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**Biblical Manhood Module**

Facilitator’s Notes

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**The Biblical Definition of Manhood**

**33 The Series Vol. 1**: **A Man & His Design**

**Session 3**: **Manhood Definition** (34 minutes)

**Presenter**: **Tierce Green**

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**Synopsis of the Biblical Manhood Module**:The two primary goals for the Biblical Manhood Module are: (1) To implement the biblical definition of manhood (RALI) into your life. (2) To help you to discern both God’s general will and his specific will for your life.

**Synopsis of this Session**:In this lesson, we will examine the life of Jesus and discover how he lived out the mandate to “create” and cultivate” in the three specific areas of responsibility that God has given man. We will also build a clear and compelling definition of biblical manhood that will answer once and for all the question, “What does it mean to be a real man?”

**Session Introduction**

In many cultures, there is a formal celebration to mark the transition from boyhood to manhood. In our culture, there is no such line of demarcation. Therefore, it is imperative that we define what it means to be a biblical man in clear terms by which we can evaluate progress on the journey to manhood.

If your child or grandchild were to ask you to describe a real man, what would you say? Today’s session provides a biblical definition of manhood to guide our thinking.

In the opening chapters of the book of Genesis, we learn that:

1. God designed man to follow His example and to **LEAD**, specifically by creating and cultivating. Whatever we **create**—a marriage, family, ministry, business, friendship, etc.—God expects us to **cultivate** what we have created that it may develop, grow, mature, and expand.
* God created men to be doers—to take action.
* God has placed in our DNA both the desire and the ability to lead by creating and then by cultivating what we have created.
* God **modeled** what a real man should be in Genesis chapter 1 and **mandated** biblical manhood in Genesis chapter 2.
* One of the reasons Jesus came to earth was to model biblical manhood for us.
* The Great Mandate for man is to “create” and “cultivate” and in this lesson we hope to demonstrate how we can become the man God created us to be and the man deep down in your heart that you want to be.
1. The type of manhood God created us to live cannot be done with our **SELF-EFFORT**.
* The largest section in almost every bookstore is the “Self-Help” section. This is very misleading for the things that are wrong in our lives cannot be fixed by our own efforts no matter how noble they are. In short, we cannot fix ourselves.
* Jesus wants to be your Savior but he also wants to be your source of strength to live the life we were designed to live. (Jn. 10:10; Phil. 4:13)
* Men do not need a list of rules to follow or a religion to belong to. Only a real, vibrant, and growing relationship with Jesus Christ can provide the fuel we need to live out authentic manhood.
* The gospel is the missing link of biblical manhood and in fact, changes everything including our masculinity.
* To perpetually have the power we need to live a Christ honoring life we must “abide in Christ” daily. (Jn. 15:4-8)
* You might want to play the Sanctus Real video from YouTube—“Lead Me” Lord so that I can lead my family (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLr6G8Xy5uc>) – 4 Minutes.

The lyrics are:

I look around and see my wonderful life, Almost perfect from the outside.
In picture frames, I see my beautiful wife, Always smiling, but on the inside,
Oh, I can hear her saying:

**Chorus**

Lead me with strong hands, Stand up when I can't.
Don't leave me hungry for love, Chasing dreams but what about us.
Show me you're willing to fight, That I'm still the love of your life.
I know we call this our home, But I still feel alone.

I see their faces, look in their innocent eyes, They're just children from the outside,
I'm working hard, I tell myself, They'll be fine, they're independent.
But on the inside, Oh, I can hear them saying:

**Chorus**

So Father, give me the strength, To be everything I'm called to be.
Oh, Father, show me the way to lead them, Won't You lead me?

To lead them with strong hands, To stand up when they can't.
Don't want to leave them hungry for love, Chasing things that I could give up.
I'll show them I'm willing to fight, And give them the best of my life.
So we can call this a home.

Lead me, cause I can't do this alone, Father, lead me, cause I can't do this alone.

* We cannot just play defense in life (reacting when we sin)—we must also play offense (practicing the spiritual disciplines in conjunction with a *Life Plan*).

The Biblical Definition of Manhood.

**Man’s Three Areas of Responsibility**

In the book of Genesis, God gave man the blueprint of authentic masculinity. God gave man three specific leadership responsibilities as he “creates” and “cultivates.”

1. God gave man a **WILL** to obey.
* Adam was not placed in the Garden of Eden to figure out what was right and wrong on his own. God dictated to Adam what was right and wrong. God commanded Adam to enjoy the fruits of this garden but restricted him from eating from one tree. God specifically said, “…but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” (Gen. 2:17 ESV)
* When God spoke to Adam, he gave him a will greater than his own to obey.
* The same is true for us today. God has not abandoned us and left us to decide what is right and wrong. We are not left to figure it out based on what we think, what we feel, or by what our culture accepts as right and wrong.
* God gave man a will to obey.
1. God gave man a **WORK** to do.
* God gave Adam work to do. Man was given the responsibility to name the animals (Gen. 2:18-20), cultivate the ground (Gen. 2:15), and subdue the earth. (Gen. 1:28)
* Work is not a curse. It cannot be because God himself is shown in the Scriptures to work. (cf. Gen. 1:1—2:25; Ex. 20:11; 31:17; Jn. 4:34; 5:17)
* Work allows man to follow God’s example to “create” and “cultivate.”
* God gave man a work to do.
1. God gave man a **WOMAN** to love.
* God said that it was **not** good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:15), so God created Eve (Gen. 2:18)—a companion for intimacy and fellowship (Gen. 2:18,20) as they enjoyed their walk with God together.
* Paul Tripp made this astute observation, “Marriage is not about our happiness but our holiness.” In other words, marriage is a holy institution to make two sinners more like Christ.
* Never forget that the woman God gave us to love exemplifies the relationship between Christ and the Church. (Eph. 5:25-33)
* God gave man a woman to love.

Man’s Three Areas of Responsibility.

**The First Adam & The Second Adam**

In this session, we will compare and contrast the two primary captains of humanity—Adam from the book of Genesis and Jesus from the New Testament.

1. The Bible describes **JESUS** as the second Adam.

Paul the apostle wrote:

“For if, because of one man’s trespass [Adam], death reigned through that one man [Adam], much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ … 19 For as by the one man’s disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s [Jesus] obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Rom. 5:17,19 ESV)

* Through Adam, sin entered the world, but through Jesus Christ **RIGHTEOUSNESS** entered the world.
* One man’s example—Adam’s is worth rejecting and one man’s example—Jesus’ is worth following.
* Jesus **FULFILLED** the responsibilities of the first Adam, who failed miserably.
* Jesus came to redeem all things including our masculinity.
* Simply put, Jesus came to perfectly fulfill the three mandates given to Adam who did not take them seriously and as a result, by the third chapter of the book of Genesis, had failed miserably in all three areas of responsibility. Adam had not fulfilled God’s will, he had not pursued the work God had given him to do, and he had not protected the woman God gave him.
* In contrast to Adam’s failures, Jesus fulfilled the will of God for his life (Mt. 26:39; Jn. 6:38; 14:31), he completed the work God had given him to do (Jn. 17:4), and he loved his bride (the church) even to the point of death. (Eph. 5:25-33)
* The Scriptures paint a marked contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam—Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul penned these words:

“Thus it is written, the first man, Adam became a living being; the last Adam [Jesus Christ] became a life-giving spirit … 47 The first man [Adam] was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man [Jesus Christ] is from heaven.” (1 Cor. 15:45,47 ESV)

* In Adam’s disobedience, we see the weakness of man. Essentially, Adam had only one command to obey and he couldn’t even do that.
* In Christ’s obedience, we see the strength of God to obey all commands perfectly.
* In Adam—we all die physically and spiritually. In Christ—we all can live!
* To be that man you want to be—you must come to Christ in order to receive his perfect righteousness and the desire to live a Christ honoring life.
* If you don’t come to Christ, you will constantly be running from him because you constantly sin. But after you come to Christ, finding forgiveness for all sin and being free from all condemnation, it is easier to run to him every time you realize that you have sinned.
1. Every man will walk in the shadow of one of these two men—Adam or Christ.
* Your life will be marked by the darkness and death of the first Adam or the light and life of the second Adam—Jesus Christ.
1. The first Adam chose “**CONVENTIONAL**” manhood. It is a manhood based on personal instinct, human reason, and human reaction.
* “Conventional” manhood takes from life and gives nothing back.
* “Conventional” manhood is self-made and self-centered and does not live in light of eternity.
* When Adam sewed the fig leaves into an apron to cover his nakedness (Gen. 3:7), he thought that he had it all figured out. “Conventional” manhood shouts, “I got this. I’m a smart guy. I got it all figured out.”
* Thankfully, we don’t have to follow the example of the first Adam!
1. Jesus is the example of “**AUTHENTIC**” manhood.
* We need a clear and compelling definition of manhood that we can live out ourselves and a path that we can call other men to follow. Jesus provides that example (1 Pet. 2:21) and the path (Jn. 14:6).
* As fathers, we must be able to describe for our sons and daughters what a biblical man looks like through our personal example.
* We must continuously challenge our sons to become a biblical man.
* We must continuously challenge our daughters to seek a biblical man as their life partner.

It is said that General Robert E. Lee’s daughters, when seeking their life partners, had a difficult time finding a man who would measure up to the example of their father. May the same be said of our daughters.

