

FAMILYLIFE® presents

**MEN'S WORKBOOK**



# **STEPPING UP™**

**A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD  
BASED ON THE BOOK BY DENNIS RAINEY**

**WRITTEN BY  
TIM GRISSOM AND JOHN MAJORS**

FamilyLife Publishing®  
Little Rock, Arkansas

## **STEPPING UP: A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD VIDEO SERIES WORKBOOK**

FamilyLife Publishing®

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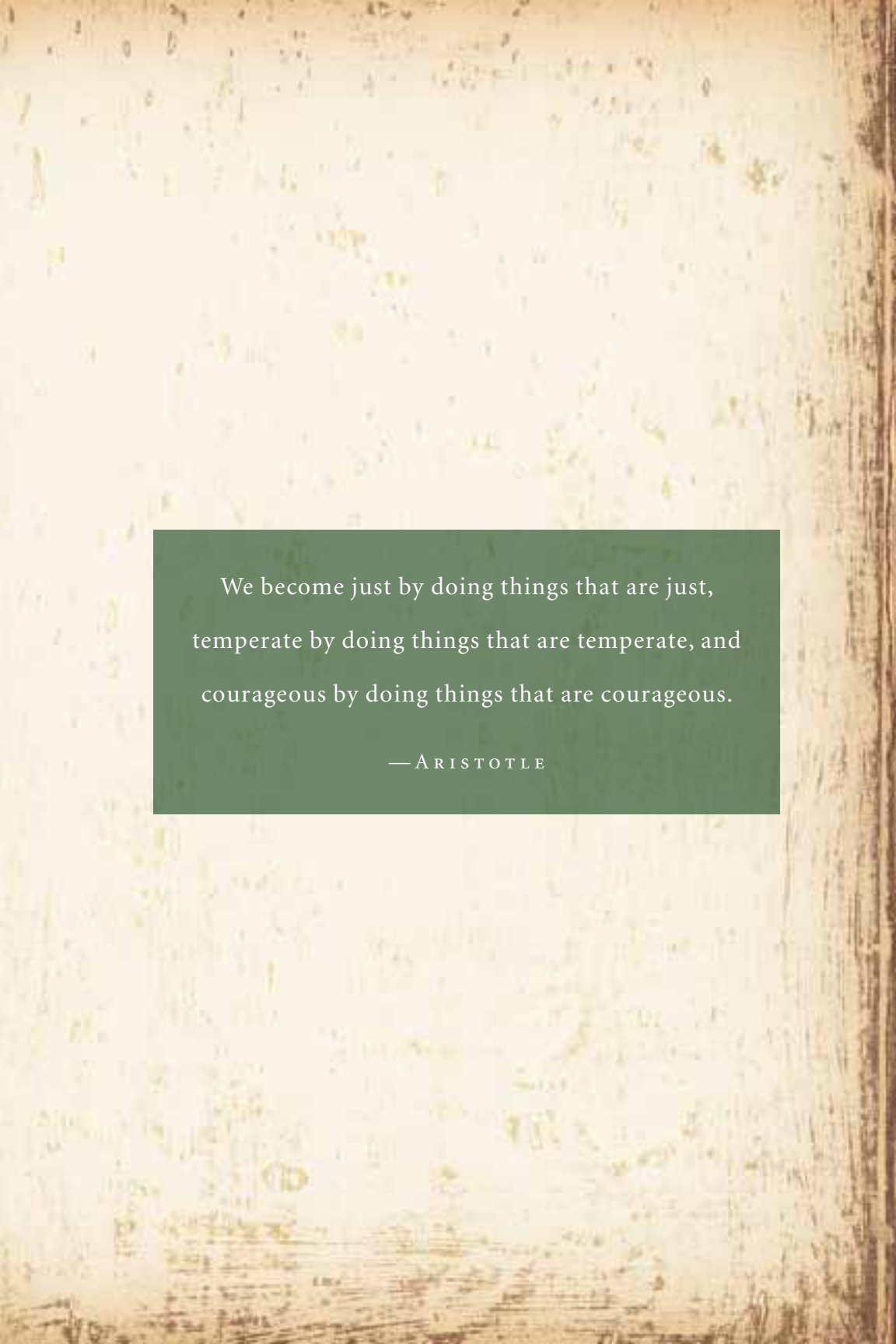
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**FAMILYLIFE®**  
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We become just by doing things that are just,  
temperate by doing things that are temperate, and  
courageous by doing things that are courageous.

