some athletic, some not, some academic, some not, some musical, some mechanical, some introverted, some extroverted, some plain, some handsome. The question that we answer in this stage is: can you be okay with how God made you? Can you be okay with the family that God put you in? How you were made will help define for you the work that God has for you. Until you can come to grips with the positive and the negative things that you have been created with, you won’t be able to fully understand the way that God has made you. The work of God in you is connected to the way we’re created.

If you don’t come to grips with the way that God made you then you’ll become an imposter, pretending to be the person other people want you to be. Even in friendships you’ll be lonely because the friend that you are is fake. It’s interesting that people don’t really like the chameleon version of ourselves. Psalm 139:14 “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” This verse is not talking about our sin, but rather God making us in His image. Take a minute to think, what’s something about myself that I don’t like and want to change, or I resent this about myself. Go ahead and write it down. For some of you it’s too shameful to admit and you’re worried someone will see, just write a symbol. What area do you not feel wonderfully made?

In this stage you want to be immersing yourself in the Scriptures and really understanding who God is. The sheep know the shepherds voice. The more you get to know the Scriptures and apply the Scriptures to your life and spend time listening to the Holy Spirit the more you will understand the God’s voice. As you lean in to embracing His love and delight in you, you will find yourself more and more secure in how God has made you.

- **Stage 2: Zakar (Phallic Stage 13-25 yrs. old)**

Zakar means male protrusion or male penis. This stage is when sexuality is at its peak as well as the dangers. The habits that you start making in this stage will help you or hurt you for the rest of your life. A lot of men get stuck in this stage, never moving on. Moving out of this stage doesn’t mean that men become less sexual but rather whose sexuality becomes for them an asset rather than a liability. Those who don’t move on never realize that sexual energy must be channeled constructively in the way that God has designed it. This can lead to affairs, addiction to pornography, etc. You can get lost in life below the belt. Your hormones and your sex drive is the strongest at this stage. A guy named Jim Downing was 85 when he was asked, “when do you stop struggling with lust?” He answered, “I heard it’s a couple seconds after you hit the grave.” He died at 104 still vigilantly guarding against sexual temptation in his life.

If you navigate this intensely sexual time now, it will be placed in the right light the rest of your life and will be a blessing to your marriage. Share life with friends and a mentor to work through shame and dirtiness. Quite a few young men have a lot of baggage sexually when they come to
Christ whether it’s sex outside of marriage or an addiction to porn that has been growing for years. Our sexual compulsions are much worse than we’d be willing to share with each other. But, the reality is you are no more sinful than any other man. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. When we are willing to be vulnerable and share our struggles with other men is ironically when we are the strongest. It’s so important to entrust yourself to your friends and mentors especially in this area with baggage and shame. Get strong in Scripture Memory as you’re renewing your mind.

Psalm 119:9-11

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?
   By guarding it according to your word.
10 With my whole heart I seek you;
   let me not wander from your commandments!
11 I have stored up your word in my heart,
   that I might not sin against you.

Get the Scriptures into your mind and meditate on them. The most helpful time to do this is when you wake up and before you sleep because that’s when temptation can be the strongest. If issues in this stage aren’t handled you will be on your way to becoming a dirty old man. The sad part is that dirty old men are everywhere. Some of you are on your way to become dirty old men but you still have time!

We will talk about the idealized woman a little more later in this program but it impacts us so much in this stage. The idealized woman is the greatest enemy to your marriage. She can morph from a brunette to a blonde, she doesn’t talk a lot, she just thinks you’re awesome, she’s always ready for sex, she thinks you’re brilliant. She doesn’t require a lot of attention. You’ve probably spent almost daily time with her in your mind since you were 12 or 13. The idealized woman does not exist and until you kill her she will kill your marriage.

In the Zakar stage you’re able to reproduce physically because your biology is changing but even more important than that you’re able to reproduce spiritually. We will talk a lot about being patriarchs. 13 year olds know enough to be able to pass on what they have learned and start learning how to disciple others.

- **Stage 3: Gibbor (Warrior Stage 20-40 yrs. old)**

Gibbor is the warrior stage. Between 18 to 40 is when a young man’s strength and competitiveness push him to be the best. The goal of this stage is to establish oneself in the community. He drives himself. During this stage, these young bucks can do great things for society. Proverbs 20:29 “The glory of young men is their strength.” The glory that you have is your capacity. It can also be very negative stage. In this stage you are getting wounded. During that stage, you might inflict some wounds on yourself while trying to carve out your niche in society. Then that drive has to be replaced with a retreat where you go and lick your wounds and heal. During this stage you have to have a plan for mastering and being mastered by the Scriptures. There will be every reason not to. Key friendships and covenant relationships with other men will form and build you up as a man. Neither key friendships nor mastering the Scriptures will happen naturally. Most of you will move after college and it will be really easy to not engage with other men. You need to initiate with and seek out godly men and go deep with those guys. If you can’t find a good group of men who are eager to grow then create one. Ezra
During this stage you must be committed to God’s glory over your own. Through the creational stage and into this stage you will grow to realize that God has created you with specific spiritual gifts. It could be evangelism, teaching, serving, hospitality, wisdom, generosity or something else. These are great things until you start getting recognized by your gifts and start thinking that people love you because of your gifts. It is our tendency to be like God and to be worshiped even through the gifts that God has given us. I don’t want to be setting myself up to be stealing God’s glory. Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.” Use your gifts for God’s glory. You will always be tempted to steal His glory but when you do repent quickly and God will continue to use you.

- **Stage 4: Enosh (The Wounded Stage ages 40-50 yrs. old)**

Enosh is the wounded stage. In your late 30’s and early 40’s you’ll start realizing many of the dreams you’ve had since you were young aren’t going to happen. The Lord usually has to take you through painful experiences to remind you that your life and your goals aren’t about you. You’ll start to feel wounded. A lot of men may have lost their marriage and their family because they were so committed to being great in the last stage, seeking glory for themselves. A lot of men have picked up coping mechanisms that they used to soothe the battle wounds in the last stage but now dominate them in this stage. Alcohol, porn, power. Most men stumble into the wounded stage. You become disoriented. God will refine all the things you thought you knew about yourself. The confidence that you had as a young man God will take and put it in Himself. God uses life and the curse to show you that you’re not as great as you thought you were. This stage can be a profitable place, or you can stay in woundedville with your coping mechanisms. A lot of dads will stay in this stage by coming home, sitting on the couch, self-medicating and living vicariously through a football player or a tv show. The desire to be warriors will still be in us but our drive will drop dramatically and it will be much easier to sit back and watch someone else fight the battle.

Resolve ahead of time that you will put your relationship with God, your wife, and your kids first. You have to fight to be emotionally engaged and physically available. There will be a time where your career and your advancement will clash with what’s best for your family. There are times where God will let you do both but there are times where He will make you decide. The men who make the wrong decision in this area usually climb the ladder of success only to realize it was against the wrong wall. Their relationship with God, their wife, and their kids is terrible and they are lonely and can’t go back to patch things up. Pursue your wife. Pursue your kids. Go to marriage counseling even if you think you don’t need it. Proverbs 5:18 “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.”

You must not stop learning and reviewing the Scriptures in this or any other stage. Stay involved in the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Once you begin to make disciples continue in it. A lot of you have never led someone to Christ but if you do, don’t stop. A lot of you haven’t discipled anyone but once you start, you can’t stop. 2 Tim 4:10 “…for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me…” We never specifically hear in the Scriptures why Demas left Paul but it likely wasn’t something incredibly scandalous that made him quit, otherwise it likely would’ve been mentioned. It was more likely that he just stopped wanting to live for Christ and
started craving comfort. In this stage you’ll have peers that seem to have it all, a nice car, a lake house, a prestigious position, and you’ll start to wonder if the things you learned now are even important. You’ll get sucked into the American dream and become sterile. You won’t have men around you reproducing reproducers. You’ll stop being a patriarch. Keep the Great Commandment and the Great Commissions at the forefront of your life in this stage.

- **Stage 5: Ish (Mature Stage ages 50-60 yrs. old)**

Ish is the mature stage- ages 50-60 The word Ish in Hebrew reflects a man who is the ruler of his own soul. Not many men arrive at this stage. It’s God’s intent, but not many men make it. It’s a time where a man directs his path more purposefully, with a clearer vision of life. It’s a deeply spiritual time. Things are settled in his life. For those that hit this stage, life takes on a new excitement. For those who don’t, they just get stagnant and something’s not quite right. Rather than becoming softer, they become mechanical and cynical. They occasionally get a burst and chase after a foolish pipe dream or leave their wives in search of an idealized, often younger woman. If men get to this stage, they can invest deeply in younger men and ministries. Isaiah 60:22 “The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly.” You should already be on your way to a mighty nation if you’ve been investing well in the earlier stages.

- **Stage 6: Zaken (Sage stage 60+)**

Zaken is the sage stage and is usually men who are over 60 years old. For the man that enters this stage, it’s anything but the end. It’s manhood in full bloom. Our world sees older men as washed up and off of the center stage because most don’t make it here. The typical man in this age bracket is a grumpy old fart that just sits around complaining about the younger generation. They aren’t secure or mature enough to mentor and bless others. We brought up Proverbs 20:29 in the warrior stage but it continues, “The younger man’s glory is his strength, the older man’s glory is his gray hair” and gray hair translates to wisdom.

This stage is the beautiful balance of wisdom and initiative. Young men have zeal but are often lacking in wisdom and typical old guys tend to have wisdom but lose their zeal for the Lord. Caleb was different. Numbers 14:24 “But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.”

- **Where Are You?**

Are you moving through the stages, or are you stuck? Maybe the writing is clearly on the wall that you shouldn’t be in a certain field, but you are so driven to prove that you are someone other than you want to be that you can’t see it. Are you okay with who you are and how you’re made?

Are you making decisions now sexually that will enable you to get move through the phallic or sexual stage well? Or are you sowing seeds of impurity that will become the sum of your identity? I already said that some of you are on the path to becoming dirty old men but remember, there is still time to change your trajectory.
You don’t have to wait until the wounded stage to start working through your baggage and the wounding that you’ve already had. Our assignment for this week could be a step in the right direction for getting rid of some of this baggage. None of us escape wounding. It could be from parents, from coaches, from teachers, from peers. It may look different for each of us, but we are all wounded. As a result, some of us believe that we are not wanted, others believe we are stupid, not worthy of respect, incompetent, wimpy, or other lies. You need a mentor to help you get through your woundedness.

- Two Transitions

There are two key transitions along the way that are essential for you to make. The first is from Mommy to Mother. Genesis 2:24 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” You’d be amazed at how many men who are in their 30’s who have not passed from Mommy to Mother. It is natural for a boy to remain bonded to his mom. There comes a time where you have to move through it. That doesn’t mean you stop relationship with her. In fact, your relationship with her will deepen if you make this transition well. You have to cut the emotional umbilical cord. Unless your mother is incredibly godly and mature, it will be impossible for her to make this transition for you. If you don’t do it now, you will face a sad awakening when you get married. Men are made to have one primary woman in their lives. If you get married and haven’t made this transition yet, your wife will be stuck in the middle of this relationship and one of the two, if not both, will resent you. Scripture tells the man to leave mother and father. How do you make this emotional break? Jesus did it at 12 years old in Luke 2. His mom asked Him where He was and He replied, “I had to be in my Father’s house.” Mom’s can’t help but try to keep the emotional umbilical cord.

Men who don’t make this passage well will exhibit pain and injury in one of two ways. They’ll become hostile to women because as women get close, they feel like they’re going to be controlled just like they were with their mom. Or they’ll become passive with women. You’ll go out looking for a wife that can be a surrogate mom who will nurture you and this will get really old and really frustrating for your wife. She doesn’t want to be married to a passive little boy, she needs a man who will love, lead, serve, provide for, protect and develop her and the kids. This is kind of a weird concept but you might be kind of like an emotional husband to your Mom. Often times a boy will be more sensitive and aware of how his Mom is doing than her husband is. There is nothing wrong with loving your Mom but you can’t be an emotional husband to two women. If you haven’t made this transition and you are thinking about how, ask older men for help.

The second passage is from Father to other male mentors. 1 Corinthians 4:15 “Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your Father through the Gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.” These will be men that can teach you skills that your Father couldn’t. These will be men who can call you to pursuits that your Father would not even dare to imagine. These will be men who can empower you with wisdom and resources outside of your Dad’s ability. Joshua had Moses, Ezra had Nehemiah, Elisha had Elijah, John-Mark had Barnabus, I had __________. Do you have a mentor? Jesus says a student is not above his teacher but each student, when he is fully trained, will be like his master.

What kind of learner will you be? Will you be picky with who you try and learn from? We can’t be discipled by Jesus while you’re here on earth. Don’t let your pride get in the way of learning. You can see something in someone else’s live and be determined that you can’t learn from them. The truth is you can learn from anybody if you choose. When you eat a fish you eat the
meat and spit out the bones. Do this with everyone. Don’t just be a learner, be teachable. When you choose to be teachable you are entrusting yourself to someone who can take you to a place you can’t get on your own.

**Assignments:**
- Memorize the third paragraph of the Creed perfectly
- Hand-write a letter to Dad and bring it next week
- Share salt with another man on your Challenge list
- Listen to “Hiddenness and the Life of Achan”
- Memorize Acts 13:22 (optional Ezra 7:10)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
- Pair off new wing man

**Small Group:**
- What hit you from tonight’s session?
- What are some ways that if you’re honest you haven’t accepted or even resent about how God has created you?
- How are you currently walking through the “sexual” stage?
- What stage do you find yourself in now? Why, and what are the indicators?
- Do you have a mentor? Are you mentoring anyone yet?
Week 4

Session 6: Noble Sexuality (Pt 1)

Key Lesson:
Pornography and masturbation have ransacked the current generation. Most either think it isn’t that big of a deal or feel as though they can never win. God however, commands us to walk in purity and freedom. He has given us a new identity in the Gospel, one not earned by our purity record. Our new identity and the power of the Holy Spirit can and will set us free. The real question is, do you want to be freed?

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 6 Handouts)
• Give everyone a Session 6 Handout
• Collect Letter to Father

Warm-up:
• Recite the first 3 paragraphs of the Creed from memory
• Ask what people did scared
• What hit you from the Achan sermon?
• What did writing your letter to your father teach you? Ask volunteers to read some or all of it.
• How did sharing salt go this week?
• What insight or takeaways do you have from the Bible study?

Content:
Our session tonight is the first half of a two part session on sexual purity. Tonight we will go over more of a big picture view of sexual purity and next week will be more practical. If you haven’t already started talking to your wingmen about sexual purity every day, start doing that for accountability.

- The Addiction of Our Generation

Not long ago the internet was just starting to gain traction. It was revolutionary that you could look at porn on a personal computer instead of going to a convenience store and picking up a magazine. It would have been crazy to think about a day where you could watch a pornographic video on your computer but that’s a reality for us now.

In fact we all have access on our phones that we carry with us wherever we go. You can access it anywhere and you can even look for very specific things along with hundreds of thousands of other people. This industry is dependent on catering to your desires and it is their plan to draw you in.
Think of where you are right now with sexual purity and pornography. Accessibility and anonymity will just continue to increase with greater technology like virtual reality and artificial intelligence. The surrounding culture not only says that this is okay, but it actually celebrates pornography and those who pursue it. Jeremiah 12:5 says,

“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?”

If all you have now is a smart phone to tempt you and you’re not doing okay, how do you think you’ll do when there’s a virtual hologram that’s knocking at your door? That sounds crazy but if you combine technology with the pleasures of Satan and the greedy sin nature of man, they can achieve what seems impossible.

Porn sites get more visitors per month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined. The porn industry makes more money than the MLB, NFL, and NBA combined. The bad news is that believers are not immune to this. The good news is that we serve a God who is powerful and brings freedom. Experiencing freedom from pornography might sound impossible to you. One, it is possible, and two, if you experience freedom you will stand out in your generation. You’ll be shocked when you see what God does in you when you start to get freedom and walk in sexual purity.

God’s desire for you is not to hate sexuality or even suppress it. God invented sex, He knows what He’s doing and He knew the struggle that we would have now. Most men are living under one of two lies regarding sexual impurity and their interaction with pornography: 1. It’s not that big of a deal or 2. I’ll never be free.

It is a big deal! It’s a much bigger deal than we realize. We are products of our generation. We’ve become desensitized to sexual perversion. When we compare ourselves to the people around us instead of to God we think, “at least I’m not doing this…”. That comparison affects your soul much more than you realize. I would challenge you to ask the Lord to reveal to you how much sexual perversion really does impact your soul. Here is an image of two people who are just normal people. These are meth addicts who didn’t think it would harm them. There are the same two people. Imagine this transformation happening to your soul. This is what sexual perversion and pornography does to us. It affects every area of your life, not just you. It will affect your marriage, your children, your job, your relationship with God.

Last week we talked about being noble patriarchs. A patriarch pays the price to walk in purity and his wife and children are the beneficiaries of that. If you decide that you want to be free and walk in sexual purity, if you desire a great sex life in the context of marriage, if you want to protect your home spiritually from the enemy, then you need to pay the price.
- **It’s Under Control**

Here is a letter from a wife about her husband who wasn’t willing to pay the price to eradicate porn from his life:

“I wish that every young man who is choosing to go to pornography would realize that the decisions they are making right now are not simply affecting them, they are affecting their future wife and kids. It is a lie when you believe that this won’t affect anyone — a total lie. The patterns that my husband chose as a single man have shaped our marriage. He thought that this would stop when he got married. It didn’t. It has gotten worse. At times it’s not as frequent as it used to be when he was single, but the devastation it causes is worse. I can’t trust him. His screwed up view of sex totally affects me and our sex life. I am not a porn star. You marry reality, not a fantasy girl. My husband learned to associate sex with just getting his needs met. That leaves both of us feeling so empty. It’s confusing for me.

It’s like if I love cooking for my husband, and he tells me that he loves my food and it’s his favorite, and then I keep finding a bunch of empty Burger King wrappers lying around. I can’t help but think he obviously isn’t satisfied with my cooking! But worse than cooking, it’s not just what I made, it’s who I am. When he goes to pornography, it tells me that he’s not satisfied with who I am.

I hate that it’s not just the world who tells him that this is ok, but that his Christian friends are so tolerant of men “struggling” with pornography. They communicate that every guy struggles with this. I wish they’d stop saying "I’ll pray for you bro" and would instead give him a black eye. I’m serious. I love him, but I literally wish that one of his Christian friends would punch him in the face. He’s killing our family. He is like a sneaky, naughty little boy. I need a man who will lead our family. A godly man who will do whatever it takes to walk in purity.”

Don’t believe your sin will only affect you, that you live in a vacuum, that you can just clean it up later. This guy thought he had it under control and could stop whenever he wanted. He didn’t.

**Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

On June 9, 2011 a man named Cody Byrne was killed. He was 34 years old. He had a boa constrictor that he had from the time it was little. When it killed him the snake was 9 feet long and 25 pounds. He had the pet snake before it seemed dangerous. Cody was used to it and thought he was safe. When they pulled the snake off of him they saw that it was well-fed, nothing had startled it, there was no reason it should have killed him. It was his pet. He thought he had it under control. What started as a pet he thought he could control ended up destroying him. He had 3 children who have no father now because he thought he had it under control. **Proverbs 6:27** says, “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?”
- It’s Not Really Affecting Me

Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.” What you dwell on, what you think about at night when no one is around, so you are. You will reflect those things. This is why when you have interactions with girls you can’t help but look at them as sexual objects. As a man thinks, so he is, and so he will become. Does your mind dwell on that which is perverted? Then your heart will become more and more perverted.

Proverbs 25:28 says, “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” We open ourselves to the influence of the enemy. It is a downward spiral because Satan always casts doubt on God’s Word, His character, and on the consequences of sin. It’s interesting that the same Satan who tempts you and tells you that sin is okay is the one who turns around and becomes the accuser. When we open ourselves, that’s what he does.

We’ve become desensitized. We’ve become used to darkness and defiling ourselves. God gives us over to that which we choose. Psalm 81:11, “But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.” We see the same principle in Romans 1 where people choose to ignore God and His ways and their minds become corrupt and in their mind, their hearts and their wills.

The good news is that when we acknowledge our depravity, when we acknowledge that we are more messed up than we’d like to admit, that we’re on a path that’s leading to destruction, that we’re addicts- as we acknowledge our weakness and we come to God asking for change, we see that God is a redeemer. Every year men get free from pornography. The cool thing is that men who are free are able to call other men to freedom.

- God Calls Us To Freedom

Ephesians 5:3, “But among you, there must be not even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity or of greed, because these things are improper for God’s chosen people” This verse is both convicting and encouraging. God does not call us to something that He does not intend us to walk in. That’s great news! This verse shows that God wants to bring us to a place where there is no hint of sexual immorality.

Romans 8:5-6 “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” This is contrasting a regenerate man and an unregenerate man. We are called to embrace the gospel, not sin management. Paul’s not talking about a Christian who is really spiritual and a Christian who’s not doing very well, he’s talking about someone who has been born again and has the Spirit of God and someone who hasn’t. For those of us who have the spirit of God in us he’s saying that you cannot live in a way where you believe that sin isn’t a big deal. If you have the Spirit of God in you there should be significant resistance to perversion.

I think you should really ask the question, “do I care about sin?” If your heart is thinking about how much sin I can get away with, you might not be a regenerate man. God says He will remove from you a heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh that desires and delights in pleasing Him, do you experience that?

The mind that is controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. Could your sexuality be described as
controlled by the Spirit and full of life and peace? Does God have sovereignty over this area of your life or does it feel like it’s off limits to the Lord?

What would you like your sexual life to be described as? Life and peace or chaos, disorder, and destruction? Of course if the Spirit of God is in you then you want freedom and you want life and peace. God will give it you you, especially if you’re serious. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to have that?

We’ve been talking in Noblemen about cultivating faithfulness. Cultivating faithfulness in this area will take resolve, humility, and effort. Cultivating faithfulness in this area will be very small decisions, “am I going to open that or not? Am I going to put myself in a position where I know I can fall? Am I going to be in regular communication with other men that I can go to when I’m tempted?” Just like most of the other areas in Noblemen, if you want the summit, you’re going to have to commit to climbing the mountain. You can’t call another man to sexual purity if you’re not walking in it yourself. When you start to get free your sinlessness won’t be what calls other men, it will be your caution and hatred of the destruction. As you become free you’ll be able to show other men the healed scars you’ve gotten from pornography and you’ll point them to the One who freed you.

- **Sexual Wholeness and the Great Commission**

Porn is the single biggest factor that the enemy has used to hinder the Great Commission in the last 20 years. It’s because guys feel guilty. It’s Proverbs 28:1, “The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” Let’s say you’ve just fallen for porn, you go look at it, and now you put yourself in God’s non-existent doghouse. You believe you just have to sit there for a while and do some good things and hope God forgets. If God puts on your heart to go talk to someone about Him, how confident will you be in sharing the gospel? How likely are you to do it scared? There are men who are unwilling to step out or they step out without power because there’s sin in the camp that they’re unwilling to deal with. Are you walking bold as a lion or living in the ministry prison of shame and paralysis because of your sexual addiction? Get free from this and you will see God use you in huge ways.

- **Steps Toward Reconstruction**

Here are our steps to reconstruction.

1. **Acknowledge it really is a big deal.**

   Be willing to admit to the Lord that you have a problem. Look through your heart and your life and acknowledge the problem and the addiction.

2. **Be willing to do whatever it takes to get free and walk in purity.**

   Between now and our next session get your heart in a place with the Lord where you can ask for purity despite the pushback from your flesh. If you ask God to take it but not take it very far you’ll never find freedom. Be willing to really ask the Lord to take it.
3. **Renounce the lie that you can never be free.**

You can be free from the addiction to pornography and masturbation and sexual impurity. You can walk in peace in this area.

Some of you God may call to singleness. The Scriptures call this a gift and if He does call you to singleness there will be grace that comes with it. Most of you He will call to be married. If you’ve been told that it doesn’t get any easier once you get married it’s a lie. God has given you a sex drive and when you’re married you also have an appropriate, God given, God designed, beautiful outlet. Of course it gets easier. It’s not that far off. The work you do now will pay off the rest of your marriage. In either situation you are called to it will get easier but the flesh will continue to try and pervert it. You’re addiction to and the temptation for pornography won’t get easier if you continue to let it fester in your life but, because God has designed sex, he can restore the things that we have given over to perversion.

Your destiny is not for sexual impurity, addiction, captivity, and the inability to help other men. It doesn’t have to be your destiny. The Lord can bring full redemption. Remind yourself of whose you are. You’re the Lord’s. The other gods of the nations pimp their people, they promise prosperity and care and they exploit their subjects. But our God invites us to Him and when we come we never find ourselves disappointed, we never displease Him. That’s the God who has called you His own.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20,

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Remind yourself of who you are, not only whose you are but who you are. Romans 6:1-4,

“What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ Jesus was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Remember whose you are, who you are, and next session we will talk about practical steps for how to live a free life.

**Assignments:**
- Share salt with another man on your list
- Memorize Ephesians 5:3 (optional 1 Corinthians 7:1)
- Memorize the 4th paragraph of the creed
- Do Weekly Bible Study

**Small Group:**
- What hit you from tonight’s session?
- How have you seen shame and legalism in your life?
- Do you really believe you can walk in sexual purity? Do you believe you can be free?
- What are some practical steps you will make this week to pursue sexual purity?
Week 5

Session 7: Noble Sexuality (pt. 2)

Key Lesson:
After we acknowledge that we need God to free us from sexual sin we have to answer two questions: what sexual sin am I holding onto, and how far am I willing to go to watch God transform me? In this session we give 10 practical tools to pursue freedom and sexual wholeness.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 7 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 7 Handout
- Optional video clip located in the Session 7 leaders guide on the website or at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Idfgllk5dgl&feature=youtube.be
- Give everyone C.S. Lews “On Masturbation”
- IMPORTANT: Mail out the participants letter to their father (template in session 7 leaders guide at the bottom of the web page)

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- How was sharing salt?
- Did you gain any new insights from the Bible study?
- How has your perception of your own sexual sin changed?

Content:

- Intro: What Are You Holding On To

Last week we talked about some of the bigger picture issues of sexual purity. We talked about reminding ourselves of whose we are and of who we are and we talked about the God who redeems us. It's amazing when you remember that in Christ God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. There's no other god that does that. He doesn't say, “Okay that's enough, you've crossed a line, you're no longer mine.” He says, “My kindness will lead them to repentance.”

So tonight we will get into more practical and specific ways to make progress into sexual wholeness. If you put in the effort between now and the time you get married, your whole marriage will be blessed and enriched because of the work that you do during this time. That doesn’t mean that you just put in effort until you get married then you’re good, but right now your sexual drive is at its peak and God has commanded you to be abstinent until you get married.

It’s worth it. As you really dig in and do the work, it's worth it. In the Achan sermon that you
listened to Bryce explained how these hunters catch a monkey. They slide their hand in and grab a piece of candy or fruit in there and they can’t get it out. Here’s a video that gives you a greater picture of what this process looks like.

*Play video*

2 Peter 2:19, “Man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.” Right up until the end the monkey sees the hunter coming but he’s still not willing to let go. He’s a captive by his own device. All he has to do is let go but he’s not willing to. Often times we think that we can let go just in time, that we have it under control. Think to yourselves, “What is it that’s in my hand that I’m not willing to let go.” What has mastery over you?

Most men have been mastered for years by sexual impurity. You have an enemy who has a target on you. His goal, even before you had sexual thoughts, was to destroy your sex life, your relationship with God, and to destroy any impact that you would have on the world. He meticulously uses everything he needs to in order to destroy us. Most men are in bondage far more than they would ever like to admit.

Our God is powerful! He’s much more powerful than Satan. The Spirit of God lives in you. Do you really want to be free? We become free as we bring our sexuality back under the Lordship of the God who created us and who created sex. Again, Satan would tell us that God’s holding out on us. If God created sex wouldn’t he know how to make sex a good thing? His way is not constrictive. It’s life and peace.

So how do we get free and how do we stay free? There are 10 things to help us get free and stay free in sexual purity.

- 10 Tools for Freedom

1. Do the work of a husband now.

“Husband” comes from two English words, “house” and “band”. It’s a band around the house. Some say it could be described as a fence builder. A husband builds fences around his house and property. We create spiritual, physical, financial, emotional, and sexual fences.

You don’t just put up a fence and it’s good for the rest of its life. It needs to be maintained and mended. There’s always something trying to get in that you want to keep out. It’s the same for us. We need to build fences and upkepp the fences that we build. Song of Solomon 2:15, “Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards.” Your job now, before you’re even married, is to be putting up fences in your life and determining that when you lay down in your bed at night there is a fence built up against sexual thoughts. Are you going to open yourself sexually to fantasies that you know will lead you down a road you can’t come back from or will you build a fence there?

Last session we mentioned Proverbs 25:28, “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” Being a good husband now is to start to develop self-control where it hasn’t been present. Do the necessary work to let God restore you. Build fences. Mend fences where you know things are getting through. Ask God to bring sensitivity to the areas of your heart that you’ve hardened.
Imagine there’s a circular saw blade in your heart and every time you look at porn or fantasize or masturbate it turns. The first couple times it hurts because it’s ripping flesh and tendons. After that the pain and damage start to become familiar. After a while its able to spin freely, it’s still doing damage but you aren’t able to feel anything because it’s ripped so much flesh. There are probably areas of your life where you don’t realize the damage it’s doing. Ask the Lord to go back and rip off the calluses and give you a sensitivity.

Repentance is not trauma, it’s relief and it’s release from what’s holding you. Psalm 51:4, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight…” If you go back and see an area that you’re calloused to, will you be willing to repent? Patriarchs aren’t men in bondage. Think of your physical and spiritual lineage. It’s worth it to do the work.

2. Learn to repent well.

Isaiah 30:15, “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.” When repenting we tend to want to hurry and leave God’s presence to prove that we really are sorry this time. We also make foolish statements like, “I’ll never do this again,” but there are so many data points that we know it’s foolish. Maybe we say that we’ll try harder or have accountability or enact drastic measures. Usually those drastic measures don’t do anything and sometimes it even gets worse.

Sometimes the more we get consumed with saying no to a sin, the more it becomes our identity and our relationship with God is defined by that sin. God doesn’t want us to try to earn a relationship with Him, that’s not Gospel thinking. What should we rest in? We need to rest in the finished work of Christ. We need to work in Christ’s performance not ours.

When we ask God to pull back the curtain and He shows us our sin, like Paul in Romans, we stop saying, “What should I do?,” and we start saying, “who will rescue me?.” Gospel transformations start happening in our hearts. We start to want to say no to ungodliness and and are moved to live an upright and godly life, not so we can earn God’s favor but because grace has moved our hearts.

3. Fully Surrender.

When someone surrenders in a battle, they don’t dictate the terms of their surrender. When you’re overtaken, you’re done. Jerry Bridges draws a great analogy between the business world and our relationships with God. In the business world there are two types of bankruptcy called Chapter 11 and Chapter 7. If you hear about a company declaring bankruptcy but still see them around after, its because they declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Chapter 11 is asking for help from the government and they get an opportunity to try again by moving some assets around. If you declare Chapter 7 bankruptcy it means you’re done. Everything you own is gone. The benefit though is that you are no longer in debt when you declare chapter 7.

When you surrender to God in order to pursue purity, you will not find deliverance if you declare Chapter 11 bankruptcy. How has it gone when you’ve dictated the terms of your surrender? If you got married right now how would your wife feel about your sexual purity? How would your children do with you as their father? Are there fences that have been broken down? Are their even fences in some places? Has Satan been having a heyday? Do what it takes. Fully
surrender.

After Noblemen there will be a Bible study called Walking in the Light that focuses on sexual purity. If you’re not at a place where you don’t want to do business and really get free then this won’t be the study for you. This is for men who want to do whatever it takes to get free and stay free.

