

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge One: Manhood

Session One: The Bible Guides Me

Unedited Transcript

Brett Clemmer

Well good morning, guys. It's great to be with you this morning. We're on a Journey to Biblical Manhood. We're going to take this year, and we're going to go through 12 challenges. We're going to talk about how do we take ourselves, how do we take the men around us, the guys at our tables, the guys that are watching online. How do we go together on this Journey to Biblical Manhood? We're going to go through 12 challenges. Each challenge we're going to talk about for three weeks. Our first challenge that we're talking about is the challenge of manhood. The essentials of Biblical manhood.

On your tables, or you can download these from the Journey to Biblical Manhood website if you're online, are these faith and life objective cards. Everybody grab one of these faith and life objective cards, and let's talk about this for a minute. Here's the idea. At your tables or in your church, you would get together with a group of men. Maybe if you're doing it in your church, maybe even all the men of your church. You would give everybody one of these faith and life objective cards. You would do this because men like to know where they're going. We like to know that there's an actual destination in front of us. That there's a purpose to what we're talking about. That it's not just one time: we meet on Friday mornings, so let's just show up on Friday mornings. That's the point. The point is not to just to meet together out of some kind of habit, but to actually go on a journey together with a destination.

The faith and life objective cards gives you the destination for each of the challenges on the journey. Mastering the Essentials of Biblical manhood, this is the first challenge that we want to undertake as men on our Journey to Biblical Manhood. You can see it; we've got three objectives here. I want you to note that each objective is either about what you know--your head--what you believe, what you're passionate about--your heart--or what you're doing or what your habits are that you might develop--which is your hands. Head, heart and hands. Makes sense, right?

The first objective is that "I will understand how the Bible guides me in each of the basic areas of my life." Things like faith and work. Family and marriage, money and emotions. The second objective is, "I hope to desire God and Biblical manhood more than the things that might distract me from Christ." Then the third one is that "I will schedule time to spend in God's word, pursue friendships with godly men, and live my life according to the scriptures." We're roughly going to talk about these three things over the next three sessions. We're going to talk about how the Bible guides us today, the next week Pat will talk about desiring God, desiring Biblical manhood. In the third week, we'll talk about how to really get into the scriptures and get the most out of the scriptures and then apply that out into your life. Does that make sense? We're going somewhere, that's the whole point here. We're moving.

I want everybody to stand up. Stand up, let's move. This is a men's Bible study not a women's Bible study, yeah. There's a lot of guys staggering to their feet. I'm not really sure what's going on. Except the gray hair might have something to do with it. Beat on your brother, bang on his back or something. Punch him in the shoulder, say hello. Get some movement here this morning. Corley's going to start doing some burpees over here I think. Hollingsworth's going to jog in place. We've got some jumping jacks. All right, that's good. That's good. Have a seat. That got some blood flowing. Tom's out of breath over here. Stood up and sat back down again.

We're talking about manhood, and what does it take to be not just a man, but a Biblical man? I've got a short video that we're going to watch and maybe give us a little introduction to this topic.

VIDEO:

What is real manhood? Do you know? There are a lot of caricatures of manhood out there. Is it about making money and being successful? Or does it mean killing things and eating their bloody hearts? Maybe it's getting in touch with your emotions. *Really* in touch. A man has to be macho, right? You don't let anyone disrespect you. Maybe it's about being known as the ultimate family man. Or maybe it's all about being the most dedicated fan. Is manhood really about playing by all the rules? Or being the busiest man at church? Don't let the world tell you what it means to be a man. God has so much more for you than this. Are you up for the challenge?

Brett Clemmer:

All right. We're going on this journey, this Journey to Biblical Manhood. As we're talking about real Biblical manhood, I think what we're going to start with, we're going to start by considering the Bible. Even our title, saying we're on a Journey to Biblical Manhood, really sets the stage. It gives us some parameters for what we're going to talk about. We're aspiring to *Biblical* manhood. An important question to ask is, is the Bible even the appropriate place to go to develop what our definition of manhood is? I would say that it is. Here's why: I think if you look at the Bible, you can see a remarkable book. This was a book that was written by dozens of authors over centuries. The main proposition of the scriptures is remarkably consistent, especially when you think about the time span, the culture span, the authorship span that's present throughout the 66 books in the Bible.