—ARISTOTLE



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## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

You hear it all the time: “Men don’t like to read.” Really? Then why have many of the world’s most historic libraries been built and collected by men? Why are so many authors men? We’re not buying it anymore. Men like to read, but they don’t like to be bored. So we’ve tried to design this workbook to appeal to a wide variety of guys, both those who just want to “git-r-done,” and those who want to linger a while.

The goal here is to help you understand the five steps of manhood, the progression that occurs across those steps, and then to help you build a personalized action plan for “stepping up” in one key area of your life. Our hope is that this will be done in the context of a “band of brothers,” a group of men who’ll share their stories and thoughts while sharpening one another.

To accomplish this, each chapter has four main components:

- 1.** Group Discussion questions: We call it “Gathering at Base Camp.” This is a series of questions to help a group of men process the content of the video sessions and the workbook.
- 2.** Personal Exercise: This is where you’ll be “Logging Time on the Trail” (clever, huh?). These exercises, three days’ worth each week, will help you personalize the content from the videos and help you build an action plan that will be finalized at the end of the series.
- 3.** Stepping Up Plan: You’ll capture a few key things from each session at the end of day 3. These will make up the bigger parts of your Stepping Up Plan (which we describe below).
- 4.** A Step Beyond: These sections are for the guy who wants to go a little deeper. Additional readings from Dennis Rainey’s book are also cited to give you more to chew on. If you plan to work through these sections, you’ll want to also pick up a copy of the book *Stepping Up*.

## THE STEPPING UP PLAN (SUP)

All the information you are processing over the course of this series is designed to help you come away with one or two key actions you can take to continue progressing in your journey as a man. Even though you will be capturing lots of ideas, our goal is to simplify everything and help you come away with one big action item. You’re most likely to take action if you target one action (think rifle) rather than shoot and hope (think shotgun) over a whole host of ideas. Not that we have anything against shotguns.

The Stepping Up Plan is the foldout that is found in the back of this workbook. Throughout the course of the study you'll be transferring information to it. Near the end of the series (session 10), you'll use the work you've done in all the previous sessions to develop an action plan for taking your next step—the one thing you need to do to keep “stepping up” to manhood.

## **ONE FINAL THOUGHT**

As you work through these sessions, do your best to move quickly through the material to avoid bogging down on any one question. Of course, if you feel the need to linger and dig deeper on any one issue, by all means, set up camp. But also feel the freedom to move quickly toward the goal. The main thing is to keep moving to make sure you allow time to identify your boulders.

Also, we recognize there is quite a bit of hunting-fishing-outdoors type of manhood talk going on in this series. We know that the essence of manhood is not wrapped up in the way you handle a firearm or a fishing pole, and that not every guy cares to go tromping through poison ivy. Be encouraged that we've done our best to also appeal to the indoor at heart, to the man who bravely conquers the heights of the office tower, with worn briefcase in tow, whose fingertips are callused, and whose coffee mug is respectably stained. The essence of manhood is more than a location; it is an attitude. So take heart and step in to this study knowing that the most important part is to come away with an action plan that fits the person God has made you to be.



## FOREWORD



Gideon eased into manhood. At best he was an excuse-maker; at worst he was a coward. Until God turned him into a hero.

To be fair, Gideon was just one faint heart among many. His story is told in the Book of Judges.

The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds (6:1–2).