4. Resolve to not defile yourself.

Daniel 1:8, “Daniel resolved not to defile himself.” Daniel lived in a pagan culture that would make our culture look pretty clean cut. For 70 years we see that Daniel lived undefiled. Resolve means to fix the form or character beforehand, to determine or decide before the event.

Jim Downing at 85 said, “90% of the temptation that I face in a given day happens before I leave my front door.” He knew where the temptations would be and he resolved ahead of time how he was going to respond. He didn’t wait until the moment to respond. He said there was a season where he and his wife were living in a place with a prostitute between his house and his work so he resolved to not drive past where she would be. He decided to drive the long way around her, making life inconvenient, for the greater purpose of walking in sexual purity.

5. Take out trash.

Imagine you just had a big party and there’s a lot of leftovers that you just throw away. You’re trash can is in the middle of the living room and after a couple days and weeks, flies start to come, then mice, and rats. These pests are getting aggressive, maybe they’ve chewed through the can or knocked it over to get to the food. What do you do? You could set mouse traps, and rat traps, and fly paper. Maybe you could call an exterminator. Obviously the most effective thing to do would be to take out the trash.

Think about your life. Is there a trash can in the middle of your heart where you’re setting all these traps when you could just be taking out the trash? What is it that you’re unwilling to get rid of? When you are experiencing intimacy with Jesus after you take out the trash of sexual impurity that has been robbing of you, everything else will seem like trash.

Ezekiel 20:7,

“Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

James 1:21,

“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”

As you think about your life and the place you live right now, Psalm 101 is a great passage to think about. You’re learning to manage your house in a way that will bless your wife and your children. Make your home a sanctuary.

Psalm 101:2-3,

“I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart, I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The
deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil."

6. Go nuclear.

Do whatever it takes. One student threw his computer off the 10th floor of his dorm and used a public computer for the rest of his college career. Maybe you need to leave your computer at home and not bring it with you anymore. Maybe you need to downgrade to a flip phone with no internet access.

Matthew 5:27-30
27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Don’t ask God to take something from you if you’re not serious. Consider getting Covenant Eyes on your computer. Covenant Eyes is a program that monitors what websites you go to and it can send reports to a friend or mentor that you assign.

Some think that doing these nuclear options is legalistic or making you submit to some kind of law. Imagine getting sent to the ER after getting in a car crash and, on top of having a severed arm the doctors find that you have a heart arrhythmia. Which are they going to treat first? Of course they will treat the severed arm because, even though a heart is more important than an arm, they have to deal with the fact that you are loosing blood and won’t live much longer if they don’t treat the severed arm. It may seem legalistic or inconvenient to follow a procedure to get healthy. It is far more inconvenient to go into a marriage with a sexual addiction and opening your kids to the enemy than it is to get covenant eyes and pay for it for a few months or years.

Be willing to do whatever it takes. You can change the world but this is the biggest area where the enemy can keep this from happening. Get free and you’ll have the moral authority to call other men into freedom.

7. Confess and renounce.

Bryce talked about this in the Achan sermon. James 5:16, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Proverbs 28:13, “He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Be willing to share with someone else everything that you’re going through. The things that are embarrassing have power in the dark but bringing it in the light, which is so hard, brings freedom. When you call your wingman to do your creed be honest about how you’re doing with porn.

What’s shared in Noblemen stays in Noblemen. This means that you need to become a vault. For some of us, that’s our default, but some tend to be a revolving door. A key phrase for a revolving door is, if you find yourself saying “don’t say anything but…” That should be a giant
red flag that should warn you to stop talking. This tends to be a harder challenge for extroverts. Become a vault. When men share things with you, they need to know that you’re not going to bring it out tomorrow. 5 years from now, with your wife, or even in some illustration if you’re discipling a guy or whatever it might be. Who wants to share with a revolving door?

8. Fight the right way.

In Colossians 2:20-23 Paul writes,

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)— according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. no power in restraining sensual indulgence.

Paul is addressing a people who were striving to live holy lives, but in doing so they actually were fighting the wrong way. They had lost sight of the Gospel and of their identity as children of God. 1 Corinthians 15:56 tells us that the power of sin is the law. It’s like what happens when we see a wet paint sign. We didn’t want to touch the wall until something told us not to. When we fight sin not out of our Gospel identity but in an effort to establish an identity, the sin nature in us is ignited and wants to sin all the more. That’s when you see someone’s struggle with a particular sin start to define their relationship with God. In the next chapter, Paul tells them instead to set their hearts and minds on things above. He goes on to still admonish them to fight sin, but to do so out of our new secure, Gospel identities.

9. Always seek out a wingman and GIGs

The writer of Hebrews had this to say about community,

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

In context, the writer of Hebrews is warning against turning away from God’s commands and returning to sin. Community that is centered around the Gospel is crucial to finishing well. Paul knew this and as such always sought to do ministry alongside other believers and leaders. What is important to note is that we are called to stir up love in one another. I believe this is best accomplished by reflecting on the Gospel; that apart from the grace of God I am a dead sinner. However because of His mercy, and the faith He gives me by the Holy Spirit, I am alive and regenerated!

Then we are called to push one another to good works. This is not performance oriented. It is instead a call to live out of your position in the gospel as sons. Eph 2:10 says that we were saved for good works!
10. Renew your mind.

Although this final step was saved for last, is it incredibly important. We have already established that as a man thinks so he is. The battle for our heart, is won and lost in the mind. God knows this. He created us this way. In fact time and time again He commands us to fill our minds with His truth!

- Rom 12:1-2, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 119:9-11, Philippians 4:8, Job 31:1

Memorizing God’s word is not merely a good habit. It is a commanded habit. As you empty your thought life of perversion new habits have to be formed in their place. To leave your mind empty is to invite your flesh to fill it with sin. Instead continue to cultivate the habit of memorizing and reviewing Scripture. It is no accident that this has been part of your weekly assignments. The verses you are memorizing are designed to help you fill your mind with the very thoughts and commands of God.

If you fill your mind with Scripture now, by God’s grace when you are old you will bleed it out. Make it a part of your prayer life today!

- In Conclusion

Ultimately these 10 steps are meaningless unless your heart and mind are changed by the Holy Spirit. Without His regenerating work we are bound by sin and death. Cling therefore to the gospel of grace and truth!

If you have the Holy Spirit pause and ask yourself, “do I really believe that God will set me free from sexual impurity?” “How far am I actually willing to go to allow God to clean out my heart and mind?”

How you answer these questions will define your life.

Assignments:
- Share salt with another man on your list
- Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 (optional Isaiah 54:4)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
- Read C.S. Lewis’s quote on masturbation

Small Group:
- What hit you from tonight’s session?
- What’s your sexual purity story? If you’re really honest, how are you doing right now?
- What’s the difference between trusting God for freedom in the Gospel and simply trying to harder?
- What action steps would you like to take tomorrow to move toward a greater sexual purity?
Week 6

Session 8: Noble Friendships

Key Lesson:
God has designed us to thrive in relationship with Him and others. Without deep male friendships we cannot live out the mission God has called us to as men. We need mentors, as well as peers who are on the inside of our lives. Everywhere we go we are called to be initiators relationally for the health of ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 8 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 8 Handout
- Send Dawson Trotman’s “Born to Reproduce”
- IMPORTANT: Make orders for FORT Week and Ceremony
  - Each student needs: 1 FORT short, 1 Ceremony shirt, 1 Noblemen block
  - Order shirts and blocks through noblemenministries.com

Warm-up:
- Recite the Creed from memory
- Ask about sharing salt
- What is the Lord asking you to do to trust Him with your sexual wholeness?

Content:

- Noble Friendships

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Most guys, if they are honest, have pretty shallow relationships. Think about it. You take one guy who is haunted by the question, “Am I enough?”, and put him with another guy who is haunted by the same question. We try to develop a true and meaningful friendship, and we usually end up with men who are surrounded by people he calls friends but, in reality, are not much more than acquaintances.

You see it everywhere you go, men who desperately long to be known by other men and to have them on the inside of their lives but are too afraid to let anyone in. Let’s face it, most men aren’t known for their empathy or listening skills. Frankly most are rather passive in relationships. Is it any surprise that so many men are lonely? When there are so many different medications like porn or video games or t.v. which distract, what’s left is a bunch of lonely guys with no friends. A man may throw himself into work, convinced that he doesn’t really need close friends, but he will live with a constant nagging to have a few good buddies. He will long for
friends who are loyal, safe, fun and godly; Men who make him a better man and who would do anything for him.

A lot of us have been burned by other guys in friendships at some point or another growing up. At the very least we’ve all been disappointed. Because of this, we develop self-protective strategies that inadvertently create shallow, sarcastic, competitive, and adversarial friendships rather than risk getting hurt again. When you see guys, even Christian guys, interact with each other it’s often so shallow. No one is willing to show weakness. We tend to shy away from other men who, if we are honest, probably intimidate us. To watch the question “am I enough” come out in other men makes us more aware of our own failures. Some guys think it’s just easier to develop deeper friendships with women because they don’t have to engage with that question that haunts them. Women tend to be safer and easier to fool with the illusion that we are enough.

But God does not desire you to be a lonely, isolated man. We all need a few good friends on the inside of our lives to keep us from being vulnerable to sin. We are vulnerable to isolation, self-delusion, blind spots in our character, and poor choices if we are not spurred on by someone who can call us to be better men.

Find a powerful leader who has taken a fall from greatness, and you will almost always find a man who has no true friendships with other men. He might have in the past but he has failed to continue those relationships and to develop new friendships through moves and the seasons of life. Authentic, worthwhile friendships are costly. They will take time, effort, risk, and will most likely involve pain and disappointment. But without them, you will be a lonely, isolated, sitting duck that the enemy will tear apart. You will have no chance without men on the inside of your life.

Tonight I want to give you 7 tips for developing healthy, vibrant friendships.

1. **Ask God for a friend that will stick closer than a brother.**

   God says in James, “You have not because you ask not". What if God is just waiting for you to ask for a good friend? Every time you move or a friend moves you will need to start over and a lot of times you find that many people already have close friends. It will be easy to get stuck in just grieving the past and not move on to cultivating new friendships.

   Proverbs 18:24 says, “A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Ask God to give that to you wherever you are.

2. **Proactively initiate until God gives you a good friend and a good friend group.**

   After you ask, be proactive! It probably will take multiple tries. It might feel like you’re a clingy guy on a second date. In the creed, we say “I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.” There’s a reason that’s in there. The good friend you have now will likely continue as a good friend but when you move you will need a new good friend in the city you live. Most of you are not going to live in the same town the rest of your life. The average American will move at least 10 times in their life. You’ve likely already moved a few times.
Chances are you’ll have quite a few more ahead of you. In many ways, each time you move, it will be harder to find good friends. It’s not just you, but your wife, and kids also. You can’t sit back passively and expect to find a good, local friend. Good, close friendships are essential, but they are not something you can sit back and passively expect will come to you. Don’t be like the 6th grade dance where all you do is wait for others to initiate. Take risks. Get rejected. It’s not just worth it, it’s essential!

1 Samuel 17:48, “As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.” This verse is about initiating because your confidence is in God. As you step out in these relationships, step out knowing that you might get burned but do it scared and do it trusting in God.

3. Kill the idealized friend.

Just like you have to kill the idealized woman, if you want a good close friend, you’re going to need to kill the idealized friend. He doesn’t exist. Think of how many good friends you have now who kind of got on your nerves at first. You don’t pick up in a new place where you left off at your old town.

1 Samuel 22:2 “All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.” Chances are there were thousands of people following David if you include wives and children. Just the men were counted, but as goes the husband, so goes the household. Four hundred families are in distress, debt and discontented and David accepted them from the Lord. If David was picky about who followed him, he never would have had men following him. Don’t be picky about the people that God brings to you. Out of many of these 400 men came David’s mighty men who lived to protect him. You never know who these men will be if you choose to be picky rather than trust God.

4. Don’t be easily offended.

One of the greatest tools Satan has is a Christian who’s easily offended. It’s amazing how much destruction that comes in to my life and to the people around me if I choose to be easily offended. In a day where almost anything can become reason for offense, the Scriptures encourage us to guard against being easily offended. Proverbs 18:19 “A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city.” Desire is appropriate, a demand is not. If you demand an apology or demand someone to act a certain way it will backfire.

So what happens if you do get offended? Matthew 18:15 says, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.” If someone offends you, go to them and tell that they offended you. How many people should be involved at first? Just you and the other person. You don’t need to bring someone else in just to get someone else on your side. If they don’t respond well then you can ask for someone for help.

In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus says, “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” If you sense perhaps you have
offended someone, go to them and ask them if you’ve offended or hurt them and mend the relationship.

When you mend relationships don’t let asterisks develop. Don’t hold against them the thing that they have done. Don’t let bitterness come between you and a friend. Bitterness is the poison that you drink hoping that it kills the other person.

Proverbs 27:5-6 “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” If you’re not easily offended you can gather men around you who can be honest with you. You don’t have to get defensive. Do you invite their voices into your life even if it will hurt? If not, you are likely on the road to destruction and won’t even see it coming. It is essential for us as men to not only invite other men to speak into the blind-spots in our lives but also to be willing to do the same for other men.

5. Fight to let someone on the inside.

As we said, everyone has been burned at some point. You have to fight your own defenses to let someone on the inside. Here again is Proverbs 18:24, “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Those many companions are on the outside of your life. Will you let someone inside?

Guys, don’t let wit and sarcasm kill intimacy. Sarcasm means “to cut the flesh”. Proverbs 26:18-19 says, “like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, ‘I was only joking’” Don’t dirt bag each other all the time. If you do, nobody will be vulnerable.

There is a significant difference between transparency and vulnerability. A lot of people like to talk about vulnerability and how vulnerable they are but what they really mean is transparency. If my life is a house and I was being transparent with you, you would be on the outside of the house looking through a window. The problem is that I can put anything in front of the window for you to see but you don’t know what’s going on in my basement. You only see that one room of my house. Vulnerability means being willing to invite people into your house. This doesn’t mean you can go anywhere in my house, that’s creepy and weird. But a vulnerable friendship means I let you rearrange the furniture in my living room and maybe I’ll show you what’s in my closet or basement someday. Share about your sexual sin, even with your wingman. When you’re vulnerable you can get hurt, but it’s worth it.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this about our need for vulnerability and community:

“He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone. It may be that Christians, not withstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service, may still be left to their loneliness…though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner…we dare not be sinners…so we remain alone with our sin…the fact is we are sinners.”
6. Join or create Gospel Identity Groups (GIGs) everywhere you live.

A GIG is similar to what you may know as an accountability group but more holistic. Noblemen is a GIG, not an accountability group. Most men tend to not stick with accountability groups because they can often just focus on sin management and behavior modification rather than getting at the root of what's going on in them. In GIGs we talk about behavior, not in order to be children of God, but because children of God want to act like they belong to Him. In a few weeks we are going to talk more about this. We'll hit more on how to develop a thriving GIG. The key is having a group that really loves and lives life with each other. It will be very rare that you stumble on another group that really identifies with the Gospel. Chances are you'll have to create it. Every one of you are patriarchs and have the ability to form a group that identifies with the Gospel and calls men to engage in their identity as sons of God. If you create a GIG other men will love you for it. 1 Samuel 18:1 “After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.”

7. Be a friend of “sinners.”

Don't just be friends with other believers. Make time to be with people who don't know Jesus. The demoniac Jesus healed in Mark 5 wanted to leave and go be with Him and His disciples but Jesus didn’t ask the demoniac to follow Him. Jesus asked him to go home and tell others what He had done. The demoniac wanted to be with Jesus and other believers and so do we. We must also remember that we have the Holy Spirit who resides in us. (1 Cor 3:16) This means we get to take Him, and godly community with us when we go to be among those who don't know Jesus.

Luke 15:1-2 says “Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Jesus became known as a friend of sinners. Jesus ate with sinners. Do you? Don't make occasional forays among the lost. A Nobleman makes time to be among those who don't know Christ! 1 Peter 3:15 says, “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”. You won't be asked about the hope that is in you if you just spend time with other Christians. If someone hasn't asked you that recently it's probably because you're not among them enough.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 says, “So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.” Be in their world and invite them into yours! There is always enough time to build relationships and for someone to begin a vibrant relationship with Christ. What if you shared salt with one person from work and your community every week for the rest of the year? Where else will they find such love?
Assignments:
- Share salt with a another man on your Challenge list
- Listen to Dawson Trotman’s “Born to Reproduce”
- Do Weekly Bible Study
- Memorize Proverbs 18:24 (optional Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

Small Group:
- What struck you from today’s session?
- Do you have a friend or two whom you would describe as really being on the inside of your life?
- On a scale of 1-10 (1 being low) how would you rank the quality of your friendships with other men?
- What would you say tend to be some of your strengths as a friend?
- What are some of your weaknesses in being a friend that you need to shore up?
- What steps can you take to developing authentic, substantial friendships with other men today?
Session 9: Noble Patriarchs

Key Lesson:
Male headship is a privilege that is often abused. However, when we submit to God as our leader and seek to obey Him it can be remarkably redeemed. We are called to be patriarchs who lovingly lead and disciple others. Not only should a man be concerned about his family, but he should also be spiritually reproducing disciples. The Gospel is God’s power to create generations of world changing patriarchs.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 9 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 9 Handout
- Give everyone access to the Bridge Video
- Walk through heaven and hell surveys, what they are and how to initiate them
- Give out Batons
- Give out Personal Multiplication Charts
- Send out Tim Keller’s “Struggle for Love”
- Give everyone Noblemen Challenge Booklets Downlaod, this at Noblemenminstries.com
- Give everyone Salty Cards Download, this is Noblemenminstries.com

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- Ask about sharing salt
- Ask what they learned from “Born to Reproduce”
- Ask for volunteers to share what God has been doing in you through Noblemen so far

Content:
- Defining a Patriarch

The word patriarch comes from a combination of the Latin word ‘pater’, meaning father, and the Greek verb ‘arche’, meaning to rule. The definition of a patriarch is a ruling ancestor who may have been the founding father of a family, a clan, or a nation.

In a worldly sense, patriarchies are often not a positive thing. The reason is because men often use their power and position to control, hoard and abuse rather than to shepherd, serve and bless the people who they are leading.

If you think back to our first session of Noblemen, you’ll remember that the Lord gives men the privilege and responsibility of headship. This doesn’t mean they’re better or smarter, it’s just the position of headship. He endows them with a position and a power that is to be used for others, not for himself.
It’s no surprise when man does not place himself under God’s headship that he will seek to be served and worshipped in his quest to be like God. This gives patriarchy a bad connotation. When you see a man who places himself under God’s headship, walks by faith, lives not for temporal pleasure, walks in humility and wholehearted obedience to God you see a patriarch. You also find a man serving and sacrificing for those under his care and those who will come after him, living for the lost and teaching the next generation to do the same. That is a patriarch who shakes the world and shapes the course of history.

One of the goals of Noblemen is to create a generation of patriarchs who will shine as lights in a self-serving, worldly patriarchal society. This is why we say you can take a Nobleman and plant him anywhere and come back later and there will be more like him. A patriarch is not just a good man. The world has had multitudes of “good” men. The world doesn’t just need more good men, it needs patriarchs, men of conviction, men who will impact everyone around them. A patriarch is a powerful force whose life is lived in such a way that it echoes long after he has lived, leaving an indelible mark on history and the lives of others.

Built in to a patriarch’s vision for his life is a desire to create a family of successive patriarchs and matriarchs. It’s not enough just for him to be a patriarch, he wants to see those after him have the ability to raise up more patriarchs and matriarchs. This is why we create crests in Noblemen. It’s to declare to you, those around you, and all who come after you that you are a patriarch.

You have been memorizing and quoting the creed every day. If you don’t just memorize and quote it but really commit to living out the words of that creed every day of your life, you will indeed be a patriarch in our generation and for generations to come. God really can use you to change the world. Let’s break down those marks of a patriarch I mentioned and then we will look at men who have demonstrated these qualities. There are 6 marks of a patriarch in 3 sections: The Cost of a Patriarch, The Ways of a Patriarch, and The Strategy of a Patriarch. We will look at some of the greatest Patriarchs in history: Abraham, David, Paul, and Jesus.

• The Cost of a Patriarch

The first mark of a patriarch. A patriarch places himself under the Father’s headship.

By this point in Noblemen, you have heard this idea several times. It is an essential concept to grasp and live out. For a man to rule but not place himself under the Father’s rule is insanity. To ask anyone to follow him makes no sense. But when he places himself under the Father’s headship he is free to bless other people. Jesus is a great example of this in Philippians 2:5-8,

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!”

In some ways it can seem like God is committed to doing the opposite of what we do. Humble yourself and God will exalt you. Exalt yourself and God will humble you. In the Old Testament Satan has several instances where he says, “I will, I will, I will” in trying to ascend to the place of God and trying to exalt himself. In this passage we see that Jesus stepped down, the opposite of what Satan is about. If you want to be a patriarch, you are going to have to rule under the
Father’s headship. This allows you to bless and release those under your care instead of controlling and using them. Would God say that the whole of your life is under His Lordship?

**The second mark of a patriarch.** A patriarch, by faith, leaves security behind and assumes responsibility for future generation’s welfare.

Let’s look at Abraham. He leaves comfort behind and assumes responsibility for the family after him. In Genesis 12, God makes a great promise to Abram to bless him and allow him to be a blessing to the whole earth but first he must leave his country, his people, and his father’s household.

You must leave and cleave, leaving your father’s household and cleaving to your wife and your new family and you must set your physical and spiritual children up to do the same. This may mean like Abraham having to sacrifice your longing for greatness like he did with Isaac in Genesis 22. Think for a moment and ask yourself, “What may the Lord be asking you to trade for being a patriarch? Parents approval? Desire for a certain career? Fame?” God may give it back like Isaac, but he might not to make you a greater man. You can be a patriarch but it’s going to cost you. Dawson Trotman, as his ministry was picking up, got approached by a man who said to him, “I’d give my right arm to do what you do.” Dawson replied, “It won’t cost your right arm…it’ll cost your life.”

- **The Ways of a Patriarch**

**The third mark of a patriarch.** A patriarch walks in wholehearted obedience to God.

This is the power of a Patriarch’s life. If there’s no passion in your relationship with God there will be no power. Thinking about the patriarchs who have impacted history you see a passion for God and power from them placing themselves under the rule of God and walking intimately with Him.

David is a great picture of this. Psalm 119:32 “I run in the path of your commands for you have set my heart free.” He didn’t obey so he would be set free, he obeyed because he had been set free. He says gain in Psalm 40:8 “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” And in Acts 13:22, “…I have found David, son of Jesse a man after my heart, he will do everything I want him to do.” The evidence of wholehearted devotion is that you’ll do whatever God asks of you.

Here’s a simple prayer I dare you to pray: “Lord, I'll do whatever it takes to get to know You better.” In a few weeks we are going to begin looking at sexual purity. If you’re willing to do whatever it takes to walk in purity, you are going to make yourself stand out and be useful to the Lord. You will be able to call other men in bondage into freedom!

**The fourth mark of a patriarch.** A patriarch serves and sacrifices himself for those under his care and who will come after him.

He doesn’t just live for himself, he’s willing to give himself up. John 13:3-5 “Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to
God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” Jesus turned leadership upside down. The God of the universe was humble and meek and used His power, position, influence, and trust not to serve Himself but to serve the men around him.

Hebrews 12:2-3 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” There will be times where you don’t want to serve the people under you. More times than not, serving is inconvenient. There will be times where the people you’re leading will betray you and will work against you. Think of Jesus who was willing to accept Judas and invite him into His life. If you want to be a patriarch, consider Jesus who endured opposition from sinful men. As a patriarch there will be times where you’ll want to serve yourself and advance yourself. But if you serve, you’ll make God’s name great.

God gives you the ability to rule, to be a head, not for yourself, but for others. Pour yourself out for them. Don’t complain when leadership is costly, rejoice that you get to imitate your Savior. Men will not really give you their hearts until they see your willingness to sacrifice yourself for them. You don’t need to broadcast how you’ve been sacrificing, just quietly do it and they will notice and God will notice.

- The Strategy of a Patriarch

The fifth mark of a patriarch. A patriarch lives for the lost.

He lives for those who are on God’s heart, those who don’t know Him. He doesn’t just live for himself. A patriarch takes his life and everything he has and orients it in such a way that other people who are not in the fold can come to know Christ.

Think about what Paul gave up as a Pharisee, the title, the power, the position, privilege that he had. What would move him to do what he describes in Acts 20:19-24,

“I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me— the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”

Patriarchs assume the responsibility of the souls God places in their path, not only those that are already God’s, but also those who don’t yet know Him. Oh that God would create a heart in us that would be so compelled for those around us! The best way to develop a heart for those who don’t know Jesus is to begin living life with and sharing the Gospel with them. Rarely do you develop a heart for people when you live apart from them. People long to see the Gospel
lived out, not just an explanation but a demonstration of grace. This is what this Noblemen Challenge is designed to help you do.

The sixth mark of a patriarch. A patriarch teaches the next generation to multiply.

He instills in them the values that he’s been learning and teaches them to do the same with others. Jesus says in John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.” Send the people you’re meeting with and teach them to do the same. Don’t just have it be about you! There’s a reason the Dead Sea is dead. It’s because it has water flowing in but no water flowing out. When you see people who are learning from you but they don’t know how to teach others they become constipated Christians who have a lot going in but nothing coming out.

In John 12:24 Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” As you spend yourself on behalf of these men there will be many seeds produced. How many seeds are in an apple? The average is five. How many apples do you think there are in a seed? An infinite number! If the seed isn’t thrown into the trash but is taken and planted in the ground, then there are an infinite number of apples that can come from it. If we would take our life and spend it on behalf of the people around us, then more seeds will start popping up. You could lead a hundred people to Christ every day and at the end of your life you could have impacted a hundred thousand. But if you start investing in people and discipling those you lead to Christ, teaching them to disciple, in a matter of thirty years the entire world population could be reached! That is the simple power of multiplication!

Paul believes in this idea. Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” An Indian pastor named Edgar Sathaluri invested in other pastors, who in turn invested in the people that they were around. As a result, radical spiritual growth was seen in India. His life continues to have a ripple effect and will continue for long after he dies.

Another spiritual patriarch is Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators. He caught the idea of spiritual multiplication around the turn of the century. As an evangelist, he was driven to lead people to Christ because he had committed to share his faith with someone every day. One day he shared the Gospel with someone that he had already met the previous year. Dawson realized that this person who had accepted Christ was no longer walking with him. Dawson hadn’t discipled him. Soon Dawson came across 2 Timothy 2:2. He realized that taking time to help the people he was leading to Christ by teaching them to do the same for others would take time but be more effective than just doing evangelism. By the time Pearl Harbor was struck in 1941 there were 1000 men on ships throughout the Pacific living out this commitment to being reproducing disciples of Jesus. All of those came from Dawson investing in one man and teaching him to do the same with others. Those men continued to grow in their relationship with God and when they came back to the U.S. they kept reproducing.

Do you have a man you are investing in? Are you a patriarch who is impacting generations long after you? Hopefully you will be able to spend the rest of your life investing in a few men every year. Most people down the road will not know who you are and your name will not be great for generations to come but your impact, if you become a patriarch, can reach hundreds of thousands of people if you will invest deeply in a few.
Assignments:
• Share salt with another man on your Challenge list.
• Invite your Noblemen Challenge Participants
• Watch Bridge Video
• Memorize 2 Timothy 2:2 (optional Genesis 12:2)
• Do Weekly Bible Study
• Listen to Tim Keller’s “Struggle for Love”

Small Group:
• What hit you from tonight's session?
• Do you really believe God can use you to change the world?
• What is standing between you and you becoming a Patriarch?
• Do you have any men in your spiritual lineage yet? Are they multiplying?
Week 8

Session 10: Noble Dating
(optional co-ed with the women)

Key Lesson:
Dating can feel strange and almost un-biblical. God however provides wisdom in His word sufficient to know how to honor Him while we pursue relationship. We are called to submit to God as master, to obey Him in the mission to which He calls us, and to trust Him to bring us or mate or sustain us for singleness.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 10 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 10 Handout
- Give everyone access to Heaven and Hell survey
- Show how to share Heaven and Hell survey
- Make sure everyone has the Challenge booklets they need.
- Make sure everyone has the characteristics of a godly man/woman sheet

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- Ask about how Noblemen Challenge invites went
- Ask for volunteers to share what God has been doing in you through Noblemen so far

Content:

- **Intro: Pick-Up Lines**

  - What are some of the worst Christian pick up lines you've heard?
  Hey girl, you know what the temple veil and I have in common? We're both ripped.
  Is your name faith? Cuz you're the substance of the things I've hoped for.
  I'm interested in full time ministry, and not only that...I also play the guitar.

  - Christian Breakup lines:
  I've decided what I'm giving up for Lent. You
  It's not you. It's Paul. He condemns our relationship & everything about you.
  Let's be like the Red Sea and part.
  I'm gonna have to "Unequally-Yoked Zone" you, sorry.
  Sorry, I met a guy who has a better testimony.
  When Jesus said 'It is finished' I think he was talking about us.
  My denomination won't let me date girls who wear pants.
  "God loves me and has a better plan for my life."
- How Do I Date?

Welcome to Noblemen session 7 Noble dating and marriage. This session is about noble singleness, dating, and marriage and I want to start by taking a moment to think about where most of your convictions about dating have come from. Most of you thought maybe family, friends, your pastor, maybe an older sibling. Most likely none of you would say the Bible, because the Scripture doesn’t explicitly describe dating as we know it today. A lot of people think the Bible doesn’t talk about dating because they didn’t date in Old Testament times. Actually there is a good amount of dating advice in the Bible. The way that we date today actually sets us up more for divorce than marriage. The Scriptures however give us great wisdom about dating to set us up for marriage.

People have very strong opinions about how you should date, and especially, how you should not date. My desire tonight is not to tell you the right way or the wrong way to date, but to help you walk in wisdom and by faith. A great definition of wisdom is living a life informed by God’s perspective. My desire for this time is to grow in God’s perspective of singleness, dating, and marriage. Faith is seeking to understand, follow and trust in God and His perspective.

We’ll look to the Scriptures where we’ll find valuable principles to guide us in dating. Psalm 32:8 gives us a valuable promise from God, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go, I will counsel you and watch over you” This is great news! God is concerned about your life and will lead you. We take for granted that the God of the universe actually cares about us, that He would communicate to us. We have access to a book that He wrote for us. While He’s dealing with universes that we don’t understand, He is still mindful of us. This even includes our love lives, our hopes and desires, and even our shame and sin.

The next verse, Psalm 32:9 says, “Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.” God is inviting you to come to Him because He has great things in store for you. Our responsibility is to seek Him, to come to Him. Some people tend to either be more like mules horses. Mules won’t act, they move by sight rather than faith, they have a fear of rejection, they have a fear or failure, they are self-protective, they refuse to move if they don’t trust God, and they are often really legalistic. Mules sound super holy because they say things like, “I’m not going to move until God makes it clear”, but that phrase could be coming from a fear of rejection. Horses tend to have a wild spirit and do whatever they want, expecting God to bless it. They don’t want advice, they resist God’s authority, and say, “God’s way is too constrictive so I’ll do it my way.” Whether a horse or a mule, both tend to move away from God rather than draw near to Him and seek Him.

Again, dating today prepares us more for divorce than it does for marriage. We become so used to looking for life in another person, that we neglect the only one who can truly give us the life and love we are looking for. God’s intention is long term.

Who here wants to be divorced? Nobody! But, right now, our culture gives you a picture of an emotionally driven relationship worldview, rather than a principle and commitment driven worldview. If you’re thinking just for a short time, then why not just look at shallow things like are they hot and are they fun. But if you’re thinking long term, then you’re going to think much differently and look for much different things. And it makes sense to have God be the one who picks!
Unless God intervenes, statistics say that there is a really good chance that you will have a difficult marriage. Either it will end, or you will stuck in it and it will be awful. My hope is that your marriage will be good, deep and sweet, and that other people will come around it and see that it’s a picture of God.

We will talk for the rest of the time about how the Scripture outlines Who, When, and How you should date.

