

Protectors and Defenders



Sand to Stone

The Gents

"A Christian man is to know and glorify God in a life that is organized around his work, himself [as an image bearer], and his relationships... The great issues of our lives are not the amassing of personal fortunes (which others will receive after we die), not the enjoyment of maximum pleasure and recreation while we can (which substitutes the worship of self for the worship of God), and not the accumulation of earthly power (which we must lose in the end). The single greatest issue of our lives is this: revealing the glory of God to a sin-darkened world so that He will be praised and that lost sinners will be saved by coming to know the Lord. The great purpose of our lives is to reveal the glory and grace of God both by what we do and by who we are."

- Richard D. Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate*,
Ligonier Ministries, p. 45-46.

The Protector and Defender's MOs

(Masculine Orthodox Statement)

I am a protector and a defender because God designed me that way. He modeled it by pushing the darkness away and replacing it with light, life and created order. He held to His perfect standard of truth and threw Satan and his fallen angels out of Heaven when they rebelled against it. He gives me His truth by way of the Bible. His Word is my guide and the standard for which I am to uphold inwardly and outwardly.

I recognize darkness by knowing the truth. I know the truth by seeking God in all aspects of my life. While some may deny the truth or even fight against it, it is my duty to be that light, and to faithfully point people toward the one who gives order and life. I will do this with tact, but I will stand for truth without wavering, even if that means I endure persecution for it.

By making man first, God established an order to leadership. He gave him truth first (Gen. 2:15-18) and charged Him to uphold it. He put him to work so he could provide for himself and his family. He made the man larger and stronger, and modeled the sacrificial nature and command of man through His son Jesus.

Man is meant to protect the life God gives through creation. That means man stands firmly in opposition to any position or movement that seeks to denigrate the value of human life regardless of age, gender, race, or circumstance. Death is not a product of God's creation but of man's sin. Though we all will die because of Adam and Eve's fall, we should not encourage hastening the end of, or preventing life in any way. We have hope that God will restore His creation to its intended perfect state, devoid of all death.

Men are to protect and defend girls and women. This protection starts at home with their mother through respect, honor, obedience, and love. It recognizes the mother's role in bringing her son into this world, nurturing, and caring for him, teaching him morality, correcting poor behavior, showing him the value of hard work, the care of others through hospitable acts, and praying for her household.

A man protects his home by remaining physically sharp and mentally sound. He has a plan to keep his family safe in case of threat or emergency. He willingly puts himself between that threat and his family. He recognizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as his model and counts others more than himself in his personal practice.

Men are active participants in politics in that they continually value and support candidates who uphold God's truth and seek to use biblical morality to legislate and lead. Men are not afraid to share their beliefs because they are rooted in logic, in truth, and conviction. This engagement demonstrates a care for community, culture, and the unalienable rights of man to pursue that which is good in life, free from oppression.

Men are protectors and defenders. My solemn pledge as a man is to uphold the convictions I have expressed here, so help me God.

Introduction

In this study, we are going to explore another aspect of manhood; what it means to be a biblically based protector and defender.

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

- Genesis 2:16-17

At the outset of creation, God made man first. Just before the verses above, God gives Adam a command to work the land. He establishes man as provider. But as we can see, God then gives Adam a command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because the consequence of doing so is death. After allowing Adam then to use his creative license, He causes him to fall into a deep sleep. During those moments, he makes woman from him using his rib. This symbolic act demonstrates the relationship God intended between man and woman. It was to be so close that two were to be one flesh (see Gen. 2:24).

The point to be made here is that if Adam and Eve are one flesh, then just as he was given the stern warning to avoid eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was to communicate the same message to Eve and then protect her from disobeying God. When he saw the serpent trying to deceive her into taking part in the forbidden tree, he should have stepped in and said “no!” But he failed on both accounts. He didn’t rightly prepare her to resist, and he didn’t rightly step in and protect. This is not what God had in mind for mankind.

This study will reflect on our role as men as protectors and defenders of truth, of life, of self, of loved ones, and of strangers.

The goal is to inundate you with wisdom, and along the way, have you build out a position statement we call the Masculine Orthodox Statement (MOs).

You will have learn the mental, physical and spiritual attacks of the enemy and how we are poised, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to ward off attacks.

The hope by the end of this is that you will have newfound confidence in your role as protector and defender, established convictions for how that looks practically, and a plan of attack for the future.

Section 1

Self-Preservation

In order for you to live out your role in life, you need to develop high amounts of mental resilience, physical prowess, and spiritual wisdom. This means you know how to identify and deal with threats to your mind, body and relationship with God. It means you take knowledge and apply it to real life situations in a way that is self-controlled, strategic, and wise. It means you don't let the constant suck of culture dull your convictions or lull you to sleep. It means you constantly rely on the source of all your energy and strength, the true Lord and God of Heaven.

This means you start with the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is simply directing your reverence to God, who is worthy of our praise. He alone is the creator and sustainer of everything in time and space. Without Him, you would be nothing, and I don't mean just lost...I mean literally non-existent.

Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- John 1:3-5

My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

- Psalm 73:26

When we recognize our inability to do life right without God, and humble ourselves before Him, we place ourselves in a position to receive God's power.

For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- Luke 14:11

How do we receive God's power? By living and walking in the Spirit which was given to us when we accepted the free gift of Jesus to make us right with God accomplished on the cross and made whole through the resurrection.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

- Ephesians 1:13-14

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

- Acts 1:8

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

- Galatians 5:16

With that, we can see that God is the source of our mental, physical and spiritual strength and resilience. He gives us His power and guidance and then asks us to live as good stewards of what we have through Him to uphold and deliver His truth to the world for as long as He has ordained us to live.

Because we live in a fallen world, we must then not be naive of the constant threat to us. The unseen realm guided by Satan is constantly at work to thwart our mission to live as ambassadors of the Gospel. We must be on guard against those who would seek to harm us or others, and place God's hedges of protection between us and threat by practically preparing and staying prepared. We will discuss several topics under the banner of protection and defense in this study. To start, the following is a look into the importance of situational awareness to promote self-preservation and protection of others.

Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is the constant, conscious knowledge of your immediate surroundings and the people that are nearby. No matter how good you are at self-defense, situational awareness is the best self-defense skill you can hone. Virtually all kidnapped victims that are recovered never thought they were in any danger prior to their abduction. Being aware of the potential threats around you provides you with a distinct advantage over assailants who are looking for easy targets. Your alertness alone is a deterrent to bad guys, who will often move on to unsuspecting prey.

Before we dive in, let's create clarity. Situational awareness is not a fear-based response or a lack of faith in the providence of God. Though we do have the emotion of fear, when our fear is misplaced or appropriated, we are operating outside of God's will.

The Bible is clear where fear should reside.

[CLICK THE LINK](#) or scan the QR Code with your phone for a video on this subject.



The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

- Psalm 111:10

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.