Whenever their enemies showed up, the people of Israel ran for the hills to the safety of their prefab bunkers. This went on for years, and then God determined the time had come to deliver them. For that He needed a champion, a man who could rally the nation. Gideon was His man. But first, Gideon had to be coaxed out of hiding.

When God dispatched an angel to give Gideon the assignment, the angel found Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress (roughly translated: doing chores behind the barn for fear of his enemies). And then the angel greeted him in a way that would have been hilarious if it hadn't also been prophetic: "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor."

At the moment Gideon was not at all acting like a mighty man of valor. But in that greeting is a lesson for all men: God looks beyond the way *we are* all the way to what *we will become*. (Much like the way Jesus chose His disciples.)

Even after his calling, Gideon continued for a while to make excuses and question whether God had picked the right man. But God kept right on calling him, and training him, and using him. And somewhere, in the midst of *doing*, Gideon became courageous.

God probably isn't calling you to lead a nation into battle, but He does have work for you to do. And there's a chance that some of that work will require more than you feel you have to give. At first, you might make excuses . . . or question God . . . or hide in a bunker.

But listen. Can you hear it?

The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor!

*Dennis Rainey,*  
president and CEO of FamilyLife





# A CALL TO COURAGE







**4.** In what ways do men need courage for daily living?

**5.** What's the most courageous thing you've ever done?

# PERSONAL EXERCISE: LOGGING TIME ON THE TRAIL

## DAY ONE

### DEFINING COURAGE

What is courage? Seems like a simple question. It's a common word, used in a wide variety of ways. For instance, men call war heroes courageous, but use the same word to describe a man changing a diaper, playing sports, or eating his mother-in-law's cooking. No doubt these are all different degrees of courage.

So what is courage, really? It's a question the video wrestled with and one we want to help you answer. Start by taking your own stab at it: What is courage, at its very core? How do you define courage?

#### 1. Courage is:

Many well-known people have proposed definitions:

Courage is being scared to death, and saddling up anyway.

—JOHN WAYNE

Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.

—GEORGE S. PATTON

Courage is . . . a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die.

—G. K. CHESTERTON

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important.

—AMBROSE REDMOON

Courage is knowing what not to fear.

—PLATO

Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.

—WORLD WAR I FLYING ACE EDDIE RICKENBACKER

It is interesting that fear stands front and center in each of these definitions. Courage almost always has a “nearly messed my pants” factor. It inherently involves overcoming fear to take action. Webster’s dictionary even defines courage as a “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, *fear*, or difficulty.”<sup>1</sup>

In the book *Stepping Up*, Dennis Rainey said,

When you read books or watch documentaries about men who, like Red Erwin, were presented the highest award a soldier can receive—the Congressional Medal of Honor—you notice that the phrase most often repeated by these decorated warriors is, “I was just doing my duty.” They don’t consider themselves heroes. They just did their duty in the face of danger. They were scared, but they acted anyway.<sup>2</sup>

Simply put, courage is “doing your duty under fire.” Courage involves action in the face of resistance, whether the resistance comes from within yourself or from some outside force.

- 2.** Who are some of the most courageous people you know? List their names below.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.** What do you admire most about their lives? What aspect of their lives do you most want to emulate?

The absence of fear is not courage; the absence of fear is mental illness.

—PO BRONSON,  
in Guillebeau, *The Art  
Of Non-Conformity*



## THE QUESTION

Dennis posed the question in the video: “What’s the most courageous thing you’ve ever done?” Not an easy one to answer, but it’s worth taking a shot.

4. What would you say is your greatest act of courage? What would be your defining courageous moment as a man?
5. If you are married, and if you dare, ask your wife what she thinks is the most courageous thing you've ever done. If you are single, ask your parents or a close friend.