I'm not going to wow you with the details of how the Bible was constructed, and there's lots of great resources you can go online or you can buy books. There's some great books like *Knowing Scripture* by R. C. Sproul that you might want to look at, and tons of other books like that that can really help you see how the Bible came together. What I want you to realize is that all the authors of all the books of the Bible written over all of those centuries, they keep talking about the same thing over and over and over again. They talk about a personal God who created us. Who chooses us, who loves us, who pursues us.

They talk about a just God, who demands perfection and clearly explains what He means by perfection. It talks about a holy God, a God who's not superhuman or just like a higher form of one of us, but actually a whole different being. A being so outside of ourselves that it's one God in three persons. The names that are used to try to describe God throughout the Bible, there are literally hundreds of different ways that God is referred to in the Bible just in an effort to describe who He is.

The authors talk about a powerful but a temperate God, a God who made everything and holds it together moment by moment. The Bible talks about a redemptive God, a God who satisfies his own sense of justice on our behalf by substituting his own Son to pay the penalty for us.

This is the story of the Bible. It's remarkably consistent. First and foremost the Bible tells us who God is, and what God wants, and what God did. There's a famous theologian of the 20th century named Carl Henry, and he gives a great one sentence explanation of what the Bible is. He wrote this series of books that takes a big space on your shelf, it's called God, Revelation and Authority. He puts forth a series of theses or arguments about setting up a systematic theology. He writes a great thesis, thesis 11 is this. He says, in fact I think I have it up here.

"The Bible is the reservoir and conduit of divine truth. The authoritative written record and exposition of God's nature and will."

"The reservoir and conduit of divine truth, the authoritative written record and exposition of God's nature and will." This would be a great big idea if any of us could actually remember it. I've made it easier. Okay?

Here's the big idea. "The Bible guides me to the truth. Every time." The Bible guides me to the truth. Every time. That's our big idea, that's what Carl Henry was saying. We're going to look at three ways that the Bible guides us to truth.

The first way is that the Bible guides us to a right view of the world, the Bible guides us to a right way to live, and the Bible guides us to new affections. To a right view of the world, a right way to live, and to new affections.

Let's start with looking at a right view of the world. If you have a Bible, turn to Genesis 2, and let me show you an example of how the Bible guides us to a right view of the world. You may have heard me say this before, but let me say it again. The Bible perfectly explains why the world works the way it works. If you're wondering why evil exists, why anybody would ever do anything selfless, why it's hard at work, why marriage is so difficult and what it takes to make it successful. You can't think of a question or a problem that you can come up with that the answer to it is not in the scriptures.

Let me give you an example from Genesis 2. Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 give us probably the greatest explanation of how the world works at a foundational level. Genesis 2. If you start at Genesis 2:15, you see this verse. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." To work it and keep it. This is before the fall. A lot of people say, "The work is the result of the fall." No, work is the result of God's design. Why do guys like to work? Why do guys like to accomplish things? Because that's how God made us. God took Adam, put him in the garden to work it and keep it. Then verse 18, "Then the Lord God said, 'It's not good that the man should be alone.'" It's not good that men should be alone. Men who are alone turn into the Unabomber. Right? Men who are alone turn into people that are not good for very much, sometimes violent and scary.

Men need to be with somebody. We know this, we need to be in relationship with each other. Many of us find a completeness in being married. Then go down to verse 24, "Therefore man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh." We get a picture of what a marriage looks like when a marriage works well. It's the husband and wife becoming one flesh. Then

chapter 3. I think Genesis 3 probably does more to explain why the world works the way it works than any other chapter in the Bible. We have this story, right? "The serpent was more crafty than any other beast in 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?'" Here we see the way that Satan works, and even the way that our flesh works. We take things that we know to be true, and then we twist them. We twist them to our own needs, to our own desires.