- Proverbs 14:27

The fear of the Lord is a reverential posture toward who God is, and what He is capable of. It includes an understanding of God's judgement on the earth, unbelievers and believers alike. It is a proper view of self in respect to an infinite and perfect God.

When we realize the enormity of God and couple that with His grace and mercy, bestowed on us through Christ, we come to realize we are part of a grander and eternal story which we have been granted the opportunity to be a part of.

Knowing we are secure in Christ and right with God, we can rightly shift our fear solely to Him.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

- 1 John 4:18

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

- 2 Corinthians 3:17

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

- 2 Timothy 1:7

We are free from fear, free from the professed finality of death, and free to serve within our God-given capacity as protectors and defenders of our family.

Becoming situationally aware

There are three types of responses to stressful, life-threatening situations; freeze, flee, or fight.

Watch the video on actual footage from an active shooter located on a campus in Seattle, WA. Click the link or scan the QR Code before moving forward. You will notice the three types of reactions, freeze, flee, and fight in the video. Who does what? Why do you think they acted that way?



[CLICK ME](#) OR

Of the three types of reactions, which one was most noble? What are the potential consequences of the other types of reactions in other situations where someone is not disarmed?

What do you think was different about the hero in this situation than the other people who reacted by running away or freezing in place?

There are certainly people who will get caught in situations like the scenario above that are just in the wrong place at the wrong time, but on a broader more general level, it is possible to lower your risk of becoming a target through several basic strategies.

One of the more obvious ones is avoiding the three “stupid”. Don’t go stupid places with stupid people and do stupid things. Exercising sound wisdom in who you hang with and the places and things you decide to do with those people can help you avoid that vast majority of confrontation.

Here are a few more simple rules to consider mitigating the risk of becoming a target.

1. When traveling to an unfamiliar area, wear clothing that blends in with that culture and avoid logo-based outerwear that could attract the attention of thieves.
2. Keep your head up and off your mobile device. If assailants think you are distracted, they are more likely to target you.
3. When entering a building, immediately become aware of all the perceived exits in the unlikely event you need to get yourself and others out of a dangerous situation. Typically, any building that is rated to hold more than 50 people will have at least two points of entry or exit.
4. If you need to pay for something, avoid taking out a wad of cash. Take out only what you need, and only carry what you need for the day. Minimize the number of cards or cash to limit your risk, loss, or headache in dealing with credit card companies if your wallet were stolen.
5. Travel in groups when possible. Have a designated meeting area for if you happen to get separated.
6. When possible, put yourself between a woman and potential danger. If you are walking on a sidewalk, put yourself closer to the road, and let her walk a step ahead of you so you can protect her from behind.
7. When sitting somewhere for a time, minimize your blind spots by placing barriers like walls behind you where you cannot see all the time.

There are different levels of awareness used by experts in the field. They use a color code system to designate the level of perceived threat:

1. White, completely unaware (Avoid This)
 - a. Looking at a cellphone in public while walking
2. Yellow, non-focused awareness
 - a. General awareness of a situation and area while there is perceived peace
3. Orange, unspecified awareness
 - a. Awareness of surroundings while knowing there is potential threat present, ready to act
4. Red, focused awareness
 - a. Acute awareness of surroundings with an identified threat, take action now
5. Black, hyper focused awareness
 - a. Engaged directly in a situation with focus completely on the individual(s)

What you can take away from this is that it is important to be always aware of your surroundings, regardless of where you are or who you are with. You need to scan the area for suspicious behavior or things that are out of the ordinary or odd. It does not mean you have to walk around fearful, but that you are vigilant as you are going. You want to remember that God is your ultimate protector and

defender and that His sovereignty is worthy of our faith. I am reminded of the quote by the famed general of the confederate army during the Civil War:

“My religious beliefs teach me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time of my death. I do not concern myself with that, but to be always ready whenever it may overtake me. That is the way all men should live, and all men would be equally brave.”

— Stonewall Jackson

This quote is not meant to cause you to throw off all care and to live free of care. I can guarantee General Jackson was situationally aware and strategic in how he lived, yet he did not live in fear of death or the fear of man.

The following video is a short overview of practical situational awareness and Rob Pincus’s view on how it is practically lived out on a daily basis. [CLICK](#)



Pre-Decisions

When I was a young teenager at camp many summers ago, my leaders gave a talk about staying pure until marriage, meaning avoiding sexual immorality. Toward the end of their talk, they challenged us to think about it and make a personal decision to save sex for the wedding night. I remember feeling compelled to do something, and as a result, made a vow to God and myself to save myself for my wife.

Throughout high school and college there were many opportunities to go back on my vow, but I did not. When my wife and I met, I made a concerted effort to keep the physical aspect of our relationship pure, even delaying our first kiss for almost six months. Even her friends at that point thought there might be something wrong with me.

Our wedding night was special because I had been faithful and true, not only to myself, but more importantly to God who made man for one woman, to be joined with her, and made one flesh (Gen. 2:24). It was a testimony of saving myself but also protecting my wife’s emotions and body until the due time.

Pre-decisions are predetermined ways of acting or reacting to stressful events. The term means you have already made your mind up before the event occurs. Why is this important?

As we saw in the video earlier, there are three types of responses to stress; freeze, flee, or fight. When the girl was shot in the arm, she stood there almost motionless for several seconds. The threat to her life was not gone...the shooter was standing within feet of her. So why did she freeze? While people are complex individuals, the simplest answer is that she had not planned what to do with that type of threatening situation. According to neuropsychologists, she behaved much like a deer does when it is caught in headlights. The theory is that a motionless body is not as readily seen by a predator. So, when someone freezes, it’s as if they are trying to be invisible to the bad guy in the moment. Unfortunately, this is not the smartest response.

The second reaction was to flee. If you look closely, you’ll see at least two people responding in that way. This seems like the natural thing to do, and certainly, evading the end of a gun barrel is definitely smarter than freezing. Unfortunately, in this situation, fleeing left the woman like a sitting duck in front

of her shooter. Seeking cover was appropriate, but it did not regard others, or help disable the man going on the shooting rampage. A man acting as protector, may evade initially, but he is not going to willingly let a shooter continue shooting or killing people at will. He has a plan to preserve life even if it puts himself in harm's way. Self-sacrifice is the call of the biblical man.

Not all pre-decisions have to be centered around life and death situations. As mentioned earlier, I made my mind up years before I was in the situation, to remain pure until marriage. Deciding how you will act or react in different situations is really the product of learning about God through His word, meditating on what His word means at the heart level, letting His word convict you, then obediently applying to it to plausible or probable future situations, with the intent to follow through in the event the possible becomes a reality. Consistently applying your mind to this takes time and discipline but is a mark of the one who fears the Lord (not man) and desires to do right.

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. -Joshua 24:15

How are you going to react the next time you're at a friend's house and someone brings out marijuana or liquor?