Many men struggle with answering this question, especially in comparison to heroic stories like Red Erwin’s. The only grenades most of us handle are full of paint or pesticide. Hardly the stuff of legends. But courage does not apply only to the epic stories of heroism. Doing your duty under fire also happens daily in dozens of seemingly small ways. It occurs with every little act to overcome the resistance to do the right thing.

In the days ahead we’ll explore this more and identify some of the little acts of courage you are called to do. Tomorrow we turn to the Bible for more on defining courage.

“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

—JOHN 16:33 NASB



## DAY TWO

### COURAGE IN THE BIBLE

The word *courage* occurs in the Bible thirty-nine times (ESV). Most uses appear in the Old Testament, and most have to do with battles and wars. But there are some other interesting contexts as well.

1. Look up the following verses and write some of the key words connected with courage in each of these passages.

Deuteronomy 31:6

Joshua 1:9

1 Chronicles 22:13

2 Chronicles 32:7

The key phrases here are “Be strong” and “Do not fear.” Of particular note is that each of the above verses connects all three ideas: be strong, be courageous, and do not fear. The Bible clearly enforces the idea that to be a man of courage you must have strength, and you must put aside fear. But to what end? Yes, most of these verses are about battle, but what were they fighting for? A new set of fig leaves? A stash of replacement sandal straps? Maybe some cords for girding up those sagging loins?

2. Think back to the reason these battles were being fought. What was it for?

These battles were fought at the command of the one and only God, and for His glory and honor alone. The courage the men were called to display was first and foremost for the sake of the name of their God—not for patriotism or for personal esteem or even for the sake of their families; it was primarily to bring greater glory to God.

### COURAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament things take an interesting turn. The word *courage* occurs only six times. Why did the word take a hiatus when

Jesus appeared? Were the disciples only one-fifth as courageous as the patriarchs? The point is not to undermine courage in the New Testament, but to show a different emphasis of courage.

- 3.** Look up the following verses. Try to identify the courageous act that is being performed and write it in the space that follows.

Mark 15:43

Acts 23:11

2 Corinthians 5:6–8

Philippians 1:20

- 4.** What would you conclude about courage in the New Testament that is different from the bulk of what occurs in the Old Testament?

- 5.** What are the similarities?

In the New Testament passages, men were called to take courageous steps to testify about Jesus, to spread the message of His work and life. Some were called to risk their lives (Paul), some their reputations (Joseph of Arimathea). Though the setting is different from the Old Testament, the goal was the same: be willing to perform acts of courage for the sake of God's glory.

- 6.** In what ways are men called to act courageously on behalf of God's honor today?

- 7.** Can you name a circumstance in your life where you courageously acted on behalf of God? If so, describe what you did and why.

## DAY THREE

One of the key scriptures for this series is 1 Corinthians 16:13–14: “Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” This passage can be separated into five key phrases, each loaded with meaning.

1. Write a brief description of what you think each phrase means and why it is important for you.

Be watchful

Stand firm in the faith

Act like men

Be strong

Let all that you do be done in love

2. Of these five phrases, which relates most to where you are in life right now?

It’s interesting that one of the directives Paul wrote to the church in Corinth was to “act like men.” This is about as literal as you can translate the Greek wording (the language in which most of the New Testament was written). The same word is also used to speak of a person “conducting oneself in a courageous way.”<sup>3</sup> The word inherently involves courage. A man is most manly when he is facing his fears, bowing up his chest, and acting courageously. If you were writing the same phrase today, you might say, “Be a man,” or even, “Man up!”

Paul was telling the Corinthians to act like men because of what was occurring in the church: sexual immorality, bickering, division, and favoritism. Part of his role in the church was to call men up to act in accordance with the Scripture.

Stepping into a challenging family situation is an act of courage. Foster dads, stepdads, and adoptive fathers have unique struggles to their roles, but stepping in offers a child guidance altering their life forever. Consider Joseph, the father (or is it *stepfather*) of Jesus, who stepped in to love and claim Jesus as his son. May God bless you for being, like Joseph, a hero by choice.