- **Who should you date?**

  1. **Someone who loves God more than they love you.**

    Proverbs 19:22 says, “What a person desires is unfailing love.” People can’t pull off unfailing love. Only God can give that. Ticks are little insects that suck blood from an animal. Dating someone who loves you more than they love God is like you, as a tick, dating another tick, while you try to suck blood from each other. You need someone who will draw life from God rather than try and get life from you or your relationship. Jesus talks about this in John 15 when he says, “I am the vine, you are the branches.” A branch can’t get nutrients from another branch but needs to be connected to the vine or the tree trunk. When you are receiving life-giving nourishment from Christ, you will be free to give and receive love in a healthy relationship. You will be freed up to enjoy another sinful person because they are not your salvation.

    One of the most important pieces of advice that we can give you in dating, is to give yourself wholeheartedly to your relationship with God. Invest in it. Read His Word. Learn His ways. Let Him love you. Let Him heal you. Let Him cleanse you.

  2. **Someone who is not just a believer, but who is passionately pursuing Christ and serving Him.**

    You want to date someone who shares a similar passion for God with you, someone who will use their gifts with you to serve Him. In this relationship between you, God, and someone you’re dating or a fiancé or a wife, you form a triangle. In the triangle you and your wife can grow closer to each other without growing closer to God or you can choose to move toward God and end up closer to your wife.

    2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?” You can’t help but love the things the person you love loves. If the person that you love does not love Christ you will drift away to love what they love.

    1 Kings 11:4- “For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” Solomon’s wives turned his heart away from God. He had a godly father as a great example and God blessed Solomon. But, because of his wives his heart was turned from the Lord. Missionary dating, is not realistic or effective and it is not what God wants.

In Genesis 24 Isaac is meditating in the field and looks up and sees Rebekah, a woman who God chose for him. After Abraham and his servant prayed, God chose a woman who would be willing to leave her family and trust God with being married to Isaac. Tell God that you’re willing to let Him choose your wife.

- When should you date?

4. When God says so.

If God is sovereign, you can’t miss the right one. You could hear that statement and know it theologically but you might not believe it in your heart. You will never arrive at a place where you’ll be totally ready to be married, but there are some times that will be better than others. Open handedly ask God. Ask your friends and mentors. Mentors might tell you very honestly that you shouldn’t be dating at all right now, so don’t ask if you don’t want an answer. And do yourself a favor and don’t just ask the advice of people who you suspect will just tell you what you want to hear.

Don’t manipulate or force things. Isaiah 50:10-11 is one of the only places in Scripture where ‘darkness’ is not a bad thing but actually describes the unknown. It says,

“10 Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. 11 Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.”

This isn’t because God wants to punish you. You need to be willing to be confused in the darkness and wonder why God is letting your friends date and get married but not you. Don’t light your own fire, trust Him.

5. Only after you submit your right to date and marry to God.

In 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 Paul says,

“32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. 33 But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.”

Our primary concern has to be serving God in the mission He has made for us. If we remember back to our survey of Genesis 2 we recall that God made woman as Adam’s helper. We as men need to have the mindset that God will bring us a helper should we need one. Until then we need to be satisfied in Him. In a similar way, a godly woman is watchful, waiting for a man whom God would ask her to serve alongside as a partner in life and the Gospel.
- **How should you date?**

6. **With godly counsel.**

Get a coach. Invite someone into your relationship before it even starts. Hopefully you already have someone like this. Just ask someone about the person you’re thinking about dating. They will probably give you their honest opinion and wisdom. Proverbs 15:22, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.” Here is some advice in taking counsel. Don’t just do what someone says just because they are older or have more life experience. You actually won’t be walking by faith, you’ll just be doing what someone else told you to do. Discipleship is not just making a bunch of minions that will do whatever you say.

Take all the counsel you can get and take the advice to the Lord to sift through where He wants to guide you. Don’t just do what the most convincing person says.

7. **Based on direction not boundary.**

When people start relationships they tend to ask, ‘how far is too far’. They want to know what to do with these hormones that are going crazy. Your relationship is like a circular fence with Christ in the middle. If you are so focused on what you can or can’t do in the relationship you end up focused on the fence and what’s on the other side of the fence. If you’re not careful you’ll totally ignore Christ in the center.

8. **With standards that you set and keep.**

No married couple says they wish they would have done more sexually before they were married. They all say they wish they would have done less. In Ephesians 5 it says that Christ will present His bride to Himself as blameless and without fault. Until you’re at the altar you don’t know if this girl you’re dating will be presented to you or to someone else as a bride. Even if you think you’ll get married, this girl might be presented to someone else, so stick to the standards that you set.

9. **Through prayer and studying the Word together.**

Almost every successful Christian marriage can be traced back to this time in prayer and the Word together. It makes temptation a lot easier and it makes Christ the center of your relationship.

10. **By doing the hard work of removing the contaminants from your soil.**

Maybe your family has some issues. Maybe you’re from a divorced home. Maybe you were sexually abused. Maybe you’ve done things that you can’t get over. Maybe you’re living with shame and accusations from Satan. We are all really messed up and some of us will admit it but a lot of us won’t. Slash and burn is an agricultural practice used to get rid of the leftover stumps and stalks after a harvest. While it’s very quick and easy it destroys the nutrients in the soil making it very hard for anything else to grow. Some of you need to remove boulders from your soil to make room for a relationship and some of you need healing and restoration so that a relationship can actually grow and flourish. If you have a lot of work to do or just a little, there is full redemption is Christ!
- **Dating Advice From Bryce and Susan Bouchard**

  - On Intimate Girl/Guy friendships: The idea of marrying your best friend can sound really neat, and occasionally it happens, but often that ends up backfiring and one or both being misled. Be intentional in your friendships. If you’re not dating, don’t act like it. Know that if you are good friends and you do end up dating, that 9-10 times you won’t be able to go back to normal if you break up.

- **Susan’s Advice on Dating if You Were Her Sons**

  1. If you like her and God is leading, then be willing to initiate so she can say yes or no. Don’t initiate passively. Make your intentions clear. Don’t just text your way into a relationship. Initiate like a man and be willing to be turned down.

  2. Don’t do with her what you wouldn’t want someone else to do with your future spouse. Make sure that the level of your actions matches the level of your intentions and commitment. Don’t wait for her to say too much is too much. You define the boundaries.

  3. Have a coach that is counseling you and friends that are keeping you accountable.

  4. Lead out in getting time in the Word together.

  5. Don’t tell the opposite sex that God showed you you were meant to be together. This puts the recipient in a tough spot. Either they have to call you a liar, or disobey God.

  6. Pay attention to a girl with a servant’s heart.

  7. If you can’t control yourself now, how will you be trustworthy when she’s had a few kids and is not looking like she used to and you go on a business trip? 1 Thess 4:3-7

- **Bryce’s Advice on Dating as if You Were His Daughters**

  1. If a guy tells you he’s been praying about you, take that with a grain of salt. It may be that he’s also been praying about several other girls too.

  2. If he can’t control himself now, how will he when you have had a few kids and are not looking like you used to?

  3. Don’t entertain and flirt with a guy because it feels good and you like the attention if you’re not interested in following through.

  4. When it comes to modesty, it is his responsibility to not lust after you. Remember, godly men aren’t attracted to a girl because of her body, but because of godliness and character. To a godly man, modest is hottest!

  5. Be careful not to daydream too much about a guy. It’s easy to get pulled in way too deep, too fast. Ask yourself, am I living in the present reality right now?

  6. Don’t over-analyze every word and nonverbal to mean something deeper than it was meant. Don’t assume just because he asked you on a date that he wants to marry you.

  7. Pay attention to little things. Does he treat you like a lady? Is he considerate? Does he listen to you and try to understand?

  8. Don’t initiate, don’t assume, don’t expect, don’t manipulate, and don’t fight it when the Lord is clearly leading. Don’t persuade, prod, nag, or manipulate him to propose. If he’s not willing and you don’t trust him to initiate, then he’s not a guy you want to marry anyway! Otherwise you are moving in fear and setting a tone for the relationship. Learn to be a responder, not an initiator.
9. Don’t expect him to change. Would you marry him right now if nothing ever changed? If not, run! Don’t just look for the broken guy who you end up helping make whole. You want a man who will lead and serve you.

10. Open your life and relationship to godly counsel. Please be willing to tell your friends the truth. Proverbs 14:12

11. Watch to see if he is placing himself under God’s headship.

- **Bob’s Bonus Rules:**

  1. She’s your Sister Mister - 1 Tim 5:1,2
  2. If in doubt, cut it out - Rom 14:22,23
  3. Your bod belongs to God - 1 Cor 6:19,20
  4. Don’t wed the spiritually Dead - 2 Cor 6:14

**Assignments:**

- Share Heaven and Hell surveys on campus
- Begin your Noblemen Challenge groups
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 6:14 (optional Proverbs 31:30)
- Do Weekly Bible Study

**Small Group:**

- Read: Ephesians 5
- Ephesians 5:1-21. How can we pursue Godly relationships through this guide to “walk in love”?
- Ephesians 5:22-33. How can we take steps today to prepare for a marriage that honors God?
- What are some bad relationships that you have seen/experienced? What are some good relationships that you have seen/experienced?
- What do you feel like God is asking you to do in regard to dating relationships?
- Who are some (peers or mentors) that you can have as counselors for your relationships?
Week 9

Session 11: The Roots Of A Noble Leader

Key Lesson:
Everyone wants to know what makes a good leader. Everyone wants to become a good leader. In order to get there most start by trying to imitate the fruits leaders they admire. God, however admonishes us to pursue character first; the proverbial roots of leadership. The 3 most important roots are trust, humility, and love.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 11 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 11 Handout
- Print off Interview questions for each man (Interview a man over 60)
- Give Ceremony date info

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Give a chance for men to share what God has done in them in regards to sexual purity
- Ask about Noblemen Challenge Group

Content:

- A Leadership Story from the Titanic

  “Close the emergency doors!”
  “They’re already closed, Sir,” the first officer replied to the captain, whom he would have addressed as E.J. under less stressful conditions.
  “Send to the carpenter and tell him to sound the ship,” responded the captain. But the carpenter had already perished in the attempt to make repairs. As the hull rapidly took on water the instruments on the bridge clearly indicated the ships rapidly declining chances of survival.
  while the steam sirens screamed in agony the captain barked out several orders at once: “wire distress signals,” “Fire the rockets in case any ship can offer assistance,” “All hands on deck.” One wonder what other thoughts and emotions stirred in his heart just then.
  Less than one year earlier the aging captain had tarnished his excellent record in an embarrassing collision with the HMS Hawke. Soon thereafter, he had damaged his newly repaired ship again by sailing it over the submerged wreck. After patching up the broken propeller blade, the captain had determined to patch up his reputation to quell rumors of his deteriorating capacities. This voyage was to have done just that.
Sticking his head into the radio room, the captain directed, “Send the call for assistance.”
“What call shall I send?” the Marconi operator asked.
“The regulation international call for help. Just that,” came E.J.’s reply as he hurried away.

When the captain began this journey, he set a course. He set the speed. He alone was responsible for the safety of the ship and its passengers. But the course he set took his ship into peril, even though he had been warned of the danger. And the speed he set ultimately determined their fate.

Although policy clearly dictated “moderate seed and maximum comfort,” the captain had treated his new charge like a sports car on the road with no speed limits. He had thought that arriving ahead of schedule would be just the trick to remove the stain from his reputation.

During the most dangerous part of the journey, the confident captain had left his third-in-command on the bridge while he boasted to his dinner guests how the ship could be cut into three sections and each would float. He believed the ship to be unsinkable. Little more than an hour after this boast, he issued his last command: “You have done your duty boys; now every man for himself.”

Captain Edward J. Smith perished with more than one thousand other passengers in the icy Atlantic that night. His reputation went down with the Titanic.

- Roots or Fruits?

Rarely is it a leader’s deficiency in their competence that sabotages their impact. It is deficiencies in a leader character the destroys their impact and harms those who follow them.

Every man is called to lead, even if you don’t have the gift of leadership. You must lead yourself, lead in your family, lead in your church. We as men have the responsibility of headship. Contrary to the view of the world, your value is not tied to your ability or your contribution to lead. You have to grasp this! Your value only comes from your identity in the Gospel. There are different types of leaders and different leadership roles. Get in the one that fits you and be okay with how God has wired you.

Let’s take a look at our handout comparing a secure leader with an insecure leader.

Over the next two weeks we will be looking at the roots and fruits of a leader. We will spend most of our time today on the roots. You are in a season of life where if you focus on the roots, you’ll spend the rest of your life enjoying the fruits.
- **Examining our own Trees**

The natural path for most leaders is to work on their fruits. This will sabotage them and their impact. The roots will always dictate the fruits. This week we are going to look at the roots. Let the exposure of your fruits lead you to the roots. Anxiety, anger, depression - these can actually expose idolatry!

Read secure fruits. Wouldn’t you love to be under a leader like that? Wouldn’t you love to BE a leader like that! The key roots we need to become that kind of leader are trust, humility, and love.

- **Trust**

  1. **Be a Leader With a Deep Fresh Relationship With God**

No yesterday’s manna! John 15:4 *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself: it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”*  

One of the greatest desires in the people you lead is to follow a leader who is deeply connected to and following the Lord.

In this same vein, be a Bible driven leader. You have to trust deeply in the truth and power of the Gospel which is taught in the Word!

  2. **Become a Leader Who Perseveres**

God is committed to transferring your trust from self to Himself. One of the most common means He uses to do so is hardship and failure. Romans 5:3 *“we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character; and character hope.”* James 1:12 *“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who live him.”*

As a believer you are guaranteed trials, persecution, and suffering. There is no escape. Read the book of Job. Instead of fearing these seasons of life, God calls us to embrace them with joy and hope.

The Greek word for perseverance in Romans 5:3 is hupomeno. It literally means to remain under. So, when God brings failure, hardship and disappointment into your life, allow Him to do in you what He wants rather than trying to get out from under the difficulty. This requires transferring your trust from yourself to Him.
- **Humility**

3. **Become a Leader Who Refuses to Steal the Glory of God.**

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.” Look at Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. Look at Joseph. Before Joseph could be in charge, he had to learn that God was in charge.

4. **Become a Leader Who is Teachable.**

This is distinctly different than being a learner. Learn to follow - Ask yourself and even your leader what it would look like for you to be a joy to lead.

1 Corinthians 4:15 “Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the Gospel.” Do you have a “father”? Someone who is leading you, someone you can look to for wisdom, rebuke, and correction? James 4:10 “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

- **Love**

5. **Become a Servant Leader**

Mark 9:35 “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many”

6. **Become a sacrificing leader**

Don’t look out just for yourselves.

Ezekiel 34:1-23 in comparison to John 10:11-13

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. The the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”
Assignments:
● Interview a man over 60 and write a summary paper
● Continue Noblemen Challenge group
● Memorize Psalm 51:6 (optional Psalm 51:17)
● Do Weekly Bible Study

Small Group:
● What hit you in tonight’s session?
● Discuss your insecure fruits. What would you say are your top 5?
● From the key roots, (Trust, Humility, Love) what are a few key applications you would like to make to strengthen the roots?
● Take time and pray for you upcoming Noblemen Challenge Groups
Week 10

Session 12: The Fruits Of A Noble Leader

Key Lesson:
As we allow God to grow us in trust, humility, and love we will start to see the fruit in our live. The basis for these 10 fruits is gospel-driven character. There is no substitute for healthy roots. Ask God to produce these in you and seek out leaders to follow who are defined by these things.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 12 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 12 Handout
- Organize Braveheart watch party. (No man watches alone. There is a brief scene of nudity after Mel Gibson gets married the first time, fast forwards)

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Ask what people did scared
- Ask about interviewing a man over 60
- Ask about highlights from Noblemen Challenge Group

Content:
- Remembering the Roots

Last week we looked at the key roots in a noble leader’s life. What were they? Trust, Humility, Sacrifice. If you recall, I suggested that the key to a leader’s influence rests primarily in focusing on these roots, not merely attempting to change the fruits.

For example, when you look at the list of an insecure leader’s life vs. that of a secure leader, it is not only easy, but pretty natural to just identify the fruits of insecurity in your life and seek to change them. Then you strive to imitate the fruits of a secure leader’s life that you find admirable.

This however is not how you change fruit! You change fruit at the root. When you see the fruit of insecurity in your own life, you allow that to lead you to God. Ask him to do deep transformational work in your roots. God never tells us to work on our pride. The message and command is to humble yourself. Think about it. If were just told to work on our pride, it would be pretty easy to think, “Wow, I’m doing pretty good here. Especially compared to that guy over there.” It’s been said that if you just work on your pride, you’ll just end up more focused on yourself. As you walk with God, you lean into trusting in Him, walking with humility, and loving sacrificially.

And from your focus on those roots, you will find a new kind of fruit emerging.
Now, while your focus should be on your roots, not your fruits, it is still essential to know what healthy fruit in a leader’s life should look like. Tonight we will look at 10 healthy fruits in a good leader’s life. When a leader has nothing to lose and nothing to prove, he is free to lead well.

- **10 Fruits of a Good Leader**

  1. **Faithfulness**

     We talked a few weeks ago about Psalm 37:3 and the need to cultivate faithfulness. Most men aren’t born faithful. For many of you, God has used the point system (imperfect as it is) to reveal a need to cultivate faithfulness and taking responsibility. And that is good! It’s good to learn this now before you get into a career or deep into marriage. You are ahead of the curve!

     A faithful man is dependable. Are you dependable? Get it done and if can’t then let someone know! Job 6:15 “My brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams.” Ask your leader if you can repeat back to him what he’s expecting of you.

     Psalm 15:4 “... Who keeps his oath even when it hurts.” Part of this includes remembering what you said you would do. Writing down everything you are asked to do. And do the job with excellence. Would you sign your name to the work you produce?

  2. **Strong Work Ethic**

     Colossians 3:23

     Think, I’m doing this for Jesus. This includes persevering when you want to quit. Be willing to give up distractions in order to accomplish a greater mission.

     It dawned on me a few years ago that laziness is not merely not working. Laziness can also be not giving myself wholly to that which I’ve been called to do. When God has given you a task or a mission do it with all your heart! When you work for a company, work as though you are the owner and put in the effort that you would if you owned the place.

  3. **Growth**

     A growing leader isn’t trying to thrive off of yesterday’s manna. Pr 19:27 “Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.” Read your Bible! Interview other godly leaders. Everyone is accessible. Don’t write off people who aren't perfect. You can learn from anyone. In college I would write down every night what I’d learned that day. Always have a key mentor in your life. Remember that learning is part of being teachable.

     Are you requesting friends and trusted leaders to speak into your blind spots?

  4. **Integrity**

     Proverbs 11:3 “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.” Luke tells us that those who are faithful in a little are also faithful in much. Our enemy in this regard isn’t merely bold faced lies. Little white lies, deceiving or omitting parts of the story to put the situation in a better light, these erode our integrity little by little.
2 Corinthians 8:21 “For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.” Every lie will be found out. It’s about your conscience and your testimony. A Nobleman is committed to not lying and to coming clean immediately if we realize we’ve done so. This will take humility but it will pay off.

5. Obedience

Be an obedient leader. King Uzziah of Judah was a proverbial “church kid” in all the worst ways. His dad did all that was right in the sight of the Lord but not with a whole heart. This is similar to growing up in a home where the family, especially the Dad, does all the church things but not with a whole heart. The kids in these cases are often worse off. 2 Chronicles 26 says this about Uzziah, “…his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful…”

But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. This was something only the priests were aloud to do. He thought he was above the law. The longer a leader is in a position and the higher he climbs up the latter, the easier it becomes for him to think that the rules don’t apply to him. When you see a leader who does this you see a leader who doesn’t cut corners. His books are in order.

6. Prayer

1 Sam 12:23 “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.”

Most people aren’t great prayer warriors. A praying leader prays for each of their people. Keep a prayer journal for each person you’re leading. Take the time that you think you don’t have to bring large and small concerns at work to the Lord.

Proverbs 16:3 “Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.”

7. Shepherding

Psalm 78:72 “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands he led them.” Proverbs 27:23 “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.” A shepherd leads, cares for, develops and sees to it that reproduction happens in his flock.

8. Encouraging Communication

Isaiah 50:4 “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains the weary.”

Leroy Eims once said if you don’t give good feedback your people will assume the worst. No sarcasm or passive aggression. I’ve worked with passive aggressive people, and it’s the worst. No one enjoys working with them. It’s easy to be sarcastic.
If there is a problem, address it directly. Better a hard conversation now than a devastating one later. This is true in marriage too. When there’s conflict, do the work to clean it up and mend it, like a wound. Don’t nitpick your people. The goal is restored relationship. If necessary ask them to jot down what they heard and then debrief.

Most of the people you lead want 3 things: to be listened to, taken seriously, and to be understood. Ask, “can you tell me what you heard?”

9. Delegation

Ex 18:13-25 Jethro gives his son-in-law, Moses, some wisdom in regards to delegation and leading millions of people! Most leaders are terrible delegators. At times it will be easier not to delegate because you think: “I’m the only one who knows what’s going on”. You don’t merely delegate because you need people to get stuff done. That’s fine, but do so with a developmental eye in mind.

Trust people and let them lead too! Let them make mistakes. Don’t be the bottleneck. Be willing to release. Use the “rule of thirds”. 1st third is us together. 2nd third is you on your own. 3rd third is us together. May be 20, 60, 20. If you trust them, then 10, 80, 10. Check in not check up. To check up on is like giving the baton away then constantly taking it back again. To not check in is foolish. Don’t swoop and poop.

10. Accessibility

In 1 John 1:1, John uses these words to describe his experiences with Jesus: “heard, seen, hands have touched.” Keep your door open. Be willing to help people. As you consider moving up the ladder, ask will this next position keep me from being accessible to the people I lead and to my wife and kids. If you want to have an impact on your family, friends, and those you work with, you may need to say no to some projects that would make you less accessible.

Assignments:
- Watch Braveheart and take notes on leadership principles
- Continue Noblemen Challenge group
- Memorize Matthew 20:25-28 (optional Psalm 78:72)
- Do Weekly Bible Study

Small Group:
- What hit you in tonight’s session?
- Which of the fruits would you like to see God grow you the most in? How do you see that happening?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Which of the those pieces (love, life, Gospel) is the hardest for you to share with others? Why? How can you grow?
- How are you doing in sexual purity?
Week 11

Session 13: Prepare to Launch

Key Lesson:
Noblemen is not merely about learning, it’s about living what you’ve learned. As you approach the end of the course we pray the Gospel has changed you, and the program has pushed you to step up as a man. There is no better way to live what you have learned than to teach it to others. Pray about leading a Noblemen course or Challenge Group in your community. As you record what God has taught you throughout the program pray He would continue to establish you as a disciplemaker of disciplemakers.

Leaders: (See Appendix, Session 13 Handouts)
- Give everyone a Session 13 Handout
- Communicate everything possible about FORT Week
- Give an example of a boyhood symbol and communicate that they need to put some thought into it

Warm-up:
- Recite the whole Creed from memory
- Ask about highlights from Noblemen Challenge Group

Content:
- Boyhood Symbol
A Boyhood symbol is something that you’re willing to destroy that symbolizes your immaturity. It could be something that you’re ashamed of, something that’s an idol or symbolizes an idol in your life. Some examples from the past have been: a mirror symbolizing vanity; a Barbie doll symbolizing porn and lust; a baseball that symbolized a guy’s addiction to following sports; a mini-pillow that symbolizes laziness etc.

- 3...2...1… Blast Off
Noblemen is all about giving you a picture and a path towards Biblical manhood. You’ve probably also noticed that a significant part of being a man is not just knowing what to do but acting on that information. A Noblemen doesn’t just have the creed memorized, they spend every day the rest of their lives seeking to live it out.

You’ve heard me say that if a man has really given himself to the Noblemen course, you can take him and plant him anywhere and before long, there will be more like him. That’s because a man living out the Biblical principles in the creed among other men elicits within them a desire to
done the same. It’s also because a Nobleman is a patriarch. He intentionally works to see Christ reproduced through him into the lives of other men.

If you’ve made it this far in Noblemen, you have already recruited and led a Noblemen Challenge group. Now, you’re ready to recruit and lead your own full Noblemen course. Do you have what it takes? Of course not. Can God still use you to reach other men and help launch them into a journey of Biblical manhood? Absolutely! Timentes Id Agite. We do it scared!

The best way to cement what you have learned is to teach it to someone else. I want to encourage you to begin recruiting and leading a Noblemen course with whatever men you will be around in the summer and fall. Regardless of where you will be you could easily lead another Noblemen Challenge group. Why not start recruiting for a Noblemen course within your own community? You can invite men of every age.

Almost every successful journey is preceded by significant preparations for the journey. Preparations for problems that may arise. Preparations to determine the best path toward your goal, determining what extra training or equipment you may need, thinking through who you want to journey with and reminders of why the trip is worth it.

Accordingly, I want us to spend the remainder of this last session with you guys individually and then in small groups thinking through 7 key Noblemen principles. I want you to contemplate what it would look like for you to live these out, and what obstacles you envision Satan would use to sabotage your efforts.

Your last assignment after this evening will be to write a paper summarizing what you have learned in Noblemen. Tonight’s work will help you in that process.

First take 30 minutes and begin working through and answering all of the questions on your own. Select one or two questions from each topic for discussion. You may not be able to get through all of the questions tonight. Finish those in your quiet times this week. You’ve spent almost 3 months in Noblemen. Don’t skimp on this part. It’s really important to solidify the lessons you’ve been learning and prepare for a lifetime of living as a Nobleman. After 30 minutes, spend the next hour in your small groups walking through and discussing your answers.

Assignments:

- Choose a Boyhood Symbol
- Write a summary paper on the key lessons you’ve learned and how God has used Noblemen to change you this semester
- Memorize Philippians 2:3-5 (optional 2 Samuel 23:3-4)
- Finish answering the Prepare to Launch questions.
- Review all of your Noblemen memory verses and be able to quote them by FORT week. (3 extra points if you are able to quote them all word perfect.)
- Show up to FORT week with Bible, Noblemen Notebook, pen, sleeping bag, pillow, (sleeping pad if you want), 1 gallon of water for every 5 points you’re off from 100. (no need to go more than 4 gallons regardless of points) boyhood symbol.
Small Group:

**Noble Treason**
- In Session One, we looked at Satan’s appeal to mankind to try to live independently of God and to actually even be like God. In what ways can you see within your flesh a desire to “be like God”? How do you personally see Satan work to appeal to this? How can you guard against giving in to the desire to be worshipped and served?
- A Nobleman fights for God’s honor and the honor of others. When God uses you to advance His Kingdom, there will be a tendency to subtly share in and steal the glory of God. One of the verses we looked at in our sessions was Isaiah 42:8 where God says, “I am the Lord, that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. Are there any practical things that come to mind that you can do to safeguard against this?

**Your Noble Identity**
- How do you see your nobility coming from the Gospel? What are ways that you still see yourself trying to become noble through your noble deeds rather than letting your deeds flow from your noble identity?
- Are there ways that you see the question “Am I enough?” being answered differently in your life now than at the beginning of the course?
- Integrity and faithfulness have been touched on several times throughout Noblemen. What are some practical ways you can be cultivating these attributes in your life?
- God says that He delights in you because of Christ. What would it look like for you to really believe this and live in it?

**A Noble Wife**
- How would you say that you see the impact of the curse playing out in women’s lives today?
- What does a woman who is not being dominated by the curse look like?
- List out some characteristics of a woman you would like to trust God for in a wife. (think less personality and more character, walk with God.) Proverbs 31:30 tells us that charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting. Many a young man has sabotaged his relationship with God, his ministry impact, his children’s spiritual depth and his enjoyment of marriage by falling for a woman who lacks spiritual depth and maturity. How could you see this happening in your own life?
- What can you do to safeguard against it?

**Noble Sexuality**
- Why is it worth it to you to pursue sexual purity?
- How would you say God would describe your sexual purity at this stage in your life?
- If God were to speak to you on this issue, what would you imagine He might say?
- Spend some time specifically listing out the ways that you have perhaps underestimated the power of sexual impurity in your life.
- How do you see sexual impurity affecting your relationship with God?
- What is your plan for growing in sexual purity after Noblemen ends?

**Noble Friendships**
- Every man longs to have men on the inside of their life. And almost every man struggles with making this happen through each season of life. They may have acquaintances, but
few men really on the inside. What would you love to see in your friendships the rest of your life?

- How do you see the question of “Am I enough?” playing into your friendships with other men?
- What obstacles do suspect you will encounter that will keep you from seeking out other godly men in every place you live?

**Noble Patriarchs**

- Do you have a spiritual lineage yet? If so, list out the men you would say that God has used you to help grow into a disciple.
- How are those guys doing spiritually? Are they helping other men grow? How could you help strengthen them?
- A man who catches the vision and a taste of being used as a disciplemaker is a powerful man in his time on earth. His life and ministry leave an indelible mark on nations and generations. Satan has every intention of distracting and even destroying you to keep this from happening. 2 Corinthians 2:11 speaks of not being unaware of the enemy’s schemes. What ways could you see Satan hindering you from being a Disciplemaker all the days of your life? (be very specific)
- What can you do to combat those schemes?

**A Noble Leader**

- Look back at both sides of the Secure/Insecure leader doc.
- What would you say are some of your greatest strengths as a leader?
- In what ways do you feel like you need to grow as a leader?
- What are some key values that you would like to see passed on to your kids?
- Fast forward to 15 years from now. If your wife and kids were to describe the type of husband and father you were, what would you hope they would say about you? Be very detailed.
- What things do you think need to be fortified in your life before you get married and have kids to see those things be true?
- When you think about being a leader and an influencer in the Church, what are ways that you can prepare yourself now to love, lead, serve, care for, develop and help others reproduce spiritually?
Week 12

FORT Week: An Overview

This is in depth description of a FORT week. You can change FORT week to fit your ministry and your desires. The example provided is of a full intensity FORT week. While you are free to modify, I would advise against making it more intense than this. However, when we’ve surveyed men in the past and asked them how difficult they would like their FORT week experience to be, the overwhelming majority indicate that on a scale of 1-10 they would like it in the 8-10 range. Again, it seems that men want to feel like they had a rite of passage.

Everyone moves in together Sunday night. Sunday school rooms at a church seem to have been a popular choice. Everyone brings their sleeping bag, pillow, a sleeping pad if they want and their boyhood symbol. We start with Sunday night dinner and cast vision for the week. The goals of FORT week are explained and then we drive to any nearby mountain we can find. Hopefully it’s within an hour or two. If you don’t have a mountain within a 2 hour drive, utilize a national park or forest. The men start FORT week at this mountain and they will end FORT week at this same mountain on Thursday night.

Sunday through Thursday the men sleep in the group location. In the morning, they get up and do Morning Challenges (MC’s) together. MC’s involve challenges that require them to work together in groups to accomplish. The point is not just to have them do difficult tasks. This is not hell week, it is FORT week. Again, we are fortifying lessons learned and preparing for commitments to be made. The goal is fun bonding. After MC’s, they all spend about 30 minutes individually having time in the Word.

Around 8 am they all take off for class/work. Then, the guys will usually come back to the church around 6:00 to hang out and eat dinner (bring their own or eat before.) and we start what we call Sanctuary time around 7:00 PM. This is a time to hear about who men truly are, share about boyhood symbols, and eat snacks. It will usually go for at least 2 hours per night. Some men only share 15-20 minutes, but often men will end up sharing for at least 45 minutes to an hour. They don’t have to share anything they don’t want to share, but after a few men start sharing pretty vulnerably, you’ll find that others end up having a lot that they want to get off their chests.

If you have 20 men in your class, you’re going to want about four men per night to share. If you have 30, six men per night. Basically divide the number of men into 5 nights and have that many share. If you have more than 30, you probably want to break the whole group into two or three smaller groups. During this time, each man is sharing about their boyhood symbol. This is something they have chosen that symbolizes their immaturity. They have as long as they want to share. They share on the topic of, “Who I really am.”
You want to ask couple of humble and respected men to lead off sharing before the first sanctuary night. You’ll find that the longer FORT week goes the more vulnerably men tend to share. Sometimes men who went early will see how deeply other guys have shared and they’ll ask to share some more.