What's your first move when your family is at a restaurant, someone gets very angry at the manager and starts threatening him or others?

What are you going to do when a girl that likes you wants to share some racy pictures or videos of herself with you?

How are you going to respond to seeing a toddler in front of you running away from his mother and into oncoming traffic?

What might you do when everyone is passing around the answers to the final in your hardest class?

Your friend is unfairly getting physically bullied and is isolated from any assistance except for you. Do you turn away, step in the middle of the situation, or do something else?

A business friend has a sure-fire way for you to more than quadruple your money in a few short weeks by investing in a company that profits off AI generated pornography. What if it was a company that champions LGBTQ+? What if it was a company that gives money to lobbyists to keep abortion legal?

If while you are shopping, you watch a mother physically and/or mentally abuse their child?

Preparedness

Some pre-decisions you can make are mental only in that you choose to avoid engagement in certain things that are unbiblical, unsafe, or both. However there are many pre-decisions that demand a certain level of preparedness. Learning a practical skill can be called prowess and can involve learning how to use and manipulate implements, weapons, or your physical body to accomplish a task.

First, you need to take inventory of what kind of shape you are in, and the skills you currently possess to protect yourself and others. If you needed to outrun a normal speed individual, could you do so? If that run needed to be extended, could you keep up a steady jog and pace for a half mile or more? If you needed to engage in hand-to-hand combat, do you know how to manipulate your body to put the opponent at a disadvantage or disabled altogether? Do you have proficiency in things like wrestling or Muay Thai? Do you even know what Muay Thai is?



Another area to consider is your general knowledge and use of weapons. Do you know how different knives and guns work? Are you able to open and close a knife without looking, or how to load a bullet into the barrel of a gun and take it off safety? Are you familiar enough with either that if you needed to use them, you could do so confidently? Just like learning to play the piano, the more practice you give your fingers on the keys, the more natural your hands will move without concerted conscious thought. It would be foolish to think you can just figure it out in the moment. The reality is that this is just not the case. Practice develops competency.

Daily Pre-Decisions

There are many decisions we would consider daily encounters. Maybe you know you need to workout regularly for general fitness, but haven't been disciplined in doing so. You have the choice every day to challenge your body, you just have to pre-decide what that is going to look like for you. Another might be related to reading your Bible. You can pre-decide how you are going to honor God by putting Him as a priority in your life by getting into His word regularly regardless of what life throws at you. The thing is, the things we value, we will make time for. For an article by Bobby Powers on this, [CLICK](#) or scan the QR code above.



There is a good book called "Atomic Habits" by James Clear that fits directly with the idea of daily pre-decision making. In the book he encourages people to commit to becoming 1% better every day by doing small things that build on one another. Much of what he teaches is starting with a goal and breaking the achievement of that goal into small life changes throughout the day that move you in the direction of your desired end. Small, seemingly insignificant choices you can make ultimately build on one another to help you achieve success in whatever area you are seeking.

Prepared Pre-Decisions (What Ifs)

Another area you need to consider is the "what ifs" category. While this thing may be unlikely to happen, if it did, what would you do? If I drive up on a wreck and people are hurt, what am I going to do? Do I know how to respond appropriately in that type of situation, and do I have what I need in my car to be able to provide the right kind of care? What if my house catches on fire? What if encounter a guy trying to assault a girl? What if an active shooter walks into my school or church?

It is prudent to think about these things. The easiest place to plan in your mind are the places you consistently spend time in, because they are familiar. The home fire scenario, a school shooter, your favorite restaurant...all of these are easier because of familiarity. While it may seem like a lot of mental work to develop mental responses to various scenarios, being mentally prepared within the context of your physical ability allows you then to not only protect yourself, but others as well.

Think About It

Now take a few minutes and think about key areas in life where you could pre-decide to act in a certain way. Consider these thoughts on how to approach this. Maybe you need to check out some local gyms, buy yourself a pocket knife you can keep on you, attend an active shooter course etc.

There are a host of character, ethical and moral things you could consider additionally. Cheating, lying, manipulating others, retaliation, sexual activity, drugs including alcohol and marijuana, etc.

Real Life Examples

The desire to preserve your life is as basic and predictable as the sun rising and setting. We are made to value life, especially our own. The question I wrestled with as a young man was, "What am I willing to die for?" I seriously considered that question. I mean, is there anything worth dying for? One day, as I pondered the life of Jesus, it finally struck me that the answer to my second question is "Yes!" and the answer to the first was "For someone else." There is nobility in sacrifice. Jesus came on a mission, to show us what it means to live a righteous life, but most importantly, to die for our sins, so that through his resurrection, we can have life with God. This changed the way I looked at life, and death. If I am to "be holy, just as God is holy," that means my attitude needs to be the same of Christ Jesus (see Philippians 2). I have a promise of being resurrected just like Jesus (see Romans 6:5) and given eternal life (see 1 Corinthians 15:52-58). So what do I have to fear? Death is not the end, but only a beginning of eternity! That changed the way I viewed my role as a man. It freed me to act more nobly. It gave me confidence that man doesn't have the final say over men. When I asked myself, "Do I value my life over my duty as a man of God", I could answer a firm "No!" If I had to choose life or death in a particular dire situation, what would I let guide my pre-decision? Not know that my life is secure in Christ and that eternity awaits. As Paul said, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). I was finally able comprehend and agree with God's word when it says,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- 1 Corinthians 15:58



The link below has two stories of those who made decisions to live as selfless individuals. Take a minute to watch their stories and consider their mindset. [CLICK HERE](#) or scan the QR Code .

Considering these questions and scenarios is foundational to you becoming prepared. Preparedness is a virtue; it is honorable and attractive. It promotes personal confidence, builds trust with those around you, and brings a feeling of safety and peace to those around you. When the Bible tells us repeatedly to seek wisdom, it does so with specific intention. Consider Proverbs 3 here:

13Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who acquires understanding,

14for she is more profitable than silver, and her gain is better than fine gold.

15She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire compares with her.

16Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

17All her ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peaceful.

- 18She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and those who lay hold of her are blessed.
- 19The LORD founded the earth by wisdom and established the heavens by understanding.
- 20By His knowledge the watery depths were broken open, and the clouds dripped with dew.
- 21My son, do not lose sight of this: Preserve sound judgment and discernment.
- 22They will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck.
- 23Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble.
- 24When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you rest, your sleep will be sweet.
- 25Do not fear sudden danger or the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
- 26for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from the snare.

- Proverbs 3:13-26

Wisdom is meant to lengthen our life, so in essence, it is a protector. And since God is the source of all wisdom, He is the rampart of our protection. God's desire to give us His wisdom through His word is a direct indicator that He cares about us. So then, as we gain wisdom, naturally we should grow in our care for others, and this will make us more like Him in how we act and behave.