—RON L. DEAL,  
*The Smart Stepdad*<sup>4</sup>

3. Have you ever challenged a guy to “man up”? What were the circumstances? How did it turn out?
  
4. If you could take a mulligan in how you challenged him, how would you handle it differently now?
  
5. Think of someone you know who needs to “act like a man.” If he were to come to you today and ask for advice, what would you tell him?
  
6. How could 1 Corinthians 16:13–14 be used to help guide him closer to the meaning of manhood?

### **MAN IN THE MIRROR**

Now that we’re doing pretty well giving others advice, let’s turn to the mirror. If you were to ask, “Who’s the manliest of them all?” and the answer came back *negatory*, *nyet*, *nein*, or *nada* for *numero uno*, what would you do? What advice would you give yourself?



- 7.** How would you tell yourself to “man up”?
- 8.** Has anyone ever challenged you to “man up”? How did they challenge you and how did you respond?

## **THE NEXT STEP**

One of the goals of this workbook is to help you develop a plan for “stepping up” in some key areas of your life, a plan for taking the next step. In order to do that, this book will guide you through identifying and capturing those thoughts in each session.

- +8.** Thinking about the theme of this session, in what one area do you need to be more courageous? Read the list below and check all that apply, or write in your own.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking on a project            | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting in shape       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confessing a sin pattern       | <input type="checkbox"/> Confronting someone    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overcoming an addiction        | <input type="checkbox"/> Leading my family      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making a tough decision        | <input type="checkbox"/> Ending a relationship  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Following through on a project | <input type="checkbox"/> Finishing my work well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coming clean                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Showing up on time     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Following my dreams    |

- +9.** What has been robbing you of courage or keeping you from showing courage in these areas?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of failing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Concern about what others might think |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy or passivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong timing                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information | <input type="checkbox"/> The wishes of others                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seems too risky     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cowardice           |  |

- 10.** What action can you take this week to display courage?

- +11.** Whom do you need to talk with about this, either to learn from them or to ask for advice, as well as their support and accountability?

## **+YOUR STEPPING UP PLAN**

You probably noticed that some questions are preceded by a + symbol. Your answers to these particular questions will be used to develop your Stepping Up Plan (SUP), which can be found in the back of this workbook. Take out your SUP now and do the following:

- 1.** Identify the area of your life where you most need to display courage (refer to your answer to question 8 in today's lesson). Transfer your answer to the Courage section on your SUP.
  
- 2.** Name one individual whose courage you admire and with whom you would like to talk about developing more courage in your life (refer to question 11 in today's lesson). Write that name in the Courage section on your SUP.
  
- 3.** What robs you of courage? You were asked that question today (question 9). Even if you checked more than one "courage robber," select the one that gives you the most trouble and write it in the Courage section on your SUP.

## A STEP BEYOND

Supplemental Readings and Exercises for Session 1

### COURAGE ROBBERS

There's a story in Greek mythology of a king named Sisyphus, the legendary founder of the city of Corinth. Sisyphus had a pride problem, and for this Zeus gave him a creative punishment: roll a boulder up a hill. No big deal, except that it was rigged so that each time he came close to the top, he would lose control and the boulder would roll back to the bottom. For all eternity he was banished to perform this beastly burden—always in sight of the goal, but never reaching it.

Men know in their hearts what it means to act courageously. They *know* what needs to be done, yet many never quite get there. Something steps in the way and that boulder goes rolling back to the bottom once again. Robbed of courage, they decide it's easier just to recline on the boulder in the valley and give up the fight.

Thankfully Zeus isn't hanging out at your house, waiting to trip you up, but there are plenty of reasons men are robbed of courage in our culture.

1. What are some of the main ways men are robbed of courage today?
2. Why do you think men are sometimes so easily taken off course by these courage robbers?