During this process we make it clear that what’s shared in Noblemen stays in Noblemen. This isn’t just for the next week or year, but for life. If you can’t make that commitment then don’t do FORT week. It’s not to be shared with your girlfriends, wives, other guys outside of Noblemen. You’ll likely be pretty surprised at the depth of vulnerability that you see in the men as they share things they swore they never would tell anyone. There are major bonds of shame and secrecy that are broken through the men bringing their sin and shame into the light with other trusted men in their Noblemen class.

**Pro Tip:** *If you have LESSER available, men you will pick from this year’s class to help lead Noblemen next year, it’s good to ask about one every other week to kick off your Noblemen sessions by sharing their story of who they really are and what their boyhood symbol was from the year before. This really sets the tone for the young men as they see someone they respect sharing vulnerably throughout the course.*

On Thursday night, you go back out to the same mountain and this time you have a 400 lb. cross made out of railroad ties with you. They then have to go back up the mountain, working together to get the cross to the top. This is usually a very difficult task, taking several hours, and is an incredibly bonding time for the men as they work together to complete their final task. They have been sharing deeply every night and doing MC’s together all week. The cross carry is a powerful crescendo to the week. At the top, you will read passages about Christ taking on our sin and freeing us by the Gospel. You finish with communion.

They go back to the church, sleep, clean up Friday morning, and then you’ll see them again Saturday night for ceremony!

If you’re married, I would strongly suggest you letting your wife know that during FORT week and ceremony you are going to be gone quite a bit. Try to spend extra time with your wife and kids the week before FORT week. You have to really work ahead to make this happen, because often the week before FORT week and ceremony can be pretty busy too.
Schedule Overview:

Sunday:
- Gather at 6:00 Pm. Meet where you will all be staying for the week.
- Eat together & pray
- Introduce Puzzle Challenge
- Drive Out to Mountain Hike
- Sanctuary Night

Monday:
- Morning Challenge: Act Like Men Maze
- Sanctuary Night

Tuesday:
- Morning Challenge: Noble Word
- Sanctuary Night

Wednesday:
- Morning Challenge: Blind Nobles
- Sanctuary Night

Thursday:
- Morning Challenge: Boxing
- Sanctuary Night
- Cross Carry

Friday:
- Rest

Saturday:
- Ceremony: Begins at Sundown

Sunday:
- Ceremony: Ends at Sunrise

FORT Week Locations:
- Mountain or National Forest
  - Should be a mile a more in length
  - Sunday Night Mountain Challenge
  - Thursday Night Cross Cary
- FORT Week Home
  - This is where the men will sleep for the week
  - Location for MC’s
  - Location for Sanctuary Nights
Items Needed:

a. Have every man bring:
   i. Boyhood symbol
   ii. Bible
   iii. Creed study
   iv. Binders
   v. Sleeping bag/sleeping pad
   vi. 1 Gallon of water, sealed, for every 5 points short of 100, up to 4 gallons
   vii. Closed toe Shoes.

b. Morning Challenge Materials::
   i. Ravensburger blank puzzle challenge
   ii. 1-2000 ft. of Twine
   iii. Multiply by number of groups in your class: 1 Sharpie, 1 roll of duct tape, 1 poster board, something to blindfold each member.
   iv. Boxing Gloves
   v. 4 or more Tiki Torches
   vi. Gas for Tiki Torches
Leading FORT Week:

Prayer:

First, send a note to your ministry partners to be in prayer for this special week with the men. FORT week is usually the most powerful part of the whole course. Ask God to really move in the hearts of the men, especially as they share during the evening sessions.

Set The Tone:

FORT week should be a fun, bonding experience along with purposeful challenges. Every challenge should have a purpose to teach a lesson or to bond the group. Don’t throw something in just for the sake of making the week hard with no intrinsic purpose. While it is a demanding week regarding the time involved and real challenges to work through, it should not be a miserable week. This is not a Christian version of Hell Week. Keep in mind that when you get humans with Y chromosomes together, what seems like a really fun or funny idea at the time, in hindsight often looks like a really bad idea. You do not want to make Noblemen a liability for your ministry, your Lesser team or for you. You certainly don’t want to take any chance of someone getting hurt or dying. Because we live in such a litigious day and age, Universities have incredibly strict hazing laws. The tendency every year in every group is to make FORT week more intense than it should be. Gracious men all of the sudden turn into Drill Sergeants. Staff and Lesser's can get wrapped up in making FORT week overly intense and go from respected and trusted to resented and distrusted. Also, keep in mind that any time you add a competition that involves eating or drinking something, you increase the risk of someone choking. The key for FORT week is to use common sense. Consider running anything you may have a question about by your wife. If she's uneasy about it, strongly consider her reservations!

Points:

You need at least a 75 to get into FORT week. Do what you can to encourage and help each guy make sure he has enough points to make it in. The first year of the program is going to be different because the men aren't used to the standard set in Noblemen. You don’t want this to be performance-oriented or legalistic, but also don’t want to establish a precedent of low commitment. Life change comes from the guys acting on what they’re learning. If they won’t put in the work, they’re not ready and they won’t live out the Creed. As you try to determine if you should let a guy who doesn’t have enough points into FORT week, the question is whether they really want to do the work or if they’re just trying to be part of the group. If they really want to do it we try hard to help them get there, especially during the first few years of the program. We generally don’t let people share points to get someone into FORT week. While it’s nice that guys are willing to help their buddies, ultimately it hurts them more than helps. The lessons they've
learned in Noblemen are crucial to living out the life of a Noblemen. If this were a course for training EMT’s, would you want someone to be certified whose buddy shared points with him but he didn’t put in the work? However, for extenuating circumstances like missing a meeting for work, a student can watch the videos of the sessions they missed and then not lose any points for that.

In the last Noblemen session before FORT week, tell them that for every 5 points you’re down from 100 you need to buy and bring a sealed gallon of water, up to 4 gallons, which you’ll carry with you during the Sunday, and Thursday night activity. Make sure they are single gallons, not a 2 or 3 gallon container.

Points in FORT Week:
- Add everyone in each small group’s score together for a collective small group score. They will compete against one another all week and have rewards or consequences based on their group’s score. After Thursday morning, combine points for the whole class.
- Everyone must wear the FORT shirt every day and carry their boyhood symbol with them for the week.
- The final class score will be taken into account when considering men for Lesser positions after the course is over.

Sunday Night Mountain Hike:

Begin FORT week Sunday night around 6:00 PM. Have the men bring their everything they need with them: their boyhood symbol, Bible, Creed study, binders, sleeping bag/sleeping pad, gallons of water for missing points, workout clothes and shoes.

Meet at the place where you will be staying. Kick off FORT week with prayer. Start with pizza and tell them that FORT week is about working together, being whole-hearted, fortifying what they’ve already learned and preparing for the commitments they’ll make at ceremony. Give them the Ravensburger blank puzzle challenge and tell them that they can work on it whenever they want, but that in order to complete FORT week, it has to be finished. Let them know that it’s very difficult and will likely take several days to finish even with all of them working together. Get a large piece of cardboard to put the puzzle on in case it needs to be moved.

If there’s a mountain within a few hours, drive to the mountain and start at the bottom. Otherwise, find a State Park or somewhere that you can do a hike. The trail should be at least a mile. Make sure each man has their gallons of water. The men are welcome to help each other with the load. Bring about 5 extra replacement gallons as some will get dropped and broken.
At the bottom of the mountain, tell the guys that they’ll need to work together to get to the top of the mountain (or the end of the hike) and that they do not want to be the last one. Really emphasize that they don’t want to be the last individual. At the midway point, have 4-6 small water bottles and a person who hands them to the first men who arrive and says, “Great job, you’re one of the first 4. There are only 4 water bottles and you just earned one of them.” This is somewhat of a setup: the first ones to make it get to have some water because they’ve earned it, but they’ll find out they were selfish to take it and that they should’ve helped the other guys. Once the the men in the lead reach the top, have them go back down and apologize to the rest of the group for leaving them and drinking the only water. Then have them help the rest make it to the finish. The lesson is that a real leader looks out for the least of these, they do not race ahead for their own glory. This applies to helping other men learn to follow Jesus in freedom, character, and skill.

Head back to where you’re staying and begin Sanctuary Nights. You can also have one or two guys kick off sanctuary sharing at the top of the mountain and then do several more when you get back to home base to give the guys a chance to think a bit more about what they’d want to share.

Sanctuary Nights:

Sanctuary Nights are a safe time and place for sharing your boyhood symbol and answering sharing your story. Bring lots of food and drinks. Begin Sanctuary at 7 p.m. each night.

Tell the men that everyone will share, but when and how much to share is up to them. If they hear another guy share and that brings up other stuff they want to share later, there will be time for that, too.

We never go in a circle because we don’t want anyone to feel pressured to share. Ensure everyone knows what is said here must be kept in confidence. Say something like this: “If you stay here, you’re making a commitment that nothing shared here will be communicated outside of this group. If you can’t make that commitment you’ll need to step outside.”

Share with them the vision of Sanctuary: Why would you want to share deeply with this group? For the rest of your life you’re going to see that men find it hard to do that. Our culture trains us to think that it’s unmanly to need people or to admit any weakness. Having a group like this, one that gives you the freedom to share vulnerably, is a gift and a privilege. Take advantage of this chance to get some things off your chest instead of acting like you have it all together. For example, what are the things that have been a struggle or that bring you shame or that you want to move beyond? We all need other men to speak into areas where we don’t feel like we’re enough, or things that we fear, and pray for us.
Have men begin by describing their boyhood symbol and then take it deeper from there. This is an opportunity for them to share who they really are, what God's been showing you, what things you want to entrust to your brothers.

Eventually, someone will be vulnerable and share something shameful, and that'll help the other guys open up. You will want to ask couple of humble and respected men to lead off sharing before the first sanctuary night. Some guys will only talk for 10 minutes, but others will go for over an hour. Try to get most people to share in the first few nights so you have some wiggle room on the last night. If you have 30 guys and 5 nights, instead of doing 6 per night, try to get 7 in the first few nights because the last few nights guys end up going longer. It is preferable to have the whole group share as a group, but if you have over 30 guys, consider breaking into 2 groups and sharing separately so there’s sufficient time for every man to share and be affirmed and prayed for.

Leaders should affirm something that was shared right away. Others can also comment to encourage or affirm them and then pray over what they’ve shared. Typically we allow any man who wants to affirm strengths in the man who just shared and whoever wants to pray for them can. If you’re short on time though, just proactively ask one or two men to pray for whoever just shared. Try not to cut the affirming time short though. This is a very powerful and rare thing for a man to receive and it really bonds the men together.

Let them know that a Nobleman should be like a vault, not a revolving door of information. What’s shared in Noblemen, stays in Noblemen. That’s for life. Just because a few years pass, doesn’t mean that you have the freedom to repeat something that was shared in confidence during FORT week. This really helps men be willing to share vulnerably. Bear in mind that ministry leaders are mandatory reporters. If someone shares something that is illegal or indicates he might harm himself we are required to report it. Tell the guys to be aware of that and if they have a question about what they would share, maybe they should start by asking someone else first.

**Morning Challenges (MC):**

These occur Monday through Thursday. There is no MC Friday morning because they hauled the cross all night and FORT week is over:

Play a loud song to start the day and wake everyone up. By the time the song finishes they need to be up, teeth brushed, and ready for MC. If not, subtract points. Morning Challenge time should start around 6am each day. Follow MC with devotionals from 7:00-8:00 a.m. If men have to leave before for class or work that’s fine. Every MC will be done in their small groups, competing against one another. The group who has the highest points each day wins that day’s challenge and gets an award. These awards are determined by you. Make it worthwhile. The group with the lowest has a penalty. These are also determined by you. Do not make them too severe and ask yourself if this would be considered hazing. Again, FORT week is not hell week!
• **Monday MC: Act Like Men Maze**
  ○ This is a maze you create and the only way out of the maze is to ask for help. Purchase a couple thousand feet of twine. Using trees or stakes you pound in the ground, create a giant maze of twine that crosses itself at several points. The men are blindfolded and told to hold on to the twine and find their way out. The rules are 1) Don't let go of the rope, and 2) If you can't make it out on your own, raise your hand to ask for help. The reality is that there is no way out. At least there shouldn't be! Success is being willing to ask for help. Debrief after and ask what they learned and how they see this applying in their everyday life. The team with the first man to ask for help wins points, the team with the last to ask for help loses points. Debrief.

• **Tuesday MC: Noble Word**
  ○ The purpose of this challenge is to force the guys to remember the Creed word perfect, focus on the word “Responsibility”, and learn how to communicate and trust. Each team is given a couple blank pieces of paper and pens. Choose 1-3 guys on each team who will be blindfolded for the whole challenge. Tell the teams they need to identify the 207th word in the creed (It's “Responsibility”). They won't be able to do this unless they know the creed perfectly. Once they identify the word, they have to spell it out with scrabble tiles that their blindfolded teammates have to retrieve through the direction of other team members. Have piles of the scrabble tiles or letter magnets, sorted by letter, on the other side of your challenge area. Each pile should be marked with a big enough sign (“A” or “T” or “X” etc.) that people can read it. But the blindfolded guys won't know where the letters are without someone on their team shouting directions to them. The blindfolded guys have to get the letters, one at a time, and bring them back until you've spelled the word. You could choose any word in the Creed. Responsibility happens to be the longest word. But that is one of main words we typically use to define biblical manhood.

• **Wednesday MC: Blind Nobles**
  ○ Give each group a sharpie that you've already duct taped with 4 pieces of duct tape, 3 feet long coming off of the sharpie at a perpendicular angle. When all four men hold their piece of the duct tape it should suspend the sharpie between the four of them. Have each guy use his shirt or something else to blindfold themselves. Then, one person (or more depending on how many are left in the group) will use commands to guide the blind members and help them spell the word NOBLEMEN on a piece of poster board. Give them 30 minutes and have them rotate to where a different person is giving commands every 5 minutes or so. Whichever team has the most legible version of the word at the end of the 30 minutes wins points. Debrief.
• **Thursday MC: Boxing**
  - NO HEADSHOTS! Seriously, guys have gotten pretty injured when we’ve done headshots even with headgear and mouthpieces. Though they can only do body shots, they still feel like they’re fighting. Have each man pair off and box for 2-3 minutes. Set up 4 tiki torches about 15 feet apart to make the ring. Debrief and explain that there’s a difference between giving up and walking away when it comes to facing challenges. We often tell ourselves that we are walking away. In reality, we’re just giving up or not being obedient to step into the ring in areas where God leads us. Life is often not about whether you win or lose, but whether you’re willing to step into the ring.

**Optional Morning Challenges:** These challenges are examples of things you could do in place of some of the above activities due to limitations on resources, space, or other extenuating factors.

**Optional Evening Challenges:** If you want to make FORT week a little more difficult, after Sanctuary time add some teamwork related challenges.

- Drop a penny in the parking lot or field and tell them they need to find it by morning. Write +300 points with a sharpie on the penny. Also consider doing the same with 4 other pennies that you write -50 points on each of. Tell them there are some points out in the field that they can go get. They don’t have to find them, but if they want points, they are out there.
- Give them blank crossword puzzles for each group and tell them they need to work together to fill in both the questions and answers using only topics discussed in Noblemen.

**Thursday Night Cross Carry**

After the final man has shared on Thursday night, drive back where you started Sunday night. This time bring a cross made of railroad ties. The cross should weigh a total of 400 or more pounds. Which means you'll need to find rail road ties that are in good condition weighing 200lbs a piece. I can’t emphasize enough how important it is to make the cross out of Rail Road ties unless you have less than 8 men doing Noblemen. If so, then construct it to weigh as much as your total number of men x 50 lbs. (5 men would be a 250 lb. cross) If you have more than 20 men, divide your group into groups of 10. The class is responsible for getting the cross from the bottom of the mountain to the top and it cannot touch the ground (-100 points every time it does). If you don’t have a long hike available or a mountain, consider having everyone blindfolded except one who acts as the leader, and have them take turns being the leader (use their shirts as blindfolds). Carrying this should take several hours and be very difficult.

While the first group is carrying the cross, the others can run ahead to the top and then come back and relieve them. Then those who were relieved can do the round-trip and come back to relieve them. The leader and Lesser are encouraged to help carry it. Eventually, combine all the
men and let them all work together because they'll be very tired. The cross is extremely heavy, so emphasize the need to be careful when carrying it to not let it fall on anyone.

Once they reach the top, you or a Lesser can share about Jesus' walk to Calvary and the love and determination it took for Him to endure and take on our sin so that we could be adopted and made Noble. Take communion together at the top. Disassemble the cross and head back where you’re staying. If they’ve completed the puzzle, they’re done. Otherwise, clean up and tell them that they need to complete the puzzle to make it to ceremony. At this point, they’re welcome to shower and change clothes.

Let them know when and where to meet you for ceremony on Saturday. I strongly encourage you to have at least a full day between the end of FORT week and the beginning of ceremony. Though ceremony is not difficult, it’s all night and is a very special time. If they’re exhausted from FORT week, it'll be frustrating because they won’t be able to concentrate.

**Thursday Night Cross Carry Alternative**

Although we recommend doing as the cross carry as outlined, we understand there are time constraints and engineering challenges. For some the Cross Carry is not possible simply because the cross would take too long to build. Others feel like their lack of experience wood working could be a liability to their participants.

In that case we recommend that you still buy two 200lb rail road ties. However, instead of forming them into a cross, you would cinch them together, side by side, with tie-downs. Tie-downs are ratcheting straps that lay completely flat. You can purchase quality tie-downs at Walmart, Harbor Freight, Lowes, Home Depot, or any other store that sells tools and hardware. Use at least two tie-downs to ratchet the RR ties together. Do not use any sort of rope or twine, as that could severely damage or tear off fingers! The rest of the Thursday night event is the exact same as outlined the above.
Building the FORT week cross

**Tools needed:** tape measurer, two hammers (preferably a framing hammer), hand saw, circular saw. Sawhorses optional, drill, drill bits, safety goggles, chisel.

**Materials:** Purchase two 8ft or 9ft railroad ties. These can be purchased at Home Depot, Lowes or a local landscape or gardening area. It may take some looking around, but you can find them in every town. Do not use pine or any other type of wood as they simply are not heavy/dense enough. 2 railroad ties weigh about 400 pounds. Select the railroad ties that are in the best shape.

Purchase 2 threaded bolts that are at least 7 inches long. 4 washers, 2 wingnuts, chalk line or wax pencil

**Construction:**
Place on ground or one at a time on sawhorses that can support the weight.

Measure the vertical beam about ⅔’s of the way up on one of the ties and mark an area the same width as your other tie which will be where your crossbeam sits. Mark using a chalk line or colored wax pencil.

Cut the outer boundaries with circular saw or chainsaw. (note, this will significantly dull the blades and chains of a saw. If borrowing a saw, take responsibility to buy the owner a new blade) Then, every inch or two cut additional lines in the center section. Chisel out the pieces. Use your hand saw to saw the side lines down to the depth that you need (the depth should be half of the thickness of your railroad tie.) Continue to use your circular saw, chisel, hammers and hand saw to get the center beam carved out.

Now measure to the center of the other tie (your crossbeam) and repeat the same process, notching out half of the beam so it will fit into the upright tie.

Fit the two pieces together. Secure them by drilling two holes through the assembled pieces. Put a bolt with a washer through each hole and on the bottom place another washer and a wing nut. Do not permanently nail the cross together as you won’t be able to take it apart for easily getting it down the mountain and for using in future years. Ideally, you want to countersink a hole on the bottom with a large wood chipping drill bit (about 1” or bigger) that is big enough for the wingnuts to fit in and not be exposed, but still be accessible. This prevents the men from getting cut on the bolt/wingnut sticking out while carrying.
CEREMONY: An Overview

The Noblemen Ceremony is intended to be the culmination of all that Noblemen has taught. It functions as a rite of passage and as such should be treated with gravity. The goal here is to give these men a memorable experience that works to cement what God has been teaching through your 12 weeks together.

Ceremony starts at sundown and ends at sunrise. If you can find private property that’s got quite a bit of room, at least 5-10 acres, that’s ideal. The men start off the time with 2-3 hours alone with God, preparing for the rest of the ceremony. This is called Time with the Father. Then, in the same small groups they were in during the course, they spend about an hour at each of the remaining 6 stations.

Station 1: Great Commandment
Station 2: Great Commission
Station 3: Commitment to Sexual Purity
Station 4: Commitment to Interdependent Relationships with Other Men
Station 5: Affirmation Stage
Station 6: Destruction of Boyhood Symbol.

There is usually a campfire at home base that the men come back to between each station to warm up around for a couple minutes. From that, the 6 stations go off a couple hundred yards in each direction. The men all have to take a turn carrying one man from their group to and from each station. As a leader, you typically will need to take 3 or more hours setting up the ceremony spot before the men get there. We usually have them drive down together, eat dinner on the way at a restaurant and then meet you there. You can also finish up preparations as they are doing their Time with the Father stage.

The women in our ministry have developed a tradition of surprising the Noblemen by staying up all night making a huge feast for the guys for breakfast. They spend time praying for each of the men by name and writing them letters of affirmation as well. Sometime during the night, they drop off the breakfast at the entrance to the ceremony location. This is usually something like breakfast burritos, monkey bread, juice and coffee.

As the sun begins to come up, the men all head to your final ceremony spot. Ideally this is at the top of a summit if your property has one. On years where we have more than 15-20 men, we hire a bagpiper. You can usually find someone within an hour or two on Gigsalad.com or Craigslist. They typically will charge you between $150-$300. This is worth the cost! You can’t imagine the feel that live bagpipes add when you have been up all night long during the ceremony, the sun is coming up, and you hear bagpipes at the top of the mountain! It really is incredible.
The men summit the mountain, or hill or wherever you have chosen for the final ceremony spot. In future years, invite your Noblemen alumni to come back to the top of the mountain to await them.

There you will read the Ceremonial Charge. Then the men kneel down, you present them with their crest and a Ceremony t-shirt and if you have a sword, as the guys kneel, tap each guy on the shoulder with it and say, “Welcome to the brotherhood of Noblemen!” Then they head to the fire at the top of the summit for the breakfast feast. (Don’t say things like “I knight you.” Medieval is cheesy for today’s generation.)

IMPORTANT: Make sure you have alternative drivers lined up as it will be dangerous to send off your men after 24 hours of no sleep. This is a liability.

Ceremony Schedule:

An example. Feel free to personalize.
Length - sundown to sunup, 8pm to 6 am in this example
Note: whatever time the weather channel says for sunrise is always about a half hour late. It’s fully light by that time. The closing ceremony is much better in the dark and then let the sunrise as you’re finishing.

6pm/7pm: Eat dinner/drive out to location
7:45pm: Ceremony Welcome and instructions
8pm: Time with the Father
11pm: Great Commandment (Stage 1)
12am: Transition
12:10am: Great Commission (Stage 2)
1:10am: Transition
1:20am: Sexual Purity (Stage 3)
2:20am: Transition
2:30am: Interdependence (Stage 4)
3:30am: Transition
3:40am: Affirmation (Stage 5)
4:40am: Transition
4:50am: Destruction of Boyhood Symbol
5:50am: Transition
6:00am: Head to Closing Ceremony*
6:15am: Begin Closing Ceremony with the sunrise
7:00am: Breakfast as a crew
8:00am: Clean and depart

*Have Closing ceremony bagpiper show up at 5:30 and be in position by 6:00
Ceremony Items:

- **Student needs:**
  - Bible
  - Pen
  - Journal
  - Creed Study
  - Noblemen Binder
  - Boyhood Symbol
  - Bottle of Water
  - Flashlight with Fresh Batteries
  - Socks to Carry Blocks
  - Money for Dinner on the Road
  - Warm Clothes - extremely important
  - Backpack

- **Stage Needs:**
  - Overall Needs
    - 16 Tiki Torches (get large kind that hold more fluid) 2 go at each stage and 4 for final part of ceremony
    - Tiki Torch fluid
    - Small Funnel for filling tikis
    - 25 Glow sticks (optional to use to light paths to stations)
    - Flash Paper (buy from local magic store)
    - Firewood (Machete & Bow saw optional)
    - Hot dogs/buns, Chips, Drinks including water, Condiments, Cookies (For Lesser setting up ceremony)
    - Pop tarts - For Affirmation stage (one 2 pack per guy)
    - Mountain Dew - For Affirmation stage
    - Cooler for breakfast if needed.
    - A box for Pop tarts and Mtn. Dew
    - Letters from parents (go through again and make sure every letter is accounted for)
    - Crests
    - Heater
    - Propane for heater and torch
    - Camp stove and propane for affirmation stage to heat water for cocoa and coffee
    - Trash bags
    - Twine (about 2000 yards) for running lines to each station so the guys know where to go
    - Rope (If your final ceremony destination is really steep and you need it to help climb)
- Blowtorch (this is a small attachment you can buy at Home Depot that goes on the small green propane cans. Consider buying the kind that lights itself rather than having to have a lighter there.)
- Handheld sledge
- Axe
- Stock pot for coffee
- Coffee cups
- Work gloves
- Cards and box or Ziploc for Sexuality Stage
- A gallon Ziploc Bag (for the letters)
- Stage names (print 2 of each. Place one at the station and hole punch the other to be hung on the string going from base fire. Print on cardstock as other rips)
- Print Noblemen charge
- Bucket to put out fire
- Shovel and Pick axe
- 6 hammers (for tapping nail on block at each stage)
- Wood blocks for each guy
- Extra nails
- Hole punch
- Flashlights for setting up and maintaining ceremony
- Sword (optional to be used at final part of ceremony)
- Baggies for each guy to put his flash paper in (Don’t tell them this is flash paper)
- Couple extra pieces of notebook paper and sharpies. (consider writing directions at a few of the stages if necessary, like “take one 2 pack of pop-tarts each”)
- Sleeping bag for each Lesser (try to get at least a few hours of sleep since you'll be driving the guys back)
  - Home Base
    - Wood, matches, Lighter Fluid, Some sort of fire pit
  - Time with the Father
    - Each guy should have a flashlight with fresh batteries, and their Noblemen Binder
  - Great Commandment
    - Hammer for each student to drive in as a stake
  - Great Commission
    - World Map
    - Scripture with instructions for participants
    - Hammer for each student to drive in as a stake
  - Sexual Purity
    - Porn Industry worker Testimonials: anonymous stories
    - Old Computer Keyboards
    - Hammer for each student to drive in as a stake
○ Interdependent
   ■ Paper strips (ideally purchase flash paper from magic store and put each one in baggies for each guy (they take these and write down ways they are falling short as a man)
   Hammer for each student to drive in as a stake

○ Affirmation
   ■ Fire or propane burner to heat up water if cold out for Hot choc or coffee
   ■ Coffee/Hot Choc if cold. Mountain Dews for each guy.
   ■ Letters from Dad’s
   ■ Snacks
   ■ A plastic bag for each letter from Parents (to protect from the elements)
   ■ Hammer

○ Destruction of Boyhood Symbol
   ■ Axe, Some sort of Propane Torch, Sledge Hammer
   ■ Boyhood symbols
   ■ Distance: This stage needs to be the furthest away
   ■ Hammer for each student to drive in nail
   ■ Water in case a boyhood symbol fire gets out of hand

○ Closing Ceremony
   ■ Bagpiper, Sword for initiation, Noblemen t-shirts
   ■ Framed crests
   ■ Charge to be read
   ■ Breakfast!

Make sure you that nobody who stays up all night is driving anyone home. Either set up drivers to come get you, or make sure the drivers get some sleep during the night. No Noblemen who has gone through the ceremony all night is allowed to drive home!

Order of stages:

Try not to have the affirmation stage be the first or second for any group. Give one person in each group a piece of paper that indicates the order that their group will go through each stage. Because you don’t want anyone to go through the Affirmation Stage first, there should be no more than 5 small groups as you will have one group at each of the remaining stages at any given time. If you have more than 5 small groups, You will need to have some stages have multiple sites. Make those sites the ones that require the least materials (i.e. additional Great Commandment and/or Great Commission)
Explaining Ceremony to NM:

- Give blocks. Explain they must keep in sock when not using during ceremony. When you pound your nail be careful. These nails actually will bend. You can do it the rest of the way at daylight to make sure you don’t go too far in or bend it. If your block cracks let me know and I have a few replacement blocks.
- Give each man their FlashPaper in baggies. Explain they need to keep it in their baggie after they write on it at the Interdependent stage.
- You will begin your time with 2-4 hours alone with God. This is a time for you to reflect on your life as a man and the commitments you are going to make in the areas of the Great Commandment, Great Commission, Interdependent relationships with other men, and Sexual Purity.
- After the Time with the Father period which will be spent in solitude, come back to this location at specified time (only use phone for a clock). Reconvene and go through the remaining stages as small groups for the rest of the evening. You have 1 hour at each stage and 10 minutes of travel time to go back to the base fire and warm up for a few minutes.
- Demonstrate how to use the blowtorch at the destruction of boyhood stage.

As Ceremony Closes:

- Just before the spot where they will kneel down, have 2 tiki torches. Tell the guys to take out their flash paper and touch it to the tiki
- Have each man kneel down
- Read Noblemen Charge
- If you have a sword, tap on each man’s left and right shoulder
- Give each man their crest
- Give each man their Ceremony shirt and tell them to wear it with pride and be reminded of the commitments they’ve made. As you give it to them, say, “Welcome to the Brotherhood of Noblemen”
- Pray over them (consider inviting a local pastor or respected leader connected to your ministry to do this)
- Don’t post pics from ceremony that show bagpiper or talk about letters
- Consider giving each year to help subsidize future NM classes. $10 if still a student, $100 if graduated
- If you’re interested in being a Lesser, let me know by next week.
- Consider announcing Sexual wholeness studies like Walking In The Light here
- There are more devotionals to keep doing every day after ceremony. Consider keeping up with a wingman the rest of the semester and the summer
- Recruit and lead your own NM Challenge group or course this summer and the rest of your life
- Give a verse to each man that you’ve selected for them (optional)
- Head to your morning feast
Ceremony Stage Explanation:

(The Ceremony Packet)

Welcome gentlemen. This is the last step in our efforts over the last several weeks to pursue authentic manhood. While it signifies the conclusion of this phase, it is just the beginning of a life of decisions to live as a Noble Man. Each component of the ceremony will represent either a current reality of manhood that we have discussed, or the challenges and honors to come in your future as a man.

Each stage will last one hour and ten minutes including travel time to each station. At each stage, appoint one man to lead the time at the station by reading the directions out loud. After each stage, go promptly to the next.

You will be divided into small groups for most of the ceremony. This is because you cannot make it through the ceremony on your own. Likewise, you cannot flourish in your journey as a man without a band of brothers committed to your success and to whom you entrust yourself. There are times you will be weak and need carried. You will have the choice to suffer alone and not seek support from other men, or, in humility and weakness, to entrust yourself to other men to help you succeed. Conversely, you will also have the opportunity to live a self-absorbed life as a “taker” not concerned with the well-being of other men, or you can take the time to serve and commit yourself to other men’s success. To reflect this reality, between each stage, each team will carry one of its members between the fire and the station. Every person will need to take a turn being carried. As you are being carried, ponder the idea of needing to entrust yourself to other men for life. After you are carried, take a moment before you switch men and ask the other men to each pound the spike in your block.

Time with the Father stage:

Every rite of passage from cultures around the world involves a significant amount of time spent alone. You will have several hours of extended time to connect with God - to pray, read the Word, to think about the commitments you will make tonight and to ponder a continual pursuit of a noble life after tonight.

First, read through this whole Time With The Father section and decide how you want to break up your time alone with Him. Spend some time slowly meditating on and praying through the Creed.

The Noblemen Creed

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously— doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.
I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.

I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God's Kingdom into all the world.