* How does the example of Robert E. Lee contrast to today’s “conventional” man?

The First Adam & the Second Adam.

**A Compelling Definition of Authentic Manhood**

The following four defining components comprise the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood. The first of these four defining components of authentic manhood is:

1. Reject **PASSIVITY**.

Moses recorded these words:

“So when the woman [Eve] saw that the tree [of the knowledge of good & evil] was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes … she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to **her** **husband** [Adam] who **was** **with** **her**, and he ate.” (Gen. 3:6 ESV)

* + Adam was passive in the garden. When Eve was tempted to disobey God, Adam stood beside his wife as she spoke with the serpent and he said nothing and did nothing.
* Adam did not jump out of the bushes and cut the head of the snake off—he took a cowardly stance.
* While Eve committed the sin of commission—she actively sinned—Adam committed the sin of omission—he did nothing. Adam was a passive male.
* In a word, Adam was spiritually “drifting.”
* Today, we must not live in the shadow of Adam but instead battle against passivity with action, energy, & intentionality.
* We must have both a plan and systems in place in our lives or we too will stand idly by. MD5 is here to help you with this.
* We must reject the example of Adam follow the example of Jesus!
	+ Jesus rejected passivity.
* In the Garden, Adam looked like a man but responded like a little boy. Adam embraced passivity, refused to take responsibility for his actions, and changed the world in a way that required the death of God to fix it.

On the other hand, Jesus rejected passivity. The apostle Paul described Jesus’ actions in these words:

“Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God [the Father], did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Phil. 2:5-9 ESV)

* In the manger, Jesus looked like a little boy but was in fact the God-man come to earth to do the will of his father in heaven. Jesus rejected passivity, took responsibility, and changed the world.
* All men live in the “dark” shadow of Adam’s sin but we have the opportunity to live in the “bright” shadow of the righteousness of Christ.

The **first** of four defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is to **reject passivity**.

The second of the four defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is:

1. Accept **RESPONSIBILITY**.

Adam failed in the three specific responsibilities that were given to him by God. On the other hand, Jesus embraced all three of these responsibilities. For example:

* + Jesus accepted responsibility for a **WILL TO OBEY**.
* Adam disobeyed the will of God because he thought that God was withholding something valuable from him. (Gen. 3:5,6)
* Jesus accepted the personal responsibility to obey God.

Jesus himself declared:

“My [Jesus’] food is to do **the will of him** [God the Father] who sent me and to accomplish his work.” (Jn. 4:34 ESV; cf. 4:34)

The innermost desire of Jesus’ heart was to obey the will of the father. It was the food that nourished his soul.

Jesus accepted responsibility for a will to obey. Secondly:

* + Jesus accepted responsibility for a **WORK TO DO**.

Jesus also could rightfully say:

“**I** [Jesus] glorified you [God the Father] on earth, having **accomplished the work that you gave me to do**.” (Jn. 17:4 ESV)

* Wouldn’t it be wonderful to come to the end of your life and honestly say before both God and man, “I have accomplished the work that you gave me to do.”
* This will happen if you accept the personal responsibility to live a Christ honoring life.

Jesus accepted responsibility for a will to obey, a work to do, and finally:

* + Jesus accepted responsibility for a **WOMAN TO LOVE**.

The apostle Paul pointed to Jesus as the ultimate example of a husband loving his wife when he penned these words:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Eph. 5:25 ESV)

* Although Jesus was not married, he did have a bride—the saints of God.
* How did Jesus demonstrate his love for his bride?
* He sacrificed his life for her.
* How can a husband demonstrate his love for his wife? By sacrificially serving her. By sacrificing his own needs on the altar of love for his wife.

The **second** of four defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is to **accept responsibility**.

The third of the four defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is:

1. Lead **COURAGEOUSLY**.
	* Adam failed to lead in the garden. Men were created to lead and Adam didn’t.
* He abandoned his post of leading his wife.
	+ Jesus, the second Adam, led courageously by providing direction for others. He told His disciples “follow me.” (Matt. 4:19 ESV) Jesus led courageously and so should we!
* The apostle Paul said, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1 NIV)
* It should be abundantly clear to our wives, children, family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers that we are followers of Jesus Christ.
	+ Jesus led by providing protection for others. He said “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (Jn. 10:11 ESV)
* Jesus actively worked to protect others from harm.
* At times, he even worked to protect others from themselves.
	+ According to the apostle Paul, Jesus led by providing life for others: “The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam [Jesus] became a life-giving spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45 ESV)
* A cursory study of the life of Christ will lead one to conclude that Jesus was continuously giving life to other people.
* Jesus stated clearly, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (Jn. 10:10 ESV)

The **third** of four defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is to **lead courageously**.

The fourth and final defining components that make up the Bible’s definition of authentic manhood is:

1. **INVEST** Eternally.
* Contrast this to the world that only wants you to be a consumer—not an investor.
* We must invest in the here and now to receive an eternal reward in the by and by.

The first Adam invested in the temporary, choosing what would satisfy him in the moment—the fruit. Jesus invested in the eternal. Jesus lived in the moment but at the same time, he lived with eternity in view.

It was Jesus who said:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (Matt. 6:19-20 ESV)

While he lived on earth, Jesus was not building an earthly kingdom or climbing the corporate ladder. He was investing in the eternal—in the lives of others. He was actively serving others, sharing truth, and leading other men to change the world.

* At the end of our lives, when we stand before God, it will not matter how rich we were, how famous we were, or a thousand other things. All that will matter is what we have invested in things of eternal significance.
* The things of eternal significance include things such as loving your wife, raising children to be disciples of Christ, serving others, loving others, protecting the weak, liberating the oppressed, and leading others to a saving relationship with Christ.

A Compelling Definition of Manhood.

**Conclusion**

In this session, we are challenging each of you:

1. To become an authentic man.

In our biblical definition of manhood, we have said that a “biblical” man:

* + Rejects passivity.
* Men, we must resolve today to stop “drifting” and start investing in the lives of others.
* We must become men of action.
* Accepts responsibility.
* Men, we must with intentionality accept the personal responsibility for a will to obey, a work to do, and a woman to love.
* Leads courageously.
* We must lead courageously our families, church, and communities for the benefit of others.
* We must become a life giver to others by sacrificially living to meet their needs.
* Invests eternally.
* We must invest eternally in others and the kingdom of God to store up real treasures in heaven. (Matthew 6:20)

These four points create a definition of Authentic Manhood worth living for. As we said earlier, we live in Adam’s dark shadow of sin but we have access to the light of Jesus Christ who illuminates a new path (eternal life).

These four points further provide a great filter for disciplining/training our children. When a young son forgets to take out the garbage, we challenge him on the basis that he failed to “accept responsibility” which is what a real man would do.

1. To develop a dependence on the Lord—on the **LIFE-GIVING** spirit of Jesus to fuel your journey. Jesus said it succinctly, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (Jn. 15:5 ESV)

The apostle Paul wrote these words: “Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.” (1 Cor. 16:13) The words “act like men” could also be correctly translated as “be men of courage.”

* To say that men should be “vulnerable” seems to have a connotation of “weakness.” Yet, being vulnerable requires tremendous courage.
* For MD5 to have an impact on our lives, we need to be both vulnerable (courageous) and be really honest with ourselves about ourselves.
* In Carl Sandberg’s biography of Abraham Lincoln, he described our 16th president as “steel and velvet.” President Lincoln was both strong and tender—rare but essential qualities in a biblical man.

**Looking at the Real Life Discipleship Wheel**, **where would you rate yourself on becoming a biblical man? An infant, child, young adult, or a parent? Why did you choose this level of maturity?**

**The Biblical Definition of Manhood**

**Discussion Questions – *Life Plan* Opportunities**

1. In this session, we have talked about “drifting.” **Contrast** “**rejecting passivity**” **with drifting.**
* The dictionary defines “drifting” as: “moving passively or aimlessly.”
* “Drifting” is not the result of a blowout—it is a slow leak. Often a flat tire is not the result of a blowout, but an almost imperceptible amount of air leaking out every day over a period of time. Then, one day, you start to get in your vehicle and discover a tire is flat.
* Our lives are like that. We do not get up one day and decide to cheat on our wife (a blowout!). But if we have been spiritually “drifting” over an extended period of time—we will wake up one day doing things we said that we would never do (the result of a slow leak).
* By “rejecting passivity,” we will take the appropriate spiritual action and stop the process of spiritual “drifting.”
	+ **In What areas of your life can you eliminate drifting by rejecting passivity?**
1. “**Accepting responsibility**” typically grades extremely high on the MD5 personal assessments. **Why do you think that would be the case?**
* Remember that we have said that you can delegate or hire someone to do about 95% of the responsibilities in your life. There is about 5% only you can do.
* Our responsibility is to discover what the 5% is in your life and focus your life on those.
1. **Pick one of the 5 F’s then write a one sentence action to** “**lead courageously**.”

For example:

* + I will lead my **family** in prayer around the dinner table 4 times this week.
	+ I will lead my **friends** away from drifting by engaging 2 friends this week.
	+ I will lead my **family** on an afternoon walk 3 times this week.
1. **How are you** “**investing eternally**?”
	* Do you focus on investing instead consuming?
	* Are you focused on leading others closer to Christ?
* Do you have a specific person in mind in who’s life you can invest?
* Can you name two men that you would like to recruit to MD5?