You see this all around you. Have you ever had a conversation with somebody and they use your words against you? You're like, "I didn't mean that. That's not what I said." Yet they're quoting back to you exactly what you said. If you have teenagers, you've definitely had this experience. Right? Why does the world work like that? The Bible shows us. This is how it works. This is exactly how it works. Our words get twisted around. The woman says, "We can eat of the fruit of the trees of 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. The serpent said to the woman, and I think this was his tone too, "You will not surely die. Come on." Again, teenager. "That's not going to happen."

"God knows when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you will be like God knowing good and evil. The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that it was desired to make one wise. She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her." The knucklehead. Standing there the whole time watching it happen. How often do we do that? How often do we just stand there and watch bad things happen? Things that we know aren't right. How many marriages would be better if a guy would step up when he sees his wife headed down a path that's not the right path for her? How many marriages would be better if when one or the other of the spouses gets engaged in a situation or in a problem, the other one doesn't just go, "Oh, I wonder how you're going to do with that one?"

We don't. We don't step in. The Bible tells us right from the start with Adam and Eve, this is where the problem started was with the lie from a serpent twisting God's words, and then the, I don't know if you'd call it cowardice or just apathy of a man standing there watching it all happen.

"Then the eyes of both were open, they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and they made themselves loin cloths. They heard this sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." What do men do when they get in trouble? They isolate. Right? They hide. Just like the Bible says. "The Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

Up until this point, God has been a creator. He's been this powerful creator of the heavens and the earth. He's been this assigner of task to the role of men and to the role of a woman. A woman is there to be a help mate, someone that's beside the man working in conjunction with him. Now we see a new part of God, we see God the pursuer. Where are you? Did God know where he was? Yeah, he knew where he was. Did he know what he'd done? Yeah, he knew what he had done. That's what a pursuer does, a pursuer comes after you. A pursuer comes after you, and that's the God that we worship.

He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked." You have shame come into the world. Right? Guilt was there when they bit the apple, but shame comes and it makes you hide from God. There's a difference. Guilt is like a legal standing, you either did something or you didn't do something. Shame is the result of guilt. When you decide instead to step into it and repent and ask

for forgiveness, and then the guilt is removed. Shame says, "No, I'm going to keep my guilt, thank you very much." It's too scary to be honest, so instead I'll just keep my guilt.

You see people like this around you? If they would just confess, if they would just say, "This is what I did," people would go, "All right. We can deal with that." Your kids, how many of you have had a kid that just looked you in the eye when you knew what they had done, and they just stuck to their guilt. Just like the Bible says. It's just like the Bible says. I love God's answer. "Who told you you were naked?" Who told you that that was even a problem? Right?

Again, we take things that are normal and natural and we twist them around and we make them bad, just like the scriptures say we do. "Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?" Then the man said, "The woman who you gave me, like I'm going to blame everybody I can and not take responsibility, gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate." I feel like he's saying, "That woman you gave me, and the serpent, they tied me up, held me down and shoved fruit down my throat." That's almost the tone here, right?

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" She blames the serpent. Adam blames the woman and God, and then Eve blames the serpent, and nobody wants to take responsibility for anything. It perfectly explains how the world works. Then God curses the serpent first, then he curses the woman. The curse for the woman, the childbirth curse, that's just the appetizer. The worst curse is the last part of it. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. Poor ladies. You're trying to figure out, well I don't understand this. Why would a woman stay in an abusive relationship? Because her desire is for her husband and he will rule over her. It's the consequence of sin.

For the man, because you've listened to the voice of your wife and not what? Not God, because you've chosen to listen to your wife and not to me, it's not about the wife, it's about Adam, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life, thorns and thistles that shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, verse 19, you shall eat bread. Now, did Adam have a job before? Did he have work before? Did he harvest the grain before, did he make bread before? Yeah, absolutely. Only now it's by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. What we see is the Bible explaining what happened to the world. The world was supposed to work a certain way, and sin corrupted it.

When you understand the Bible, you understand the corruption of sin. You understand how it takes everything that God made that was good, and it tainted it. The thing you have to remember about sin is this. We tend to think about sin as the actions that we engage in, like, "I sinned. I did a sin." That is sin, but sin is much more pernicious than that.