Masculine Orthodox Statement Exercise – Self-Preservation

Now it's your turn. Write down some areas you feel you need to make some pre-decisions. What is your motivation? What biblical values or principles are guiding you? If you have questions, sit down, and talk to your dad about it.

Finally, let's summarize this section into a statement of belief or conviction. This can be considered an orthodox statement because it reflects what you believe about life through a Christian lens. Since we are dealing specifically with the role of man, we will use the phrase "masculine orthodox statement" or MOs for short. M.O. consequently can stand for "modus operandi" which means the "the method of operating." This section of your MOs should reflect what you believe about how self and situational awareness, personal prowess, and God's example through Jesus inform how you plan to live and act moving forward. Below is an example:

As a steadfast guardian, I recognize that true protection goes beyond mere good intentions. To fulfill my duty, I commit to cultivating unwavering situational awareness, maintaining a sharp mental acuity, and honing my physical abilities to defend both myself and those who are in need. In the face of challenges, I draw strength from the unshakeable confidence that God's promise of eternity eclipses any threat posed by

man. It is my solemn conviction that living with honor and nobility involves dedicating oneself to a transcendent cause, even if it entails placing oneself at risk. In this pursuit, I embody the essence of the protector, standing resolute in the face of adversity for the greater good.

Section 2

Protecting Women

Protecting Women

When God made man, he gave Him the ground rules of the garden.

¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.” - Genesis 2:16-17

Afterwards, he created woman. If you will notice the text, after creating Eve, God does not restate explicitly the same ground rules for the garden. He has entrusted those to the man who is to pass them on and protect them both from disobeying Him. We know how that went.

Adam stood by idly as Eve was tempted. It is almost as if he was seeing just how far she would go, assuming he would not be indicted for her actions. He had forgotten his role of protector, trading it for spectator in a life and death situation. The implications of his passivity and complicity led to a severing of the relationship between God and man. It brought a curse on the earth and because of Adam, all people are infected with his original sin.

By virtue of the order of creation, men are the heads of their family and bearers of the truth. Whether you are married or not, you are commanded to grow into your role as head of your family which assumes you will be assertive at a younger age in bearing the truth and protecting others from deception.

Genesis 3:11, 17 demonstrate the result of Adam’s inability to live up to his God-given role as a man.

¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? ¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it, ‘cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

You are first and foremost meant to identify and push back darkness. Some darkness is very much in your face. At some point you may find yourself in the presence of a physical domestic dispute between people you know or complete strangers. Someone may be threatening your girlfriend, wife, mother, etc. You’ll have a real choice in that moment about how to react. Seeking wisdom in those situations is critical, but I can tell you that passivity is never going to be the correct way to react. As a man, you are called to react confidently and with self-control.

Conversely, not all darkness is as blatant. The Bible is clear that the devil can sometimes masquerade as an angel of light. If that is the case, how is one to be able to identify darkness in the first place?

Identifying a Counterfeit

The answer may lie in how money counterfeiters are trained. It is estimated that \$70-200 million dollars in counterfeit money is circulating in the U.S.A. About that same amount is confiscated every year. That means 1 in every 1,000 bills is counterfeit.

So, how do trainers teach workers to identify the fakes? It is not by having them study all the methods and nuances counterfeiters use to trick merchants and lay people. No, they train them on the real thing. Within each real bill are dozens of what we would call “Easter eggs,” which means there are unique properties and characteristics that make up a genuine bill. When the workers can rightly identify all the features of the real thing, they will more easily be able to identify an imposter.

You are commanded to seek and know the truth and to identify the myriad of ways the devil is trying to corrupt your mind or the mind of others around you. You are to protect yourself, but also help others see the ways our adversary is trying to lead them astray. Whether it is your family, your girlfriend, people at school, or your wife, you are to know the truth, identify deceptive schemes, and make it known to others that you won't participate and you pray they won't either. While attacks may seem like they come in waves, understand that the evil one is always on the prowl either preparing for an attack, or is engaged in one. It is a constant battle. Satan never takes a day off.

Protecting Women While Single

If you are living at home, make it your duty to live under the authority of your parents and to remain respectful to them. When you see things occurring in your home that seem to violate what you know about God and His truth, ask your dad to have an honest conversation about whatever is going on that concerns you. Let him assess the situation and guide the next steps. If your dad is either absent or passive on the matter, you should have the same conversation with your mother. Encourage her to ask your dad to act on the matter.

If your dad is the problem, say he gets drunk or is consistently critical of your mother, prayerfully consider talking with your dad when the environment is such that he is not impaired and there isn't active conflict. If the situation is too unstable to be able to do that, reach out to a friend of your dad's who probably knows the situation already, and get him to help you confront him.

As a single man, your job is to seek out the man you want to become (for God's glory) more than you need to be seeking out the right woman, though there are times when God gives us the green light to do so. In response to the pursuit of holiness, you will become more aware of how those in your community fall short of God's best by falling for the lies of the world.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life 1—is not from the Father but is from the world. - 1 John 2:15-16

What is our responsibility to the world around us when we see them stumbling over sin? There is a situational and a religious aspect to this. First, situationally, if you know the person well and there is a level of trust between the two of you, you should feel more confident that confronting

them on their behavior is appropriate and right. If they are a follower of Christ, this religious aspect allows you to approach them with God's truth. A believer is held to the standard of God's word so it is right to use it to correct them.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.
- Galatians 6:1

The caveat to this is we must approach that person with love and respect, and most of all, with compassion. This is consistent with how Jesus approached people caught in sin. Depending on the personality of your friend, you'll need to discern how to deliver the news to them. Some no doubt will handle well a direct blow to their ego, where others may need to be walked into their error more gently. But the result is not about us feeling self-righteous or winning some sort of holiness competition, but helping our friend understand their error, and showing them a better way.

If a person is not a believer but is a friend, we must approach this situation a little differently. Two things exist in this situation. First, a non-believer still has God's truth in their heart, but they have denied that truth and either haven't been exposed to the gospel, or they have rejected Jesus already (see Romans 1). Second, God's word is living and active and penetrates to the deepest recesses of our being; and on top of that, God's word does not come back to Him in vain. So, sharing truth with even a non-believer can sometimes tap the convictions in a person's soul and make them pause to think. At the very least, it removes all excuses for their actions moving forward. Wisely pray through opportunities with people you know who need Jesus and whose lives do not honor God. They are like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus looked on the lost people of Israel with compassion here as well, and we would be right to do so too.

There may be times you encounter a stranger who you don't know anything about (religion, circumstance). These situations require wisdom, so prayerfully seek an answer on how to respond. Generally speaking, in any situation, there is nothing wrong with sharing the truth on a matter. Truth pushes back darkness.

If you found yourself on the edge of a cliff next to a random stranger not knowledgeable in the law of gravity, and that person told you they were thinking of seeing what happens when you jump off a cliff, what would you do? Any reasonable person would warn the person about the effects of gravity and encourage them not to act on their curiosity. In this situation, you are communicating a proven fact about physics to a person who is naïve. This is a form of natural compassion because it shows you care enough about their life to want to preserve it. If they jump anyway, your conscience should be clear on the matter because you warned them.