**Homework Assignment**

Memorize the biblical definition of manhood that we have presented in this session. Have your sons and daughters memorize it as well. You will be held accountable for this definition in the future.

**Helpful Hint**

The acrostic “R.A.L.I.” may help you remember the four parts of our definition of biblical manhood.



**Finding the Will of God – Part 1**

Source: *Finding the Will of God in a Crazy Mixed-Up World*

**By Tim LaHaye**

**Synopsis of this Session**:God has created and then gifted each man of God to fulfill his unique purpose in each of our lives. This session focuses on God’s general will for all men and then practical instruction on how the biblical man can discover and fulfill God’s specific will for his life.

**Session Introduction**

**If you were given 5 interrupted minutes with Jesus, what would you ask him?**

* Might it be, “Lord, what is your will for my life?”
* The starting point in understanding God’s will for our lives is to define exactly what we mean by the term “God’s will.” The Greek word translated into English as “will” means, “What God wishes to be done by believers.” This Greek word implies “volition”—a personal desire to do that which God desires.

* Knowing and doing the will of God is a theme that is repeated throughout the Scriptures:
	+ Christ said that he came to do the Father’s will. (cf. Matt. 26:39; Jo. 4:34; Heb. 10:7)
	+ The psalmist said that he delighted in doing God’s will. (Psalm 40:8)
	+ Jesus taught his disciples to pray that God’s will be done on earth. (cf. Matt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2)
	+ Peter said that believers are to live for the will of God. (1 Pet. 4:2)
	+ The writer of the book of Hebrews said that God will equip believers to do the will of God (Heb. 13:21) and that he who does the will of God will be rewarded. (Heb. 10:36)
	+ The apostle Paul:
	+ Prayed that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. (Col. 1:9-12)
	+ Stated that believers are to understand what the Lord's will is. (Eph. 5:17)
	+ Admonished believers to do the will of God from their heart. (Eph. 6:6)
	+ Encouraged believers to “stand firm” in the will of God. (Col.4:12)
	+ John, the apostle, said that he who does the will of God lives forever. (1 Jn. 2:17)
* God desires that we do his will even more than we want to know it.
* In John 10:10, Jesus said He had come that we might have life—an abundant life or life to the full. This promise not only refers to eternity but to the here and now. To enjoy this abundant life, we must discover and obey God’s will for our lives. We can continue to seek to guide our own lives, which results in emptiness, or we can choose to pursue God and his will for our lives and live life to the fullest extent.
* The psalmist wrote: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:4 ESV) Seeking God’s will, as opposed to seeking our own, will result in having the desires of our heart met and finding peace, contentment, and satisfaction in the process.
* To find purpose in our lives, we must realize it all starts with God. (Prov. 16:9) It is the Lord who directs our steps. (Prov. 3:5-6)

**My Most Traumatic Decision**

Dr. Tim LaHaye stated that he had only one fear on this earth—getting out of the will of God. (p. 20) **Is this a fear that grips you from time to time**, **and**, **if so**, **what is your main concern?**

* “We can accomplish many things in this life, but if we fail to obey the commands of our creator, we have missed the mark.”—Steve Crawley
* “My greatest fear is that I will have wasted my life. I have only one life and I want to make it count for Christ.”—Jeff Swart
* The two greatest questions anyone could ever ask:
	+ Who are you Lord?
	+ What do you want me to do? (Acts 9:4-6)

In Jeremiah 29:12-13, the Lord provides a condition that must be met for us to find his will (or him more specifically—p. 22). **What is that condition?**

* We must seek him with all our heart. In other words, we must be serious about knowing and doing God’s will for our lives.
* A believer who has no desire to know or do God’s will is out of God’s will!

Our lives are full of decisions – major, moderate, and minor (p. 22-23):

* + **Major Decisions** – Will I be saved, what vocation will I choose, who will I marry, where will I attend college, will I commit to practicing the spiritual disciplines, etc. (p. 23)
	+ **Moderate** **Decisions** – Where shall I work, where will I live (city, country, & in which house), where I will attend church, who I want as my friends, how many children will I have, etc. (pp. 23-24)
	+ **Minor** **Decisions** – Which church service I should attend, which stores I will shop, when to purchase a new automobile and which exact one to buy, should I put my socks on first and then my jeans, etc. (p. 24)

**Which of these decisions should we bring to the Lord?** (p. 25)

* All decisions should be brought to God. (“Pray without ceasing” 1 Thess. 5:17)
* Jesus wants to be Lord over every aspect of our lives. (cf. Acts 2:36; 10:36)
* In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus reminds us that he feeds the birds, takes care of the lilies, and knows the number of hairs on our head. (pp. 25-26) **What realization does this bring to your mind?**
* If God cares for creation as he does, how much more will he take care of his children who are made in his image (Gen. 1:26-27).

My Most Traumatic Decision.

**What We Already Know About God’s Will**

**When we want to know God’s will about a particular situation, where do you start?** (p. 27)

* Ask, “What do I already know about God’s universal/moral will for me?” Until we understand and obey God’s known universal/moral will, we will never discoverhis particular will for our lives. Why should God show us his particular will when we are not following his universal/moral will that he has already revealed to us?

**Where do we learn about God’s will?** (p. 27)

* His Word. We challenge you to fill your mind with the word of God and the Holy Spirit will use the Word to reveal the will of God to you. We cannot know God’s will apart from God’s Word.
* It has been said that 95% of the things a believer needs to know has been revealed in the word of God.
* “You are exactly the same person you will be five years from now except for the people you meet and the books you read.”—Charlie “Tremendous” Jones This statement fits so very well concerning the Bible.
* The further we get from the word of God the more regrets we will eventually have. Every man will die with some regrets. How sad would it be for that regret to be not to know the word of God. As Roger often says, “When you come to the end of your life, make sure that you pour your regrets out of a thimble—not a dump truck.”

**Where in the Scriptures is a good place to start in discovering God’s universal/moral will?** (p. 28)

* The 10 Commandments. (Exodus 20:1-17)

In addition to the 10 Commandments, we are given six specific aspects of God’s universal/moral will. It is God’s will that:

* + 1. **You are SAVED**. (2 Pet. 3:9)—p. 28
		2. **You be controlled by his WORD and SPIRIT**. (cf. Eph. 5:18-21; Col. 3:16-17)—pp. 29-31. **How are we filled or controlled by the Spirit?**
* We are filled with the Spirit as we fill our minds with the word of God.
	+ 1. **You love God and SURRENDER to His will**. (pp. 31-34)
* It is his will that we obey the Great Commandment. (Matt. 22:37)
* It is also his will that we obey the Great Commission and become a spiritual parent. (Matt. 28:18-20)
* We learn from the Discipleship Wheel that children cannot give birth to new life and that only the spiritually mature can reproduce themselves in the lives of others.
	+ 1. **You live a SANCTIFIED** (holy) **life**. (1 Thess. 4:3-6)—pp. 34-36
	+ Abstain from sexual immorality. (Gal. 5:19-21)
	+ Possess your body in sanctification and honor. (1 Thess. 4:3)
	+ Deal honestly with others. (Heb. 13:18)
		1. **You OBEY legitimate authority** (cf.Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-15)—pp. 38-40
		2. **You be THANKFUL**. (1 Thess. 5:18)—pp. 40-41
* The purpose of the *Gratitude Journal* is to help us realize how God has blessed our lives. This realization will aid in developing a spirit of gratitude for all he has done for us.
* Write down three things that you are thankful for every day in your *Gratitude Journal*.
* Remember, complainers are not thankful!

While these are not an exhaustive list of God’s commands and principles, each command fits neatly into one of these categories. The better we know the word of God, the easier it is to discover his will for our life.

What We Already Know About God’s Will.

**God Has a Specific Will For Your Life**

* Why would God reveal his specific will for our lives if we are not obeying his universal or moral will?

**What was Paul’s prayer for the believers at Colossae?** (Col. 1:9-10)—p. 44

* He prayed that they may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.

**What is your purpose of being on this earth?** (pp. 46, 49-51)

* The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* asks this question, *“What is the chief end of man?”* Notice that the question is singular “*end*” and not plural “*ends*.” The question could be rephrased to ask, “*What is the single greatest purpose for man’s creation*?” The Catechism’s answer is, *“Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”* And how do we glorify God and enjoy Him forever? We discover God’s will for our lives, fulfill that will, and worship our Lord forever!
* The sole purpose of our existence is to glorify (honor) God.

**As we seek his will, why is it important that in** “**all our ways we acknowledge Him?**”(Pro. 3:5-6)—pp. 45-46

* Even if we are in the Word and seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, without a daily sacrificing of our “self-will,” we may begin to function independently of God.

**Identify several Bible characters that indicate God had a specific will for their lives**: (pp. 47-48)

* Adam (cf. Gen. 1:27-30; 2:15-17).
* Noah (Gen. 6:11-22).
* Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
* Moses (Ex. 3:1-10).
* David (1 Sam. 16:1-13).
* Zechariah (Lk. 2:5-25).
* John the Baptist (Lk. 2:13-17).
* Joseph (Matt. 1:18-24) and Mary (Lk. 2:26-38).
* Paul (cf. Acts 9:6,15; 13:2-4).
* Philip (Acts 8:26-29).
* Peter (Acts 10:9-24).

