



"Christ carried a cross. You can carry responsibility."

Men's Bible Study

PURPOSE

“Christ carried a cross. You can carry responsibility.”

The Bible is filled with great men - but nearly every one of them had a weakness that threatened to destroy them. Yet through obedience, humility, and God's grace, they overcame.

This study is designed to help men identify their own weaknesses, learn how God's Word addresses them, and develop the disciplines necessary to become warriors - and ultimately men of God.

HOW THIS STUDY WORKS

Every other week is a teaching session.

The weeks between are Warrior Challenges designed to put the teaching into practice.

KEY TRUTH

Every week, ask yourself: Am I manning up, or running away?

PHASE ONE: WEAKLING

Identifying the Enemy Within

WEEK 1 - Adam - The Passive Man

“Silence in the face of responsibility is still a decision.”

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 2:15-17 (NKJV)

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 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.'

Genesis 3:6-7, 12 (MSG)

When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it - she'd know everything! - she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate. Immediately the two of them did 'see what's really going on' - saw themselves naked! ... The Man said, 'The Woman you gave me as a companion, she gave me fruit from the tree, and, yes, I ate it.'

Romans 5:12 (MSG)

You know the story of how Adam landed us in the dilemma we're in - first sin, then death, and no one is exempt from either sin or death.

James 4:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJV)

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

Proverbs 24:30-34 (MSG)

One day I walked by the field of an old lazybones, and then past the vineyard of a shiftless person - they were overgrown with weeds, they were a mess, the walls were broken down. I took it all in, then thought about it. I saw a lesson to be learned: A nap here, a nap there, a day off here, a day off there - and before you know it nothing but rags and poverty.

KEY TRUTH

Adam's greatest failure wasn't what he did. It was what he failed to do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where am I avoiding responsibility?
2. What difficult conversations am I avoiding?
3. What opportunities have I ignored because action seemed uncomfortable?
4. How does passivity affect those around me?
5. What responsibility is God calling me to embrace?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #1

“Responsibility avoided becomes regret multiplied.”

SCRIPTURES

Joshua 1:9 (NKJV)

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

James 1:22 (MSG)

Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear!

1 Corinthians 16:13 (NKJV)

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

MISSION

Identify one area where you've been passive. Take one action toward solving it this week.

REFLECTION: *What changed when you stepped up?*

NOTES

WEEK 2 - Saul - The Insecure Man

“If you live for people’s approval, you’ll die by their criticism.”

SCRIPTURES

1 Samuel 13:11-14 (NKJV)

Samuel said, 'What have you done?' Saul said, 'When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed... I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.' And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God... the Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart.'

1 Samuel 15:20-24 (MSG)

Saul defended himself: 'But I did obey God. I did the job God set for me.' ... Samuel said, 'What's more pleasing to God: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his Voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice... Because you said No to God's command, he says No to your kingship.' Then Saul admitted it: 'I sinned. I violated God's command and your instructions. I cared more about pleasing the people.'

Proverbs 29:25 (MSG)

The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in God protects you from that.

Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

John 12:42-43 (MSG)

On the other hand, a considerable number from the ranks of the leaders did believe. But because of the Pharisees, they didn't come out in the open with it. They were afraid of getting kicked out of the meeting place. When push came to shove they cared more for human approval than for God's glory.

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

KEY TRUTH

A man cannot fear God and fear man at the same time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. Whose approval do I seek most?
7. What compromises have I made to fit in?
8. How does insecurity affect my decisions?
9. What truth about God helps combat insecurity?
10. What would change if I feared God more than people?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #2

“Confidence grows where approval dies.”

SCRIPTURES

Psalms 27:1 (NKJV)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Isaiah 41:10 (MSG)

Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.

Romans 8:31 (NKJV)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

MISSION

Make one decision this week based solely on obedience to God.

REFLECTION: *How did it feel to obey without seeking approval?*

NOTES

WEEK 3 - Nebuchadnezzar - The Proud Man

“The man who takes credit for God’s blessings eventually loses sight of God.”

SCRIPTURES

Daniel 4:30-33 (NKJV)

The king spoke, saying, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?' While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!' And he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen... until he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men.

Proverbs 16:18 (MSG)

First pride, then the crash - the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

James 4:6 (NKJV)

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'

1 Peter 5:5-6 (MSG)

And you who are younger must follow your leaders. But all of you, leaders and followers alike, are to be down to earth with each other, for... God has had it with the proud, but takes delight in just plain people. So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time.