**Creed Bible Study**

Though you already went through the Creed study, you now you have some more extended time to revisit the verses and pray through these. Start with the areas that you think you need to grow the most in and spend more time on those. As has been said, though tonight marks the end of the Noblemen course for you, it is only the beginning of a life that will be lived for noble purposes.

Think through each part of the Creed. How will you live these out and continue in them the next several decades? On the blank page below, write out some thoughts on how you personally plan to fortify the areas of the creed that you expect will be a challenge for you to live out.

At the end of your time, pound your spikes into your block as a commitment to living out the creed the rest of your life.

**Creed areas to be fortified and plan for doing so:**

**The Sexuality Stage:**

One of your strongest urges, your sex drive, has the potential to bless you with a lifetime of pleasure and pass your line on to future generations. But it also has the potential to destroy your walk with Jesus and devastate your family.

* “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Gal 6:7-9)

You know very well the battle being waged for the purity of your soul. You will fall in this battle but remember Proverbs: “For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.” (Proverbs 24:16) Recognize that you can’t afford to let up in this battle. “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)This stage is divided into three parts. Spend time moving through each part as a team:
Part 1:
Have each member of your team pick a card from the box and read them out loud to the group. Each card is a real life story from a former worker in the adult industry.

Part 2:
These keyboards are symbolic of the ongoing decision you’ll face to remain sexually pure or to defile yourself. Have each member of your team interact with the keyboard for a few minutes, following the instructions on them. As you do, consider not just this time but the times in the future when you’ll be by yourself and will decide whether to sow to the flesh or to the Spirit.

Part 3:
Spend time in your small group imploring Christ for the grace to say no to sin and yes to holiness. Remember the creed: “I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly father as I love, protect, and disciple them.” We all contribute to the sex industry unless we assume the responsibility to act against it. Pound your stake as a commitment to live a noble life sexually and to fight for sexual purity for those who cannot fight for themselves.

The Interdependent Stage:
(Each of you pound the nail of the man who was just carried to this station)

One of the keys to you flourishing through the manhood maze of life is the willingness to entrust yourself to other men. In this envelope you will find a small piece of paper. Make sure it doesn’t get wet. Take about 10 minutes and individually write down the ways that you find yourself falling short as a man, don’t feel like a man and the things you ashamedly struggle with. What are fears that you have about not being enough? What are areas of shame that you have privately been carrying by yourself in the dark. Write all of these down on your small paper. Commit to the Lord to seek out and entrust yourself to a few friends through every season of life. Pound your nail as you commit to this.

Then reconvene and spend the remaining time sharing these with one another. Start your time together by someone reading James 5:16. Please bear in mind that a key to your freedom is the willingness to entrust yourself, both strengths and weaknesses to other men. Pound each other’s spikes before you leave. If there is time, pray for one another. You need to place your small piece of paper back into its baggie and put it in your pocket for later.

Great Commission Stage:

You have an opportunity to spend the rest of your life giving yourself on behalf of those who don’t know Christ or ignoring them. The norm for Christians around you will be to generally ignore them, occasionally pray for them and maybe do an outreach event or two when convenient. Yet Jesus says that He has committed to you the message of reconciliation, as though He is making His appeal to them through you. As you already know, this will be costly. It will cost you time, challenge your pride, and most of all will cost you your commitment to comfort. Spend some time as a group reading through the following verses and then praying together, committing yourselves to being available for God to use you to help others come to know Christ.
Pound your nails as a commitment to spending yourself on behalf of those who are perishing.

**Great Commandment Stage:**

As we discussed during sessions, this is where the bulk of your battle is fought. There is no substitute for regular intimate time with Jesus. Spend some time reading through the following verses and then spend time asking God to make you a man who loves and seeks Him with all of your heart. Go through the following verses together as a group and discuss them.

**Psalm 27:4,8**
**Acts 13:22**
**John 5:39,40**

Pound your nail as a commitment to pursue Him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and to daily bask in His Word and His love for you. Pray that the Lord will give you big souls and passionate hearts to know Him all the days of your lives.

**Affirmation Stage**

*“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”* Proverbs 25:25

As you know, we all need others who will cheer us on in our pursuit of being authentic men. You can now open the letters that were given to you (Letters from parents.) Enjoy this time hearing what others have to say about you. If you’d like, share all or parts of your letters with each other. Then, share with each other the strengths that you see in one another.

**Destruction of Boyhood symbol stage**

Jonah 2:8 - “*Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.*”

You have each chosen a boyhood symbol that represents something that needs to be left behind in your pursuit of a life of nobility. Take 10 minutes by yourselves to mentally lay this on the altar before the Lord and to sacrifice it to Him. Then, one at a time, destroy your boyhood symbol.

Pound your nail as a commitment to leave whatever this symbol represents behind you.
Ceremony Charge

You are being granted a right of arms. This signifies that you are a man and are the head of this new branch of your family line.

May you love God and others well;

May you enjoy, trust and obey Christ our King by absolute surrender to Him;

May you live in purity and holiness, yet cling to and receive the grace of the cross when you fail;

May you understand the suffering and true costs of being a disciple of Christ - yet choose to passionately pursue Him anyway;

May you find other brothers in Christ for whom you will stand by and fight for their true identities, calling them to live noble lives;

May you resist the lure of passivity at every turn;

May you lead courageously by laying down your life;

May you assume responsibility even when it cost you dearly;

May you live not for this world, but for God’s greater reward and May you believe in and embrace His good plan for your life and live out the noble and glorious purposes for which you were created.
Walking in the Light

Walking in the light is a phenomenal Bible study focused on teaching men and women how to trust God and his plan for their sexuality. If you want to see your men walking in sexual wholeness, this study is an investment that cannot be overstated. It is a great follow up to everything learned and taught in Noblemen. Here is the study’s introduction:

“In Greek mythology, the Sirens were three dangerous bird-women, portrayed as seductresses. Sailors who sailed near the shores where they lived were compelled by the Sirens’ enchanting music and voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast.

Greek mythology mentions two heroes who needed to go through the Sirens’ waters. One hero was Odysseus, who was curious to hear what the Sirens sounded like. He told his men to tie him to the mast. He ordered them to leave him tied to the mast, no matter how much he would beg. Then he had the men plug their ears with beeswax. Meanwhile, he remained bound, able to hear but not free to follow his desires. And he safely passed by the Sirens.

The other hero, Jason, had a different solution for the Sirens. When Jason had to sail past the Sirens, he brought along Orpheus, the mesmerizing musician. When Orpheus heard the Sirens singing, he drew out his lyre and played his music more beautifully than the Sirens, drowning out their voices. Jason and the rest of the crew didn’t pay any attention to the Sirens. They were not even curious about them because a more beautiful song captivated them. Ultimately, this is our answer. We need to be so in love with God, so captivated by God, so convinced that His design is the best plan, so sure that His song is the most captivating song, that anything the world has to offer is drowned out by Jesus’ voice saying, “I came that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

This is the ultimate goal of this discovery guide—to paint the picture of God’s mesmerizing song, a song more beautiful than the song of our culture...It is our desire that our gracious God will use men’s (and women’s) interaction over this material to usher many into the freedom that is our heritage in Christ. May God guide you as you connect passionately with Him and with others!”
Fellowship of Lesser Brethren - An Invitation

By Bryce Bouchard

I thought that it might be helpful for you to have some more details and a little more of the vision and purpose of Lesser as you pray about whether God would have you involved throughout Fall and Spring. In a nutshell, I am inviting you to help me keep my finger on the pulse of how Noblemen, the ministry, and the people within the ministry are doing.

Lesser also helps share the load of the ministry by serving where necessary. This would include not only things that I would give you to do, but also you choosing to proactively posture yourself as a servant who is looking for opportunities to give of yourself on behalf of our ministry and the students in our ministry.

The best term that comes to mind to describe how I see this group is the idea of a stakeholder.

Stakeholder- “Any group or individual who can affect or who is affected by achievement of a firm's objectives.”

A stakeholder has a deep and vested interest in and commitment to the success of an organization. They give themselves on behalf of the organization, and benefit personally from the organization as well.

If you’ve been invited to be a part of Lesser, it is because you have shown yourself as one who has lived like a stakeholder or shown potential to do so. You’ve cared about the ministry and the people in the ministry, have served and have shown commitment to the ministry. Many (I would even venture to say most) of our students have shown this spirit as well. The difference in what I’m inviting you into with Lesser is a more formal commitment to the health and success of our ministry.

Lesser get more input in Noblemen, more developmental opportunities, are more a part of my family and their counsel regarding the ministry is weighed more heavily than other students. They also serve more behind the scenes by running more thankless errands, sacrificing time that they’d rather be doing something else, and giving of themselves in ways that cost them.

I would say the disciples (not just the 12, but the 72 and beyond) were Shareholders. They held a share in the ministry of Jesus. Unlike a Stakeholder, however, if a shareholder doesn’t like the direction the organization is headed, or how well it is going for the organization, they can cut bait, sell their share and go elsewhere. I.e. Judas. A stakeholder on the other hand, as the word suggests, has much more at stake. They will literally give of themselves to see to it that the ministry flourishes.

Peter, James and John were obvious stakeholders- consequently, they enjoyed more time with Jesus, were developed more, had greater privileges, responsibilities and sacrifices than others---even than the other disciples. The Fellowship of Lesser Brethren has a unique, strategic role distinct from staff in that you are “insiders” in our ministry. Our goal has always been to be staff directed, but student led. This happens as the students see themselves as stakeholders.
I am reminded of what Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators regularly prayed for God to give him: “Lord, soon bring us into touch with a band of young men, rugged soldiers of the cross, with an eye single to Thy glory…may we help fulfill the Great Commission by recruiting, building and sending laborers in every nation.” I too find myself asking God to do the same—and to give me men who will go anywhere, do anything and pay and cost to know Jesus and to advance His Gospel. God has done that, and it is my highest privilege to help take young leaders to a place in their walk with God, character and influence that they cannot get on their own.

**Expectations:**

*Meet weekly at a time TBD:* Each week will look different. Sometimes we evaluate the ministry; sometimes we brainstorm; sometimes we will pull out a world map and pray for the nations; sometimes we pray through the Scriptures; sometimes we talk about the Scriptures; sometimes we share with each other how we are doing.

*A vibrant, abiding relationship with Jesus in which you regularly spend set aside time with Him:* Your involvement in and commitment to Lesser is only as helpful as your connection to The Vine. It is assumed that you are and will be going first to Jesus to meet all of your deepest needs.

*Participate in and help with all of our events:* As a Lesser, you are leading in more than just Nobleman meetings and events. You can't keep a pulse on something if you're just occasionally tapping your finger on a vein every once in a while. This would include: Nobleman, large group meetings, Camping trips, Regional Conferences, Spring Breaks, etc. In Lesser, we often evaluate the effectiveness of an event. You cannot lend helpful input if you weren't a part. By definition, as a leader, the assumption is that people are following you. You cannot encourage others to go to something that you yourself are not participating in.

*Commitment to living your life among and giving your life to the lost:* If Lesser adds one more “Christian” thing on your plate that precludes you from having the time to invest in the lives of those who don’t know Jesus, then it may not be for you.

*To not look at pornography:* Lessers commit to not looking at pornography while serving as Lessers. This is a zero tolerance issue. This includes anything in which you intentionally go looking for images or videos that you know dishonor God and your future wife. As a Lesser Team works together in this, every year we have seen men get set free and find victory in ways they never have before. After a year of sobriety from porn, you will be amazed to see just how much of a hold it had on you beforehand.

*Share your life with the men in Lesser:* While our Lesser meetings have a component of accountability, they are much greater than that. We don't want to just be a moral policing unit that we each report to every week on how well we are doing sexually. Rather there is the freedom for anyone to share how they are doing, or not. If you don't feel like there is anything going on in your life worth mentioning, then you don't need to do so. But if you do have a pressing need etc. then you can feel the freedom to share and to ask for prayer.

*My commitment to the men in Lesser:* I don't think that it would be a stretch to say that I would do or give just about anything for the men who have been involved in Lesser. I have a great respect for each of them, am deeply proud and fond of all of them, trust them immensely, and I pray that God will do greater things through them than He ever will through me. I consider them each a part of our family. The men
who have done Lesser are impacting people all over the world. As pastors, missionaries, Entrepreneurs, CEO's and blue collar workers reaching their coworkers, they are living out the Noblemen Creed in significant ways.

Because of our commitment to one another, I call them on things and I call them to things which I may not with another student. Proverbs says that “Wounds from a friend can be trusted.” A coach takes you to a place that you cannot get to on your own. Just as a coach would do a deep disservice to his athlete if he didn’t call him to more for fear of offending or making him uncomfortable, so I am committed to in a healthy way pushing, prodding and helping the men in Lesser to become men with undivided hearts who will shake the world.

**Development:**
Every month or so we will be focusing on a new topic. That may mean reading a book, or doing a word study in the Scriptures, or revamping/creating something new for the ministry.

**Breakdown of time commitment:**
5 hours per week time commitment. Here is the breakdown of those hours:

1 hours per week meeting together.
1 hours learning/studying the Scriptures and serving as needed in the ministry.
1 working on recruiting and investing in the new Noblemen class.
2 hours per week during Noblemen to go to meetings.

These are very generalized, and will obviously flex based on the needs of the ministry, and your personal course load and life needs on any given week. I.e. If there is a week where everyone has a ton on their plate with papers or mid-terms, we won’t meet.

Paul urges his young gifted disciple Timothy to train himself to be godly. And likewise, I urge you to take the time to train yourself to be godly. I’ve created and structured Lesser as a vehicle to help young leaders do just that. That being said, while I am very excited about Lesser, and the possibility of each of you men being a part, I realize that it will not be for each of you. May I stress again that it will not affect my relationship with any of you should you choose not to be a part. I would rather you say “no” now than to start with us and not really be committed to Lesser.

Please respond to me within 7 days with how God has led regarding you being a part of Lesser. I will send you a copy of our first topic for development titled “COURAGE”. We will discuss it at our first meeting.
Quotes:

Jim Luebe “There is great confusion in our society concerning what it means to be a man. Noblemen helps men understand what a godly man looks like and how to intentionally pursue biblical manhood. I wholeheartedly endorse Noblemen and wish every college man could experience it.”

Ryan Mckee (former NFL player and college leader of Chapel Hill Bible Church) “Noblemen brings young men into a conversation they would otherwise not have during their college days. You cover key topics of manhood but at a depth most adult men aren’t willing to go. The most challenging moments in my life have produced the most fruit. Noblemen was that for me as a leader and it was for my students.”

Matt Crawford (NWMSU) “After doing a poll of our leadership team and realizing that 75% of them had looked at pornography within the last 30 days, we realized that we had to change how we did things. In order to produce life-long laborers, thereHAS to be a strong emphasis on character and biblical masculinity. Noblemen transformed the culture of our men’s ministry.”

Rich Redel (ASU) “Noblemen continually challenges me personally on what it means to be a man as it applies to by roles as campus director/father/husband. But the effect it has on young men in the ministry is huge: We see men in the Word consistently, in close fellowship with one another and tackling purity in their personal lives and interactions with women. The big takeaways seem to be deep healthy relationships with other men and a commitment to God and His Word.”

Ryan Mullarkey (UofA) “As a sophomore my first experience through Noblemen gave me a vocabulary to finally explain what I was feeling deep in my soul. I’ve since led several groups through Noblemen over the past six years, and I’m convinced Noblemen helps us engage with young college men in an unparalleled way. Through Noblemen, younger men are given a workable path towards manhood, called into dependency on Jesus and courage in life, and shown that only through Jesus can they become the men they were created to be.”

Stephen Holecheck (UCSD) “Noblemen on our campus has given our guys a vision to pursue a brotherhood that produces vulnerability, and a deeper experiencing of Jesus and the Gospel. Since starting Noblemen in our ministry in 2015, the men in our ministry have stepped up to serve like never before and have stepped out to lead even when scared and uncomfortable. Having Noblemen has given me steps and a process to walk with men deeper into their journey of Biblical manhood and true nobility.”

Keith Pepsny (University of Washington) “We are big fans of Noblemen! After taking numerous college guys through the experience, we’ve noticed a difference in their love for God, their respect for women and their understanding of what it means to be a godly man.”

Sean McKelvey (Nav20’w Colorado Springs) “In 14 years of ministry I have not found anything more impactful in the lives of men than Noblemen. It was life shaping as young men truly became men of character, integrity and valor.”
Appendix: Noblemen Handouts
Daily Devotional Reading Guides
Introduction to Proverbs

Authors Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart wrote “How to Read the Bible Book by Book, a guided tour”

Here is the walk through for the book of Proverbs. Hopefully you will find this as a helpful tool to further your understanding of Proverbs! The following includes: orienting data for Proverbs, an overview of Proverbs, specific advice for reading proverbs and a walk through the whole book as you read.

Orienting Data for Proverbs

Content: a series of opening poems praising wisdom and warning against folly, followed by several collections of proverbs from sages who taught wisdom to Israel, starting with Solomon

Author(s): collections of proverbs originating with Solomon, various wise men, Agur and Lemuel’s mother- gathered and arranged for later generations by someone otherwise unknown.

Emphases: wisdom begins with the fear of and trust in Yahweh; at the practical level, it consists of making wise choices between good and evil behavior; such wisdom is to be desired above all else in order to live a full and godly life.

Overview of Proverbs

The larger part of the book of Proverbs is made up of six collections of proverbs, that is, wisdom sayings, mostly couplets (two-liners) that offer guidance to the young-although their value is by no means limited to any age group- on how to live morally and beneficially in the world. On the other side of these collections is a prologue of several poems (1:8-9:18) that stress the importance of listening to the sages, and an epilogue of one poem (31:10-31) that idealizes a wife who is characterized by wisdom. A preamble (1:1-7) sets forth the book’s title, purpose and theme.
The groupings of the proverbs are all identified within the book itself:

- **Proverbs of Solomon I** (10:1-22:16)
- **Sayings of the Wise I** (22:17-24:22)
- **Sayings of the Wise II** (24:23-34)
- **Proverbs of Solomon II** (25:1-29:27)
- **Sayings of Agur** (30:1-33)
- **Sayings of Lemuel** (31:1-31)

All of these are intended to be read and studied in light of the prologue, with its emphasis on the need to attain wisdom and to reject folly (to walk in righteousness and to shun evil). Here you also find the book’s fundamental theological perspective: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (9:10; cf. 1:7). For even though many of the proverbs are common to other cultures, these have been especially tailored for life in the covenant community of Israel. They presuppose not only the covenant of law (6:16-19) - indeed, to fear Yahweh is to hate evil (8:13) - but also the life of the people of God in their promised land (2:21-22; cf. 10:27-30).

**Specific Advice for Reading Proverbs**

As with the book of Psalms, reading through the book of Proverbs is not the ordinary way of handling the proverbs (who would read a collection of familiar quotations?). On the other hand, the preamble, the prologue, and the macrostructure of the whole indicate a rather careful overall arrangement, probably intended to be memorized by the young (see 3:3; 4:21: 7:3; 22:17-18). So two matters are of importance in order for you to read the book well.

First, some observations about structure. The preamble (1:1-7) prepares you
for reading the book as a whole, setting forth its theme (v.2, attaining wisdom), its purpose (vv.3-5), the basic contrasts between wisdom and folly (v.7) and its theological foundation (v.7). At the same time verse 6 offers and outline of the book, according to its main "authors" (proverbs belonging to Solomon and the sayings of the wise).

It is important to observe that the contrast between wisdom and folly is also a contrast (primarily) between righteousness and wickedness. These contrast become the predominant theme in the poems of the prologue (1:8-9:18), where the two main illustrative themes are easy money (money taken by corrupt means) and easy sex (being seduced by another man’s wife). At the end of the prologue, wisdom and folly are personified as women calling the young men to follow them. It is therefore no surprise that the central section of these poems (chs. 5-7) admonishes the young man to a lifelong love of his wife (5:15-19) and not to be tempted by a wayward wife, which in turn also serve as analogies for loving wisdom rather than folly (chs. 8-9). This also helps to make sense of the acrostic poem with which the entire collection ends (31:10-31), where the idealized wife is a model of wisdom, while serving as an analogue for Lady Wisdom. It is also not surprising that these poems are primarily in the form of admonitions.

These contrasts between wisdom and folly carry through the first half of Solomon I (10:1-15:29), now with mostly antithetical couplets (the second line in sharp contrast to the first) rather than with admonitions. Here wisdom/righteousness means diligence in work and care of the land, prudent use of money (resources), caring relationships with neighbor and in family, proper use of the tongue, and proper attitudes and actions (being humble, avoiding anger, etc.); while folly is pictured as its opposites. The second half of Solomon I (15:30-22:16) continues these themes, now using predominantly synthetic couplets (the second line completes or builds on the first), with the noteworthy addition of several proverbs that focus on the king and his court.

Second, a few comments about proverbs themselves and what makes them work. First, their form is that of poetry. But the poetry is Hebrew poetry, which means that some things translate into English, and some do not. Think about how difficult it might be to put the following English proverb into another language: “A stitch in time saves nine,” or “A penny saved is a penny earned,” or “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” Common to these are their rhythmic nature and “sound alike” pattern, which are what makes them memorable. Another language cannot always capture these qualities, even though the gist of the proverb may be plain. So it is with these Hebrew proverbs, which are pithy (typically only three or four Hebrew words to a line) and full of alliterations, catchwords, poetic meter, etc.-not to mention allusions and metaphors that belong to their cultural setting, not all of which are easily captured in English.
Their function is to offer practical instruction for the young, with the focus on how to live uprightly and well in a society that understands itself to be under God. It is important to remember that these proverbs functioned primarily in the home to reinforce the benefits of living prudently and well in everyday life; they are not religious instruction as such. Nonetheless, their goal is to mold the character of the young in ways that conform to the law, even if the law itself is not mentioned.

Their method is the same as with proverbs universally-to express important truths for practical living in ways that are memorable and thus repeatable. This is done by overstatement, by “all or none” kinds of phrases, or by catchphrases that are not intended to be analyzed for their precision. Sometimes it is the overstatement-which speaks truth but not the whole truth-that makes the point. Take, for example, the American proverb, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” While true, its point is thrift, not that one should ever spend. Or take its reverse, “A fool and his money are soon parted,” which reminds one of the need for thrift in a different way. The latter has an earlier counterpart in Proverbs 17:16, “Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?” Thus what is at stake for you in reading the proverbs is to determine their point by looking carefully at their content and poetic form, but to be careful also not to make them “walk on all fours”-and not to ignore counter proverbs, which also speak truth.

A Walk Through Proverbs:

The Preamble (1:1-7)

Several important matters for reading the whole collection are presented here. The proverbs originate with Solomon, who is significantly noted as the son of David, king of Israel (v. 1); their purpose is given (vv. 2-5) to attain a prudent life that is also righteous and just; they are address to the young and the “simple” (v. 4, the latter word meaning something like “gullible”- those who are easily led astray); their content is anticipated (v. 6); and their basic perspective and basic contrasts are spelled out (v. 7).

The Prologue (1:8-9:18)

To understand the collection of proverbs that begins in 10:1, it is important for you to pay close attention to this prologue. You will see that it comes as a series of ten lessons from a father to his son(s), especially picking up the antitheses set out in 1:7; you will also see that most of this material comes as admonition. Each new lesson begins with an introduction of several couplets (“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction,” etc.), followed by the lesson itself. The lessons themselves are carefully
structured and arranged, building toward the climax of chapter 9, where wisdom and folly make their final appeals.

1:8-33 Lesson 1 (and Interlude 1): Warning and Rebuке

Note that this first introduction (vv. 8-9) includes both the father and mother (cf. the beginning of the collection at 10:1). You will see that this lesson is a strong warning against the enticements of wicked men (vv. 10-19) who plot evil against others for easy money (“ill-gotten gain”).

You will also see that in the interlude (vv. 20-33), personified wisdom speaks, rebuking not the “son” but the “simple ones” and “mockers,” those who would entice the son away from his parents’ wisdom. Her rebuke basically describes the just end of such people.

2:2-22 Lesson 2: Safeguard against the Wicked

Watch for the four distinct parts of this lesson. A longer introduction urges the son to seek wisdom (vv. 1-4); then he will “understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God” (vv. 5-6), which in turn will protect his way (vv. 7-8) and enter his heart to guard him (vv. 9-11). What follows, then, are the two main ways in the prologue the son needs protection: (1) from “wicked men” (vv. 12-15) and (2) from the “wayward wife” (vv. 16-19). Verses 20-22 then return to his walking in the paths of the righteous.

3:1-35 Lessons 3 and 4: The Value of Wisdom

Lesson 3 (vv. 1-10) sets forth God’s promises and the son’s obligations: love and faithfulness = favor with God and people (vv. 3-4); trust in the Lord = straight paths (vv. 5-6); humility = good health (vv. 7-8); tithes and offerings = abundant crops (vv. 9-10).

Lesson 4 (vv. 13-26) presents three poems that highlight the value of wisdom (note the 6- 2-6 couplet arrangement)- its blessings and value (vv. 13-18; note the “blessed” at the beginning and end); its role in creation (vv. 19-20), picking up “the tree of life” from verse 18; and its blessings again (vv. 21-26), now picking up especially the theme of peace and prosperity from verse 2. Now watch how verses 27-35 at the end of the lesson 4 correspond to the lesson 3 by offering negative admonitions and warnings.
4:1-27 Lesson 5-7: The Supremacy of Wisdom

The first of these three lessons (vv. 1-9) emphasizes the family’s heritage of wisdom and thus urges the sons to continue in it. Lesson 6 then urges the son to stay off the wrong way, the way of wickedness (vv. 10-19), while lesson 7 urges him not to swerve off the right way, the way of righteousness (vv. 20-27).

5:1-6:19 Lesson 8: Warnings against Adultery, Folly and Wickedness

Picking up from 2:16-19, this lesson warns against adultery (5:3-14, 20), which also includes an admonition to marital fidelity (vv. 15-19); this is followed by a further warning against the wicked (vv. 21-23) and against two kinds of folly (securing strangers, 6:1-5; sloth, vv. 6-11). It concludes with the final warning in the prologue against the wicked (6:12-19).

6:20-35 Lesson 9: Further Warning against Adultery

Note how this introduction begins as the others did (vv. 20-23), but concludes on the warning note (vv. 24-25) that will then be elaborated. With a threefold series of couplets (vv. 26-29, 30-33, and 34-35), the lesson points out the fearful consequences of adultery (punishment, disgrace, a vengeful husband).

7:1-8:36 Lesson 10 (and Interlude 2): The Unfaithful Wife and Wisdom’s Call

This final lesson corresponds to lesson 8, focusing now on the seductive tactics of the unfaithful, adulterous wife. Note that she will also serve as an analogue for the invitation of Folly at the end of the prologue (9:13-18; cf. 9:18 with 7:27; and 9:14 with 5:8).

Notice how the second interlude (8:1-36) corresponds to the first one (1:20-33), which followed the warning against the “wicked men.” This time Wisdom offers self-praise to the “simple” and “foolish” (v. 5) to recognize her value both to kings and the prosperous (vv. 12-21), not to mention Yahweh himself (vv. 22-31). And at the end (vv. 32-36), she steps into the father’s shoes and invites the sons to watch daily at her doorway (the seductress).
9:1-18 Epilogue: Rival Banquets of Wisdom and Folly

Note how this final series begins and ends with rival invitations to “all who are simple” to banquet at the houses of Wisdom and Folly (vv. 1-6; 13-18), and note especially how Folly both mimics Wisdom and echoes the seductions of the unfaithful wife. Between the two final invitations you will find two brief lessons (vv. 7-9, 10-12) contrasting the wise and mockers- all of this to lead you into reading the proverbs themselves with diligence and thoughtfulness.


Our division of Solomon I into two parts is intended to highlight the fact that most of the couplets in this section are antithetical, thus following hard on the antitheses of the prologue. But in contrast to the prologue, there is scarcely an admonition among them. They begin with a couplet (10:1) that not only picks up the “instruction” to the young from the prologue, but also puts both parents in the picture, along with the contrast between the wise and foolish child.

As you read through this collection, note how certain themes characterizing wisdom/folly and righteousness/wickedness are replayed over and over in different ways and with different images. Scholars are only recently discovering various patterns that hold smaller groupings together, often in relationship to groupings that precede and follow. But many of these are difficult to trace in English translation. So two things may help you here as you set out to read through the proverbs.

First, be aware of the many educative proverbs that look very much like the introductions to the lessons in the prologue (e.g., 10:17; 12:1; 13:13). These usually mark “seams” in the collection, so you should look more closely at the smaller groupings before and after these educative proverbs.

Second, you might find it helpful to use a set of colored pencils and mark out some of the recurring themes. Along with the more generic wise/foolish and righteous/wicked themes, note the frequency of themes such as wealth/poverty, work/sloth, speech (truth/lying, etc.), relationships (neighbors, family, king), and attitudes (anger, love/hatred, etc.).

For example, the following may be marked out among the thirty-two couplets in chapter 10: Contrast between the righteous and the wicked (either expressly or implied) occur 18 times, both generically (ten times, where this is the point of the proverb [vv. 3, 6-7, 9, 24-25, 27-30]) and in conjunction with other themes (8 times, vv. 2, 11, 16, 20-
21, 23, 31-32); contrasts between wisdom and folly occur 2 times generically (vv. 1, 23) and 8 times in conjunction with other themes (vv. 5, 8, 13-14, 18-19, 21, 31); contrasts between proper and improper speech occur 11 times (vv. 8, 10-11, 13-14, 18-21, 31-32) and constitute the main theme in most of their occurrences; contrasts between work and sloth are the subject 3 times (vv. 4-5, 26); and contrasts between wealth and poverty occur 3 times (vv. 15-16, 22), occurring in conjunction with work/sloth in verse 4. The only proverb in this chapter that does not belong to these concerns is verse 17, which deals with discipline (cf. also v. 13). The fact that many of these are related and grouped suggests that the arrangement is not simply haphazard. You may wish to try this for yourself on other small groupings that emerge as you read.

15:30-22:16 Solomon I, Part 2

While this section of Solomon I continues the themes and emphases of part 1, they are noticeably different in two ways. First, you will see that, even though antithetical couplets still occur, the majority of couplets are now synthetic, so that both lines add up to one point. Second, there is an increase in couplets that reflect the king and his court (and other forms of “vertical” relationships, which began at 14:28, 35 in part 1).

The Sayings of the Wise (22:17-24:34)

22:17-24:22 First Collection of the Sayings of the Wise

Two things mark this collection to distinguish it from Solomon I: (1) The verses are not uniform, having from two to several lines each, and (2) they return to the admonitions that marked the prologue. Note also that they are introduced and numbered as “thirty” (22:20), which probably includes the introduction (22:17-21) as the first of these. Watch for the interesting and broad range of topics covered here.

24:23-34 Second Collection of the Sayings of the Wise

This collection is separate, because “thirty sayings” (22:20) sets limits on the preceding collection. The five sayings of this second collection are diverse both in form and content, dealing with relationships with neighbors and diligence in work.
Proverbs of Solomon II (25:1-29:27)

Observe how this collection of Solomonic proverbs moves away from the admonitory style that has just preceded it. Hezekiah’s “men” collected these. Two collections are in evidence (chs. 25-27; 28-29), while the whole is less uniform in style than Solomon I.


You will find that in this first part the proverbs are more vivid and diverse in nature, with explicit comparisons becoming more frequent (note the number of verses that begin with “like”). The collection begins with a series relating to the king’s court (25:2-8), which also sets a pattern for several longer units (sometimes called “Proverb poems”: 25:16-17, 21-22; 26:23-26; 27:23-27). Otherwise most of them repeat themes found in the first collection.


This second collection is a series of fifty-five (mostly antithetical) couplets that focus primarily on the wicked and the righteous. Note how the first, middle, and final couplets make this theme explicit (28:1, 28; 29:27; but see also 28:12; 29:2, 7, 16), and that they frame couplets that are basically concerned with rulers, teaching, and justice for the poor.