Here is something to consider regarding that last example. When you warn someone about an error they are, or are about to make, are you condemning them? Absolutely not! You are simply sharing something true and warning them against harm to themselves. What is it that condemns that person? Gravity. Yes, gravity condemns them when they jump and find out you were right. And this is how it should be in life. We share the truth with people without condemnation. We warn them of what can or will happen when they reject Jesus. We operate from a concerned compassionate standpoint. But in the end, as devastating as it is, if they choose to ignore the warning, their consequences are not due to naivety.

Pushing back darkness is a form of compassion, with the gospel as its foundation.

Protecting Women While Courting (aka dating):

I use the term courting because it is a more biblical historic term for when an unmarried boy and a girl spend quality time together with a concerted focus on trying to determine whether they are a right fit for marriage. The term dating is an Americanized form of courting that represents a more exploitive and loos version of courting where breakups tend to mimic miniature divorces and often involve physical and/or emotional violations through hooking up or playing “house”. Courting is much more conservative, mature, and protective of both the boy and girl involved. It is also the right way to approach finding your spouse.

Unfortunately, one of the most accepted types of exploitation occurs within a dating relationship. From early on in a boy's youth, he is taught that part of his identity is tied to whether or not he can “get the girl”. Much like a sporting event, boys are taught girls are objects worth conquering for their own pleasure. Locker rooms and text threads are laced with sexual innuendos or inquiries about their sexual conquests with girls from school etc.

Unfortunately, with the explosion of social media, girls are exposed to the same sexualized videos and sensuality and have been groomed into believing guys want a certain thing and that it is their job to give it to them if they want to have a boyfriend. The combination of our culture's loosening morality on sexuality and the programming of both sexes on the idea of physical pleasure seeking, has led to an erosion of the beauty of sex and marriage as God designed it.

The way men are made, most of them see the pinnacle of a relationship as what happens in the bedroom, the backseat of a vehicle, or over a phone. Conversely women find their highest pleasure in knowing they are loved and secure. If a woman wants to be loved bad enough, she will do what it takes to hear those words, even if that means exploiting her body. In recent years though, both men and women have laid aside love for the allusion of pleasure. Casual encounters serve almost like a hit from a drug, giving the receiver temporary satisfaction only. Don't believe the lie that sex is anything less than God's gift to mankind to be expressed only after a couple is married. There is no other right way.

With that said squire, you have an obligation to protect the girl you are interested in. She is not an object, but a beloved creation of God. She is not someone to manipulate so you can satisfy an urge or look cool with the guys. She is not something to be used and discarded.

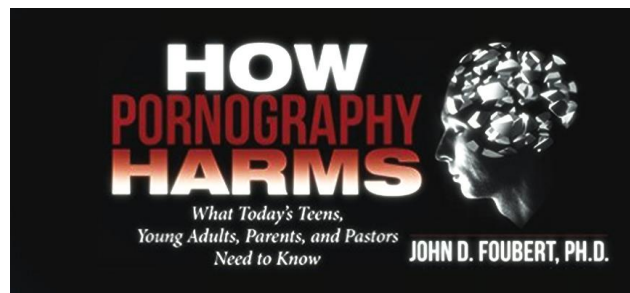
Your job is to respect and honor her with the same love God feels and shows to her, whether she knows it or not. So how do we honor, respect, and protect girls?

Affirm their identity. In the old movie Jerry Maguire, there is a really sappy moment between the two lead characters (Tom Cruise and Renee Zellweger. They have a deep heart-felt interaction in front of friends, and Jerry (Tom) tells Dorothy (Renee) how much he misses being with her. At the conclusion of his mushy speech, he speaks the now iconic phrase, “You...complete me.” For as many tears were shed by people that watched that movie, and while it pulled on the heartstrings, it is a completely absurd to assert that anyone outside of

Jesus completes you. Never imply that you are anyone's savior. Never tie your identity to a girl and certainly don't make them think that without you, they are incomplete.

Honor her purity. As I said earlier, boys and girls are daily being exposed to a scripting about sexuality and how two people who like each other should engage physically. It is truly tragic that intimacy as God designed it has been bastardized and made into something so base. Much of the focus of the attack from Satan has been on the men because we are stimulated through sight. There is a good reason the porn industry is worth almost \$100 billion, why 35% of all downloads are porn related, and why 4% of all websites that exist on the web are sex related. The industry has destroyed what it means for a man and a woman to come together in monogamous union under the covenant marriage bond and convinced boy men and women that sex is something you need to practice and master through multiple partners. That is saying it oh so kindly. In a nutshell, the cultural take on it is downright demonic.

I would highly encourage you to read the following book about how porn affects our brain in addictive ways. There is great brain science evidence that the dopamine release that occurs when looking at porn reinforces a pattern of doing so while leading to desensitization to normal sexual stimuli over time and changes in neuroplasticity, promoting addictive behavior and trouble with arousal later in life. Additionally, most men will progress through porn until they are watching types of sexual interactions that are unnatural, dangerous, and downright demeaning. No one needs to see or experience that. As seductive and pretty as those women may appear, most of them are sex slaves at one level or another, meaning they sold themselves into it without realizing what they were doing, or they were sold into it by another. Many of them are under constant threat to their well-being if they don't achieve their quota, and in no control of what they must do on camera or in person. These women are the daughters of God, not some object to be enjoyed and discarded.



The Bible is clear on the issue of personal purity.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 1 Corinthians 6:18

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Hebrews 13:4

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

Your job as a man is to see women as who they are in God's eyes, and to display this honor and respect to them in all situations. That means you speak to and about their beauty in respectful ways. That means you respect her personhood by not using her to gain popularity points with your guys friends. That means you show you care by opening up doors for them, making them apart of a group and by not playing mind games. That means you don't communicate physically in a sexual way and you don't use physical touch as means to satisfy yourself at her expense.

Even if she were to consent or pressure you to move forward physically, it is your job to show self restraint. Song of Solomon 8:4 says not to awaken love until it is time. In essence it is warning about calling lustful love, true love. The quickest way most people move that way is by connecting physically with one another. There is a one-night stand every minute somewhere and this by itself is deplorable. That is an act of pure lust with no commitment. But in a more committed relationship, you must guard her heart and body by not taking advantage of her willingness to give herself to you in pursuit of the love she wants.

There is only so far you can go physically. Holding her hand may seem innocent enough, and the first time you do it, it will cause an exhilarating feeling, but that feeling will soon wear off and you'll be tempted to move on to an arm around the shoulder, then eventually hugging, then kissing...you get the point. It's based on the law of diminishing returns, which states that the feeling you get the first time you do something is greater than the feeling you get anytime after that, and the feeling tends to diminish and find a low return baseline over time. Said another way, adding the same input over time leads to less return. So the natural thing is to bump up the input to increase your return. The problem is that eventually, when it comes to the physicality of the relationship, you are left with the choice of sex.