Philippians 2:3-5 (MSG)

Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.

Obadiah 1:3-4 (MSG)

Your proud heart has deceived you - you who live high in the mountains, who make your home in the heights, who say to yourself, 'Who can possibly bring me down to earth?' Soaring Eagle, think again. Even if, like an eagle, you hang out on a high cliff-face, even if you build your nest in the stars, I'll bring you down to earth.

KEY TRUTH

Pride blinds a man to the source of his success.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

11. Where am I tempted to take credit?
12. How do I handle correction?
13. Do I struggle more with arrogance or humility?
14. Who can speak truth into my life?
15. What would true humility look like?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #3

“Humility isn’t thinking less of yourself; it’s thinking of God more.”

SCRIPTURES

Micah 6:8 (MSG)

But he’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don’t take yourself too seriously - take God seriously.

Philippians 2:5 (NKJV)

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:12 (MSG)

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline.

MISSION

Perform an act of service that no one knows about.

REFLECTION: *How did serving without recognition affect you?*

NOTES

WEEK 4 - Samson - The Undisciplined Man

“The strongest man is the one who can master himself.”

SCRIPTURES

Judges 16:16-17, 20-21 (NKJV)

And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, that he told her all his heart... And she said, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' So he awoke from his sleep, and said, 'I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!' But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes.

Proverbs 25:28 (MSG)

A person without self-control is like a house with its doors and windows knocked out.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (MSG)

You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition.

Titus 2:11-12 (MSG)

God's readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation's available for everyone! We're being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now.

James 1:14-15 (NKJV)

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

KEY TRUTH

Power without discipline becomes destruction.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

16. What appetite controls me?
17. What habit weakens me most?
18. What boundaries am I missing?
19. What area requires greater discipline?
20. How can I strengthen self-control?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #4

“Your habits are either training you or betraying you.”

SCRIPTURES

Romans 13:14 (MSG)

Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

2 Timothy 2:22 (NKJV)

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV)

Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

MISSION

Choose one unhealthy habit and replace it with a healthy one for seven days.

REFLECTION: *What did you learn about your self-control?*

NOTES

PHASE TWO: WARRIOR

Learning to Fight

WEEK 5 - David - The Fallen Man

“Failure doesn’t define a man. His response to failure does.”

SCRIPTURES

2 Samuel 11:2-4 (MSG)

One late afternoon, David got up from taking his nap and was strolling on the roof of the palace. From his vantage point on the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was stunningly beautiful. David sent to ask about her... David sent messengers to get her. She came to David and he slept with her.

2 Samuel 12:7, 9, 13 (MSG)

Then Nathan said to David, 'You're the man!... Why have you treated the word of God with brazen contempt, doing this great evil?'... David said to Nathan, 'I've sinned against God.' Nathan said, 'Yes, but that's not the last word. God forgives your sin.'

Psalms 51:1-4 (MSG)

Generous in love - God, give grace! Huge in mercy - wipe out my bad record. Scrub away my guilt, soak out my sins in your laundry. I know how bad I've been; my sins are staring me down. You're the One I've violated, and you've seen it all, seen the full extent of my evil.

Proverbs 28:13 (MSG)

You can't whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 32:1-5 (MSG)

Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be - you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean. Count yourself lucky - God holds nothing against you and you're holding nothing back from him... my body felt like it was falling apart, and I groaned all day long. Then I let it all out; I said, 'I'll make a clean breast of my failures to God.' Suddenly the pressure was gone - my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared.

KEY TRUTH

A godly man isn't one who never falls; he's one who gets back up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

21. How do I respond to failure?
22. Do I hide mistakes or confess them?
23. What does genuine repentance look like?
24. How has failure shaped me?
25. What area needs restoration?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #5

“God can’t heal what you’re still hiding.”

SCRIPTURES

Psalms 32:1-2 (MSG)

*Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be - you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean.
Count yourself lucky - God holds nothing against you and you're holding nothing back from him.*

James 5:16 (MSG)

Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

MISSION

Confess a struggle to God and a trusted brother.

REFLECTION: *What freedom came from honesty?*

NOTES

WEEK 6 - Gideon - The Fearful Man

“Courage isn’t the absence of fear. It’s obedience despite fear.”