More Sayings of the Wise (30:1-31:31)

30:1-33 Sayings of Agur

This diverse collection is full of interest, in terms of both form and content. Note especially the following: how verses 2-4 echo material in Job 38:5-11; the prayer in verses 7-9 (the only one in Proverbs); the four classes of wrongdoers singled out in verses 11-14; and the numerical sayings/riddles in verses 15-31, which seem to contain simply various kinds of observations about life as opposed to specific moral teaching.

31:1-9 Sayings of Lemuel

This final collection is unique in that it relates sayings of a king taught to him by
the queen mother. Both parts of this concluding chapter, therefore, offer examples of wise women—thus serving to bookend the instruction of Lady Wisdom in chapters 1-9.

31:10-31 Epilogue: A Wise/Ideal Wife

This final, idealistic portrait of “a wife of noble character” is probably to be understood as another saying that Lemuel’s mother taught him. It is an acrostic poem (each verse begins with a succeeding letter of the twenty-two letter Hebrew alphabet). Note how it idealizes the wife in terms of the values that have been taught throughout the book— a fitting conclusion to the collection.

*The book of Proverbs fits into the biblical story by giving practical instruction to the young (and all others listening in) in order to help them follow in the ways of the Lord and have a beneficial, fruitful life on earth.
Introduction to Mark

Timeline

Author, Date, and Recipients

The apostle Peter passed on reports of the words and deeds of Jesus to his attendant, John Mark, who wrote this Gospel for the wider church as the record of Peter’s apostolic testimony. The book was likely written from Rome during the mid- to late-50s A.D. (though the mid- or late-60s is also possible). Mark’s audience, largely unfamiliar with Jewish customs, needed to become familiar with such customs in order to understand the coming of Jesus as the culmination of God’s work with Israel and the entire world, so Mark explains them.

Purpose and Theme

The ultimate purpose and theme of Mark’s Gospel is to present and defend Jesus’ universal call to discipleship. Mark returns often to this theme, categorizing his main audience as either followers or opponents of Jesus. Mark presents and supports this call to discipleship by narrating the identity and teaching of Jesus. For Mark, discipleship is essentially a relationship with Jesus, not merely following a certain code of conduct. Fellowship with Jesus marks the heart of the disciple’s life, and this fellowship includes trusting Jesus, confessing him, observing his conduct, following his teaching, and being shaped by a relationship with him. Discipleship also means being prepared to face the kind of rejection that Jesus faced.

Key Themes

I. Jesus seeks to correct messianic expectations and misunderstandings (1:25, 34, 44; 3:12; 4:10–12; 5:18–19, 43; 8:30; 9:9).
II. Jesus is man (3:5; 4:38; 6:6; 7:34; 8:12, 33; 10:14; 11:12; 14:33–42).
V. Jesus as the Son of Man must suffer (8:31; 10:45; 14:21, 36).
VI. Jesus is Lord (2:28; 12:35–37; 14:62).
VII. Jesus calls his followers to imitate him in humble service, self-denial, and suffering (8:34–38; 9:35–37; 10:35–45).
VIII. Jesus teaches on the kingdom of God, and implies that God continues to call a people to himself (compare 1:15; 9:1; 14:25; 15:43).

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–15)
II. Demonstration of Jesus’ Authority (1:16–8:26)
A. Jesus’ early Galilean ministry (1:16–3:12)  
B. Jesus’ later Galilean ministry (3:13–6:6)  
C. Work beyond Galilee (6:7–8:26)  

III. Testing Jesus’ Authority in Suffering (8:27–16:8)  
A. Journey to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52)  
B. Entering and judging Jerusalem (11:1–13:37)  
C. Death and resurrection in Jerusalem (14:1–16:8)  
D. “Longer ending of Mark” (16:9–20; see note)  

The Setting of Mark  

The events in the book of Mark take place almost entirely within Palestine, from Caesarea Philippi in the north to Beersheba in the south. During this time Palestine was ruled by the Roman Empire. The book opens with Jesus’ baptism by John during the rule of Pontius Pilate and the tetrarchs Antipas and Philip. It closes with Jesus’ death and resurrection about three years later.
Introduction to Galatians

Timeline

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<td>Paul visits, writes to Galatians</td>
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Author, Date, and Recipients

The apostle Paul wrote this letter about A.D. 48. The Galatians are probably believers in the churches of the southern region of the Roman province of Galatia. Paul is more critical of his audience here than in any of his other letters.

Theme

Christ’s death has brought in the age of the new covenant (3:23–26; 4:4–5, 24). People do not have to become Jews or follow the outward ceremonies of the Mosaic law in order to be Christians (2:3, 11–12, 14; 4:10). To require these things denies the heart of the gospel, which is justification by faith alone and not by keeping the “works of the law” (2:16). In this new age, Christians are to live in the guidance and power of the Spirit (chs. 5–6).

Purpose

False teachers have convinced the Galatians that they are required to be circumcised. The result is division within their church (5:15). Paul gives numerous reasons why they should return to the simple truth of the gospel.

Key Themes

I. In his sin-bearing death, Christ is a substitute for all Christians. He brings them into a new realm of freedom and life (1:4; 2:20; 3:13).

II. The gospel of Christ comes from God alone—not from any human source. Paul himself is a living example of this. His conversion to Christ and his apostleship were not through human means. They came through direct revelation from Christ (1:1, 11–12, 15–20).

III. Salvation comes not by works of law but by faith, which leads to justification (2:16).

IV. To require circumcision and other Mosaic laws as a supplement to faith is to fall back from the realm of grace and freedom and to come under the whole law and its curse, since perfect observance of the law is impossible (2:12–14, 16; 3:10; 4:10; 5:3).

V. Old Testament Scripture itself testifies to the truth of justification by faith (Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4).

VI. Believers have died with Christ to sin and therefore have renounced the flesh (Gal. 5:24; 6:14).

VII. The Spirit is the source of power and guidance in the Christian life. He produces love and faith in the believer (5:6, 16, 18, 25).
VIII. The Christian life is one of pleasing Christ. This requires willingness to suffer persecution for the sake of his cross (1:10; 6:12, 14).

Outline

I. Opening (1:1–9)
II. Indirect Appeal: Paul’s Ministry and the Gospel (1:10–2:21)
III. Direct Appeals to the Galatians (3:1–5:12)
IV. Life in the Spirit and Love (5:13–6:10)
V. Final Warning (6:11–18)
VI. The Setting of Galatians

The Setting of Galatians

C. A.D. 48

Paul’s letter to the Galatians was likely written to the churches he had established during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–14:28). He probably wrote the letter from his home church in Antioch in Syria, sometime before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1–31).
Introduction to Ephesians

Timeline

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Ephesus and the surrounding region c. A.D. 62 while imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28). During this time he also wrote Colossians and Philemon. All three letters were sent with Tychicus and Onesimus.

Theme

There are three main themes of Ephesians: (1) Christ has reconciled all creation to himself and to God; (2) Christ has united people from all nations to himself and to one another in his church; and (3) Christians must live as new people.

Purpose

Ephesians offers general instruction in the truths of God’s redemptive work in Christ; the unity of the church among diverse peoples; and proper conduct in the church, the home, and the world.

Key Themes

I. All people are by nature spiritually dead. They disobey God's law and are ruled by Satan (1:7; 2:1–3, 5, 11–12).

II. God predestined his people to redemption and holiness in Christ (1:3–14; 2:4, 8–9).

III. God's rich mercy in Christ has saved sinners. This free gift is by grace through faith alone (1:7–8; 2:4–14).

IV. Jesus' saving work was part of redeeming a fallen creation for God. For this he deserves glory, honor, and authority in this age and the next (1:15–23; 3:1–13).

V. Jesus unites Jews and Gentiles into his one body, the church, as a new creation (1:23; 2:10–22; 3:1–21; 4:1–6).

VI. Christ's people are saved to new lives of holiness in thought, word, and deed. They must reject their old, sinful lifestyles (4:1–3, 17–32; 5:1–20).

VII. Holiness in life includes submission to proper authorities, in home and family life, and those in authority must care for those in submission to them (5:21–6:9).

VIII. Jesus has given powerful gifts to his church. These bring unity, maturity, and defense against the devil and his allies (4:7–16; 6:10–19).
Outline

I. Introduction (1:1–14)
II. Paul’s Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:15–23)
III. Salvation by Grace through Faith (2:1–10)
IV. Unity and the Peace of Christ (2:11–22)
V. Revelation of the Gospel Mystery (3:1–13)
VI. Paul’s Prayer for Strength and Insight (3:14–21)
VII. Unity of the Body of Christ (4:1–16)
VIII. Paul’s Testimony (4:17–24)
IX. Encouragement for a Holy Lifestyle (4:25–32)
X. New Life in Love (5:1–20)
XI. Submission to One Another (5:21–6:9)
XII. The Whole Armor of God (6:10–20)
XIII. Conclusion (6:21–24)

The Setting of Ephesians

c. A.D. 62

Ephesus was a wealthy port city in the Roman province of Asia. It was a center of learning and was near several key land routes. Paul probably wrote his letter to the Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28).
The Creed Study

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously—doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.

I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.

I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving, and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.
Day 1

“As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my Noble identity.”

Verses on Noble identity

Isaiah 61:10

John 1:12

John 10:28

2 Corinthians 5:21

What does it mean to be a child of God?

What does it mean to live as a child of God?

What are some ways you could actively live out of your Noble identity in the above verses, instead of trying to earn a Noble identity?
Day 2

“I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life.”

**Verses on depending on God**

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

2 Corinthians 12:9-11

Why do you think depending on God often seems so counterintuitive?

**Verses on enjoying God**

Psalm 43:3-4

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Do you feel like you enjoy God? If not, you’ve likely got something twisted in how you view Him and yourself. Ask God to reveal any misconceptions and to increase your enjoyment of Him.

**Verses on submitting to God**

*Note: We don’t submit to gain a noble identity, but because of our new noble identity!*

John 12:24-27

Titus 2:11-14

What does it look like to live a life fully surrendered to God?

Is there an area of your life right now that God would say you’re not surrendering to Him?
Day 3

“I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word.

Verses on Abiding Daily

Psalm 27:4-8

John 15:1-11

Philippians 3:7-11

Revelation 2:4

What things tend to keep you from abiding in the Lord and His Word?

Are you willing to give them up to know Him better?

Pray God would give you a greater hunger for Himself.

Make a Five-Year Plan for Mastering the Word
Day 4

“I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.”

Note: Your life will be full of changes. Though long-distance friends are irreplaceable, it’s essential to also have local friends wherever you live. Take the risk to develop new, local friends through every season of life.

Verses on Entrusting yourself to godly men

1 Samuel 18:3-4

Proverbs 13:20

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 27:6

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Who are some good friends with whom you can actively pursue going deeper?

Is there someone who God is bringing to mind who you could bless by extending a deeper friendship?
Day 5

“I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life.”

Verses on holiness

Job 31:1

Psalm 101:2-4

Ephesians 5:3

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

1 Timothy 4:12

1 Peter 1:14-19

What does a pure and holy life look like in your daily life?

What motivates you to live a holy life?

Pray that you will grow in a love for what is righteous and a hatred for what is impure
Day 6
“I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down.”

Verses on Not Staying Down

Job 13:15

Psalm 37:23-24

Psalm 130:1

Psalm 145:14

Proverbs 24:16

1 John 1:9

1 John 3:20

What does “not staying down” look like in your life?

What are some things that will help you actively get up after a fall?
Day 7

“I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so.”

Note: Deception is a close relative to lying. Just because you don’t technically tell a lie does not mean you haven’t deceived someone. Also, saying you’ll do something and not keeping your word is in essence lying.

Verses on Not Lying

Leviticus 19:11

Psalm 15:4b

Ecclesiastes 5:5-6

Matthew 5:37

Acts 5:1-11

2 Corinthians 1:17

In what ways can you actively pursue not lying in your daily life?

Are there any lies or deceptions that come to mind that God would have you come clean about?
Day 8

“I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously - doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.”

Verses on Resisting Passivity
1 Samuel 10:22-26

Luke 16:10-12

Hebrews 3:7, 15, 4:7

James 4:17

What does it mean to resist passivity?

What are some areas of your life you are prone to passivity?

What steps can you take to resist passivity in these areas?

Verses on Courage
Joshua 1:9

1 Samuel 17:48

1 Corinthians 16:13

2 Timothy 1:7

What does it mean to live courageously?

What is an area in your life right now that God would have you act with greater courage?

How would you imagine things changing if you did?
Day 9

“I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family…”

Verses on Vision

Genesis 12:2-3

Proverbs 29:18

Verses on Direction

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Psalm 143:8

What is the vision and direction you want to lead your family in?

Verses on Leadership

Psalm 78:70-72

1 Timothy 3:2-5

What does it look like for you to lead courageously in your family, present or future?
Day 10

“...putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them.”

Verses on Placing Their Needs Above Your Own

Philippians 2:3-8

1 Timothy 5:8

Verses on Emotionally Engaged

Psalm 103:13


Genesis 16:13

Verses on Physically Available

Proverbs 18:1

Proverbs 27:8

Zechariah 11:17

Knowing who you are now, what are some ways you might find yourself being emotionally and physically absent from your family in the future?

How can you prevent those problems?
Day 11

“I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death.”

Verses on Loving Your Wife, pursuing her and receiving her.

Note: the Greek word for “receive” in Romans 15:7 is “Proslambano”. It means to welcome, to draw to oneself, to grant access to one’s heart. This is an easy thing to do when things are going well. However, we can only extend this kind of love when we are offended and disappointed by considering the way that God has likewise received us in Christ.

Proverbs 15:1

Mark 10:2-9

Romans 15:7

Galatians 5:15

Ephesians 5:25-33

1 Peter 3:7
Day 12

“I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.”

Verses on Loving, Protecting & Discipling Your Children

Psalm 103:10-14

Proverbs 14:26

Proverbs 22:6

Malachi 4:6

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Ephesians 6:4

Hebrews 12:6-11

What are some of the ways that you have seen God the Father love, protect and disciple you?
Day 13

“I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ.”

Verses on Serving the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 Peter 4:7-11

It can be very easy to live as though we have no need of other Believers. This is especially true of whom those we don’t particularly like and are different than us. Who is someone in the Body who gets on your nerves?

Ask God to show you how you need them and what steps you could take toward inviting them into your life.
Day 14

“As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life.”

Verses on Being a Spiritual Patriarch, Sharing the Gospel

1 Samuel 12:23

Psalm 145:4

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

1 Thessalonians 2:8

1 Peter 3:15

Ask God to bring to mind 2 people with whom you could be sharing your life and the Gospel.
Day 15

“I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs.”

Verses on Mentors

Proverbs 15:22

Luke 6:40

1 Corinthians 4:15

Is there a man whom you deeply respect that you would like to emulate?

Why not initiate lunch or a phone conversation with him this week and learn from him?

Verses on Mentoring

1 Corinthians 11:1

2 Timothy 2:2

2 Timothy 3:10-14

Is there someone in your life right now who you could begin discipling?

What would be a next step you could take toward them this week?
Day 16

“I will lead by serving…”

Note: We often want to serve in ways that we enjoy or that bring us glory. Though God will sometimes allow you to serve in ways that you enjoy, He also will often present you with opportunities to serve that are undesirable and inconvenient. Be open to these!

Verses on Serving

Ezekiel 34:1-16

Mark 9:33-35

Mark 10:35-45

Luke 11:46

Luke 17:10

Jot down your gifts, talents and resources. How can you use these to serve the Body?

Is there a need in your fellowship right now that you could meet that is inconvenient and undesirable to you? Ask God if He might want you to help meet that need and how.
Day 17

“And will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own.”

Verses on God’s Honor

Psalm 115:1

Isaiah 42:8

Acts 12:22-23

1 Corinthians 6:20

How can you give honor and glory to God in your daily life?

Verses on Other’s Honor

1 Samuel 18:1-5

Matthew 7:12

2 Corinthians 4:5

How can you seek the honor of others who are in your life right now? How would they be able to see it lived out in you?
Day 18

“I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand.”

Verses on Standing in Christ

Psalm 62:1-2

Jeremiah 9:23,24

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Matthew 11:28-30

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Philippians 3:3

Colossians 1:9-14

Ask God to reveal to you the things you are trusting in other than Him
Day 19

“I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.”

Verses on Advancing God’s Kingdom

Isaiah 60:1-3

Isaiah 61:1-4

Matthew 24:14

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8

Revelation 7:9-12

Ask God to use you to advance His Kingdom into all the world!
Session 1 Handouts
Session 1: The Problem With Men

Notes:

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of today’s content? What stood out to you?

- How do you relate to the feminized man? (Waits rather than initiates; Prefers group approval; Shuns risk taking; Struggles with decision making; Places overemphasis on feelings; Shrinks back from upset women)

- Satan offered an erroneous picture of the character of God— that the Lord was out to ruin Adam and Eve’s lives, that God was holding out on them. Do you ever feel like that? How so?

- In the Garden, Satan’s primary strategy was threefold. He cast doubt on the character of God (God is holding out on you), the Word of God (Did God really say?), and the consequences of sin (you won’t surely die!). His strategy with us is the same. How do you see yourself believing lies about the character of God, the Word of God, or God’s commands?

- Do you think God would say that you live with Him as the master and absolute ruler of your life?
● What are ways that you can see that you’re wrecking your own life by not having God in charge?

● Are there ways that you’ve seen yourself trying to have people worship and serve you?

● Are there any practical steps that you can take today to put God on the throne of your life that He deserves?

Assignments:

● Begin daily Proverbs reading at LAUNCH Trip
● Choose a wingman and begin connecting daily at LAUNCH Trip
● Begin tracking points daily at LAUNCH Trip
● Memorize the first paragraph of the Creed perfectly
● Memorize Isaiah 32:8 (optional Psalm 27:8)
● Bring Commitment Contract to LAUNCH Trip
Noblemen Course Details

Assignment Examples:

**Daily Devotionals:**
Every day you are expected to get into God’s word and read at least a chapter. Initially you will start in the book of Proverbs. From there you will go to the book of Mark, Galatians, Ephesians, and finally the creed study. Like everything with Noblemen, you'll get out of the readings what you put into them.

**Wingman:**
Call one another daily and do the following: Quote the Creed from memory; Quote the verse for the week; Share what stood out to you in the daily devotional time. Every week you will pick a different man to connect with. Try to pick someone who is not in your small group or who you don’t know well so you get to know the other guys in your class.

**Memorize weekly verse:**
We have selected a verse per week. There is also an additional optional verse for each week that can be memorized for an extra ½ point if memorized word perfectly.

**Creed** The Noblemen Creed reflects truths from almost 100 verses. Start working on memorizing the Creed every day.

**Points** Here's the breakdown of points. It's all on your honor. Keep track of your points by logging into Noblemenministries.com daily.

- Everyone starts with 100 points.
- You must have at least 75 to enter FORT week.
- All points are on your honor.
- Keep track of your points on the Noblemen Website

- **Point Deductions are as follows:**
  - **D** = Daily
  - **W** = Weekly

  - D - Miss a daily reading (-1 point)
  - D - Miss Wingman call (-1 point)
  - W - Miss memorizing verse by meeting (-1 point)
  - W - Miss doing weekly Bible Study (-1 point)
  - W - Can’t quote Creed portions by meeting (-2 points)
  - W - Missing or imperfect weekly assignment (-10 points)
  - W - Miss a session (-20 points)
- Extra Credit opportunities are as follows:
  - Read *Shadow of the Almighty* by Elisabeth Elliot and write a 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  - Read *Silence of Adam* by Larry Crabb and write 1 page paper about what you learned (+15pts)
  - Listen to *Love Songs* by Tommy Nelson (the full sermon series) and write 1 page paper about how you will apply this to your life (+10pts)
  - Pre-approved community volunteering opportunities (+5pts)
  - Make up one missed session and write 100 word paper summarizing what you learned (+3 points)

**FORT Week:** Is in April, Ceremony caps it off. Fort Week, short for Fortify is an opportunity to fortify everything you’ve learned throughout the course and to prepare for the commitments you will make during ceremony.

**Ceremony:** Caps off FORT Week and lasts all night. If you have a job you will probably want to request off on Sunday that follows as you will have been up 24 hours.
The Noblemen Creed

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously—doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.

I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.

I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving, and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.
Noblemen Commitment Contract

• I am committed to completing the Noblemen course

• I am committed to attending all Noblemen sessions, meetings, and retreats. If I cannot due to an extenuating circumstance I will let a leader know immediately in order to reach an alternative solution.

• I am committed to completing all daily and weekly assignments to the best of my abilities.

• I am committed to recording my daily and weekly points honestly to honor God and the commitments of this course.

• I am committed to diligently pursuing my other God-given responsibilities during the course of Noblemen. (Ex. Family, Work, School, etc.)

• I am committed to keeping all things I learn about the Noblemen Ceremony private in order to allow future Noblemen to experience the richness of a Rite of Passage.

• I am committed to paying the full cost of the Noblemen Course, or as much as I am able.

__________________________________________
(Printed Name)

__________________________________________
(Signature)

__________________________________________
(Date)
Session 2 Handouts
**Session 2: The Question That Haunts Every Man**

**In Small Groups:**

In your own words, how would you define courage?

What causes courage to fail or to prove successful?

What is something courageous you have recently done?

**Read Genesis 2-3 and answer the following questions:**

Where was the man made?

From what was he made?

For what was he made?

In what arena did God curse him?

**Read 1 Corinthians 16:13:**

NASB - Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
NIV - Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

What do you observe about that verse? Why?

**Notes:**
Small Group Discussion Questions

● What really hit home in this session? Explain

● What are you hoping to get out of Noblemen?

● In what ways, areas or circumstances do you find yourself not feeling “enough”?

● What are ways you try to hide from God and others?

This Week’s Assignments:

● Begin reading Proverbs daily and mark it online
● Choose a wingman and begin connecting daily
● Finish memorizing the first paragraph of the Creed Word Perfect.
● In your groups create a list of men who you could ask salty questions. Put a couple guys who would scare you to death to ask.
● Do something scared before the next weekly meeting
Session 3 Handouts
Session 3: Why She Does What She Does

Notes:
Small Group Discussion Questions:

● What stood out to you from tonight session?

● How do you see the curse playing out in the lives of the women you know?

● How do you see the curse playing out in your parents’ relationship?

● Have you ever had a relationship where the curse impacted the way you and your girlfriend related?

● Have you ever tried to be God to a woman and meet needs that only God can meet? How did it go?

Assignments:

● Continue reading Proverbs daily and mark it online
● Continue connecting with wingman daily
● Finish memorizing the first paragraph of the Creed word perfect.
● In your groups create a list of men who you could ask salty questions. Put a couple guys who would scare you to death to ask.
● Do something scared before the next weekly meeting.
Session 4 Handouts
Session 4: How To Become Noble

Notes:

Who God is:

Who you are not:

Who you are:
Holy Hands:

Not what my hands have done can save my guilty soul
Not what my toiling flesh has born can make my spirit whole
Not what I feel or do can give me peace with God
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears can bear my awful load

These guilty hands are raised, filthy rags are all I bring
And I have come to hide beneath Your wings
These holy hands are raised, washed in
The fountain of Your grace
And now I wear Your righteousness

Thy work alone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin
Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God, can give me peace within
Thy love to me, O God, not mine O Lord to Thee
Can rid me of this dark unrest and set my spirit free

Thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak
Thy power alone, O Lamb of God, can this sore bondage break
Not other works save Thine, no other blood will do
No strength save that which is divine, can see me safely through

I praise the God of grace, I trust His truth and might.
He calls me His, I call Him mine, my God, my Joy my Light.
Tis’ He who saveth me, who freely pardon gives
I love because He loveth me, I live because He lives

Discussion Questions:

● What hit you in tonight’s session?

● How do you find yourself trying to perform for God’s approval?

● Why does it seem to be so hard to rest in Christ’s work for our Nobility rather than trying to achieve it ourselves?

● What do you do when you feel like you’re in God’s dog house?

● How do you need to grow in the process of repentance?

Assignments:

● Memorize second paragraph of the Creed Perfectly

● Continue daily Bible reading

● Select a new wingman and connect daily

● Share salt with at least one man on your salty list

● Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21 (optional Isaiah 61:10)

● Do Weekly Bible Study
Noblemen Salty Questions/Statements

You should be looking for opportunities every day to discuss salty questions with the list of guys you’ve been praying for. While in person is ideal, a phone call or even text message is still great. You can easily be asking at least one salty question per day.

Put all of these in your own words and just ask them in every day conversations. If it’s someone you don’t know very well, feel free to say something like, “Hey Dave, I’m doing this course on Biblical manhood and they encourage us to process what we are learning with other people and to hear their thoughts. You up for me bouncing some of what I’ve been learning off of you?” Also feel free to come up with your own additional salty questions from what you’ve been learning in Noblemen and your Bible reading!

Salties 1 - Session 4

a. In this course I’ve been doing on Biblical manhood they brought up the question of whether God has a doghouse or not. (You know, like when a husband frustrates his wife and he has to wait a while and do nice things to get back in her good favor.) They were asking if that’s true with God. I feel like it’s not true, but honestly I often live like it’s not. What do you think?

b. In this course I’ve been doing on Biblical manhood we looked at this illustration that explains why men and women tend to behave the way we do in relationships. I’d love to show it to you and see your thoughts. Draw out the Ephesians 5 circle. (provide/protect at the top, respect on the right, love/sacrifice on the bottom, submit on the left.) Ask their thoughts and if they have seen those dynamics in their parents relationships or their own relationships. Ask if they feel like submission is still a good idea and why.

c. In this course I’ve been doing on Biblical manhood we talked about how every man is haunted by the question am I enough and constantly trying to prove to himself and others that he is enough. They talked about how in and of ourselves we never can be enough but that once we admit that, God actually makes us enough. What do you think of that? Share a way that you’re realizing that you’ve been dominated by the question of am I enough and ask if they have any.

d. In this course I’ve been doing on Biblical manhood we talked about how Satan offered an erroneous picture of the character of God—that the Lord was out to ruin Adam and Eve’s lives, that God was holding out on them. Do you ever feel like that? How so?
Salties 2 - Session 5

a. You know that course on Biblical manhood I’ve been telling you about? We were talking about how nothing we do can make up for our sin. Do you think that’s true? What do you do to atone for, or make up for things you’ve done that displease God?

b. ... One of the things they were talking about was what men often struggle with today. They listed 6 key trends.

- Waits rather than initiates
- Prefers group approval
- Shuns risk taking
- Struggles with decision making
- Places an overemphasis on feelings
- Shrinks back from an upset women

Man, I can totally relate to the ________________ and the one about _________________. How about you?

c. ... One of the things they were talking about was how at the beginning of the world, Satan comes and tempts Adam and Eve that he casts doubt on the Word of God (God didn't really say) The Character of God (God is holding out on you) and the consequences of sin (You won’t really die if you eat the fruit.) It seems like Satan still employs the same strategies today. I can see it in my own life, how about you?

d. ...we talked about how God is committed to doing the exact opposite of what we do. If we humble ourselves, he will exalt us. If we exalt ourselves, he will humble us. What do you think of this? Have you seen examples in your own life? Does that change the way you want to live right now at all?

Salties 3 - Session 6

a. You know that course on Biblical manhood I’ve been telling you about? One of the things they were talking about was that Satan took the word LORD, which meant master and absolute ruler and instead referred to God simply as god. So, he still recognized God’s existence, but sought to strip him of his authority and he still works to do the same in our lives today. They talked about our tendency to want to be the Lord of our own lives. I can really see that. I wonder if God would say that I really live with him as the ruler of my life. What about you?
b. ...One of the things they were talking about was how men long to be respected and women long to be pursued. Do you feel like that’s been true in your experience or observations? Seems like a lot of couples start out strong in these but that it rarely lasts. Why do you think that’s so? Any thoughts on how to make it last?

c. ...“To see the law by Christ fulfilled, to hear His pardoning voice, changes a slave into a child and duty into choice.” -William Cowper
   What do you think of this quote? Christianity is the only world religion that gives assurance of atonement for our sins. Why do you think other religions don’t offer assurance of forgiveness? How would God assuring us that we are forgiven not lead to us living like hell if we know we’re forgiven?

d. ...Do you feel at peace with God? What are some things you do that help you feel at peace with God? Do you feel like they work? If you could change one thing about your relationship with God what would it be?

Salties 4 - Session 7

a. ...if you could ask God any question, what would it be?

b. ...is there anything in the Bible that’s confusing to you or that you disagree with? Do you have a favorite sermon? One of mine is ________________. I’ll send you the link for it.

c. ...we talked about how so many guys friendships tend to be pretty shallow. Why do you think that is? What are a few of the things that are most important to you in your friendships with other guys?

d. ...have you ever read the whole Bible?

Salties 5 - Session 8

a. ...one of the things we talk about in Noblemen is being a great husband and Dad. What are some things you’d replicate that your Dad did? What are some things you’d like to do different that your Dad did?

b. ...what do you want to be known for when you die?
c. ...we were talking about how we can actually know that we have forgiveness and assurance of relationship with God both now and for eternity. Do you feel like if you were to stand before God right now that He’d welcome you to heaven?

d. We listened to a great sermon called The Struggle For Love. Share a few things that hit you from the sermon and send them the link and encourage them to listen to it. Follow up and ask if they listened and what they thought.

Salties 6 - Session 9

a. (in this course… or, you know that course I’ve been telling you about?) we looked at this cool illustration that focuses on how to become a secure leader. I’d love to show it to you and hear your thoughts. Show them the InsecureTree illustration. They asked us to circle our top 5 on the insecure leader side. These are the ones I circled. How about for you, which ones can you most relate to? Then explain how the point of the illustration is that our security or lack thereof is tied to who we are trusting in, ourselves or God.

b. ...What do you think are a few indispensable leadership qualities that every leader must possess? How are you doing in those? What are some ideas of how we can grow in those?

c. ...We talked about how 8 out of 10 men look at porn monthly and how guys don’t think it will impact their marriage, but it really does end up doing devastating damage. Why do you think that it would?

d. In Noblemen, we talk a lot about believing that God can use us to change the world. What are some ways that you’d like to be used by God to impact our generation and beyond? Share yours as well.
How To Become Noble Bible Study
Paul Petersen

Introduction:
This week’s session focused on how to become noble. In order to do so you must do three things: first develop an accurate assessment of who God is, second develop an accurate assessment of who you are not, and third develop an accurate assessment of who you are. The Bible study for this week will dive into each of these points, and demonstrate how a greater view of God leads to a realistic view of who we are not, which invites us to receive and live in Christ’s noble identity.

Growing In Our Understanding of Who God Is:
Pastor and teacher John Piper has illustrated that our study of God ought to be more like using a telescope than using a microscope. When someone uses a microscope, typically you are taking something small and making it appear bigger in order to study it. With a telescope however, you are taking something that appears small (like a star) and the telescope makes the object appear as it really is. Sometimes our perspective of God can be like this, where he appears small and far off, but when we see Him for who He truly is- His beauty, magnitude, splendor, majesty and glory- then we are able to see ourselves more accurately. Our first step then will be to study scripture that focuses on and exalts God, allowing us to see His greatness.

Text:
Read Isaiah 40:9-31, Psalm 139, & Job 38. For each of these passages, observe and record below what is said about who God is, and what He does.

Isaiah 40:9-31:
9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains.
20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 
21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 
22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 
23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 
24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 
25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 
26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. 
27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? 
28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 
29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 
30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 
31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 139

1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me! 
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 
3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 
4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. 
5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 
7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? 
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! 
9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 
10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 
11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” 
12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. 
13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. 
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 
15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 
16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 
17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! 
18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. 
19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! 
20 They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain! 
21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 
22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.
23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Job 38

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

5 Who determined its measurements--surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? 12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. 16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. 19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, 20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? 21 You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! 22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?

24 What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon it? 25 "Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26 to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass? 28 "Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew?

29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. 31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? 32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? 34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? 35 Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?

36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind? 37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, 38 when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? 39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? 41 Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?
Think:

- **Who God is:**

- **What God does:**

- How do these passages give you a larger view of who God is?