**Identify several historical figures over the past few centuries who discovered God’s will for their lives**: (pp. 48-49)

* William Carey
* D.L. Moody
* Charles H. Spurgeon
* James Madison
* John Witherspoon
* Bill Bright
* Billy Graham

**What is the key to success in fulfilling God’s will for your life?** (p. 50)

* Know his Word.
* Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.
* Finish today’s tasks.
* Then, God will guide us daily by opening the next door.
* God guides believers through an intimate relationship with himself. (cf. Ps. 25:9-10; 32:8; Isa. 30:21; 49:10b)

God Has A Specific Will For Your Life.

**The Bible: Your Road Map For Living**

Why are the lives of so many people, including Christians, a proverbial “train wreck?” (pp. 71-72)

* We rely on the wisdom of the world instead of the wisdom of God.
* The Bible is the most life altering book ever written. If we try to live without applying the principles and guidelines contained in God’s Word, it is like embarking upon a journey without a map. The Bible is truly a road map on how to live a life of obedience that will honor Christ.
* In the computer world, there is a saying, “Garbage in … Garbage out.” In other words, you only get out of a computer what has been programmed into the computer. Dr. John MacArthur states that there is a corollary to this in the spiritual realm, “Truth in … Truth out.” If we put the truth of God’s word into our minds, the truth of God’s Word will flow out of our lives.
* When we get in the Word, God’s will finds us!
* We begin to understand what the Father wants. For example, a disciplined child does not have to ask his father if he can play in the street—he already knows this would not be the will of his father.

We all want to be happy. God wants us to be happy. What is the key to lasting happiness? (joy)—pp. 73-74)

* For a believer, happiness comes through obedience to God’s Word. (Ps. 119:1-2) If we violate the principles outlined in his Word regarding life, we will be miserable. The Lord is the manufacturer of the human race—therefore, we must follow the manufacturer’s instructions (the word of God).

The “hunt-and-peck” system of referencing the Bible does not involve a thorough reading of God’s Word. **What is the danger of this system of referencing the Bible?** (p. 76)

* We may take a verse out of context and think we are hearing from God when we are really not.
* For example, a man was seeking direction for his life and so he decided that he would let his Bible fall open randomly, and then with his eyes closed, point to a verse of Scripture on the page where the Bible opened. Whatever the verse he pointed to told him to do, he would interpret that as a message from God and do what the verse said.

He opened his Bible and randomly put his finger down at, “… and went and hanged himself.” (Matt.27:5 KJV) He did not particularly like the message, so he tried again. This time he found, “… Go, and do thou likewise” (Lk. 10:37 KJV). In frustration, he quickly made one more effort, and read, “… that thou doest, do quickly.” (Jn. 13:27 KJV) In this case, carelessness in interpreting these verses of Scriptures would have led to the man’s physical death. There is no substitute for correct interpretation!

**Which five books of the Bible make up the wisdom literature?** (pp. 79-80)

* Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

**List five ways we can learn wisdom from the scriptures.** (pp. 80-81)

1. **HEAR** the Word. (Lk. 11:28)
2. **READ** the Word. (Rev. 1:3)
3. **STUDY** the Word. (2 Tim. 2:15)
4. **MEMORIZE** the Word. (Ps. 119:11)
5. **MEDITATE** on the Word. (Ps. 1:1-2)

**Finding the Will of God Pt. 1**



**Finding the Will of God – Part 2**

Source: *Finding the Will of God in a Crazy Mixed-Up World*

**By Tim LaHaye**

**Synopsis of this Session**:God has created and then gifted each man of God to fulfill his unique purpose in each of our lives. In this session, we will share eight road signs to help you discover God’s will for your life and make Christ honoring decisions from the writings of Dr. Tim LaHaye.

**Session Introduction**

Singers Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley both sang a song entitled, “*I Did it My Way.*” The song title says it all concerning how they lived their lives. John Wayne, movie actor and cultural model of American manhood, also took the “his way” approach to living when he said, “A man’s got to do what a man’s got to do.”

However, the biblical man declares with his words and his actions that “*I did it his way*”—actively seeking the will of God. Our quest for biblical manhood, does not start with us but with the Lord. He is the Creator—we are the created. It is futile to think we can be successful in this life doing it “our way” as opposed to doing it “his way.”

Today, we want to share with you from the writings of Dr. Tim LaHaye eight road signs to help you discover God’s will for your life and make Christ honoring decisions.

**Eight Road Signs For Decision Making**

* **Road Sign 1 – Surrender**.(pp. 86-89)

Dr. LaHaye asserts that we must first surrender to God’s will, before we even know what God’s will is, and only then will God reveal his will to a believer. (p. 86) **Why do you think that is?**

* Because God reveals his will to be obeyed not contemplated, negotiated, or compromised. I often say, “God is not Montee Hall and he is not playing, ‘Let’s Make A Deal.’”
* Someone who wants God to reveal his will before they agree to obey his will is not surrendered to God.
* Surrender is the foundation of God revealing his specific will to a believer.

**How do you think you can know if you are surrendered to doing God’s will?** (p. 87)

* If you are presently obeying what God has already revealed to you, it is a good indicator that you are surrendered to him and will obey future revelations of God's will.

Surrender.

* **Road Sign 2 – Prayer**. (pp. 89-90)

Read these Bible passages related to prayer as being essential part to knowing the will of God:

* + “Ask, and it will be given to you … ” (Matt. 7:7 ESV)
	+ “Let your requests be made known to God … ” (Phil. 4:6 ESV)
	+ “… asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ” (Col. 1:9-10 ESV)

**Why do you think God uses prayer as a means of knowing his will?** (pp. 89-90)

* Because prayer is the divinely appointed means of drawing closer to God. The closer we are to God, the clearer his will for our lives will be.
* In fact, we are as close to God as we want to be.

**What are things God might use to get our attention so that we earnestly seek him?** (p. 90)

* + Financial difficulties.
	+ Health problems (personal or family).
	+ Marital disharmony.
	+ Uncertainty (a lack of peace) about a change in life.
* Unanswered prayer may be an indicator that God wants us to spend more time with him.

Prayer.

* **Road Sign 3 – The Holy Spirit**. (pp. 91-93)

**What does John 14:16-31 and Romans 8:1-17,26,27 teach us about the Holy Spirit?** (pp. 91-92)

* When we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, the divine presence within, he will direct us to God’s specific will for our lives.
* The Holy Spirit is the believer’s counselor (Jn. 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:27), advisor, and teacher (1 Jn. 2:27).

**When the Holy Spirit is leading us**, **how should we expect it to impact us?** (p. 93)

* God’s Spirit will impress, burden, or nudge our human spirit to do something we might not otherwise do.
* The Holy Spirit often burdens me about a person, place, or thing; impresses me to do or say something; creates unusual situations in my life; brings people into my life; opens doors of opportunity, etc.
* Evangelist D.L. Moody said, “When you get a ‘burden’ to do something that doesn’t violate the scriptures, it is the will of God.”

The Holy Spirit.

* **Road Sign 4 – Circumstances**. (pp. 93-97)

**What is an example of a circumstance in our lives God may use to guide us in a particular direction?**

* An open door of opportunity (cf. 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Rev. 3:8)
* God gave the apostle Paul an open door of opportunity to enter Macedonia (northern Greece) in order to take the gospel to Europe. (Acts 16:6-10) Because Paul walked through this open door, the gospel was taken to Europe and eventually from Europe to America. We are saved today because Paul walked through an open door of opportunity!

Circumstances.

* **Road Sign 5 – Peace**. (pp. 97-99)

When God is leading us, we will experience peace in both our mind and in our heart.

**What does James 3:17 indicate about the wisdom of God?** (p. 97)

* God’s wisdom is both “pure” and “peaceable.”
* When the Lord is truly leading your life, you will have his peace.
* In Phil 4:7, the apostle declares that the Lord will give “peace” to both the believer’s heart and mind.
* In my life, peace is the key factor in deciding whether something is the will of God for my life or not.
* When there is no peace—I make no decision. Do not move until you have peace about a situation or you may make a mistake!

**According to 1 Jn. 5:14-15**, **when we pray and ask according to God’s will**, **we can pray with what?** (p. 97)

* When we truly discover God’s will for our lives, we will have fearless confidence or boldness to obey it.

**In Phil. 4:6-7, what comes to those who do not worry but pray and seek answers from God?** (p. 97)

* The peace of God.
* In this passage, Paul declared that an inner tranquility from the Lord (“the peace of God”) is superior (“transcends”) to the human intellect (“understanding”) because this inner tranquility (“peace”) will protect the center of all human desires, passions, and impulses (“hearts”) and the human mind which is the organ of understanding (“minds”). God’s inner tranquility (peace) will guard or protect our minds like a sentry on guard duty.

**LaHaye states that peace serves as an umpire when making decisions**. **How do you think this might play out?** (p. 98)

* In a baseball game, an umpire decides strikes, balls, outs, what is in bounds, and what is out of bounds.
* In a similar way, the Holy Spirit lets the believer know what is in bounds or what is out of bounds in his or her life by means of giving or withholding an internal peace.