### HISTORY OF STUMBLING

Some guys find they have struggled with doing the courageous thing all their lives because of decisions they made long ago. It may have started with one moment of cowardice on the playground or an act of bullying in the barroom.

#### Top Ten Things Men Fear<sup>5</sup>

10. Going to the doctor
9. Being wrong
8. Public speaking
7. Commitment
6. Being an inadequate lover
5. Poor health
4. The risk of financial loss
3. Not being a good husband or father
2. Appearing to need help
1. Failure

3. As you think back over your life, do you find any uncourageous moments you wish you could do over? (No need to list them all, but you might capture one or two that really stand out.) Perhaps it will be appropriate to share them with the men in your group at some time.
4. As you look at those situations, are there any patterns? Is there anything you were consistently avoiding in those moments?
5. Look back at the advice you gave yourself (day 3, question 7). If you could go back to those moments where you avoided doing the courageous thing, what advice would you offer to yourself?
6. If you could boil it all down to one thing you need to do to get the courage boulder rolling all the way to the top of the hill, what would it be?

Congrats for getting through this exercise. It can be pretty painful to think back to failures. Who likes to remember those? Now it's time to move on; no need to self-loathe over past mistakes. You can't change the past. But the best thing about failures is the opportunity to learn from them. If you're not learning, then you're more likely to repeat the same mistake.



## READ MORE ABOUT IT

In your *Stepping Up* book, read:

1. “Stepping up means owning up” (pages 6–8)

What do you admire about Michael’s display of courage?

2. “A North Star” (pages 24–25)

Describe what you learn about courage from this passage.





2



**THE FIVE STEPS  
PART 1**



**BOYHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE**

# GROUP DISCUSSION:

## GATHERING AT BASE CAMP

- 1.** In what ways is it helpful to think of the journey of manhood as a series of steps or stages?
- 2.** Name some of the men from your youth who taught you about manhood. What did they teach you (good or bad)?
- 3.** Why are some boys and young men drawn into the gang lifestyle?
- 4.** Why do some men seem to stay in the adolescent stage longer than they should, or step back into it?
- 5.** What things did Gregg Harris do to help his boys navigate the adolescent years?



# PERSONAL EXERCISE: LOGGING TIME ON THE TRAIL

## DAY ONE

### THE FIVE STEPS

Each step offers its own set of challenges and opportunities, but one thing remains the same: no matter where you are in life, God calls you to do your duty, sometimes under fire. He calls you to courageously set aside any obstacle—your fears, your insecurities, your selfishness and sin—and step up to fulfill the responsibilities He has given you.

—DENNIS RAINEY,  
*Stepping Up*

In his book *Stepping Up*, Dennis Rainey described the normal trajectory of a man's life in five steps or stages: boyhood, adolescence, manhood, mentor, and patriarch. This progression indicates not only the seasons of a man's life but also the increasing load of responsibility he carries as he ages. In fact, the difference between living responsibly or irresponsibly will define a man's life even more than his age does. We don't expect men to look like boys, and we shouldn't expect them to act like boys either.

1. In your own words, briefly describe each of the five steps in a man's life by completing the following statements:

Boyhood is a time when:

Adolescence is a time when:

Manhood is a time when:

Mentor is a time when:

Patriarch is a time when:

The English poet John Donne wrote:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man  
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main . . .

Romans 12:5 gives a similar description: “We, though many, are one body in Christ, and *individually members one of another*” (emphasis added). The meaning is simple: Our lives are connected; the way we live affects not only ourselves. No matter which of the five steps (of manhood) you find yourself on today, you are influenced by those ahead of and around you, and you are influencing those who are coming up behind.

- 2.** List the names of a few men who are your most reliable and respectable influencers.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.** List the names of those who are looking to you for an example to follow.

## **BOYHOOD**

The first step is boyhood, which Dennis Rainey describes as an age of exploration and discovery. For some, boyhood was an idyllic time of innocence and fun when even their worst behavior was more mischief than malice. Sadly, for others boyhood brings plenty of bad memories and few good ones. Either way, boyhood shapes us. Years later we find ourselves either attempting to build on what we gained during that time or trying to overcome what we lost or never had.