- Read Job 42:1-6. What is Job’s response to God’s inquisition of Him? Why does He respond this way?
Personalize:
- What attribute or action of God (whether included in the passages above or not) is most humbling to you personally? In other words, if you really contemplated who God is, what makes you feel small?

Growing In Our Understanding of Who We Are Not:
Job discovered that his knowledge of God was more conceptual than based on reality. When God’s greatness became a reality in His life, Job’s self image came crashing down. In the same way that standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon is not intended to make you feel significant, experiencing the reality of God’s glory gives us a more accurate assessment of ourselves. We see that we are not God and we fall desperately short of His Glory.

Think
- Recall Psalm 139. To what extent does God know you? How is this both a comforting, and challenging reality?
Personalize:
- Reread Psalm 139:23-24. Since starting Noblemen or this study, what areas of your heart has God exposed to you that fall short of His glory?

- How has the reality of who God is challenged the way you think about yourself?

Growing In Our Understanding of Who We Are:
The purpose of experiencing the reality of God and recognizing how we fall short is not ultimately to make you feel bad about yourself. Rather it is an invitation to depend on, and live out your new identity in Christ. You are not holy or noble on your own, but you have been made holy and noble, and you now get to live out of your noble identity.

Think
- Read Romans 8:12-7. What do these verses say about our new identity, and what the response to our new identity ought to be?

- Read 1 John 3:1-2. What do these verses say about our present and future realities?
- Ephesians 5:1 reads “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved Children.” The word “as” indicates the manner in which we are to be imitators of God. How does your position as God’s beloved son influence the way in which you imitate God? How would the verse be different if instead of “as” it read “so that you become”?

- Read Hebrews 12:3-11. Why does God discipline us? What does that mean about us?

Personalize
- What do you struggle the most to believe about your noble identity in Christ?

- Think about the areas that the Noblemen course will be examining. (Masculinity, Friendships, Fatherhood, Dating, Sexuality, Leadership, etc.) In what ways do you need God’s discipline in these areas? How does your identity as a noble son change the way you receive God’s discipline in your life?
Build Convictions:

- Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:

  - If God is really as glorious as He is then…

  - If I have fallen short of God’s great Glory and can’t earn nobility then…

  - If I have been given a noble identity in Christ then…

  - If God disciplines me for my good then…

Application:

- Commit to do at least 2 of the following:

  - Devote extra time this week to reading scripture that exalts God’s character (For example, Read the rest of Job 39-42, as if God were examining you)

  - In a group setting, pray the ABC prayer. (E.G. go through each letter of the alphabet, and name as many characteristics of God for that letter as you can)

  - Each day this week, pick one attribute of God to focus on. In your Journal, specifically describe how you have fallen short, and spend time confessing that sin to God, receiving His forgiveness, and meditate on how your new noble identity both instructs and empowers you to live.

  - Memorize Romans 8:12-15

Additional Resources:

- The Holiness Of God- A book written by R.C. Sproul which expounds on what makes God uniquely God, and what that means for us.

- Who Am I? - A book by Jerry Bridges that goes in depth into our new identity in Christ, and what this means for us.

- The Gospel and Yourself- A sermon by Tim Keller that focuses on how God moves from a concept to a reality in our lives, looking at Isaiah’s experience of God in Isaiah 6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRsuCQe7aVk
Session 5 Handouts
Session 5: Noble Stages of Manhood

Notes: The six stages of manhood

1. ________________ The Creational stage - 0-20

2. ________________ Phallic Stage - 13-25

3. ________________ Warrior Stage - ages 18-40

4. ________________ The Wounded Stage - ages 40-50

5. ________________ The Mature stage - ages 50-60

6. ________________ The Sage stage - ages 60+
Discussion Questions:

● What hit you from tonight’s session?

● What are some ways that if you’re honest you haven’t accepted or even resent about how God has created you?

● How are you currently walking through the “sexual” stage?

● What stage do you find yourself in now? Why, and what are the indicators?

● Do you have a mentor? Are you mentoring anyone yet?

Assignments:

● Memorize the third paragraph of the Creed perfectly
● Hand-write a letter to Dad and bring it next week
● Share salt with another man on your Challenge list
● Listen to Bryce’s “Hiddenness and the Life of Achan”
● Memorize Acts 13:22 (optional Ezra 7:10)
● Do Weekly Bible Study
● Pair off with a new wingman
Letter to Father Example:

Heyo Padre,

I’m not sure if I’ve mentioned it yet, but this semester I’m taking a course through an on-campus ministry on the topic of Biblical manhood called “Noblemen”. It’s a pretty cool thing for me to immerse myself in, and I’m truly coming to enjoy it. The class presents itself as a rite of passage into manhood and offers an interpretation of how the Bible shows men to live their lives. I was initially attracted to it after seeing a friend and roommate of mine go through the course; I watched step-by-step as he grew farther from being an immature little boy to somebody who could and did lead in a godly way. He stepped away from being impulsive and instead became calmer, more level-headed, and had a changed air about him that I cannot quite describe. The course covers topics like the problem with man, the eternal question of “am I enough”, dating and marriage, and a son’s relationship with his father.

We’ve recently started talking about that last point and in it I’m realizing that I’m not satisfied with where we’re at in our relationship. In all reality, we only talk when I’m home, and even then, only about incidentals and surface topics. I haven’t been one on one with you outside of the house in years. This status quo is all we’ve really ever known. But I’m not writing this letter to complain, I’m writing so that we can take the next step between the two of us.

Looking back at my life and childhood, I don’t think that I ever realized how good I had it in spite of everything that’s gone on. Some of my earliest memories are of you and Mom taking me out for pictures that involved me sitting uncomfortably on some sharp rocks near Shallow Gardens while I wore my favorite overalls. I remember being goaded into looking at the camera, awkwardly posing with Alissa, and being herded from location to location for different shots. I remember you and Mom in that house not far from Grandpa Mike’s and the time I poured out all the flour and then claimed that it snowed in the kitchen. I also remember all that Scooby-Doo and George of the Jungle that I subjected us to. I always appreciated the two of you sacrificing a little bit of your sanity every time I forced us to watched George of the Jungle or hit Libby with a plastic golf club.

While we were in Missouri, I remember going on float trips as a family and watching you impressively maneuver two tethered canoes by yourself—I also remember being ripped from the second one by a bungie chord because I thought that I could hold them together as we ran aground. I was in awe of your ability to fight copperheads and fling them back into the woods (even if sometimes they flung upwards instead of away), and I marveled as you braved treacherous rapids while practically carrying the weight of the family on your back. I really enjoyed those times out there as a family, they were instrumental in how I viewed nature, family, and fun.

It’s hard to forget the times we shared gaming either. We’d take the old N64 and get into dogfights while playing on Starfox that inevitably just ended in us doing loop-the-loops until someone’s fingers got too tired to keep pressing the same buttons over and over. The PS2 also gave us a great distraction in the original Star Wars Battlefront—I remember Mom coming home and scolding the both of us for having played for 8 straight hours! We hadn’t even moved an
inch from the time she left to the time she returned! I am also especially fond of all the times we
played Burnout and I’d memorize the traffic patterns in the game so well that I didn’t even have
to look at the screen to beat ya. Even better was the family’s constant attempts at Wii bowling.
Time like that meant a lot to me, and every moment was worth it.

Our time outside of the virtual world was also just as memorable. I remember taking Nerf
guns all around the house in massive battles that always ended in craziness. I’m still proud of
the time I combat-rolled into the living room and managed to put a dart into your eye mid-roll.
Granted, the timing could’ve been better, you were talking to the plumber at the time; but I’m still
proud of such a quality shot. Our pyrotechnics were just as on par as our Nerf-ing, and I’ll never
regret “accidentally” sending a flaming paper airplane into your chest as we chatted around the
burn barrel. That was probably some kind of Karma getting back at you for the ants we killed
with our improvised hairspray flamethrower in Doug’s yard anyways. (Side note, there’s a
company called The Boring Co. that is actually selling flamethrowers that are branded as “not a
flamethrower” to avoid some rather restrictive laws—I’m not saying that we should pick one
up…..buuuttt….that’d be pretty cool.)

Our time at Buddy’s Halfway House has left its’ mark on me as well. It was almost a
game to see what random critter would be hanging about our house and just how much you
knew about taking care of it. From kittens to ferrets to lord knows what else, you knew about it
and took care of it. It was a great time you created for us.

Or trips were also something of greatness. I remember going to the races together,
smelling the dirt, rubber, and both of us secretly hoping for a cool-looking crash to happen. Or
our time in Mississippi with the indoor waterpark and your side of the family. Our times canoeing
Lake Erie, and the one time we decided it’d be a good idea to wade in despite the fact that snow
was whipping around us. I have never been, nor will ever be so cold again.

I’ve also come to appreciate the hard calls you’ve made. When kittens were lost to injury
or other things, you were the one to address it and solve the problem. You’ve sent cars we
couldn’t spare to Oklahoma twice now and are working to help Alissa with her current situation
despite it being rough for you. I vividly remember you taking me aside just before the 4th of July
and telling me that you and Mom were divorcing—it is still the only time I’ve ever seen you cry. I
remember sitting there, staring straight forward at that old Batman TV for nearly an hour. I
remember you crying next to me, begging for me to look at you. Eventually I did, and it’s etched
into both our minds. Looking back, I appreciate that you were the one to tell me, that you took
me alone, and didn’t lump Alissa and I together. It took a lot to go through that twice, but I thank
you for doing it. I needed it alone, I needed to process, and I needed your undivided attention.

Dad, what we’ve had so far has often been bumpy, and neither of us have handled every
aspect of it well, but there are all these good times as well that we shouldn’t and can’t gloss
over. I have pulled away from our relationship more times than I care to admit. I put a lot off onto
you over the past ten years. For a time, I even considered you the antithesis of what I wanted to
become. But when I look back now I see that I hurt the both of us with those actions. I haven’t
been open to doing things with you, to going places, or even to talking. I stunted our relationship
by pulling away as hard as I have. I’m sorry for that.
But no more of that, that shouldn’t be our future. When last semester we had your heart scare, it really made me stop and reconsider everything. I don’t want you out of my life, and I don’t want you gone. I want to spend more time with you again, time where the two of us can go off and do something together again. I look forward to taking my kids to your massive farmhouse someday, to canoeing in whatever waterways we can find, to long nights, and early mornings. I want us to take the family camping, to going back to simple things and not worrying about the money and politics of it all. Who cares? In the end, what matters is the memories we have. Let’s just pack up and roll.

I love ya padre, I mean it. I want to go out and do Father-son stuff again, to think beyond the car payment and beyond work. In the end that stuff falls away into obscurity. I’ll never forget those hours of gaming, those days on the lake, or the long drives to Minnesota. We’ve got one shot at this, and we’ve already come dangerously close to losing it—let’s not do that. To quote an overly used Latin phrase, let’s *carpe diem*, seize the day, take life by the horns and not let go.

Stick to your diet fat man, I’m not about to lose you this early.

Your son,

Mikey
Letter to Deceased Father Example:

Dad,

At the time of this letter you will have been gone for 11 years and 7 months. I generally don’t count the days or dwell on the time lost, but curiosity often has me thinking about how much of my life I’ve lived without you. It hasn’t quite been half, but sometime in the next 2 years, there will come a point where every day forward, is one more day spent without you than spent with you. So, what have you missed? Well, my entire teen years for one. Could there have been a more inconvenient time to be on my own? I never got “the talk,” I never got to talk to you about girls or dating or relationships. I was becoming a man without having a man to guide me, and it sucked. I learned how to tie ties through YouTube videos, and let me tell you I can tie a damn good knot. We live in a culture where manhood isn’t easily defined, and that problem was exponentially more challenging for me because you weren’t there to teach me what you personally believe makes a man. Because, despite all your flaws, and boy were there flaws, you were still a great man, and you did a lot of things right.

I doubt I’d struggle with the same things if you could have been here to explain the world to me. I’m quite broken. I spend a lot of time alone, I have social anxiety, I’m often emotionally frustrated, I find dating hard and undesirable, I worry that I’ll never open up to people and that I’ll spend my entire life alone as a consequence. I seek approval in the wrong places, and I’m devastated when I don’t have the approval I desire. I take everything personally, and overthink everything. Would this have been different if you were still here? I don’t know, but I often think about how different I would be if you were. I can spend all day rambling about my shortcomings, but I also want you to know how great things are going regardless of my challenges. I’ve done a pretty good job of growing up if you ask me, or Mom. My credit score is almost 800, I’ve traveled to several countries, even times by myself. I had my first job offer back in December, months before any of my friends. I pay my own rent, and I can make my own dentist appointments.

As I made my way through adolescence, I longed for someone to just love me. I had a hole in my heart that I couldn’t seem to fill. I think we all have that hole, mine just seemed a tad bigger than most. But because of that hole, I was able to find a love that only Jesus can provide, and a love that I might not have found if I hadn’t had been searching so hard. Had I not been orphaned by you, perhaps I wouldn’t have found my adoption in Christ. I believe that God saw me in my desperation, and came down to rescue me, and how beautiful is that? My heart now yearns for the fatherless. My heart breaks for the orphans of the world in a different way than
most because of a pain I can feel so closely. I feel a sense of duty to share God’s love to those
with similar circumstance, and I believe that adoption will one day be on my horizon.

Like every paper I’ve written in college, this is a poorly worded jumble of words
that I don’t quite know how to finish. So, I’ll wrap up with this; I love you, I love you for
everything you did for me during our time together on earth. I love you because you’re my
father, and I’m your son. I miss you, I miss you every single day. There isn’t a day that goes by
where your absence gets any easier. And finally, I forgive you, I forgive you for leaving me
alone, leaving me fatherless. I know that it wasn’t your intention, but that doesn’t stop me from
being upset. I will follow Jesus for the rest of my life, and I hope to see you again in His holy
kingdom. Life is weird, and death is weirder. But I know that Jesus defeated death and there is
beauty and peace in knowing that.
22 Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23 And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. 25 If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death. 26 Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man. 27 And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus the LORD has said, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? 28 Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. 29 Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' 30 Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever, 'but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33 The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. 34 And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. 35 And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. 36 And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."

Chapter 3 1 Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" 5 And ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6 And the LORD called again,
"Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the young man. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." 11 Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." 17 And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Think:
- Record 15 observations about the passage. (Do some background research on the passage. Perhaps read the chapter before and after)
- For what did the LORD condemn Eli and his sons?

- Why did he condemn them?

- Who is faithful priest God would raise up?

- What do you notice about Samuel's character as a boy?

- How do verses 19-21 of chapter 3 characterize Samuel's growth into a man?
- In what stage of manhood would you place Eli, Eli’s sons, and Samuel? Why?

**Personalize:**
- In what stage of manhood would you place yourself? Why?

- Eli’s sons were priests before God, yet their behavior was hypocritical and selfish. This is especially apparent in their sexual behavior and in breaking temple law for sordid gain. Eli was passive and did nothing to stop his sons, leaving them to their own devices. How does sin, like greed, passivity, or impurity entice you in your current stage?

- What can you learn from this passage about choosing sin and self over God? How does it affect your development as a man?

- The sins of Eli and his sons affected generations of Israelites. Likewise, God’s punishment was also generational. How have you been affected by generational sin? (eg. within family or social spheres)
- In what way can your sin affect generations?

- What principles can you glean from verses 19-21 of chapter 3 that teach you what you will need in order to grow as a man?

- Read John 15:1-17. How does Jesus describe our relationship to Him, and His relationship to the Father?

- How does Jesus produce fruit in us through His gospel?

- How is God asking you grow with Him? What is He asking you to do in your current stage of manhood? What is He asking you to give up?
Build Convictions:

- Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:
  - If I do not submit my identity as a man to God then…
  - If I want to navigate the pitfalls that will beset me in every stage of manhood then…
  - If I want God to produce the fruit of a godly man in my life then…
  - If I want to grow past the current stage of manhood I’m in with wisdom then…

Applications:

- Commit to do at least 1 of the following:
  - Seek out a personal mentor who is a stage or two beyond you.
  - Meet with someone most would consider a godly Sage and ask them how they have walked with God through the failures and successes of life.
  - Spend and extended time away with God meditating and studying Ecclesiastes.
  - Meet with a small group of other Noblemen to talk through what stages you are in and what you are struggling with. Pray for each other.

Additional Resources:

2. *Being and Building Men for the Local Mission* - Sermon by Darren Patrick
   https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/being-and-building-men-for-the-local-mission
Session 6 Handouts
Session 6: Noble Sexuality Part One

Notes:

Steps to reconstruction
1.

2.

3.

Remind yourself of _________________________________

Remind yourself of _________________________________
**Discussion Questions:**

- What hit you from tonight’s session?
- How have you seen shame and legalism in your life?
- Do you really believe you can walk in sexual purity?
- Do you believe you can be free?
- What are some practical steps you will make this week to pursue sexual purity?

**Assignments:**

- Memorize the fourth paragraph of the Creed.
- Share salt with another man on your list.
- Memorize Ephesians 5:3 (optional 1 Corinthians 7:1).
- Do Weekly Bible Study.
The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: “This is what the LORD says: “ ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown. 3 Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,’ ” declares the LORD.

4 Hear the word of the LORD, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel. 5 This is what the LORD says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. 6 They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?’ 7 I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable. 8 The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.

9 Therefore I bring charges against you again,” declares the LORD. “And I will bring charges against your children’s children. 10 Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this: 11 Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols. 12 Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the LORD. 13 “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

14 Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth? Why then has he become plunder? 15 Lions have roared; they have growled at him. They have laid waste his land; his towns are burned and deserted. 16 Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have cracked your skull. 17 Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way? 18 Now why go to Egypt to drink water from the Nile? And why go to Assyria to drink water from the Euphrates? 19 Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

20 “Long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off your bonds; you said, ‘I will not serve you!’ Indeed, on every high hill and under every spreading tree you lay down as a prostitute. 21 I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine? 22 Although you wash yourself with soap and use an abundance of cleansing powder, the stain of your guilt is still before me,” declares the Sovereign LORD. 23 “How can you say, ‘I am not defiled; I have not run after the Baals’? See how you behaved in the valley; consider what you have done. You are a swift she-camel running here and there, 24 a wild donkey accustomed to the desert, sniffing the wind in her craving— in her heat who can restrain her? Any males that pursue her need not tire themselves; at mating time they will find her. 25 Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, ‘It’s no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.’
Think:
- Reread the passage again and record at least 15 observations. (Think context clues, key words, and main themes)

- In the first three verses how does God describe His relationship with His people Israel?

- What is the main theme of God’s accusation against His people? Select a key verse.

- In your own words, define Idolatry
Personalize:
• In Romans 1:21-25, Paul describes idolatry as exchanging the truth of God for a lie. How are the people of Israel exchanging God’s truth for a lie in this passage?

• What parallels can you draw from God’s accusations against Israel to your own life? What are some of your own personal idols?

• In Jer 2:20-25, God uses numerous sexual analogies to portray the adultery of His people. These metaphors are both spiritual and practical.
  • What does sexual idolatry look life in your life?

  • What does spiritual adultery look like in your life?

• How does Jeremiah 2:13 summarize the sins of Israel? How does it make you see your own sexual and spiritual idolatry?

• Read Isaiah 55:1-5. How does God’s invitation to be satisfied in Him pair with Jeremiah 2:13?
• In Jeremiah 2:14-19, God describes His people as slaves to foreign abusers. How has sexual sin enslaved and harmed your soul?

• God’s invitation to be satisfied in Him is made through His son on the cross. How can the good news of Jesus bring you satisfaction that will defeat sexual sin? (Titus 3:3-7)

Build Convictions:

• Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:
  • If God has designed me to be satisfied in Him then…
  • If idolatry is a rejection of God’s truth then…
  • If sexual sin is a potent form of idolatry in my life then…
  • If I can be satisfied through the promise of a glorious inheritance in Christ then…

Application:

• Commit to do at least 2 of the following:
  • Prayerfully write out your past sexual history, confessing it to God.
  • Set up a time to meet with a leader and confess sexual sin and impurity.
• Go through the purity allies worksheet with a friend or two.

• Install covenant eyes (or an equivalent accountability software) on all your devices.

Additional Resources:

• Walking in the Light Bible Study - A small group study designed by the Navigators to help you walk in sexual wholeness

  • https://www.desiringgod.org/books/sex-and-the-supremacy-of-christ

• ANTHEM: A strategy for fighting lust.
  • https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/anthem-strategies-for-fighting-lust
Session 7 Handouts
Session 7: Noble Sexuality Part 2

Notes:

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

4. ______________________________________

5. ______________________________________

6. ______________________________________

7. ______________________________________

8. ______________________________________

9. ______________________________________

10. ______________________________________
Discussion Questions:

• What hit you from tonight’s session?

• What’s your sexual purity story? If you’re really honest, how are you doing right now?

• What’s the difference between trusting God for freedom in the gospel and simply trying to “white-knuckle” it?

• What action steps would you like to take tomorrow to move toward a greater sexual purity?

Assignments:

• Share salt with another man on your list.
• Read C.S. Lewis quote, “On Masturbation”.
• Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 (optional Isaiah 54:4)
• Do Weekly Bible Study
On Masturbation
C.S. Lewis

“For me the real evil of masturbation would be that it takes an appetite which, in lawful use, leads the individual out of himself to complete his own personality in that of another (and finally in children and even grandchildren) and turn it back; sends the man back into the prison of himself, there to keep a harem of imaginary brides. And the harem, once admitted, works against his ever getting out and really uniting with a real woman. For the harem is always accessible, always subservient, calls for no sacrifices or adjustments, and can be endowed with erotic and psychological attractions which no real woman can rival. Among those shadowy brides he is always adored, always the perfect lover; no demand is made on his unselfishness, no mortification ever imposed on his vanity. In the end, they become merely the medium through which he increasingly adores himself… Masturbation involves the abuse of imagination… Almost the main work of life is to come out of ourselves, out of the little dark prison we are all born in. Masturbation is to be avoided as all things are to be avoided which retard this process. The danger is that of coming to love the prison.”
Example Letter to Parents (DO NOT GIVE TO STUDENTS)

- Send with the students letter to their father.

Dear parents, January 1 2017

Hello! My name is Bryce Bouchard and I work with The Navigators Christian Fellowship at the University of Oklahoma. Through this ministry I have enjoyed getting to know your son.

One of the activities that we do every Spring is called “Noblemen.” The name is taken from Isaiah 32:8, which says, “But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.” Recognizing the ambiguity of manhood in our day, we have developed a twelve week course for the men in our ministry that addresses just what it means to be a man of good character.

A few of the topics that we are discussing are: resisting passivity, accepting responsibility, leading courageously and living for God’s greater reward. We have been so encouraged to see the eagerness of your son and the other men involved.

Letter to your son: Toward the end of the semester we are planning an evening of recognition to affirm the men for who they are as noble men. This is where you come in. We are asking if you would write a letter to your son that would affirm him as a man. Take the liberty to write whatever you feel would mean the most to him. Here are just a few suggestions to get you started: a story; some memories; a list of his strengths; ways you are proud of him; how you’ve seen him grow in maturity; how you admire him.

Feel free to write a letter from both parents together, separately, or just one of you. Please note, though, that while a mother’s voice is very important in her son’s life, a father’s voice carries a unique significance. It has been said that “A boy doesn’t feel that he’s a man until his father tells him so.” Each year I’m amazed at how this part of our evening of recognition is so impacting in these young men’s lives. Also, while it’s not required, feel free to include letters from his Grandparents, siblings, friends, key mentors etc. If your son’s father is no longer alive, please include letters from key men who’ve been mentors or influenced him.

We want to surprise the men with these letters during the celebration at the end of the semester. So, please do not mention to your son that you are writing a letter! Please send your letter(s) by April 21 to one of my co-leaders, Donovan who will be collecting the letters. His address is:

Mike Besson
402 Manchester Ct.
Norman, OK
73072

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me (Bryce) at 520-954-6287 or e-mail me at mygomee@gmail.com

Thanks so much!
Bryce Bouchard
Text: Matthew 23:25–28 (ESV)

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Think:
- Record 15 observations about Jesus rebuke to the religious leaders of His day.
- In what ways were the religious leaders off in their pursuit of righteousness? Where was their focus?
- Where does Jesus point them to correct their error? What should they focus on to pursue godliness?
Personalize:

In our pursuit of sexual purity, we so often are just like the religious leaders. We look to outward behavior and focus there in the hopes it will bring us to godliness. Stop looking at porn. Don’t masturbate. Stop looking at girls as I walk around campus. While these are good objectives, they are focussing on the symptom and not the actual problem!

Colossians 2:23 (ESV)

23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

If we want to see our behavior change, we must look deeper and follow Jesus into cleaning the inside of the cup. Sexual sin functions like medication. Technology has made sexual content readily available, a drug that can make you feel better at any moment. Making matters worse, pornography is one of the most addictive forces in the universe and most of us were exposed at very young ages. Rather than focusing on stopping a behavior, the first step is to identify how we are medicating through sexual sin.

Spend some time reflecting and writing out your personal story and your journey with sexual sin. Here are some questions to help guide your reflection.

- When did your struggle with sexual sin start? What do you remember about that time?

- Think about what this battle was like for you in elementary school, middle school, and high school?

- Did anyone ever talk to you about this struggle?

- Were you ever caught or confronted?
• What have you done to try to get help?

• What major setbacks do you remember?

• What behaviors are present in your life right now that you want out of your life six months from now?

• As you reflect on your story, can you identify any pain or wounding that you have been medicating with sexual sin? (examples: relational pain, anger, worry, anxiety, fear, boredom, frustration…)

• Share your story with your group.
Build a Good Defense:

**Galatians 6:7–8 (ESV)**

> 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.
> 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

**1 Peter 2:11 (ESV)**

> 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

The apostle Peter describes our sexual passions as an ongoing warfare. As men, this battle will not end as long as we are in the flesh. If your enemy is continually firing at you, we need to build a good defense in this battle!

Galatians 6:7-8 points us out of denial and into analyzing the ways we are sowing to our flesh.

- Are there areas of your life that you are feeding your sexual passions? Aside from school time, how did you spend your free time this past week?

- What shows, music, apps, movies, games did you spend time on?

- Which of them were “sowing to your flesh”?

- If your enemy’s objective is to lob sexual temptation grenades at you as often as possible, what are the methods he is using in your life? (TV, phone, computer, magazines, social media) Which of these do you need to cut out of your life as you grow into a nobleman?
• What verses of Scripture can you memorize for a shield when temptation comes? Write it out. (consider 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, Psalm 51:10, Psalm 119:37, Psalm 101:3)

• Write out two action steps that will help you build a good defense against sexual sin and share them with your group and ask them to follow up with you.

Build a Better Offense:
In 1 Peter 2:11 discussed above, Peter encourages we abstain from our fleshly passions. But he doesn’t stop there.

1 Peter 2:12 (ESV)
Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Consider also the following passages:

2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)
So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Ephesians 4:25–29 (ESV)
25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
• These passages point us to the truth that it is not enough to focus on what we aren’t going to do, but rather we must replace that behavior with what we are going to do. From these passages, write out the negative behaviors listed and the positive behaviors they should be replaced with?

To build your “offense” you must come before the Lord, write out your sexual behaviors that He is calling you out of and ask Him what He wants you to replace them with. Your offense is your calling. It’s your passion that gets you out of bed in the morning. Satan has been taking sexual shots at you your entire life, it’s time to hit back!

• What specific calling do you sense from the Lord?

• What areas of building His Kingdom give you energy and excitement? (Discipleship, leading, evangelism, serving the poor, prayer, missions, teaching…) If you aren’t sure, that’s OK, but spend some time praying and asking the Lord to give you clarity on your calling, gifting and passions.

Your calling is your offense. When God gives you a specific calling and direction for your life, you will begin to see sexual sin for what it is, a weight that will hold you back and prevent you from running the race (see Hebrews 12:1-2). A nobleman won’t have time to sit around and be bombarded with sexual temptation because he will be active in God’s Kingdom, focusing his energy on what God has called him to.
Additional Resources


2. Scientific evidence against pornography. www.fightthenewdrug.org/overview

Session 8 Handouts
Session 8: Noble Friendships

Notes:

1. ________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________

5. ________________________________________________

6. ________________________________________________

7. ________________________________________________
Discussion Questions:

- What struck you from today’s session?

- Do you have a friend or two whom you would describe as really being on the inside of your life?

- On a scale of 1-10 (1 being low) how would you rank the quality of your friendships with other men?

- What would you say tend to be some of your strengths as a friend?

- What are some of your weaknesses in being a friend that you need to shore up?

- What steps can you take to developing authentic, substantial friendships with other men today?

Assignments:

- Share salt with a another man on your Challenge list
- Listen to Dawson Trotman’s “Born to Reproduce”
- Do Weekly Bible Study
- Memorize Proverbs 18:24 (optional Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
Noble Friendships
Bob Walz

Introduction:
Picture four young men, each of them from a leading family in their country. A neighboring world power invades their land and conquers it. Each of them is torn out of their families and deported them to the capital city of the conquerors. Other young men from their country have been captured as well and all of them forced into mandatory education in their “new home”. Their names are changed to honor the gods of this new country. They are indoctrinated into the ways of this conquering force and are called to serve this nation with all their gifts and skills. Amazingly these four young men are committed to the God of Israel and are faithful to Him no matter the cost. How do they stand against such pressure? Let’s look at their mutual commitment to Jehovah God and their noble friendship with each other.

Text: Daniel 1:1-21 ESV
1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. 3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. 6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. 8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. 9 And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.” 11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 12 Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” 14 So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. 16 So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. 17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. 21 And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.
Daniel 2:1-49 ESV

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.”

Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”

They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.” The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.”

The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. He declared to Arioch, the king’s captain, “Why is the decree of the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding;

he reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.

To you, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise,
for you have given me wisdom and might,
and have now made known to me what we asked of you,
for you have made known to us the king's matter.”
Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation." The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: 29 To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. 30 But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

"You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. 32 The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

"This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. 37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, 38 and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. 39 Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. 41 And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. 43 As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, 45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery." Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.
Think:
• Read through these two chapters in Daniel. Write down 10-15 observations about these young men and their commitment to God and to each other.

• How are the young men described? (1:1-7)

• What is unique about these young men as opposed to the other Jewish young men captured by the Babylonians? (1:8-20)

• Why are they willing to let their names be changed to names that honor Babylonia’s gods but will not eat and drink the king’s food and drink?
• What is the situation they find themselves in when Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that troubles him? (2:1-16) How do they stand together to take initiative together? What does the Lord do for them? (2:17-20) How are these men rewarded by God and Nebuchadnezzar for their faithfulness? (2:21-49)

Personalize:
• So far in Daniel 1,2 what have you discovered that is noble about these 4 young men? How does their friendship enable them to excel?

• In your Bible read Daniel 3:1-30. How are Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego put to the test? (Later on, Daniel is serving under a different ruler and he is put to a similar test, see Daniel 6:1-28). What part does the noble friendship of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego play in helping each of them to stay faithful to God no matter the cost? How does their example influence Daniel when he is tested?
• Write down the names below of 2-3 men whose noble friendship with you has sharpened you (Proverbs 27:17). How did each of these men influence and impact you?

•

•

•

•

Psalm 119 is a prayer to God about His Word. What does the Psalmist say in these verses about his commitment to God’s Word and to men of the Word? Men can bond together over work, sports, hunting, fishing, adventure, video games, etc. What happens when men bond together over God’s Word?

• Psalm 119:63

• Psalm 119:74

• Psalm 119:79

• Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. What are the warnings given to men in these verses about the dangers of being alone? How has being alone been dangerous in your spiritual life?
Build Convictions:

• Complete the following statements based upon this Bible study:

  • If I will be a man who **Actively** takes initiative to seek out noble friends then I must…

  • If I am to build noble friendships with other men we must be **Authentic** in these ways….