**Do you think God cares about what type of car we drive or house we live in? Why or why not?** (pp. 98-99)

* The answer is both “yes” and “no.”
* I know for certain that God has provided certain vehicles and houses for me that were his specific will for my life.
* On the other hand, it seems that God leaves some choices up to our “sanctified” consciences If we meet several criteria: (1) We can afford to purchase a certain size house or make of car. (2) The motive for the purchase is not an effort to keep up with someone else.
* It has been correctly stated that we often “we buy things we don’t need, with money we don’t have, to impress people we don’t like.”
* It has also been said that “comparison is the thief of joy.”
* Paul stated that people who compare themselves, among themselves, are not wise (2 Cor. 10:12).
* Please do **not** compare your life to someone else’s life, family, house, cars, possessions, etc. to other peoples’.

Peace.

* **Road Sign 6 – Your Own Desires**. (pp. 99-101)

**What must preclude our own desires being used as a sign of confidence in knowing the will of God?** (cf. Ps. 37:4; Jn. 15:7,16; 1 Jn. 5:14-15)—(p.)

* A believer being surrendered to both God’s Word and God’s will.
* If we are surrendered, doing God’s will may be as simple as fulfilling the desires of your hearts.

**What did the Psalmist say regarding our desires in Ps. 37:4?** (p. 100)

* When we derive the highest degree of pleasure in life from our relationship with the Lord, God will honor us by giving us the very things that we desire in life the most.

Assuming our heart is right, the first indication of God’s will for your life is your desire to do it.

Your Own Desires.

* **Road Sign 7 – Godly Advice**. (pp. 101-107)

If we are making a major life decision, we should seek counsel. **What do you think should be the requirements for the ones in whom we seek counsel?** (p. 101)

* There are two ways to learn: (1) From the mistakes of others. (2) From our own mistakes. By seeking counsel from others, we can learn from their mistakes without experiencing the pain of making our own mistakes.
* We must avoid seeking advice from the unsaved or carnal Christians. (cf. Prov. 12:15; 13:10; 19:20; 20:18)
* Our counselors should be saved, spiritually mature, Spirit-filled, obedient, someone who gives counsel from the scriptures, etc. (Prov. 27:17)

**What does Prov. 11:14 teach concerning counselors?** (p. 103)

* It is wise to consult several godly counselors.
* The right counsel will save a believer from difficulty or unpleasantness.
* We certainly will make fewer mistakes in life.

Godly Advice.

* **Road Sign 8 – Common Sense**. (pp. 107-111)

**What are some terms used in the Bible to describe common sense?** (p. 108)

* + “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 2:2; 1 Pet. 4:7)
	+ “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7; Titus 2:12)
* This has often been referred to as “sanctified common sense.”

Dr. A.W. Tozer shares the following thoughts concerning the will of God in his book *How the Lord Leads* (pp. 108-109):

* + Except for things specifically commanded or forbidden, God allows us to be free to exercise our own intelligent choice.
	+ The shepherd guides the sheep but does not decide which tuft of grass in which they are to feed every moment.
	+ God is pleased when we are pleased, and His choice for us may allow one of many options.
	+ One totally surrendered to Christ cannot make a wrong choice.
	+ In those rare times where we cannot determine clear Scriptural instruction, we are to ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) who has promised to give it liberally.
	+ Take your problem to the Lord, remind Him of His promises, and then do whatever seems best to you. Either choice will be right. God will not permit you to make a mistake.

There may be rare cases where we feel led to do what seems to defy common sense. **In these situations**, **what might we expect?** (pp. 109-111)

* A special indication from the Lord.
* If the Lord reveals his will, we must obey even if at the time it does not make sense!

**How are using these eight** “**road signs**” **to find God’s will similar to using the instrumentation panel on an airplane to land in the fog?** (pp. 111-112)

* We must trust these “road signs” just as a pilot trusts his plane’s instruments to make a successful landing.
* When all eight of these “road signs” line up in a straight line, we know that we have received God’s “clearance” to land because we are properly approaching the “runway” to God’s will for our lives.

Common Sense.

Eight Road Signs For Making Decisions

**Don’t Make Snap Decisions**

**Why do you think it is dangerous for us to make hasty decisions as we are seeking God’s will for our lives?** (pp. 113-118)

* Because God is never in a hurry.
* When we get in a hurry, we are prone to make mistakes.

Don’t Make Snap Decisions.

**Double Check For Accuracy**

**When seeking God’s will**, **how might we double check for accuracy to affirm our decision?** (pp. 119-124)

* We can tell God what we believe his will to be and that we are going to obey what we understand by a certain date unless he changes our mind.

Double Check For Accuracy.

**What About The Fleece?**

**Have you ever used a** “**fleece**” **when seeking God’s will?** (pp. 125-129) **If so**, **describe the situation.**

Let us think through the following guidelines for using a fleece (pp. 127-128):

* + Use a fleece **SPARINGLY**.
	+ Use a fleece **PRAYERFULLY**.
	+ Save a fleece for **MAJOR** decisions, as the Spirit leads.
	+ Use a fleece to **CONFIRM** God’s will, not to find it.
	+ Make your fleece **SPECIFIC**.

What About The Fleece?

**Don’t Flunk The Faith Test**

When we make a decision, even if we feel we are in the will of God, we will be tested. **How should we respond?** (pp. 131-135)

* First, reexamine your decision to make sure that you have not been deceived and in fact are doing the will of God.
* Secondly, count the test as confirmation that you are in the will of God.
* With every commitment to God comes a test. It is like standing at the bottom of a flight of stairs. When we make a commitment to the Lord, we move up to step one. Then we are tested. If we pass the test, we move up to step two. If we fail the test, we move back down to the landing. Many believers are wearing the carpet out on the landing and the first step. They are going back and forth … back and forth. There is movement but there no spiritual growth.
* No matter what it costs you personally, stay the course of obedience as to what you understand the will of the Lord to be for your life. You will be eternally glad that you did!

Don’t Flunk the Faith Test.

**Finding the Will of God Pt. 2**

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**Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets**

Source: *Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets*

**by** **Andy Stanley**

**Synopsis of this Session**:Because life is filledwith countless choices and decisions, in this session, Andy Stanley shares five questions we need to ask ourselves as an aid to making good decisions.

As we near the end of the Biblical Manhood Module, we remind you of the two primary goals for this module: (1) To implement the biblical definition of manhood (RALI) into your life. (2) For you to know both the general and specific will of God for your life.

Everything we have covered thus far in MD5 is a series of questions that we should be asking ourselves that in reality act as a filter through which we make decisions. In fact, we should turn the biblical definition of a man (RALI) into the form of questions:

* Am I **rejecting** **passivity** in my life?
* Do I **accept** **responsibility** for my actions and reactions?
* Am I **leading** myself and others **courageously**?
* Am I **investing** **in** **the** **Kingdom** and carrying out the Great Commission?

Today, we want to focus on Andy Stanley’s book, *Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets* because life is filled with decisions and choices. To help you make better decisions, Andy Stanley shares 5 questions we need to ask ourselves:

* **The Integrity Question**: “Am I being honest with myself?”
* The **Legacy** Question: “What story do I want to tell?”
* The **Conscience** Question: “Is there a tension in my life that deserves my attention?”
* The **Maturity** Question: “What is the wise thing to do?”
* The **Relationship** Question: “What does love require of me?”

When faced with life’s decisions, and that when answered correctly, will lead to better decisions and fewer regrets. Simply put, the better the questions we ask—the better decisions we will make!

**Session Introduction**

You have never made a personal decision that did not become someone else’s business. Private decisions always have **PUBLIC** ramifications—especially to those closest to us. (p. 3)

* Every decision you make each day (even the smallest decisions) has the potential to affect more than just your life.
* Because our lives touch the lives of others (“No man is an island”—John Donne), the poor decisions that I make can impact the lives of others.
* But there is another side to that is coin—the good decisions I make can also impact the lives of many others.
* Simply put, our decisions become the steering wheels of our lives directing us to a destination.
* In the end, we are where we are in life because of the decisions we have made.
* Your decisions determine your legacy—your story.

Andy Stanley said, “… well-placed, appropriately timed, thought-provoking questions result in better decisions and fewer regrets.” (p. 3) Simply stated, good **QUESTIONS** lead to better **DECISIONS**. After someone has made a bad decision, it is not unusual to hear them say, “I should have asked more questions.” **Have you ever said this? If so, what were the circumstances?**

* Instinctively we know that the more questions we ask, the more information we have, which leads to greater insight, and hopefully, to better decisions.
* Dr. John Maxwell made this observation, “When I have **good** information, I make good decisions. When I have **bad** information, I make bad decisions. When I have **no** information, I make lucky decisions.”

There is no necessary correlation between knowing and **DOING**. (p. 5) There should be a correlation but there isn’t.

* Knowing what questions to ask, and then pausing to actually ask them, are two completely different things.
* Some knowledge is necessary for behavioral change but just because you possess that knowledge does not mean that you will use it to change your life.
* We think it is fair to say that most people whose life is a train wreck know what they should be doing but are simply **not** doing it.
* The apostle Paul confessed: **“**For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” (Rom. 7:15 ESV; cf. Gal. 5:16-18)
* Pastor and author Dr. John MacArthur often says that one key to life is found in the following three words: “Being, knowing, and doing.” “**Being**” saved gives you both the desire and power to make real life change. “**Knowing**” includes what to do and how to do it. And the “**Doing**” is the actual “doing” of what you “know.”
* Note the order of the three words. “**Being**” saved is the foundation of life, a certain level of “**Knowing**” is essential to making good life choices, and it is only in the “**Doing**” that we become effective for God.

