



MEN OF **COURAGE**

► *Leading with Wisdom and Humility*

Using this Study Guide

This course and study guide are designed to help you reflect on your biblical role as a man in your home, workplace, and church. Each module offers concise, powerful messages to inspire reflection and discussion – encouraging you to embrace your God-given role, strengthen family relationships, and lead with wisdom, courage, and trust in the LORD.

While there may be other ways to engage with the content of this course, this study guide has been designed to facilitate the approaches outlined below.

Listening and reflecting by yourself

In this mode the emphasis is on learning for yourself. Reflections may be general from a biblical perspective and may also be very personal in relation to yourself as a Christian man and your connections with others.

Listening and reflecting with a partner

In this mode the emphasis is on learning together with a trusted person and drawing on each other's feedback. Reflections may be general for biblical perspective and may be personal in relation to both participants, if both participants are Christian men. Where the partner is the person's wife, the focus may be on growth in the specific role in the family.

Listening and reflecting as a small group of men

In this mode the emphasis is on learning together, with peers and drawing on each other's feedback. Reflections will be more general for biblical perspective and personal application will be conducted partly in the group setting and partly individually.

This course and study guide have been produced utilising content from the 2025 Seek Wisdom Men's Conference, *Men of Courage*. The speeches and panel discussions referenced in each module are now available for further listening and reflection. These can be found on our website at seekwisdom.com.au/project/men-of-courage.

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Introduction

To begin this course, we encourage you to read **Joshua 1:1–9**.

Read the passage and consider these questions

1. What instruction did the LORD give to Joshua in this passage, even three times over?

2. What two things are mentioned by the LORD to enable Joshua to be able to be what he was called to be?

3. Joshua was told what to be and also what not to be; what was he not to be?

Being Men of Courage is a biblical call in accordance with God's instruction to Joshua. The LORD's call to Joshua is also a call to men in the 21st century. Through the following 8 modules, we hope to delve into what it takes to become and what it looks like to be men of courage. The answer may even come as a surprise to you. We hope you enjoying engaging with the content and learning about biblical masculinity and courage.

Redefining Manhood

Empty Hands, Filled with Grace

Session Overview

A man with empty hands – surely that’s a contradiction in terms. We admire those who are strong, self-sufficient, respected – real men. But since Christ came not for the healthy but for the sick, perhaps it is better to be small and weak. That is grace for men – when we are weak and empty, then we are strong and full.

SPEAKER Rev. Clarence Bouwman

► Begin Module 1 by watching the first Keynote Speech from Men of Courage: **Redefining Manhood**.

Key Points

Adam stood by while Eve dialogued with the serpent and did nothing; he didn’t lead, as he was called to do.

FURTHER READING [Genesis 3:1–7](#)

God planted a garden and placed Adam in it with the instruction to “work it and to keep it”; here was his calling to lead.

FURTHER READING [Genesis 2:8–15](#)

Adam was capable of leading as called by God; he was created in God’s image and was told to have dominion.

FURTHER READING [Genesis 1:26](#)

Christ, the second Adam, dialogued with the serpent too. He resisted the temptation and warded Satan away with a word of God.

FURTHER READING [Matthew 4:1–4](#)

On the cross, Christ exercised dominion over His crucified self and over the devil; the devil and his legions were defeated.

We struggle to be men of courage and can identify with David, who became an adulterer and a murderer.

David acknowledged his sin before God and was set free.

FURTHER READING [Psalm 32:1–6](#)

Christ took David’s and our sins to the cross and cancelled the debt against us.

FURTHER READING [Colossians 2:13,14](#)

As men we are called to own the gospel.

We have been “made alive” in Christ, “raised” with Him and “seated in the heavenly places” with Him.

FURTHER READING [Ephesians 2:4–6](#)

At Pentecost all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

FURTHER READING [Acts 2:1–4](#)

Believers were cut to the heart, repented, and received the Holy Spirit.

FURTHER READING [Acts 2:37–38](#)

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

FURTHER READING [Galatians 5:22,23](#)

We can become men of courage again, only because of God and His work of salvation in us.

FURTHER READING [1 John 2:12–14](#)

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. As a man, do you see yourself in the weakness of Adam, David, Peter and others in Scripture? Describe how you might identify with each of these men.

2. What is the answer to your weakness?

3. What does being a man of courage look like?

Headship's Heart

The Call to Christ-Like Leadership

Session Overview

Explore biblical leadership in marriage and family. Many men struggle to balance domination and passivity, harming relationships and missing God's design. Based on Ephesians 5:22–33, true headship is about sacrificial love, protection, and provision, not power. Husbands are called to lead by serving and nurturing their families. Discover how Christ-like leadership can transform your marriage and strengthen your family.