Sin isn't just the actions that we do, sin is the consequences of the corruption of God's creation. Childbirth didn't used to be hard. Anybody been in the room when a baby was born? Not so good, huh? Even with drugs. Now the sweat of our brow is what it takes for us to accomplish anything. You see the work, that was a good thing, becomes corrupted. It becomes hard, and even more than that, men start worshiping things other than God. They worship their wives, like Adam did. They worship their kids, they worship their work. The Bible perfectly explains how the world works. It gives you a right view of the world right from the very start.

Let me give you a New Testament example of this. Flip over to Ephesians and look at Ephesians chapter two in the first three verses. "You were dead and the trespasses and sins in which you once walked." Now listen to this. "Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air." Who's that? Prince of the power of the air? Satan, right? "The spirit that is not working the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind." The world, the flesh and the devil. This is the passage that we get that concept from that we fight against three things that are pulling us away from God. The world is telling us how we should live our life, right? Satan's whispering in our ear telling us how we should live our life, and then our own flesh is desiring of that.

James talks about the cycle of sin, the cycle of temptation and the language that he uses is that sin is like a, he uses fisherman talk, sin is like bait dangling in the water. Why does bait work? Because we want to eat what the bait is. Nobody's baiting guys with pictures of broken down cars, they're baiting us with Corvettes and Lamborghinis, right? Our flesh is attracted to it, but inside that bait is what? Is a hook, is death, James says. The Bible perfectly explains the way the world works, guys. If you're wondering why it's so hard, it's hard because of corruption. It's hard because of sin. It's all in here. If the Bible gives us a right view of the world, it's guiding us to truth, right? This is our big idea, the Bible guides me to the truth every time.

The Bible also then gives us a right way to live. A right way to live. Think of the greatest struggles that men face. Think of just about any issue that's in your life that you're struggling with. Let's take money, okay? Jesus talks about money in the gospels more than anything else. There are 2350 verses in the entire Bible about money, that's what Howard Dayton said. In fact, you can go to this website right here, I made a little website, tinyurl.com/moneyverses, and there are all 2350 verses organized by topic. If you're struggling with money, or if you don't want to struggle with money, download that from Crown Ministries and you can see all the different verses organized by topic about money. The Bible helps us figure out how to live life the right way.

What does the Bible say about money? Well, Deuteronomy 10:14 reminds us that it's all God's. "Behold to the Lord your God, belong heaven in the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it." It reminds us that everything comes from him, in verse Chronicles 29:14 it reminds us what our responsibilities are with money. Helping the poor, supporting the work of missionaries and the church, providing for our families. Even investing wisely. All of these principles about money are all throughout the Bible. Dave Ramsey, Howard Dayton, these guys have made a ministry, a mission of their life about helping families use their money effectively. Using nothing but Biblical wisdom, and people that follow those principles, their finances are in good shape. If you follow the principles.

What about marriage? Genesis tells us that a husband and wife are like one flesh. If you're going to live like your wife is one flesh with you, how do you treat your body? You don't ignore it, you don't push it aside, you don't make other things a higher priority than that. Like we've said here, like Pat has said, after God but before all others, make your wife your top priority. Why does he say that? Because that's what the scripture says. It says we're one flesh. It says to wives, submit to your husbands, but it also says to husbands love your wives like Christ loved the church. Hey, she has to submit, we have to die. I'm a feminist today. Yeah.

You understand what I'm saying? The Bible's not one sided, it gives all of us a right way to live, a right way to view things so that we make the decisions that make our lives better. This is what it means to pursue Biblical manhood. What about parenting? The Bible gives us all kinds of admonitions about

proper discipline. Spare the rod, spoil the child. It also says don't exasperate your children. You can go all throughout scriptures, you can see the way that God treats his children, us, and you can see the admonitions that the Bible has. All throughout proverbs, all throughout Paul's letters, and Peter says the same kinds of things. The way that we're supposed to treat our families, it's all in the book.