**Chapter 1 – More Than A Decision**

Our bad decisions can impact us and our loved ones immediately, and well into the future. **Can you think of a bad decision that you made that impacted the lives of those closest to you? What was it?**

Most people do not learn from bad decisions because they are convinced their bad decisions were somebody else’s **FAULT**. (p. 8) **When Eve was confronted with her sin in the Garden, what was her response? What was Adam’s response?**

* Eve blamed the serpent for her sin when she said, “The serpent deceived me and I ate.” (Gen. 3:13 ESV)
* Adam’s excuse was even more unbelievable, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” (Gen. 3:12 ESV) Adam blamed both Eve and God for his sin.
* The bottom line is that God does not accept our excuses!

We all write the story of our lives one decision and one response at a time. Decisions made by your parents and grandparents determined the **TRAJECTORY** of your life. (p. 16)

* This includes the bad decisions of both our parents and grandparents as well as their good decisions.

**What are good decisions that other people make that can positively affect the trajectory of your life?**

**What are poor decisions other people make that can adversely affect the trajectory of your Life**?

**Discussion Question**

Your decisions shape the direction and quality of your life for good or bad. Those decisions tend to compound. **What does that statement mean?**

* One bad decision can lead to a second bad decision and then a third, fourth, and so on.
* On the other hand, one good decision can change the direction of your life and this one good decision can lead to a second good decision, and then a third, fourth, etc.
* The smallest decisions in the right direction over long periods of time create exceptional results. (i.e., a small change in your diet can lead to a change in your health, investing a small amount of money consistently over time can lead to financial freedom, etc.)

More Than A Decision.

**Chapter 2 – The Integrity Question: Am I Being Honest With Myself?**

The easiest person for you to deceive is the person you see every day in the mirror.

* Our fallen human nature has the ability to overlook our own faults.
* Our fallen human nature also finds it easier to hold other people to a standard that we excuse in ourselves. (Matt. 23:24)

**SELF-LEADERSHIP** is the greatest leadership challenge any of us face. (p. 20) Whether or not you want to be like your parents depends upon how well they led themselves, not what they required of or taught you. (p. 20)

* You will never be a leader worth following if you do not lead yourself well.
* Your self-leadership will also determine whether your own children will want to be like you. Think about that statement for a moment. This should be sobering!

Exceptional self-leadership, not authority, is the key to sustained influence. We rarely open ourselves up to the influence of people we do not respect, even if they have authority over us. (p. 20)

* Your “influence,” which is the succinct definition of “leadership,” will **not** last very long if you do **not** lead your own self well.
* Great leaders last because they lead themselves well.

You cannot **LEAD** yourself if you are **LYING** to yourself. (p. 21) If we cannot lead ourselves without lying, we will never be able to successfully lead others.

* If you lie to yourself about yourself, you will think more highly of yourself than is really true. You will think that you are doing a better job as a man, spouse, father, employee, or servant of the Lord than you really are.
* Our actions speak louder than our words because people pay more attention to what we do than to what we say.
* Lead Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church Jason Aultman often says, “Your talk talks, and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”
* Evangelist D.L. Moody is quoted as saying, “One man reads his Bible and 99 people read his life.” (2 Cor. 3:2)
* You have to earn the right to speak truth into the lives of others. You earn that right by living out in your daily life the things you say you believe.
* No lasting life change occurs in our life until we tell the truth to “the man in the mirror”—ourselves!

Bad **decisions** lead to bad **routines** and bad routines lead to bad **habits**.

* As sure as the sun comes up in the east, one bad decision can lead to a second bad decision etc. which eventually compounds into a lifetime of bad habits.
* And we might add, “… bad habits lead to bad character, and a bad character can lead to a bad eternal destiny.”

**“You can’t talk your way out of a problem you have behaved your way into.”**—Steven Covey

The kings of Judah are a good example. Kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah did not take the advice of God’s prophet Jeremiah. In this illustration, we see bad decisions, followed by bad behaviors, compound through a seed planted in the family by Jehoiakim.

**Jehoiakim**, king of Judah, rebelled against **Nebuchadnezzar**, the king of Babylon. ( The prophet **Jeremiah** warned King Jehoiakim not to do this—but he did not listen to God’s man (Jer. 6:16-19; 25:4-11). The armies of Babylon marched to Jerusalem and after a 3-month siege, they entered the city and took King Jehoiakim captive, blinded him, and then took him to the city of Babylon where he was paraded around as a trophy to the military superiority of Babylon (2 Kgs. 23:37; 2 Chron. 36:5; Jer. 22:18-19).

King Nebuchadnezzar then crowned Jehoiakim’s son **Jehoiachin**, as the new king of Judah. Jehoiachin only reigned three months and then he was captured and marched to Babylon the same as his father had been (2 Kgs. 24:8; 2 Chron. 36:9; Jer. 22:24-30).

King Nebuchadnezzar then appointed Jehoiachin’s uncle **Zedekiah** as the new king of Judah who rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar the same as King Jehoiakim had done and was given the same fate—blinded and taken to Babylon (Jer. 37:1; 39:5-7).

It was at this time that the prophet **Jeremiah** penned these sobering words, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9 ESV) All three of these kings, who were part of the same family, committed the same sins, with the same results.

* Our hearts can deceive us all. This is why at a later time you often don’t understand why you decided what you decided!
* It has been said that the definition of insanity is “doing the same thing, in the same way, and expecting the results to be different.”

**Discussion Question**

**How often do we see bad decisions compound once they enter a family line?**

* Analyze your extended family for the purpose of determining if you can discern any negative family traits. If you find any, make the changes in your own life so that your life will tell a different story.
* Fitness is the only one of the “Fs” you cannot hide, but how can the other “Fs” compound through a family?

The Integrity Question: Am I Being Honest With Myself?

**Chapter 3 – The Legacy Question: What Story Do I Want To Tell?**

Every decision you make becomes a **PERMANENT** part of your story. (p. 53)

* We think it is safe to say that most men never think about their legacy.
* It is time, actually it is past time, that we contemplate the story we want others to tell about us at the end of our lives (our obituary).

In the story of your life, will you be a hero to your kids, grandkids, and great grandkids? All too often men just drift into nothingness and are neither the villain nor the hero in their story.

* Many men are spiritually neutral. They are not hurting the cause of Christ but neither are they advancing the kingdom.
* This is one of the major reasons for MD5—to help men become the hero of their own story (with the help of the Lord of course).

We are left thinking in terms of our options and choices, but not our stories—immediate outcomes, not **ULTIMATE** outcomes. (p. 62)

* One of the reasons that we do not think about our story is because decisions are now—the story is later—much later.
* We think about immediate outcomes—not ultimate outcomes.
* This has the potential to become very dangerous!

Your decisions are now, and your story is now. Avoid drifting or just kicking the can of life down the road. You must have a plan for your life and live intentionally.

We can learn from both Joseph’s father Jacob, and Andy Stanley’s father Charles, to never be a victim of your **CIRCUMSTANCES**. Joseph came to fork in the road with Potiphar’s wife, but he had a plan. So many decisions are made at the fork in the road. Do you have a plan?

* Forks in the road come frequently in life and they usually come without warning.
* Some of the seemingly small decisions that we make along the road of life have long-term consequences.
* The decisions you make each day are driving the actions that are creating the story others will tell about you.
* When you write your eulogy, remember that it is the story **you** want told about **you** at the end of **your** life. Don’t let other people tell a story about **you. You** set the narrative so that **you** tell the story of **your** life that others will then tell about **you**.

**One day, Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree**. “**Which road do I take**?” **she asked**. “**Where do you want to go**?” **was the response**. “**I don't know,**” **Alice answered**. “**Then**,” **said the cat**, “**It doesn't matter**.” — Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*

Joseph had a plan. Good stories never involve sitting idly by and letting the story develop. The best legacy stories **never** involve “passivity.” They are developed day-by-day as men “accept responsibility” for their actions.

* The best legacy stories also involve relationships with others. A good example is the life of Joseph—a man of God whose story we are telling our children and grandchildren today! Joseph’s legacy is tied to the relationship he had with God and that he developed with people (i.e., **Joseph & his father**—Gen. 37:3,10,31-35; 45:24-28; 46:29-30; 47:28-31; 49:22-33; 50:1-14; **Joseph & his brothers**—Gen. 35:22-26; 37:1-35; 42:1—45:15,22; 50:15-21; **Joseph & Potiphar’s wife**—Gen. 39:1-20; **Joseph & the warden of the prison**—Gen. 39:21-23; **Joseph & the cupbearer & the baker**—Gen. 40:1-23; 41:8-13; **Joseph & Pharaoh**—Gen. 41:14-57; 45:16-22, 47:1-12; **Joseph & Reuben**—Gen. 37:12-30; 42:21-22; **Joseph & Benjamin**—Gen. 42:13-20; 43:29-34; 44:1-34; 45:12-15,22).
* To change the ending to your story, you must change the decisions that you are making today.
* The good news is that you get to decide what story you want others to tell about you. Write a good one!