- +4.** Describe two or three boyhood memories that have had a lasting effect on you.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- +5.** Reflecting on your boyhood, name a couple of men who had the best influence on you.

- 6.** If you could talk to these men today, what would you say to thank them for their influence on you?
  
- 7.** Boys need to be taught and trained. List three to five “life principles” a boy should learn before he moves into his teen years.
  
- 8.** Thinking of the boys who are growing up in your community right now, what dangers and risks do they face if they don’t have men in their lives to influence and train them?



## DAY TWO

### ADOLESCENCE

1. Dennis Rainey described adolescence as an age of pushing and pulling. What do you think he meant by this description?

The transition from boyhood to adolescence is just as easily marked by changes in attitude as it is by the physical changes underway in a boy's body. He's growing whiskers *and* independence. Any debate over which is growing faster?

More than anything else, adolescence is a season of transition. A boy is on the way to becoming a man. But this can be, and often is, a turbulent time for the young man and his parents. A boy doesn't take one fluid upward step and *voilà!*, he's a man. Instead he bounces back and forth, erratically. There's a lot of confusion going on inside him and it will sometimes come out as belligerence.

During this time, he's not only testing the tide of manhood, wanting more respect and fewer boundaries, but he's also continuing to dangle his toes in the safe and familiar waters of boyhood. He wants to learn to drive and still get to play with LEGO toys.

2. At approximately what age do you think a boy moves into adolescence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. At approximately what age does an adolescent move into manhood?

- +4.** Describe what adolescence was like for you. What were some of the key and defining occasions that happened in your life then?
- 5.** Describe some of the new expectations we have of a young man once he moves from boyhood into adolescence.

Unfortunately, people often have a negative outlook on preteens and teens, and young people can sense it. The unspoken, or sometimes spoken, message is: Go away! You annoy me. The hurt this brings sometimes causes young people to withdraw from the adults—parents, grandparents, older siblings, aunts and uncles, and family friends—whose good influence is greatly needed.

Perhaps this happened to you. If so, you can probably still feel the sting of it.

On the other hand, some adults seem to get it. They obviously know that an adolescent is an adult-in-the-making, and they lovingly step in to help train and encourage him on the way. They exude love, patience, and understanding.

Did you have anyone like that in your life?



**+6.** How did you answer that question? Did you have any adults in your life who encouraged and helped you during your preteen and teen years? List their name(s) here.

**7.** Have you ever gone back to them and thanked them for their role in your life? If not, consider calling them or writing them a note. Return their encouragement with some of your own.

If the person or people you'd like to thank have since died, you can still (1) thank God for them in prayer and (2) contact one of their surviving relatives and communicate your fond memories of their loved one.

Truett Cathy, founder and CEO of Chick-fil-A, wrote the book *It's Better to Build Boys Than Mend Men*. Without even opening it you know the book has a significant manhood message: start training and learning early. A boy needs to grow up with a keen awareness that God created him to be a man, a godly man. The sooner a boy gets this reality planted into his heart, the clearer his path to manhood will be.



## DAY THREE

### KEEP MOVING

In the book *Stepping Up*, Dennis Rainey wrote, “With each new generation, we have lowered our expectations for teenagers. Today most people in our culture believe that adolescence is a time when young men should have all kinds of freedom and fun. They are expected to rebel, experiment with risky choices, play games, look at pornography, have sex, and generally get into trouble. . . . We expect teenagers to continue acting like children.”

Do you see the problem? Generally speaking, we don’t expect our young men to advance, we expect them to revert. And that’s the opposite of what should be happening. Or, to put it more bluntly, they’re going in the wrong direction. Instead of stepping up, they’re stepping down, and with few consequences other than a sympathetic nod.