SPEAKER Rev. Stephen 't Hart

► Begin Module 2 by watching the first Impact Speech from Men of Courage: **Headship's Heart**.

Key Points

Husbands are called to exercise Christ-like leadership.

FURTHER READING [Ephesians 5:22–33](#)

Domination is about imposing your will, demanding submission, using force; not seeking to understand. It's about broken relationships and resentment.

Abdication is ignoring the needs of the family, seeking refuge in hobbies or other activities (it can even be church related activity). It is chaotic and leaves needs unmet.

For men in families, leadership is often exercised by way of domination or abdication. However, Christ-like leadership is not about control, it's about humble service, sacrificial love following the example of Jesus.

The focus in Ephesians 5 seems to be on wives and the call to submit to their husbands. Indeed, wives are called to submit, but husbands are not called to enforce that submission. Wives are accountable to God.

FURTHER READING [Ephesians 5:22](#)

Husbands are called to love their wives which is about giving, serving, nurturing and protecting; not asserting authority, but assuming responsibility.

Husbands are called to create the environment where wives can flourish and feel valued.

Biblical headship remembers the call to submit to each other as husband and wife.

FURTHER READING [Ephesians 5:21](#)

Biblical headship is about **provision** (physically and spiritually) and **protection** (physically and spiritually).

Biblical headship is a big call; men can be empowered only in the gospel and through Jesus Christ, to reflect the heart of Christ.

Leading biblically is not about dominating, nor about abdicating; it is about cultivating, so that wives will feel cherished and children will feel secure.

Biblical headship is

Sacrificial love, service and humility [EPHESIANS 5: 25](#)
 Placing your wife's needs above own desires
 Understanding and giving honour [1 PETER 3: 7](#)
 Encouragement and support [1 THESSALONIANS 5: 11](#)
 Grace-filled interactions
 Promoting unity and resolving conflicts

Biblical headship is not

Selfish, harsh and controlling [COLOSSIANS 3: 19](#)
 Giving priority to your own desires [PHILIPPIANS 2: 4](#)
 Being dismissive and quietly ignoring [1 PETER 3: 7](#)
 Fear, intimidation and manipulation [1 JOHN 4: 18](#)
 Misusing Scripture to justify your behaviour [2 TIM 2: 15](#)
 Ignoring the call for mutual submission [EPHESIANS 5: 21](#)

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. Why do we get the aspect of biblical leadership so terribly wrong, so often?

2. What does the task of providing and protecting look like for a husband and father?

3. How might your knowledge of Christ empower you as a Christian husband and father?

Living the Mystery

Showing Christ's Love in Real Life

Session Overview

Christ calls us as husbands to love our wives as He loves His church. How is that possible? Only by looking to Him, adoring Him, trusting Him, worshipping Him. It's as we fix our gaze on Christ that we are transformed and become like Him. He will enable us to give our wives shining eyes. After honestly laying out some of the difficult challenges in marriage, we'll consider three things we can pursue to help our marriages thrive: understanding, trust and humility. It is as we faithfully love and serve our wives that they will become radiant and show off not just Christ's glory but also ours.

SPEAKER Rev. Dirk Poppe

► Begin Module 3 by watching the second Impact Speech from Men of Courage: **Living the Mystery**.

Key Points

Marriage is a precious gift given to us by God. To do it well, we need to look to Christ.

FURTHER READING [Genesis 2:21–25](#)

Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Christ acts upon the church in order to remove every spot and wrinkle, so that she should be without blemish and holy before Him. Husbands are to act upon their wives to make their eyes shine.

FURTHER READING [Ephesians 5:27](#)

Pastors are consulted by women about their marriages, not by men, they think they can fix themselves.

What are some common concerns?

- Husbands can't deal with emotions and feelings.
- Husbands don't lead spiritually.
- Fathers are not involved in their children's lives.
- Husbands desire sex but aren't interested in creating the right atmosphere.
- Wives feel used and abused, falling asleep weeping.
- Men working long hours, at the family's expense.
- Husbands always on or distracted by their phones.

For some it's really toxic:

- Husbands dominate and manipulate, but present as very godly to others.
- Husbands play mind games to manipulate or control in order to isolate and punish their wives.

In such situations men must be disciplined, admonished and excommunicated if they don't repent.

How do we change? Get to know Christ and look to Him.

Moses was transformed by looking upon God, as was Stephen in the New Testament.

FURTHER READING [Exodus 33:18–23](#) and [Act 7:55](#)

See the glory of Christ your LORD as this is revealed in, for example, John 1, Colossians 1 and Ephesians 1.