So men, delay physicality in your relationship. Take the lead by talking to the girl about how you want to communicate your feelings in ways that aren't purely physical and how you want to honor her by not making the physical aspect of the relationship primary or even secondary in the relationship. When I was dating my wife, I chose to not kiss her for the first six months of our relationship because I knew once I had crossed that boundary, I would have a hard time going back. I chose to not tell her that I loved her until I got down on a knee and proposed to her in the middle of an intersection in a tiny west Texas town. This simple delaying of my touch and words allowed us to approach our relationship more slowly and with higher honor.

Catch this next piece of advice. Typically the words "I love you" have less effect on a man than a girl. Since girls feel in different ways than boys, the words you say mean more emotionally to them than to you. Hearing those words from someone she likes evokes a feeling in her that goes well beyond just warm-fuzzy. Because women feel with their emotions, hearing "I love you" from a guy is deeply satisfying. In comparison, it is like the feeling gets when he has had sex. The problem in our culture is that we throw around those words so loosely or have sexual encounters so nonchalantly, that the meaning of either has been degraded down to almost just another experience rather than exalted to what it was intended for, a regular intimate encounter in the privacy of a married couple's bedroom.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

That price paid was the blood of Jesus on the cross. That is no small price. It took His death, no small act. He literally died and rose from the dead so that you may have reconciliation with God and obtain eternal rest with Him in heaven. If you are a believer, this is the standard of response for those who understand their salvation. They respect and revere so deeply, the actions of Jesus, that they commit to honoring their Savior through right living in alignment with the word of God.

I would ask you slow down and consider your Savior. Consider how His life, death and resurrection has impacted your eternity, but equally as important, your present. He became God in the flesh. He showed us how to live life compassionately, in consideration of others, with kindness, grace, and goodness. He did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for the world. How does the living word of God inform your decisions on a daily basis? How does the model of Christ convict you to be like Him over anyone else? We can know about Jesus, that's knowledge. But to truly know Jesus, that is where we develop conviction. That is where we say, "You're right Lord and I want to follow your example." This takes more than just knowing about your salvation, but fully experiencing it, and through humility, letting the Holy Spirit change your desires to align with God's desires.

The great thing about courtship is it is non-binding because you have not stood before a pastor and witness and made any covenants with each other. Each person is free to move on at will. Your desire should be to find a woman who understands what it means to live as a Christian, and what her role in marriage looks like. Your job is to become the man that is willing and capable of leading a woman in a marriage in a Christ centered way (see Ephesians 5). Everyone of you should consider reading a book by Voddie Baucham called "What he must be if he wants to marry my daughter." It is an honest deep dive into what a man desirous of being married must strive for to biblically love and lead a woman.

Protecting Unknown Women in Community

The vast majority of women you will encounter in life will neither be family members nor ones you are interested in pursuing for marriage. But despite that, every girl is a creation of God. The love and compassion God has for them should prompt us to follow that model regardless of our association with them. All life is precious, therefore life is worth protecting.

As you go about life, at some point you are going to encounter some sort of abuse between individuals. It could be between a parent and a child, a man and woman, two women, or even two men. The principle is generally the same. If someone is aggressively trying to harm someone else, you need to feel compelled to preserve life. If that person is a woman, you need to be under the mindset of "If it is to be, it must be me." This statement affirms that a man is the protector and defender of the weak(er). This is not to say men are better than women in essence, but that we have been created differently and it was God that put man in a position of leadership and of protecting them.

What I cannot answer for you is how exactly you need to react in any given situation because situations can vary greatly. You may not know whether a man is trying to defend himself against a woman who has initiated an attack or the particular circumstances that have led up to their current situation. But here is what you can bank on. If a woman is being overpowered by a man, you need to intervene. That may be first with a shout, letting him know you are present and engaged. Depending on the level of danger to her, you may have a moment to call 9-1-1 to get them en-route. Ultimately, if you are going to preserve life, you may have to physically remove the assailant from her.

This assumes a couple of things. This assumes you know your own abilities, and that you have trained for these kinds of moments. A man that has not reckoned with his physical self and developed some level of prowess, will be less compelled to act in a situation like this, to his shame.

So, my encouragement to you is to learn how to defend yourself. Start by learning to beat your body into submission through physical training. Our bodies are a temple of the holy spirit, and God cares not only about mental fortitude and character development, but also our physical selves, as it helps us stay healthy and strong, and capable in times of need.

Learn how to deal with a hand-to-hand combat situation and how to defend and subdue an opponent. Engage in wrestling or Jiu Jitsu to help you develop physical prowess and confidence. Hopefully, you will never need it, but every warrior for the Lord needs to be willing and ready to “bear the sword” even if that means you never have to use it.

We are talking a lot about physical violence here, but verbal abuse and manipulation is also egregious and should be called out. No one deserves to be verbally put down or shamed. The words of God brought life to the world. By His word we have everything good you see. He gave Adam the same task of creating when He asked him to name all the animals. Just as James 3 points out, words can create life, and they can bring on death as well. We will fight to preserve life as warriors for the kingdom.

Protecting and Honoring Mom

There is no doubting, as you get older, there is (or should be) a natural separation between boy and mom, not because he doesn't need her anymore, but because he needs his father more. Mothers were never meant to raise boys to be men, so when a boy starts considering the ways of manhood, he predictably moves away from the feminine and toward the masculine.

In the book “Iron John” by Robert Bly, the story goes that a wild hairy man is locked in a cage in the king's court while the son of the king plays near the cage with his ball. In this story, the hairy man represents the way to true masculinity. When the ball errantly bounces into the cage, the wild hairy man promises to give it back if he will release him from his cell. When the boy announces he doesn't know where the key is, the man tells him where to look...under his mother's pillow. That indeed is where the boy finds it, but he must wrestle with the dilemma of stealing it to release the hairy man or to stay “caged up” himself by allowing his mom to stunt his need to mature.

He eventually chooses to steal the key and released the wild hair man, who first gives him his ball back, and then invites him to come with him into the wilderness. The boy realizes this man has something he

doesn't have, namely a masculinity he has never experienced, and so he agrees to go with him and learn his ways. The hairy man represents our opportunity to become men by learning the way of manhood and the mother in this case represents the opposite; the choice to be feminized by his mother and kept arrested in his maturation.

All boys who want to be men must eventually move toward other men from whom they can learn. This break is necessary, but it must be done with wisdom.

Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.
Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice. - Proverbs 23:22-25

When we read this passage, a couple of phrases regarding mom stand out. The first is "when she is old." The implied interpretation here is that even though we may break from mom when we enter our teen years, we do not put her off or disregard her. The phrase implies a boy continues to have a positive and loving relationship with his mother throughout his life. She may not be the one who is teaching and marking the way toward manhood, but she is the one who gave birth, nurtured, dressed, and fed you all those years you were dependent on her. In an ideal situation, she taught and modeled for you the biblical differences between men and women and her role in the home. She deserves your honor.