**1.** Do you agree with this assessment?  Yes  No

If not, what is your feeling about the life stage of adolescence and what should happen in a young man’s life during those years?



**2.** What is so appealing about adolescence that draws many men back to it repeatedly?

**3.** Have you ever struggled with reverting to adolescence?

Yes  No

Are there any areas in your life right now where you are acting and thinking like an adolescent instead of acting and thinking like a man?  Yes  No

What are those areas?

Philippians 2:3–4 addresses one of the key transitions that should take place during adolescence: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

As a boy grows toward manhood he should begin to understand that real men serve. He should start shifting focus from himself to looking out for the good of others, seeking to put their needs ahead of his wants.

**4.** Take an honest look at your own life. How do you think you are doing at meeting the standard of Philippians 2:3–4?

What adjustments do you need to make?

**5.** List two or three key lessons a young man needs to learn along his way to becoming an honorable man.

## **+YOUR STEPPING UP PLAN**

Take a few minutes to work more on your SUP by completing the following exercises.

- 1.** Identify one defining event or circumstance that happened in your boyhood (refer to your answer to day 1, question 4). Transfer your answer to the Boyhood step on your SUP.
  
- 2.** Identify one defining event or circumstance that happened during your adolescence (refer to your answer to day 2, question 4). Transfer your answer to the Adolescent step on your SUP.
  
- 3.** Thinking of your boyhood and adolescence together, who or what had the greatest influence on you during that time? (This could be a repeat of one of your answers to the two questions above; your answer to day 2, question 6; or something you hadn't thought of before now.) After choosing, write your answer in the Adolescent step on your SUP.

## A STEP BEYOND

Supplemental Readings and Exercises for Session 2

### GROWING UP

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. —1 CORINTHIANS 13:11

This verse points out two things that are true of every man:

1. Things will change about him and his perspective of his world as he gets older.
2. He will change things about himself and his world as he gets older.

#### *Things Change*

Many things in life are beyond your control. You will age, and your body will gripe about it. People will move away and pass away, and your heart will hurt over it. On the other hand, some of the changes in life will bring you joy, such as having children, adding grandchildren, and paying off your mortgage. The point is that life has a natural progression to it . . . yesterday/today/tomorrow; last year/this year/next year; past/present/future. However you choose to mark time, one thing that never changes is that things change. Accepting this truth is not meant to be an excuse for careless living; rather, it puts you in a realistic frame of mind to take on those things that you can—and should—change.

#### *You Can Change Things*

While the “child” in 1 Corinthians 13:11 became a “man” through the natural process of aging, he also grew up by choice (“I *gave up* childish ways”). He stopped doing the things he used to do as he willingly put aside childish behavior in favor of more grown-up ways. This is a simple and liberating truth: by the grace of God a man can always grow and change. Today doesn’t have to be a repeat of yesterday. True, some changes are harder to make than others, but the possibility of change is still there.

1. As you grew up, what were some of the natural changes that occurred in your life—things you had no control over?
2. What changes have you made in your life, by your own choosing?
3. What changes do you feel you should make in your life?

### **THE BIG THREE**

In 1 Corinthians 13:11, the apostle Paul specifically mentioned that he grew up in the way he spoke, thought, and reasoned. We shouldn't think of this list of three as being all of the ways in which a child needs to grow up into an adult, but they are worth considering.

#### *Speak*

4. What do you think it means to speak as a child, and how does that differ from the way an adult should speak?
5. Read James 3:1–12 for a description of the power of our spoken words. What changes, if any, do you need to make in the way you speak?

## *Think*

Paul said that he also grew up in his thought life, meaning that the thoughts he entertained as a man were not the same as those he entertained when he was a boy. This is not referring to temptations, but to ideas and interests.

- 6.** What outside influences most affect a boy's thought life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 7.** What outside influences most affect a man's thought life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 8.** What can you do to take your thoughts in a direction that is good and pleasing to God?