There's literally no problem or dilemma that I can think of that you can face that you cannot find at least a Biblical principle that can help you make the best choices in that area. The Bible contains the wisdom you need, it guides you to the right way to live. The Bible guides me to the truth, and it does it every time.

The third thing is that the Bible does is that it guides us to new affections. It guides us to new affections. There's something about God's Word that illustrates its power. The power of the scriptures is that it is actually the living Word of God.

I like to read. I read a book, sometimes I'll read a book twice. After that, I'm like, I'm done with it. There's passages that I read in the Bible that every time I read them I get something new out of them. How is that? I read a story in a book, or even a non-fiction book about some business principle or something, and it says the same thing every time. No matter how many times I read it, it always says the same thing. Yet the words don't change in the Bible, but my understanding of what it means gets deeper and deeper and deeper every time. There is no logical explanation for that. It's just the power of the Spirit of God in the book.

When you spend time in the Bible, you change. Look at Galatians five. When you spend time in the Word and when you spend time in the presence of God, something happens to you. Look at Galatians 5:22. This is a pretty famous passage, this is the fruits of the spirits passage. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control against such things there is no law." Let me tell you what this is not. This is not a list of things to aspire to. You cannot aspire to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control in your own power. What you can do is you can spend enough time in the Word, enough time in the presence of God.

This is the *fruits of the spirit*. It doesn't say the fruits of good old fashioned hard work are. The fruits of you trying as hard as you can to be holy and righteous and good. It's not about you. When you spend time in the Word, the affections of your heart begin to change. You're struggling with your marriage, spend time in the Word. God will start to change your heart. You've got a problem child? Spend time in the Word. God will start changing your heart towards your child. You've got an enemy? You've got a problem with anger or sadness? Spend time in the Word, and God will start to change your heart. Spend time with people who can point you to the Word, and God will start to change the affections of your heart.

The Bible guides us to the truth every time. Let me share one final thought as far as a Bible verse goes, and then we're going to go to the tables. This is James 1:22 to 25, he says this. "But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror, for he looks at himself and goes away at once and forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

The Bible guides me to truth, every time. I want to show you a couple things really quick here. I want to really encourage you to get into the Bible and then as you get into the Bible, you're going to want to learn more about it. You're going to want to learn more how to use it. Let me show you a couple of books. One is this book by Donna Whitney called *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. If you want some good practical tools for how to get into the Word, the first couple of chapters, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* is a great book to read. If you want to talk about a book that has pulled out verses on lots of different topics, this book is called *Godly Counsel*, and it's by Brian Campbell in collaboration with the Reverend Jim Angelakos. Jim has helped to put a book together that goes through and grabs several hundred scriptures, again putting them topically. You need to study the Bible, but you might also look for books that can help you understand scripture even better, because the Bible guides us to truth every time. We need to know how to understand it.

Father, thank you so much for your word. It inspires us, Lord, it informs us, it educates us, it trains us and it changes us. Father, I pray that over the next few minutes here and then throughout the rest of this weekend and this next week, that you would draw us, you would compel us into your scriptures, Lord. That we would have a hunger and a thirst to know you better through what you've revealed through your Word. Father, be with us over the next few minutes, Lord, and bless our time together in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, let me say this, guys, sort of as a final word. I just want to remind you that the Bible relentlessly points to God while the world relentlessly points us back to ourselves. The problem with the world's view is that deep and down inside of our own mind, heart and soul, we all know that we are an inadequate source of wisdom and truth. In other words, we know that we don't know. In fact, if we're honest, we know that we can't know on our own. We need the wisdom of God. So let me take you off the hook. Your feelings of inadequacy, they're not weakness, they're honesty. Focus on the truth that God reveals in His scripture. You will live the life that you want to live.

Let me say a quick prayer for us, and then I just want to recognize the first-timers after I do that, so hold your seats just for a second.

Father, teach us through your scripture, draw us close to Yourself, help us, Lord, to love being in your Word. Make it compelling to our hearts and our minds, Lord, so that we will study it and learn it and live it with all our strength. In Jesus' name, amen.