The second phrase is "let her who bore you rejoice." If your mother knows the Lord and understands the balance of Jesus the lamb of God, and Jesus, the lion of Judah, she will understand at least contextually the way a man should act. She will know you are to be a gentle-man-warrior, a man who is pleasant to be around, but a man who is also to be feared. A biblical man maintains a healthy balance of kindness and aggression. His mother should know her son is a blessing to all those whom he interacts with, full of grace and mercy, a joy to his community. She should also know he can identify threats to the sanctity of life and peace and is willing to act on those without hesitation. This is what makes a mother rejoice in her son. This is the pride of a mom.

In some cultures, as a part of an initiation rite of passage to manhood, a boy must do two things. The first is to abstain from all milk for an extended period of time. For some cultures where milk is a primary staple of daily life, this is a large sacrifice. The second is to go into the wilderness and kill an animal, prepare its meat, then cook and serve his mother a meal. The first act of abstaining from milk is a way of remembering her nurturing act of feeding him as a baby, and how it is important for him to wean from her protective hold. The second is to honor her and all she has done in providing for him throughout childhood and adolescence. This is a beautiful picture of bestowing on her dignity due.

Young men, you must break from your mother to learn the way of man. The wild in you must be realized and matured so you can become the man God has planned for you to become. But you must also continue to respect, honor, and uphold your mother all your days.

When your dad is gone, assume the role of protector of the house if you are the oldest. Ask how you can serve your mother around the house in ways your dad does or should. Speak kindly to her and submit in obedience to her...she is still your authority. But establish respect by first giving it to the one who has raised you and start to model the role of the man who will someday, Lord willing, lead, protect, and provide for his wife.

Protecting and Honoring Wife

There is not a lot that needs to be said here as all of you likely are not married. However, the same principles you are learning here will apply to marriage, so there are a few things worth mentioning now. A man must prepare himself to become the proper leader of his home. There is a reason in Proverbs you see Solomon imploring his son to listen to his teaching and to seek out wisdom. He knew that becoming a proper husband requires training, and that this training starts when a boy is young. Every decision you make is slowly making you into someone. Certainly, people can head the wrong way in life and then choose to change, but often, this doesn't come without consequences. There is right way to prepare for your future, and it starts today under the guidance of the word of God and a father who does his best to point you in the right direction.

"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." – Roy E. Disney

Right decision-making starts knowing what is important to you in life and what you value. When you don't know these two things, you'll stumble around in life more than you'd like to, trying to figure it out on the fly.

"Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of. An apparently trivial indulgence in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge or railway line or bridgehead from which the enemy may launch an attack otherwise impossible." - C.S. Lewis

God made marriage as a reflection of His relationship with us. The covenant a man and a woman make before their family and friends is a mirror image of the covenant God made with Abraham when He promised to create through him the people of Israel, which He promised never to leave or forsake.

A covenant is more than a contract. Contracts can be broken at any time. If I want to leave my job, I can hand in my resignation. If I want to shop at a different store because they have cheaper products with the same or better-quality foods, I don't have to formally let the store owner know of my decision. I can just leave and go somewhere else. These are examples of contracts.

A covenant says "I will be what I ought to be regardless of whether you are who you are supposed to be. It is a sacrificial statement and commitment to living right regardless of the circumstance, and not holding to an "if, then" mentality ("If you are nice to me, I will be nice to you. If you have better prices, then I'll shop here.") If the Lord gives you a woman to marry, you will be responsible for ensuring your home is a place of strength, protection, and love. Some of the ways you will show love for your wife will be to make sure she feels secure in her home, secure with the finances, secure in your presence, and secure to become who God wants her to be for His glory. That will mean you will need to know and commit to loving her just like Christ loves the church.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands

should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. -
Ephesians 5:25-28

A covenant between God and man is best demonstrated in Genesis 15. God had already promised Abram a son in his old age; one that would become the great nation of Israel and would be deemed God's chosen people, never to be forsaken. There was a point where God reaffirmed His promise with Abram and in response, Abram asked for proof of this promise. God told him to create a space for a formal covenant to occur. This included killing and dividing an animal in half and laying on either side of a designated space to walk. When it was your turn as a part of the ceremony, you would make a vow that if you did not uphold your end of the covenant that you placed a curse on yourself to be split in two like the animal on display. Walking between the sacrificed animals was the act of making that commitment.

When God initiated, He passed between the slain animals but never asked Abram to do the same. The ceremony was in effect over, seemingly only have the way complete in his eyes. But the reality and the implications of it are astounding. First, when God passed between the animals, He was saying that He was subject to death if He didn't uphold His end of the promise (to make Abram's descendants in a beloved nation). But since Abram didn't have to do his part, God was taking on his end of the covenant too, stating that if Abram and his descendants didn't uphold their end of the covenant which is to follow God wholeheartedly, God would be subject to death then as well. God was backing Himself into a corner and for a reason. Knowing Abram and his family couldn't keep their end, He was pointing to the coming Savior, Jesus, who would die for our sins and save us from eternal separation from Him.

This is a covenant worth modeling. It says "I will be who I am supposed to be regardless of if you are who you are supposed to be." In this statement is unwavering commitment to do what is right even when it is hard to do so. It is a statement willingly stepping into sacrifice, grace, and mercy. This flies in the face of what culture teaches; "I'll do what I am supposed to do only if you do what you are supposed to do." This conditional statement is unfortunately what many people misunderstood when they agreed to marry their spouse, only to find out that marriage is more difficult than they thought.

The best time to start grasping the magnitude of marriage is now. It is today that warrants your attention because the sanctification of your life doesn't happen overnight. It comes from years of learning to know who God is and the humility to apply that knowledge to your life.

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! - Hebrews 9:14

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. - Colossians 3:1

You can learn a lot about God the protector and defender from the Bible.

But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. - 2
Thess. 3:3

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah – Psalm 32:7

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. - Psalm 46:1

The Lord is your mighty defender, perfect and just in all his ways; Your God is faithful and true; he does what is right and fair. - Deut. 32:4

I depend on God alone; I put my hope in him. He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated. My salvation and honor depend on God; he is my strong protector; he is my shelter Psalm 62:5-7

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in Whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. - Psalm 18:2

If God is our model for life and we see how He treats those He has created, we can rest assured that our best response to how He deals with us is to deal the same to others. As we read earlier in Ephesians 5:25, the way we are supposed to treat our wife is sacrificially, even to the point of placing ourselves between her and threat without hesitation. The readiness to act should be second nature. It should be unquestionable. No one or thing attacks your wife mentally, spiritually, or physically without a fight on your end.