The Legacy Question: What Story Do I Want To Tell?

**Chapter 4 – The Conscience Question: Is There A Tension That Deserves My Attention?**

The Fallacy of Origins says that we tend discount information based on the **SOURCE** rather than the merits of the information. (p. 99)

* I once worked for a man who always wanted to know my source when I told him something. When I told him the source, he would attack the source of the information which was his way of avoiding the truth of the information I had shared. Because in his mind he was able to discount the source, he was able to dismiss the new information. I soon learned never to share the source so he would hear and then process the validity of the information I shared.

Remember, the critic is not always wrong. There is always a kernel of truth in every criticism. Find that kernel, learn from it, and you will be a better man for it.

We have the ability to sell ourselves right past the pesky tension that deserves our attention. (p. 99) If something is bothering you about a relationship, a job, a deal, a contract, etc.—there is a reason for it. Pay attention to the tension! Ask more questions. It may save you a lot of heartache in the future.

David felt a tension—he knew that something was not exactly right. (p. 104)

* On the one hand, if David killed King Saul, he would become king—an office that he had already been anointed to. Secondly, David and his men would no longer be hiding out in the wilderness as common criminals. (1 Sam. 24:1-22)
* But David felt a tension … a hesitation. Something wasn’t exactly right.

David did not know what the outcome of his decision to kill Saul would be. (p. 105) We believe we can **PREDICT** outcomes. Ignoring the tension in your gut sets you up for disappointment. (p. 106)

* Saul was the king God anointed and if David killed him, David would be a murderer. That would become David’s legacy—the man who murdered the king of Israel!
* Disappointment is always connected to an unexpected outcome. We anticipate this—we receive that.
* Paying attention to the tension is how we avoid disappointments and mistakes.

**Discussion Question**

**How do we know when we are ignoring our conscience?**

* The conscience has been defined as the “voice of God in the mind of man.”
* We know when we are ignoring our conscience when it screams “guilty” to us, when we cannot sleep at night, when we are irritable, when we are impatient, when we overreact, when we have no peace in our heart, when we have a knot in our stomach, etc.
* It is not wise to solely trust our conscience. Our conscience can deceive us (Jer. 17:9), and our human nature can justify almost anything.
* It is helpful to trust the conscience of faithful advisors. (Prov. 11:14) That’s why we believe that it is so important to have a network of like-minded Christian men with whom we can consult. (Prov. 27:17)
* The observation has been made that some of the most life changing conversations occur in the parking lot after an MD5 meeting.

The Conscience Question: Is There A Tension That Deserves My Attention?

**Chapter 5 – The Maturity Question: What Is the Wise Thing To Do?**

Our natural **INCLINATION** is to live as close to the line as possible. The line between responsible and irresponsible, moral and immoral, ethical and unethical. (p. 116) Our undisciplined human nature allows us to get by with as much in life as we can get by with.

* Dr. Stanley shared several flawed assumptions people may hold:
* If it's not wrong, it's all right.
* If it's not illegal, it's permissible.
* If it's not immoral, it's acceptable.
* If it's not over the line, it's fine.
* Assumptions based on facts can be helpful in our decision making. (i.e., The sun will rise tomorrow so there are things that I need to do to prepare for the new day.)
* However, if we make decisions based on unexamined assumptions, circumstances, events, or relationships—this can lead to disaster.
* Eradicating false assumptions can make us better decision makers.

How long can I neglect my family, my finances, or my health without feeling the effects? (p. 118) This is the **wrong** question to ask. In effect, it is asking, “How far over the line can I go without getting caught or experiencing the consequences of my actions?”

* The question implies that there is a margin between the first time that I do wrong, neglect something, or push the boundaries and when I get caught. This margin actually encourages people to continue to sin.
* Solomon stated it this way, “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.” (Ecc. 8:11 ESV)

To create moral, ethical, and financial **MARGIN**, ask of every invitation, opportunity, and option: What is the wise thing for me to do? (p. 121)

* The apostle Paul gave believers this admonition: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”(Eph. 5:15-16ESV)

What if you had an opportunity to go back and invest the time in productive, healthy, life-giving activities? Imagine where you might be today. (p. 123)

* We cannot go back in time and undo the bad decisions we have made, re-live the time we have squandered, or unspend the money we have wasted.
* But we can make better decisions today and redeem the time that we have left. (Eph. 5:16)

Most of my apology’s stem from my propensity to react to the moment. When the moment has passed, I discover I’ve **OVERREACTED** and hurt someone in the process. (p. 133) Taking time to slow down, get input from trusted advisors, and praying about the issue always leads to better decision making.

* Roger has often said, “My greatest strength in business was my ability to make quick decisions. My greatest weakness was in making quick decisions.”
* We must be careful to not allow the pressures, fears, problems, and circumstances of today push us to make decisions that we will regret tomorrow.

Our greatest regrets are always proceeded by a **SERIES** of unwise decisions. (p. 135) This is the very reason that we must learn to make better decisions.

* Andy Stanley wisely admonished, “Don’t be content with doing the right thing. Do the wise thing.”

**Discussion Question**

“**If you don’t design your own *life plan***, **chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan**. **And guess what they have planned for you**? **Not much**.”—**Jim Rohn**

**What does Jim Rohn’s statement mean to you personally?**

**Chapter 6 – The Relationship Question: What Does Love Require of Me?**

The first four questions came with a guaranteed **RETURN** on investment. (p. 147) “Return on Investment” (ROI) means that you will come out ahead in life when you discover why you are doing what you are doing.

* The ROI will often be measurable. You can see the difference in your story for having asked, “The **Integrity** Question: “Am I being honest with myself?” The **Legacy** Question: “What story do I want to tell?” The **Conscience** Question: “Is there a tension that deserves my attention?” and the **Maturity** Question: “What is the wise thing to do?”

The 5th and final question is the **RELATIONSHIP** Question: “What does love require of me?” Jesus succinctly answered this question when He shared what is now commonly referred to as the “Golden Rule”: “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, **do also to them**.” (Matt. 7:12 ESV)

* This verse is actually a paraphrase of the second great commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt. 22:39 ESV; cf. Lev. 19:18; Rom. 13:8,10; Gal. 5:14)

Jesus was not commanding his disciples to feel something. He was commanding them to **DO** something. (p. 151) The “Golden Rule” is not passive—it is active. Remember, a biblical man “rejects passivity” and “accepts responsibility.”

* “Love” is more than an emotional feeling. It is a verb—the action component of a sentence.
* If we love God (the greatest commandment—Matt. 22:36-38)—we will love our neighbor. We demonstrate that love by treating our neighbor the way we want our neighbor to treat us.
* The “Golden Rule” teaches four things: (1) We should **not** treat men the way they treat us—good for good or evil for evil. (2) We should not treat men the way they think they should be treated. (3) We should **not** treat men the way we think they should be treated. (4) We should treat men the way we want them to treat us.
* Jesus taught that disciples are to treat others lovingly even if they do not treat us the same. This is what real love is. (1 Cor.13:4-8)

Jesus pointed to one specific thing that was to be the identifying characteristics of his followers–the way they **LOVED**. (p. 153)

* Jesus said that there was an identifying characteristic of his disciples: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn. 13:35 ESV)

The primary concern of Jesus was not that they believe something. He insisted they do something. (p. 153) If we “do” nothing to help a fellow human being, we have actually denied the “faith” that we profess to believe. Why? Because our faith commands us to be an “active” part of the solution to life’s challenges and not merely a “passive” part of the problem.

* James, our Lord’s half-brother, stated the issue clearly, “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James 2:15-17 ESV; cf. James 2:20,26)
* There is no spiritual and eternal “value” in being passive. As disciples of our Lord, we must “reject passivity” and “accept responsibility.”

Jesus’ followers would not authenticate their love for God by looking up. They would authenticate their devotion by looking around. (p. 154) MD5 offers the opportunity for you to look around—to look beyond yourself at a network of godly men who will walk with you through the challenges of life.

**Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets**

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**Living Forward**

Source: *Living Forward: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting*

*and Get the Life You Want*

By Michael Hyatt & Daniel Harkavy

**Chapters 1 – 4**

**Synopsis of this Session**:In this session, Hyatt & Harkavy share the importance of developing a *Life Plan*—a living, breathing document that allows the man of God to live with intentionality. The last section of this lesson includes suggestions on how to write your eulogy.