Meditate on the kind of love, care and kindness as He has rendered, that changes you, it makes you shine, so you can make your wife shine. Get to know your wife.

Deal with your own weaknesses and sins, for example, emotional disconnection or addictions.

Three Action Points

- Seek to understand your wife
- Be trustworthy
- Act with humility

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. How might looking to Christ transform you to be a good husband?

2. How can you grow in understanding your wife better?

3. What are some ways you can become more trustworthy?

4. What does it mean to act with humility?

5. Do men struggle to express their emotions and/or feelings? How might you address this in yourself? How might you address this in your circle of friends?

Strengthening Marriage

Reflecting God's Love

Session Overview

A call to leadership, vulnerability and sacrificial love as we explore the complexities of a godly, Christ-centred marriage. Together, we can move beyond today's call to cultural silence in order to embrace biblical headship and mutual flourishing.

SPEAKERS Rev. Dirk Poppe | Rev. Stephen 't Hart | Richard Suter

► Begin Module 4 by watching the first Panel Discussion from Men of Courage: **Strengthening Marriage**.

Topics to Ponder and Discuss

As you listen to the discussion, note down some of the points that resonated with you on the following topics.

BEING A SILENT BYSTANDER _____

CHURCH LEADERS REACHING OUT TO HELP _____

HOW TO REACH GUYS WHO DON'T WANT TO TALK _____

ABUSE _____

DOMINATING _____

AVOIDING CONFLICT _____

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES _____

GROWING IN LEADERSHIP SKILLS _____

Humility in Fatherhood

Drawing Near to God

Session Overview

An increasing number of couples in our circles postpone having children. Often it is because they enjoy their life together and don't want it to change. But what if change is fundamental to our spiritual growth as men? God uses fatherhood to teach us about the beauty of growth. He draws us into His work of creation in the most personal way possible. As our children grow up, God also draws us into His work of regeneration. When we look at it from that perspective, we learn to admire God's work of change instead of avoiding it. That helps us then to also recognise and embrace His work of change in our own lives. We can let go of control and depend on an unchangeable God. He never changes and He's fully committed to us. That's true for us all, whether you're a father or not.

SPEAKER Rev. Abel Pol

► Begin Module 5 by watching the third Impact Speech from Men of Courage: **Humility in Fatherhood**.

Key Points

When we speak of deferring having children, we may be buying into a lie and be robbed of a great gift.

God uses fatherhood to draw us into the process of change that is important for us.

God bestows a great honour on us through fatherhood.

We are drawn into God's creative work to bring forth new people.

We are also drawn into the work of regeneration and renewal of people; it's God's work but He draws us into it.

Fatherhood is about creating conditions for change to happen in the lives of young people and also in your own life.

As fathers, men get drawn into something much bigger than themselves.

Parenting provides many situations over which we have no control; not being in control makes us humble.

It shows up where we must change. For example, we may see that we are impatient in new situations; this calls for change within ourselves.

Through fatherhood we get the opportunity to re-evaluate who we are as person and how we might need to change.

God doesn't only test us in fatherhood, but He also equips us to fatherhood.

God calls us to look to Him in fatherhood; postponing having children means avoiding Him, avoiding necessary change in us, missing out on an enormous blessing, as we postpone grace.

Postponing children means postponing growth in humility and drawing nearer to God.

Where God withholds children, that causes hurt, but God also uses those circumstances to humble us and become aware of Him in a new way.

Encourage one another in fatherhood, embrace the changes God brings through being a father, as you are embraced by Him.

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. Describe the biblical mindset around parenthood (fatherhood); how does this mindset impact the decisions you make in relation to having and raising children?

2. Parenting (fatherhood) makes you humble. Does it really work that way? What good comes out of that?

3. Postponing children means postponing humility, postponing grace, postponing drawing near to God; how might you respond to that?

Courage in Action

Helping Young People Thrive

Session Overview

What do young people need to grow and thrive? How can male role models impact their personal and spiritual development? This presentation explores the vital role of fathers, grandfathers and mentors, highlighting the importance of 'repairing ruptures' in relationships, as well as the effects of disengaged and dysfunctional fathering. Courage is viewed as an action, with emphasis on self-reflection, emotional maturity and the need for continuous spiritual growth to positively impact young people's lives and faith development.

SPEAKER Lucy Wagenaar

► Begin Module 6 by watching the fourth Impact Speech from Men of Courage: **Courage in Action**.

Key Points

Young people are excellent barometers of what's happening in society.

Young people notice things; they are looking to adults as role models.

Young people are good recorders of what's happening but not always good interpreters.

Taking action to **repair** can often be more impactful than the original mistake.

Fathers may be disengaged or dysfunctional in relation to their children.