SCRIPTURES

Judges 6:11-16 (MSG)

The angel of God appeared to him and said, 'God is with you, O mighty warrior!' Gideon replied, 'With me, my master? If God is with us, why has all this happened to us?... I'm the runt of the litter.' God said to him, 'I'll be with you. Believe me, you'll defeat Midian as one man.'

Judges 7:2-3, 7 (MSG)

God said to Gideon: 'You have too large an army with you. I can't turn Midian over to them like this - they'll take all the credit, saying, I did it all myself, and forget about me.'... God said to Gideon: 'I'll use the three hundred men who lapped at the stream to save you.'

Isaiah 41:10 (MSG)

Don't panic. I'm with you. There's no need to fear for I'm your God. I'll give you strength. I'll help you. I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Psalms 56:3-4 (NKJV)

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

KEY TRUTH

God often calls men while they're still afraid.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

26. What fear controls me?
27. What would I attempt if fear wasn't present?
28. How does fear hinder obedience?
29. What promise of God combats my fear?
30. What step of faith do I need to take?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #6

“Faith moves when fear says freeze.”

SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 31:6 (MSG)

Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you.

Psalms 27:1 (NKJV)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Romans 8:15 (MSG)

This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?"

MISSION

Do one thing you've avoided because of fear.

REFLECTION: *How did God meet you in that step?*

NOTES

WEEK 7 - Peter - The Impulsive Man

“Maturity is learning that your first reaction isn’t always your best response.”

SCRIPTURES

Matthew 14:28-31 (NKJV)

And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' So He said, 'Come.' And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'

Matthew 16:22-23 (MSG)

Peter took him in hand, protesting, 'Impossible, Master! That can never be!' But Jesus didn't swerve. 'Peter, get out of my way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works.'

Matthew 26:33-35, 74-75 (MSG)

Peter broke in, 'Even if everyone else falls to pieces on account of you, I won't.'... 'Don't be so sure,' Jesus said. 'This very night, before the rooster crows up the dawn, you will deny me three times.'... Then he remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times.' He went out and cried and cried and cried.

Acts 2:14 (MSG)

That's when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency...

James 1:19 (MSG)

Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear.

KEY TRUTH

God can transform reckless passion into righteous leadership.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

31. Do I react before thinking?
32. What triggers emotional responses?
33. How can I become more intentional?
34. How has God matured me?
35. What area needs patience?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #7

“Strong men don’t control others. They control themselves.”

SCRIPTURES

James 1:19 (MSG)

Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear.

Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV)

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (MSG)

Don't shoot off your mouth, or speak before you think. Don't be too quick to tell God what you think he wants to hear. God's in charge, not you - the less you speak, the better.

MISSION

Pause and pray before responding in difficult situations.

REFLECTION: *How did slowing down change outcomes?*

NOTES

WEEK 8 - Paul - The Self-Righteous Man

“Religion says earn it. Jesus says receive it.”

SCRIPTURES

Acts 9:1-6 (MSG)

All this time Saul was breathing down the necks of the Master's disciples, out for the kill... he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light. As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: 'Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?' He said, 'Who are you, Master?' 'I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next.'

Philippians 3:4-9 (MSG)

If anyone has reason to think he could pull it off in his own effort, I have even more... I've got the pedigree... But all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life... I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ - God's righteousness.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:5 (MSG)

He saved us from all that. It was all his doing; we had nothing to do with it. He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NKJV)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day.

KEY TRUTH

A man of God depends on Christ, not himself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

36. Where do I rely on myself instead of God?
37. What spiritual pride exists in my life?
38. How does grace change me?
39. What has Christ done for me that I could never do myself?
40. What does surrender look like today?

NOTES

WARRIOR CHALLENGE #8

“The strongest man is the one fully surrendered to God.”

SCRIPTURES

Psalm 78:4-7 (NKJV)

We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done... that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.

2 Timothy 2:2 (MSG)

Pass on what you heard from me - the whole congregation saying Amen! - to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others.

Joshua 1:8-9 (NKJV)

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

MISSION

Write your personal Man of God Covenant.

REFLECTION: *What kind of man does God want me to become?*

NOTES

FINAL DECLARATION

A Weakling is controlled by his weakness.

A Warrior fights his weakness.

A Man of God is led by God despite his weakness.

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is progress.

The goal is becoming the man God created you to be.