**Session Introduction**

We spend more time planning vacations, college educations, and for **RETIREMENT** than planning our lives. (p. 17)

Many people are successful in one area of their lives—money, and yet **BANKRUPT** in areas that matter most. (p. 18)

**Circle the following areas of your life that matter the most to you**. **Then**, **state why**.

**Faith**, **Family**, **Friends** (people), **Finances**, **or Fitness** (the Five Fs)

**How would you define success?**

The best way to be intentional about shaping your future is to develop a *Life Plan*. **What does a *Life Plan* help us do?** (pp. 19-21)

* A *Life Plan* allows you to live with **PURPOSE** and **BALANCE**. (p. 20)
* Helps you become an **ACTIVE** **PARTICIPANT** in life. (p. 20)
* You take **CONTROL** of your life and actually shape your own future. (p. 20)
* Gives you more **INFLUENCE** to obtain the things you really want out of life—financially, relationally, physically, and spiritually. (p. 20)
* Heightens your sense of what’s **REALLY** possible for you in life. (p. 21)
* Equips you to make better **DECISIONS** in every area of your life. (p. 21)
* Positions you to make the most significant **CONTRIBUTION** in this world that you can. (p. 21)
* Allows you to add **VALUE** to those around you. (p. 21)

**Chapter 1 – Acknowledge The Drift**

Drifting happens when we are: (pp. 28-30)

* **UNAWARE** – We do not know what we do not know. Often, we do not realize what is happening or what is at stake. We are guided by assumptions that may not be true. (pp. 28-29)
* **DISTRACTED** – The riptide of life can suck us in before we know it. (ex. The song *Cats in the Cradle* by Harry Chapin or the book *The* *Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis)—(p. 29)
* **OVERWHELMED** – We do not establish boundaries and lose margin. (p. 29)
* **DECEIVED** – Satan’s goal is to rob, kill, destroy (Jn. 10:10), and he is the master deceiver. (cf. Eph. 4:14; Rev. 12:9)—(pp. 29-30)

The consequences of “drift” leads to: (pp. 30-32)

* **CONFUSION** – We lose perspective, become disoriented, and make bad decisions. (p. 30)
* **EXPENSE** – It costs us both time and money. (p. 30)

* **LOST OPPORTUNITY** – If we do not know where we are going, we will miss many opportunities along the way. (ex. *Alice in Wonderland*) When we get where we are going, where will we be? When we accomplish our goals, what will we have? (p. 31)
* **PAIN** – We will experience pain in the following areas of our life: health, career, marriage, family, spiritual life, emotions, etc. (p. 31)
* **REGRETS** – We will begin to think “if only.” (pp. 31-32)

Life Planning is the exact opposite of the drift. Drift is about **PASSIVITY**. Life Planning is about proactivity. (p. 32)

The drift is about blaming our circumstances. Life Planning is about taking **RESPONSIBILITY**. (p. 32)

**The MD5 Strategy**:

* + 1. **Define reality**—the man I am—through the **assessments**.
		2. **Define** my **preferred** **future**—the man I want to be—through the **eulogy**.
		3. **Bridge** **the** **Gap** between the two **through** **your** ***Life******Plan***.

Acknowledge the Drift.

**Chapter 2 – Understand The Mission**

What is a *Life Plan*? Within the context of MD5, a *Life Plan* is a living document detailing God’s will for your life in five key areas—faith, family, friends, finances, and fitness. The *Life Plan* is:

* **CREATED** by you and for you. (p. 37)
* Describes how you want to be **REMEMBERED**. (p. 37)
* Articulates your personal **PRIORITIES**. (p. 37)
* Provides specific **ACTIONS** necessary to take you from where you are to where you want to be. (p. 37)
* We describe your *Life Plan* as a **LIVING**, breathing document because It needs to be routinely reviewed, modified, and updated on a perpetual basis. (p. 38)

We differ from the authors of the book on the development. Instead of taking a day and building the document, we will strive to build our *Life Plans* over a year.

Understand the Mission.

**Chapter 3 – Appreciate The Benefits**

Life Balance is giving not equal but **APPROPRIATE** attention to each of the various categories (the 5Fs) of your life. (p. 47)

The six benefits of Life Planning are: (pp. 44-52)

1. **CLARIFYING PRIORITIES** – Faith, family, friends, fitness, & finance. (pp. 44-46)
2. **MAINTAINING BALANCE** – Life is not linear. The wheel of life does not turn smoothly when out of balance. (pp. 46-48)

**Key Point** – The way we lead ourselves impacts the way we lead those around us. Self-leadership always precedes team leadership. (p. 48)

1. **FITTING OPPORTUNITIES**  – If you employ a *Life Plan*, you will be afforded multiple opportunities because you will be successful. The benefit of the *Life Plan* is that it helps you filter out the best versus the good. “Good is the enemy of great.”—Jim Collins (ex. career versus quality of life)—(pp. 48-49)
2. **FACING REALITY** – The first job of leadership is to define reality—the man I am today. (pp. 49-50)
3. **ENVISIONING the FUTURE** – The *Life Plan*/Eulogy forces you to think about the man you want to be and pursue the will of God. (pp. 50-52)
4. **AVOIDING REGRET**  – When we are not intentional in the way we live, we drift and fail to accomplish what is most important. (pp. 52-53)

“**The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it**.”

**– William James**

Appreciate the Benefits.

**Chapter 4 – Design Your Legacy**

**The Eulogy**

We will conclude this first segment of MD5 by focusing on the first phase of developing our *Life Plan*—the **eulogy**. (pp. 57-67)

**Answer the following questions to analyze your life at this juncture** (p. 60):

* **What would those closest to you remember about your life?**
* **What stories would they tell one another?**
* **Would those stories make them laugh, cry, sigh, or all three?**
* **How would they summarize what your life meant to them?**
* **At the end of your life, what will those closest to you say, what will they remember, how will they assess your legacy?**

Our legacy comprises the spiritual, intellectual, relational, vocational, and social capital we pass on to others. (p. 61) It is the sum total of the:

* Beliefs you embrace.
* The values you live by.
* The love you express.
* The service you render to others.

Legacy is the you-shaped stamp you leave upon others when you die. (p. 61)

**When Writing Your Eulogy**

1. Identify your key **RELATIONSHIPS**. (p. 64)
2. Describe how you want to be **REMEMBERED** by each group. (p. 64)
3. Make your legacy statement as **COMPELLING** as you can. (p. 66)

 **How to Write Your Own Eulogy**

**Sit down and imagine that you lived until you were 90 and then went home to be with the Lord**.

* + What would it be like to die and attend your own funeral?
	+ Who would be there?
	+ How many people would come?

**The things we should focus on the most are**:

* + What will the **Lord** say about me?
	+ What will my **family** say about me?
	+ What will my **friends** say about me?
	+ What will **others** say about me?
	+ Have I made any difference in this world?
	+ What will people remember about my life and how I treated them?
	+ How will I be eulogized?

**One Step Further**

We are going to take our imaginations one step further. We are going to write our own eulogies. **We will not write about the men we are today but about the men we feel God is calling us to be**. It may seem a little morbid, but we all must confront our mortality.

In the 90th Psalm, Moses writes, *“*So teach us to number our days.” (Ps. 90:12 ESV) Numbering our days and living with the “end in mind” can help us concentrate on living each day with purpose. Even if we live to be 90, that day will be here faster than we may realize.

**Step 1**: **Write an outline around the Five Fs**.

What is your legacy statement? (your mission in life)

**Faith**

Read the Faith segment of the MD5 Assessment and consider the following questions:

* When did you come to know Christ as your Savior?
* What was God’s specific will for your life?
* Where was your church membership?
* What was your spiritual gift(s)?
* How were you using your spiritual gift(s) to serve your local church?
* How often did you read the Bible and pray?
* Did you have a personal plan for fulfilling the Great Commission?
* Did you live out the biblical definition of manhood?

**Family**

Read the Family segment of the MD5 Assessment and consider the following questions:

* Who was your wife? When were you married? What do you want her to say about you? Did you love her sacrificially? Did you disciple her and pray with her daily?
* Who were your children? How do you want them to remember you? Did you nurture them? Were you a picture of Christ in your home?
* Who were your parents? How would they describe you? Did you honor them?
* How would your siblings describe you?
* Did your family know they were top priority? Did you have firm boundaries around other areas of life to ensure you had ample margin for your loved ones?
* What did you enjoy doing with your family?

**Friends**

Read the Friends segment of the MD5 Assessment and consider the following questions:

* Were you intentional about creating encounters to build relationships with other men?
* Was your faith apparent to your friends?
* Would your friends say you were the same man even when no one was watching?
* Were you a loyal and faithful friend?
* Who were the six men you chose to carry you to your grave. Did you invest in them?

**Finances**

Read the Finances segment of the MD5 Assessment and consider the following questions:

* Where did you go to school? What did you study?
* What did you do for work? Did you stay with one company or job your whole life or did you change careers several times? Were you a loyal and faithful employee and highly engaged?
* Did you trust in God's provision, not worry about finances, and did you practice contentment?
* Were you grateful?
* Did you embrace God's view of money and manage His resources His way for His glory? How?
* Did you plan ahead to take care of your family so on this day they were financially secure?
* Did you prepare an estate and financial plan in preparation for this day to ensure your family’s burden was light?
* What kept you busy in retirement?

**Fitness**

* Read the Fitness segment of the MD5 Assessment and consider the following questions:
* Were you disciplined in taking care of your body—the “Temple of the Holy Spirit?”
* Mentally?
* Physically?
* Spiritually?

**General Questions to Consider**

And as you wrap-up this exercise, consider the following general questions:

* Were you a man of integrity merging what you said and what you did?
* What was most memorable about you?
* What was it about you that people admired most?
* What will people miss most about you?

**Step 2: Turn Your Outline Into A Eulogy**.

Now you are going to take all the ideas you just jotted down and coalesce them into a finished project. Your eulogy does not have to be an endless book. Just hit the high points of your life—the really important stuff. You may follow the Five Fs outline or create one of your own.

Remember, your eulogy is describing the man you want to be and will serve as the “North Star” for the remainder of your life. Be sure to think and pray through this process. **This is a critical point in your life!**

Design Your Legacy.

**Living Forward**