When young people are let down by adults they have either of two responses: belligerent or disassociated.

Disengagement and **Dysfunction** may have four long term effects on youth:

- Reduced academic performance
- Poor physical and mental health outcomes
- Increase in risk taking behaviour
- Increased delinquency and incarceration

Together, these lead to increased spiritual confusion.

Men have a collective responsibility to the young people of the church.

Men need to have the courage to keep going and not give up, especially when young people can be incredibly challenging. Long term, the benefits of this persistence will show.

Connection is vital; it is the foundation for all coaching and correction.

Our young people are desperate for direction.

Fathers, grandfathers, men, called to be compasses that have connection, show compassion, provide correction.

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. How can adults be a positive role model for young people?

2. What gets in the way of adults seeking to repair mistakes towards young people?

3. How might adults avoid or repair spiritual confusion in young people?

Defending the Truth

Inspiring Our Youth

Session Overview

Together let's unpack what it means to be a mentor to young children and how men can serve as the spiritual compass for our children and teens.

SPEAKERS Rev. Abel Pol | Lucy Wagenaar | Craig vanderSchaaf

► Begin Module 7 by watching the second Panel Discussion from Men of Courage: ***Defending the Truth***.

Topics to Ponder and Discuss

As you listen to the discussion, note down some of the points that resonated with you on the following topics.

PURSuing CHANGE / GROWTH _____

OPENNESS ABOUT YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL JOURNEY _____

MODELLING EMPTY HANDS _____

WORK FOCUS _____

APOLOGISING: WHAT TO DO AND WHAT TO AVOID _____

PRAYING WITH YOUR CHILDREN _____

PARENTING PAST THE POINT _____

BEING PRESENT _____

RE-CONNECTING WHEN IT HASN'T BEEN A STRENGTH TILL NOW _____

Monsters or Mice

Real Bravery in Today's Culture

Session Overview

Our culture indoctrinates us with the idea that men are either cruel monsters or weak mice. And our speaker knows these extremes very well. In his speech, he will explore the negative portrayal of men in modern society and its consequences. White Christian men, particularly those who are married, are often marginalised or “cancelled.” We will examine why men are essential in society and the significance of courage in living out our Christian calling amidst cultural pressures.

SPEAKER Hon. Nick Goiran

► Begin Module 8 by watching the final Keynote Speech from Men of Courage: **Monsters or Mice**.

Key Points

In our modern culture men are often perceived as monsters because of the many sexual crimes committed.

The reality is that men function more as mice, not prepared to be leaders in their marriages and in their families.

The 21st century is a chaotic time; our society is confused about basic things such as what a man and what a woman actually is.

How do Christian men function in this society that is confused and chaotic and that suffers from the men as monsters and men as mice syndrome?

Be aware of two circles, one that functions within the other. These are, first, your **circle of concern** which entails the many things within your personal life, your family situation, your state and country and even the world within which we function. The second circle is your **circle of influence** which relates to the people you connect with and relate to. Work positively within the circle of concern and through that activity it will grow and become bigger.

Three things you might do:

- If you are in a place of peace, advocate for more men of principle to lead in the public square. Identify a person with the gifts to do that, encourage them and support them, potentially step up yourself.
- If you are in a place of peace, rededicate and recommit to your families, apply some of the tips that you have picked up on, nourish and cherish your wife and connect with your children.
- Look around and identify one person who may be in a place of pain and do something for that person, so that they don't have to walk the journey of pain on their own.

By giving attention to these three items, we help to smash the perception that comes from the devil that men are monsters and the reality of many men being mice.

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. Should the state of chaos and confusion in the world be of concern to us? Why / Why not?

2. Who is part of your circle of influence that you can impact, and how will you go about doing that?

3. Which of the three suggestions made are you most likely to act on? Why is this your priority and how will you do this?

Concluding Thoughts

A final overarching thought to be enacted

Throughout the conference the message has been the need to change and to grow in a biblical understanding of our manhood and the big question is always, just how are we going to do that?

The answer has, in every instance, been to look to and to meditate on the person and the work of Jesus Christ, to become more like Him. That requires careful and close engagement with God's Word, through which we learn about Him.

Engaging in God's Word is critical for change. It helps us to be men who reflect God's will for us, to be husbands who reflect what Christ is for His church and to be fathers who connect with, teach, and correct their children.

Men of Courage, leading as God calls us to lead.

Course Review

1. What are some key learnings I have taken away from Men of Courage?

2. What are some actions points I am going to make a priority in my life? How will I hold myself to these goals?

More Resources

Are you looking to host your own conference, seminar or study group?
To view all our available resources, please visit www.seekwisdom.com.au/resources/.

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