  • If my noble friendships must be based on the **Authority** of God’s Word we should…

  • If my noble friendships **Abide** in Christ through prayer we must…

  • If my noble friendships are to marked by **Accountability** we must regularly…

Application: (Select 1 or more of the following applications below)


• Get together with 2-3 other men and share answers to some or all of these questions. 1. How did you come to know Christ? 2. Who is your personal Mt. Rushmore? (the 4 men who have most influenced your life and how have they done so?) 3. What is your life purpose and what kind of men do you need around you to achieve it? 4. In what areas right now do you need accountability in your life? 5. What can I pray for you? (then pray together) 6. Because we care is there anything we need to know about you in the past, present and/or future? 7. How has God been speaking to you from His Word?
• Do a study or Quiet Time with a brother reading through the book of Proverbs to find characteristics of noble friendship. Write down every reference that applies to this topic and key thoughts from each. When you are finished go back and see if you can discover key principles of noble friendship by grouping verses together that speak to same issues and stating the principles you discover.

Resources:
• To learn more about Daniel and his three friends check out the book: *Thriving in Babylon* by Larry Osborne
• Go to the website: discipleshiplibrary.com and listen to messages about David & Jonathan (Ray Ortlund has three!) or about friendship in general.
Session 9 Handouts
Session 9: Noble Patriarchs

The Cost of a Patriarch:

1. Places himself ________________________________.

2. By faith ___________________ and ____________________ for future generations welfare.

The Way of a Patriarch:

3. Walks in ________________________________.

4. Serves and sacrifices himself ________________________________.

The Strategy of a Patriarch:

5. Lives for ________________________________.

6. Teaches the next generation to ________________________________.
Discussion Questions:
- What hit you from tonight’s session?
- Do you really believe God can use you to change the world?
- What is standing between you and you becoming a Patriarch?
- Do you have any men in your spiritual lineage yet? Are they multiplying?

Assignments:
- Invite Noblemen Challenge Participants.
- Share salt with another man on your Challenge list.
- Listen to Tim Keller’s “Struggle for Love”
- Watch Bridge Video
- Memorize 2 Timothy 2:2 (optional Genesis 12:2)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
Heaven/Hell Survey: How to Share the Survey

This is a simple, short survey on the topic of heaven/hell. It is also a phenomenal tool to springboard into sharing the gospel! A few years ago I was studying the topic of hell in the Scriptures. As I began to do extra-biblical research, the last good study I could find on American’s view of heaven and hell was over 12 years old. I had no doubt that American’s view of heaven and hell had changed dramatically, even in the last decade. So, I set out to interview 10,000 people (primarily on college campuses) and see what they thought. So far in the last 3-4 years since I’ve been working on it, we are at about 2100 people surveyed. The more people who use this, the quicker we will get to 10,000 and the more who will hear the Gospel!

The interesting thing about this survey, is that early on when I created it, I was thinking I’d just interview a bunch of people and get to 10k pretty quickly because the survey can be done in less than 2 minutes. But, my friends (about 7 of us) and I who decided to take one hour per week interviewing people with the survey each kept coming back with only 1-2 interviews each. The reason? Almost every person at the end of the survey would ask us, "How about you...what do you think about heaven and hell?" Well here was a novel thought! Turns out if you ask people questions and are genuinely interested in their answers, they tend to reciprocate!!! So, we added an extra question at the end that says, "Would you like to hear what the Bible says about who goes to heaven and who goes to hell?" The cool thing is that over 50% of students are answering yes to this. So, it has actually become a pretty useful tool for sharing the Gospel.

It's a real baby-step type tool. It's incredibly non-threatening for someone to use. And when the person being surveyed says they want to hear what the Bible says, we'll usually share a short Bridge illustration and then also set up a Gospel Appointment with them for the next day to share a more thorough Gospel presentation and to get to know them.

I know a few staff who have started making the habit of kicking off every one on one meeting by going out together with the student they are meeting with and doing a couple heaven/hell surveys on campus. Sometimes this takes 10 minutes, sometimes their whole time gets hijacked by sharing the Gospel with an interested person. (Now that's an inconvenience I'm willing to live with!)

I generally just introduce the survey to a stranger by saying something like, "Hey there, would you be up for taking 2 minutes to help me with my survey? We are trying to survey 10,000 students and hear their opinions on heaven and hell. So far we are at almost 3000. Would you be up for helping?"

Part of the reason this is such an easy, baby-steps survey is because almost nobody says no to the offer to participate. Like any survey, I of course am hoping and working toward building relationship with the student as I'm giving them the survey. The goal isn't simply to fill out the survey. Unless they are clearly in a hurry and/or seem like they don't really want to talk, I typically will ask questions on some of their answers as we go. I may even put my ipad or iphone down and say something like "hey, this isn't on the survey, but I'm just curious...what do you mean by that? Or, Wow, I'm really curious to hear more about your answer. Could you tell me more?" and then resume the survey as appropriate.

Make sure that under surveyor, you put your name, not the person you are surveying. Also, you don't hand them the survey. You just kinda flash it to them to show it's legitimate and then you type in their answers. At the end hit submit and you're ready to do another one.
“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” John 12:24

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BRIDGE TO LIFE

Step 1 - God’s Love and His plan

People and God

Jesus said, "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10)

Step 2 - Our Problem:
Separation from God

People (sinful) separated from God (holy)

"...all have sinned and fall short of God’s perfect standard” (Romans 3:23)

Not by Good Works

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags... (Isaiah 64:6)

Step 3 - God’s Remedy:
The Cross

People (sinful) separated from God (holy)

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God...” (1 Peter 3:18)

Step 4 - Our Response

People (sinful) separated from God (holy)

"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)
Text: Philippians 2:5-22 (NLT)

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevate him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ’s return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News.

Think:

- Record 15 observations about the passage.
• Look up the word origin and definition of the word “patriarch.”

• Record some observations about the passage.
  a. What is the author’s main idea?

  b. What seems to be the key verse?

  c. Describe the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

**Personalize:**

Characteristics of a Patriarch

1. **Chooses to be under God’s authority.** How did Jesus show this in the passage above? What danger would this avoid?

2. **Sets aside security and a longing for greatness,** to serve and be an example to those he’s leading. How did Paul demonstrate that characteristic?
3. **Follows God in whole-hearted obedience.** What did this look like for David in Acts 13:22?

4. **Lives for the lost.** How did Paul do this, according to Acts 20:19-24?

5. **Serves and sacrifices for those under his care.** (John 13:3-5, Heb 12:2-3) How did Jesus feel about the cost of leadership? How did the disciples feel about following him after they saw him serving them?

6. **Teaches the next generation to multiply.** (Matt 28:18-20, 2Tim 2:2, John 12:24) Paraphrase Paul’s instruction to Timothy in your own words.
**Build Convictions:**

Complete the following sentences based on this bible study

1. If I choose to be fully under God’s authority, then …

2. If I’m going to set aside a longing for security and greatness, then …

3. If I’m going to live for the lost, then …

4. If God desires for me to build up generations of patriarchs, then …

**Application:**

1. Arrange an extended time alone with God (a quiet place to have some uninterrupted time - one or two hours) and pray through your answers in the previous section.

2. Ask an older man you’d describe as a patriarch for his advice in pursuing this.

3. Ask someone who knows you well to help you think about how you’re doing on developing the characteristics of a patriarch.

**Additional Resources:**

*How to Spend a Day in Prayer* – Written by Lorne Sanny, this Nav resource describes how to go about spending an extended time alone with God.

Session 10 Handouts
Session 10: Noble Dating

Who I Should Date:

1. ________________________________

2. ________________________________

3. ________________________________

When I Should Date:

4. ________________________________

5. ________________________________

How I Should Date:

6. ________________________________

7. ________________________________

8. ________________________________

9. ________________________________

10. ________________________________
Discussion Questions:
• Read: Ephesians 5
  Ephesians 5:1-21. How can we pursue Godly relationships through this guide to “walk in love”?

  Ephesians 5:22-33. How can we take steps today to prepare for a marriage that honors God?

• What are some bad relationships that you have seen/experienced? What are some good relationships that you have seen/experienced?

• What do you feel like God is asking you to do in regard to dating relationships?

• Who are some (peers or mentors) that you can have as counselors for your relationships?

Assignments:
• Share Heaven and Hell surveys on campus.
• Start Noblemen Challenge groups.
• Memorize 2 Corinthians 6:14 (optional Proverbs 31:30)
• Do Weekly Bible Study
Characteristics of a Godly Woman

• **Her life is committed to Christ**
  2 Corinthians 6:14, 15 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

• **She has discretion**
  Proverbs 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

• **Her character enables her husband to be confident in her. She enhances his life**
  Proverbs 31:10-12 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

• **She is a hard worker**
  Proverbs 31:17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

• **She has a heart for people**
  Proverbs 31:20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

• **She has a strong spirit and dignity**
  Proverbs 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

• **She is wise in counseling others**
  Proverbs 31:26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

• **Her beauty is not merely outward, but she also fears God**
  Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Peter 3:3,4 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment… Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.

• **She communicates with grace**
  Proverbs 21:19 Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.

• **She chooses her friends wisely**
  Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

• **She is not given to drunkenness**
  Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.
Characteristics of a Godly Man

• **He desires to obey God**
  Acts 13:22  God says “I have found David a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.”

• **He is not given to drunkenness**
  Proverbs 20:1  Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

• **His life is committed to Christ**
  2 Corinthians 6:14, 15  Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

• **He is committed to holiness and controls himself**
  1 Thessalonians 4:3-7  It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

• **His confidence and trust is in God**
  Jeremiah 17:7, 8  But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes, its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

• **He loves the Bible and seeks God**
  Psalm 119:9-11  How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

• **He is generous with his resources**
  Proverbs 11:25  A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

• **He seeks godly counsel**
  Proverbs 10:8  The wise in heart accepts commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.
  Proverbs 12:15  The way of the fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.
  Proverbs 18:2  A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.

• **He chooses his friends wisely**
  Proverbs 13:20  He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.
Text: Genesis 24

1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." 5 The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" 6 Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. 10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'--let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." 15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. 16 The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." 18 She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. 21 The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not. 22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD 27 and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. 29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring.
As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. 31 He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." 32 So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. 33 Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I have to say." He said, "Speak on." 34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35 The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. 37 My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, 38 but you shall go to my father's house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.' 39 I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' 40 But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father's house. 41 Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.' 42 "I came today to the spring and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, 43 behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," 44 and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also," let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.' 45 "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. 47 Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. 48 Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. 49 Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." 50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken." 52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the LORD. 53 And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. 54 And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." 55 Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." 56 But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master." 57 They said, "Let us call the young woman and ask her." 58 And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!" 61 Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.
Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Think:
- Record 15 - 20 observations about the passage.
- Why did Abraham command his servant not to take his son away from the land of Canaan in search of a bride?
• What did Abraham believe about the provision of God?

• How did Abraham’s servant show dependence on and submission to God in searching for a wife for Isaac?

• What sort of characteristics was Abraham’s servant looking for in a woman?

• How did the servant respond when God provided?

• Who is Abraham and Isaac’s master according to how they live? How do you see this?

• What is their mission? How do you know?
Personalize:

• There is a relation model known as “The 3 M’s: Master, Mission, Mate.” In other words, before you start looking for a mate, understand who is your master. Is it God or yourself? Then seek to understand God’s mission for you. This is not necessarily a specific job, but it is a calling. Then seek out the mate God would bring you.

• When you are pursuing a woman how do you go about it? Be honest and specific.

• Is the process you take in pursuing a woman marked by self reliance or dependence on God? How do you see those at play?

• How is God asking you to mirror the attitudes of Abraham, his servant, and Rebekah's family?

• What do you sense God is calling you to live your life for?

• Read Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. How do those inform your calling? What is God calling you to in those verses?
• What are you looking for in a woman? How do those qualities either affirm or contradict the calling God gives us as believers in the 2 passages above?

Build Convictions:

• Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:
  • If I am self-reliant, acting as my own master, then…
  • If I submit to God in all circumstances, single, dating, or married then…
  • If I desire to know my mission as a man then…
  • If I desire to marry and godly woman, or lead a godly life single then…

Applications:

• Commit to do at least two of the following:
  • Ask a mentor to begin to advise and train you to pursue women in a Christ honoring manner.
  • Memorize 1 Peter 5:5-7.
  • Pray through Matthew 6:25-34

Additional Resources:
  • https://www.desiringgod.org/books/not-yet-married
• 10 Questions on Dating with Matt Chandler
  • https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/10-questions-on-dating-with-matt-chandler
• Single In Christ a sermon by John Piper
  • https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/single-in-christ
Session 11 Handouts
Session 11: The Noble Roots of a Leader

Notes:

Root 1 _______________________

1. __________________________

2. __________________________

Root 2 _______________________

3. __________________________

4. __________________________

Root 3 _______________________

5. __________________________

6. __________________________
Discussion Questions:

- What hit you in tonight’s session?

- Discuss your insecure fruits. What would you say are your top 5?

- From the key roots, (Trust, Humility, Love) what are a few key applications you would like to make to strengthen the roots?

- Take time and pray for you upcoming Noblemen Challenge Groups

Assignment:

- Interview a man over 60 and write a summary paper
- Continue Noblemen Challenge group
- Memorize Psalm 51:6 (optional Psalm 51:17)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
Interview a Godly Man Over 60: Questions

What is one of your favorite aspects of God’s character? Why?

Tell me your story about how you came to know, date and marry your wife
What is your favorite thing about your wife?

What has been hardest about being married?

What do you wish you would’ve known or done before marriage?

What are some practical ways that you led, care for and developed your wife and kids?

What role have godly friends played in your life? Any advice you’d give me on friendships?

What advice would you give to me about:

Work;
Money;
Walk with God;
Church,
Ministry?

What do you wish you would’ve known or done at my age?

Write a short paper (about 1000 words) Summarizing your interview and what you learned.
the INSECURE leader
{ everything to prove // everything to lose }

unable to admit weakness
creates an environment of pressure not peace
sneaky
won’t move forward unless guaranteed success
controlling
positions self for recognition
pretentious
poor objectivity
paralyzed by fear of failure
suspicious of others
doesn’t own personal mistakes or blame
unable to think of others’ development
shallow relationships
demanding
kills creativity
legalistic
threatened by gifted people
intimidates others
unwilling to let others fail
micromanages
unteachable
critical
prone to anxiety

Trust is rooted in self
This is what the Lord says: cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.
[Jeremiah 17:5]

Bryce Bouchard

the SECURE leader
{ nothing to prove // nothing to lose }

motivated and motivates, rather than driven and driving others
role doesn’t define identity
surrounds self with leaders who are more gifted
unselfish
willing to move in fear
creates high trust environments
unhurried
fosters a sense of wellbeing
sacrifices for others
open to critique
lets others’ strengths complement their weaknesses
believes the best of others
takes risks
high objectivity
lasting fruit
free to delegate well
fosters creativity
team feels free to correct/disagree with them
trusting
strong relationships
develops and recognizes others
open handed with people

Trust is rooted in God
But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the streams. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.
[Jeremiah 17:7,8]
Roots of a Noble Leader Bible Study
Bryce Bouchard

Introduction:
This week’s session focused on the roots of a noble leader. For our study, let’s compare the roots of two key leaders lives - King Saul and King David.

Read the following passages and make observations about the two leaders in the space below.

On Wholehearted Obedience and Devotion

1 Samuel 15:11:
“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.”

Acts 13:21,22:
Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’

Saul:

David:

On Natural Ability

1 Samuel 9:1,2:
There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. 2 And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

1 Samuel 16:6-12:
When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before him.” 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the
outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” 11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest; but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” 12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

Saul:

David:

On Repentance

1 Samuel 15:10-30:

10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel: “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night. 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal.” 13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD all night.” 14 And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?” 15 Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction.” 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night.” And he said to him, “Speak.” 17 And Samuel said, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.” 18 And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, ‘Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?” 20 And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.” 22 And Samuel said,
“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”

24 Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD.” 26 And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” 27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” 30 Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.” 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.

2 Samuel 12:13:
David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

2 Samuel 24:10:
But David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.”
**On Confidence**

1 Samuel 10:21,22:

He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. So they inquired again of the LORD, "Is there a man still to come?" and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

1 Samuel 17:32-37:

And David said to Saul, "Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

1 Samuel 17:45:

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

**On Courage**

1 Samuel 17:8-11:

He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves,
and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” 10 And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.” 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

1 Samuel 17:48:
When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

Saul:

David:

On waiting on God
1 Samuel 13:8-14:
he waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. 9 So Saul said, “Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.” And he offered the burnt offering. 10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. 11 Samuel said, “What have you done?” And Saul said, “When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, 12 I said, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.’ So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.” 13 And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

1 Samuel 23:1-4:
Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” 2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” 3 But
David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” 4 Then David inquired of the LORD again. And the LORD answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.”

2 Samuel 5:22-25:

And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, “You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. 24 And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.” 25 And David did as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

Saul

David

Think:

- What are three things that distinguished Saul from David?

- How do you see humility factoring in to each of their destinies?
- Look up Isaiah 50:10,11 and paraphrase in your own words what you think those verses mean. How do you see them playing out in both Saul and David's lives?

Personalize:
- Take a few moments and look at those same topics in your own life and ask the Lord to reveal ways in each of these that you may look more like Saul than David in your life right now.
- Wholehearted obedience and devotion
- Natural ability
- Repentance
- Confidence
- Courage

Build Convictions:
- Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:
  - If I want to have a heart after God then I must…
  - If I am half-hearted in my devotion to God then my …
- If my life will be built on following God with all my heart, then…

- If God doesn’t look on the outward but on the heart, then…

Application:

- Commit to do at least 2 of the following:
  - Go back and look at your observations and pick one thing you’d like to emulate and one thing you’d like to avoid in your life?
  - God says the evidence of a heart after His is a willingness to fully surrender to His will and do whatever He asks of you. Spend time asking God to make you a man after His own heart. (Be careful what you pray for! Don’t ask if you don’t mean it)
  - List out some of your natural abilities, resources, advantages and how you could be using those to God’s glory to a greater degree.
  - Memorize Acts 13:22

Additional Resources:
  - *David A man Of Passion And Destiny* - A devotional commentary by Chuck Swindoll
  - *The Golden Alphabet* - A devotional commentary on David’s Psalm 119 by Charles Spurgeon (note: out of print, but available online for free or in Kindle version)
Session 12 Handouts
Session 12: The Fruits of a Noble Leader

Fruit 1 ______________________________

Fruit 2 ______________________________

Fruit 3 ______________________________

Fruit 4 ______________________________

Fruit 5 ______________________________

Fruit 6 ______________________________

Fruit 7 ______________________________

Fruit 8 ______________________________

Fruit 9 ______________________________

Fruit 10 _____________________________
Discussion Questions:

- What hit you in tonight’s session?

- Which of the fruits would you like to see God grow you the most in? How do you see that happening?

- Read 1 Thess 2:8. Which of the those pieces (love, life, Gospel) is the hardest for you to share with others? Why? How can you grow?

- How are you doing in sexual purity?

Assignments:

- Watch Braveheart and take notes on leadership principles
- Continue Noblemen Challenge group
- Memorize Matthew 20:25-28 (optional Psalm 78:72)
- Do Weekly Bible Study
Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you—but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! For which is greater, the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'
Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

*Verse 14 does not exist in the earliest and best manuscripts.*

Think:

- Reread the passage again and record at least 15 observations. (Think context clues, key words, and main themes)
Let’s learn more contextual information about who the Pharisees were. Go to biblestudytool.com and search “Pharisees”. Select the entry from Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary. Who are the Pharisees? What should they stand for? How did the rest of Israel view them?

Two weeks ago we examined the “roots” of a Noble leader: trust, humility and love. What “roots” do you see Jesus identifying in the pharisaical leader?
This last week we looked at the 10 “fruits” of the Noble leader. In the above passage there are 7 “woes” of the pharisaical leader. List all the “fruits” of the pharisaical leader:

Personalize:
- Of the 7 Woes, which stood out to you personally? Why?

- What bad roots and spoiled fruits do you identify in your life? How do they tie together?

- How do you see your unhealthy roots and rotten fruits affecting both your peers and those you lead?

- The Pharisees appeared godly to those around them, but Jesus could see their hearts. What would Jesus say of your heart?
- Jesus provides an antidote to pharisaical leadership in verse 12. What is it?

- How does preaching the gospel to yourself daily change you as a leader? How can this affect your leadership of others? (See James 4:6-10)

**Build Convictions:**

- Complete the following if then statements based upon the Bible Study:
  - If my “righteous” fruit is rooted in pride and greed then…
  - If I humble myself daily before God by preaching the gospel to myself then…
  - If I am plagued by self interest and evil motives then…
  - If I desire to be a leader like Jesus then…
Applications:
- Commit to do at least 2 of the following:
  - Memorize Philippians 2:3-4
  - Ask a mentor or leader who is familiar with you to sit down and point out fruits and roots that are sinful, and also fruits and roots they see God producing in you.
  - Confess to affected parties the way your rotten fruits have affected them genuinely and honestly.

Additional Resources:
- *Humility: True Greatness* by C.J. Mahaney. A book which teaches on how to live and lead with humility
Session 13 Handouts
Session 13: Prepare to Launch

(Select one or two questions per section for discussion. Do the rest on your own.)

Noble Treason:

In Session One, we looked at Satan’s appeal to mankind to try to live independently of God and to actually even be like God. In what ways can you see within your flesh a desire to “be like God”? How do you personally see Satan work to appeal to this? How can you guard against giving in to the desire to be worshipped and served?

A Nobleman fights for God’s honor and the honor of others. When God uses you to advance His Kingdom, there will be a tendency to subtly share in and steal the glory of God. One of the verses we looked at in our sessions was Isaiah 42:8 where God says, “I am the Lord, that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. Are there any practical things that come to mind that you can do to safeguard against this?

Your Noble Identity:

How do you see your nobility coming from the Gospel? What are ways that you still see yourself trying to become noble through your noble deeds rather than letting your deeds flow from your noble identity? Are there ways that you see the question “Am I enough?” being answered differently in your life now than at the beginning of the course?

Integrity and faithfulness have been touched on several times throughout Noblemen. What are some practical ways you can be cultivating these attributes in your life? God says that He delights in you because of Christ. What would it look like for you to really believe this and live in it?
A Noble Wife:

How would you say that you see the impact of the curse playing out in women’s lives today?

What does a woman who is not being dominated by the curse look like?

List out some characteristics of a woman you would like to trust God for in a wife. (think less personality and more character, walk with God.) Proverbs 31:30 tells us that charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting. Many a young man has sabotaged his relationship with God, his ministry impact, his children’s spiritual depth and his enjoyment of marriage by falling for a woman who lacks spiritual depth and maturity. How could you see this happening in your own life?

What can you do to safeguard against it?

Noble Sexuality:

Why is it worth it to you to pursue sexual purity?

How would you say God would describe your sexual purity at this stage in your life?

If God were to speak to you on this issue, what would you imagine He might say?

Spend some time specifically listing out the ways that you have perhaps underestimated the power of sexual impurity in your life.

How do you see sexual impurity affecting your relationship with God?

What is your plan for growing in sexual purity after Noblemen ends?
Noble Friendships:

Every man longs to have men on the inside of their life. And almost every man struggles with making this happen through each season of life. They may have acquaintances, but few men really on the inside. What would you love to see in your friendships the rest of your life?

How do you see the question of “Am I enough?” playing into your friendships with other men?

What obstacles do suspect you will encounter that will keep you from seeking out other godly men in every place you live?

Noble Patriarchs:

Do you have a spiritual lineage yet? If so, list out the men you would say that God has used you to help grow into a disciple. How are those guys doing spiritually? Are they helping other men grow? How could you help strengthen them?

A man who catches the vision and a taste of being used as a disciplemaker is a powerful man in his time on earth. His life and ministry leave an indelible mark on nations and generations. Satan has every intention of distracting and even destroying you to keep this from happening. 2 Corinthians 2:11 speaks of not being unaware of the enemy’s schemes. What ways could you see Satan hindering you from being a Disciplemaker all the days of your life? (be very specific)

What can you do to combat those schemes?
A Noble Leader:

Look back at both sides of the Secure/Insecure leader doc. What would you say are some of your greatest strengths as a leader?

In what ways do you feel like you need to grow as a leader?

What are some key values that you would like to see passed on to your kids?

Fast forward to 15 years from now. If your wife and kids were to describe the type of husband and father you were, what would you hope they would say about you? Be very detailed. What things do you think need to be fortified in your life before you get married and have kids to see those things be true?

When you think about being a leader and an influencer in the Church, what are ways that you can prepare yourself now to serve, lead, care for, develop and help others reproduce spiritually?
Noblemen Ceremony Handout
Noblemen Ceremony Packet

Welcome gentlemen. This is the last step in our efforts over the last several weeks to pursue authentic manhood. While it signifies the conclusion of this phase, it is just the beginning of a life of decisions to live as a Noble Man. Each component of the ceremony will represent either a current reality of manhood that we have discussed, or the challenges and honors to come in your future as a man.

Each stage will last one hour and ten minutes including travel time to each station. At each stage, appoint one man to lead the time at the station by reading the directions out loud. After each stage, go promptly to the next.

You will be divided into small groups for most of the ceremony. This is because you cannot make it through the ceremony on your own. Likewise, you cannot flourish in your journey as a man without a band of brothers committed to your success and to whom you entrust yourself. There are times you will be weak and need carried. You will have the choice to suffer alone and not seek support from other men, or, in humility and weakness, to entrust yourself to other men to help you succeed. Conversely, you will also have the opportunity to live a self-absorbed life as a “taker” not concerned with the well-being of other men, or you can take the time to serve and commit yourself to other men’s success. To reflect this reality, between each stage, each team will carry one of its members between the fire and the station. Every person will need to take a turn being carried. As you are being carried, ponder the idea of needing to entrust yourself to other men for life. After you are carried, take a moment before you switch men and ask the other men to each pound the spike in your block.
Time with the Father stage

Every rite of passage from cultures around the world involves a significant amount of time spent alone. You will have several hours of extended time to connect with God- to pray, read the Word, to think about the commitments you will make tonight and to ponder a continual pursuit of a noble life after tonight.

First, read through this whole Time With The Father section and decide how you want to break up your time alone with Him. Then, spend some time slowly meditating on and praying through the Creed.

The Noblemen Creed

As a Nobleman I belong wholly to Jesus Christ, who gives my noble identity. I commit to depending on Him, enjoying Him, and submitting to His greater purposes in every area of my life. I will strive to abide daily in the Lord and His Word. I will seek out and entrust myself to godly men through every season of life.

I will reflect my new noble identity through a holy life. I may fall in this journey but I will not stay down. I commit to not lying and to coming clean immediately if I realize I’ve done so. I commit to resisting the lure of passivity and to living courageously— doing what is right despite my fear or lack of desire.

I will provide vision, direction and leadership for my family, putting their needs above my own and staying emotionally engaged and physically available to them. I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church. I will pursue her heart and receive her strengths and weaknesses until parted by death. I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly Father as I love, protect and disciple them.

I will faithfully serve the Body of Christ. As a spiritual patriarch, I will assume responsibility for the souls God puts in my path, praying for them and making known to them the Gospel of Life. I will seek out older mentors and younger men to mentor, helping them raise up more generations of spiritual patriarchs. I will lead by serving and will seek the honor of God and those around me rather than my own. I am a Nobleman, and in Christ alone I stand. I am a Nobleman, and by His grace I will help advance God’s Kingdom into all the world.
Creed Bible Study

Though you already went through the Creed study several weeks ago, you now you have some more extended time to revisit the verses and pray through these. Start with the areas that you think you need to grow the most in and spend more time on those.

As has been said, though tonight marks the end of the Noblemen course for you, it is only the beginning of a life that will be lived for noble purposes.

Think through each part of the creed. How will you live these out and continue in them the next several decades? On the blank page below, write out some thoughts on how you personally plan to fortify the areas of the creed that you expect will be a challenge for you to live out.

At the end of your time, pound your spikes into your block as a commitment to living out the creed the rest of your life.

Creed areas to be fortified and plan for doing so:
The Sexuality Stage

One of your strongest urges, your sex drive, has the potential to bless you with a lifetime of pleasure and pass your line on to future generations. But it also has the potential to destroy your walk with Jesus and devastate your family.

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Gal 6:7-9)

You know very well the battle being waged for the purity of your soul. You will fall in this battle but remember Proverbs: “For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.” (Proverbs 24:16) Recognize that you can't afford to let up in this battle. “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

This stage is divided into three parts. Spend time moving through each part as a team:

Part 1
Have each member of your team pick a card from the box and read them out loud to the group. Each card is a real life story from a former worker in the adult industry.

Part 2
The keyboards are symbolic of the ongoing decision you'll face to remain sexually pure or to defile yourself. Have each member of your team interact with the keyboard for a few minutes, following the instructions on them. As you do, consider not just this time but the times in the future when you'll be by yourself and will decide whether to sow to the flesh or to the Spirit.

Part 3
Spend time in your small group imploring Christ for the grace to say no to sin and yes to holiness. Remember the creed: “I will raise my children in imitation of my heavenly father as I love, protect, and disciple them.” We all contribute to the sex industry unless we assume the responsibility to act against it. Pound your stake as a commitment to live a noble life sexually and to fight for sexual purity for those who cannot fight for themselves.
The Interdependent Stage
(Each of you pound the nail of the man who was just carried to this station)

One of the keys to you flourishing through the manhood maze of life is the willingness to entrust yourself to other men. In this envelope you will find a small piece of paper. Make sure it doesn’t get wet.

Take about 10 minutes and individually write down the ways that you find yourself falling short as a man, don’t feel like a man and the things you ashamedly struggle with. What are fears that you have about not being enough? What are areas of shame that you have privately been carrying by yourself in the dark. Write all of these down on your small paper. Commit to the Lord to seek out and entrust yourself to a few friends through every season of life. Pound your nail as you commit to this.

Then reconvene and spend the remaining time sharing these with one another. Start your time together by someone reading James 5:16. Please bear in mind that a key to your freedom is the willingness to entrust yourself, both strengths and weaknesses to other men. Pound each other’s spikes before you leave. If there is time, pray for one another. You need to place your small piece of paper back into its baggie and put it in your pocket for later.
Great Commission Stage

You have an opportunity to spend the rest of your life giving yourself on behalf of those who don’t know Christ or ignoring them. The norm for Christians around you will be to generally ignore them, occasionally pray for them and maybe do an outreach event or two when convenient. Yet Jesus says that He has committed to you the message of reconciliation, as though He is making His appeal to them through you.

As you already know, this will be costly. It will cost you time, challenge your pride, and most of all will cost you your commitment to comfort. Spend some time as a group reading through the following verses and then praying together, committing yourselves to being available for God to use you to help others come to know Christ.

Daniel 12:2
2 Thessalonians 1:8,9
Luke 16:19-31
2 Corinthians 5:10-21
John 12:24-28
Philemon 6
Isaiah 43:8-12

Pound your nails as a commitment to spending yourself on behalf of those who are perishing.
Great Commandment Stage

As we discussed during sessions, this is where the bulk of your battle is fought. There is no substitute for regular intimate time with Jesus. Spend some time reading through the following verses and then spend time asking God to make you a man who loves and seeks Him with all of your heart. Go through the following verses together as a group and discuss them.

Psalm 27:4,8
Acts 13:22
John 5:39,40
Jeremiah 3:10
Jeremiah 4:1-4
Philippians 3:7-14

Pound your nail as a commitment to pursue Him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and to daily bask in His Word and His love for you.
Affirmation Stage

“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.” Proverbs 25:25

As you know, we all need others who will cheer us on in our pursuit of being authentic men. You can now open the letters that were given to you. Enjoy this time hearing what others have to say about you. If you’d like, share all or parts of your letters with each other. After you read the letter then go around and share ways you have seen God work in the men around you. Affirm them honestly, pointing out what God has done.

Pound in your nail as an acknowledgement of what God has done in you, around you, and through you.
Destruction of Boyhood Symbol stage

Jonah 2:8  “Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.”

You have each chosen a boyhood symbol that represents something that needs to be left behind in your pursuit of a life of nobility.

Take 10 minutes by yourselves to mentally lay this on the altar before the Lord and to sacrifice it to Him. Then, one at a time, destroy your boyhood symbol.

Pound your nail as a commitment to leave whatever this symbol represents behind you.