The difference between two married people and two acquaintances is stark and is the source of why this willingness to protect your future spouse is so serious.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. - Genesis 2:24

For those of you will get married someday, God has ordained one woman for you to marry and live out your days with. The ceremonial act of becoming one flesh is demonstrated in the marriage covenant, but the actual physical portion of this is when the couple consummates the marriage in the privacy of their bedroom. They become legally one in front of God and their peers, and physically one in bed. There is no one else who should share this union with you, and in becoming unified, you are in essence making two one. That means whatever hurts her, hurts you. Whatever she finds success doing is something you celebrate with her. Her sickness becomes your burden. Her joy becomes your joy. Any threat to her is a threat you must stop. This is the way of Ephesians 5:25. This is something to look forward to as a man. It is an honorable thing to honor your wife.

Masculine Orthodox Statement Exercise – Protecting Women

Now that we have made it through our section on protecting women, lets fortify this section by answering the questions below, and then continue building out your MOs for this section.

What did you learn in this section about protecting women?

Why do you think women are subject to exploitation by men, and what are ways to prevent that?

How does God's word and the example of Jesus inform how you should view and interact with women regardless of the level at which you know them?

What are some key differences between protecting and defending women in general, and a spouse?

Now, take your responses and consolidate them into a MOs for this section that communicates your conviction on how you plan on protecting and defending women. Avoid passive, unclear, or vague statements. Don't feel like your statement has to fit into just one or two sentences. Pray over your thoughts and allow God to inform your words.

Here is an example:

As a man guided by a masculine orthodoxy rooted in the belief that men and women share the same essence yet differ in their divine roles, I embrace the responsibility bestowed upon me by God. It is my sacred duty to protect and honor women, reflecting the divine protection bestowed upon all of God's creatures. I affirm that true masculinity lies in safeguarding the dignity and well-being of women, forbidding any exploitation or advantage-taking by fellow men.

In the tapestry of God's creation, I recognize women not as objects but as cherished beings, recipients of God's love and provision. I stand firm in my commitment to shield women from harm, placing myself as a barrier between any threat and their well-being. Just as God protects His creations, so shall I protect and cherish the women in my midst. This duty is not just an obligation but an honorable expression of the divine order, a reflection of God's love manifested through the noble actions of men who, with strength and conviction, uphold the sanctity of those entrusted to their care.

Section 3

Pro-Life

Defending the Unborn

One of the hottest topics in America at the time of this writing is abortion. Abortion, simply put, is the deliberate termination of a human life. Compare this now with God's word.

Thou shall not murder. - Exodus 20:13

If someone is deliberately killing a baby in the womb, this is a direct violation of one of the ten commandments. There is just no way around the issue. All abortion is wrong. All.

Life begins at conception. That means when the male sperm is able to penetrate into the ovum, there is a dramatic shift in the activity in the womb almost instantly. Twenty-three chromosomes from both the male and female combine to form a zygote. It is estimated that the information contained in the chromosomes, when combined, contains over 21,000 genes and 3 billion base pairs. The amount of information contained in a strand of DNA is somewhere between 200 and 900 megabytes of data. The expression of such produces entirely unique individuals. All of this begins within hours of intercourse.

Check out these few "shorts" on the beauty of and argument for life at conception.



[CLICK](#)



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Many people believe there is some gray area on the issue of abortion. Here are a few of those arguments:

1. In the case of incest (someone related to the woman has sex with her).
2. In the case of rape.
3. If the baby is going to die at childbirth.
4. If the mother is at risk of dying.
5. If the mother thinks it's her right because it is her body.

Answers:

1. So the fetus has nothing to say on this issue? What makes it right that we kill an innocent human being?
2. Again, the fetus didn't make the decision, some selfish guy did. So does that make it right to kill this child?
3. No one can predict the future, but terminating a pregnancy out of convenience is not right. It is possible the baby might live, even if for a few hours, that time of life may be precious and memorable for the family. Life is still life.

4. The correct ethical principle to be applied to medicine in this situation is to save both mother and child in pregnancy or at childbirth. One of the unintended results of a life-saving procedure may be death to a fetus or child, but never should anyone try and abort a life on purpose.



5. Watch this [CLICK](#)

When you think through and engage people who hold a pro-choice stance, its important to keep logic at the forefront. In every situation, a pro-choice person is advocating for killing. The main difference with each argument is scenario, laced with emotion. But each argument seeks to find a justification to kill a life. In the QR code that follows is a full discussion on how to engage people with a pro-choice viewpoint. Take some time to listen to this important podcast on the subject. It is the first link. The second is a whitepaper overview of the most common abortion justifications and proper responses to each. Also take some time to review this one.



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Write down a few things you took away from this podcast:

The Roe vs. Wade decision handed down by the Supreme Court in 1973 gave women the right to terminate their babies at their discretion. The law held for almost fifty years until the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization case was heard by the Supreme Court in 2022. On June 24th, the court overruled the Roe vs. Wade decision, reversing the law on abortion, severely limiting the killing of unborn children.

In the first year alone since the overturning, it is estimated 32,000 baby’s lives were saved! That doesn’t mean the fight to legalize abortion is over. Those opposed to preserving the lives of the unborn will continue to press for “women’s health” and the “right to choose.” It is important for men to maintain a clear view of the sanctity of life and to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. - Psalm 127:3-5

We need to see the blessing of parenthood and remember it is meant to exist in the context of a marriage covenant. Historically and unsurprisingly, that overwhelming majority of abortions occur among unmarried women. This assumes the women are engaged in pre-marital sex, already a violation of God's design and command. Sometimes there are unintended consequences of our actions. Getting pregnant out of wedlock is no excuse to harm an innocent life. God's design is meant to protect us from consequence, and meant to bring us ultimate satisfaction. When we go against His design, we run the risk of receiving the due penalty of our choices. You can see the slippery slope of sin, most egregiously displayed in how people deal with their sinful choices.

This probably goes without saying, but let's say it anyway. When you enter any relationship with a woman, YOU are the one who sets the temperature physically. It is your responsibility to protect her heart and body by honoring and protecting her from believing in the hyper-sexualized culture which tells her to perform and give herself away to you. Any woman you have interest in that cannot appreciate this lead must be reconsidered for your affections.

Manhood Orthodox Statement Exercise

This may be a shorter section than our previous one, but it is no less important. We are literally dealing with life and death. Our culture has normalized the killing of the unborn in America. It is not time for Christians to fall in line with the flow and rhetoric of liberal ideologies. It is our job to stand on God's word (Thou Shalt Not Murder) and fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Fortify this section by adding to your MOs below. You can refer to the example following:

I wholeheartedly embrace the divine commandment against the taking of innocent life. Recognizing that God is the source of life itself, I understand that any act of murder is a direct affront to His honor. I firmly affirm the sacredness of life from the moment of conception, viewing every individual existence as precious and deserving of protection.

In adherence to God's teachings, I hold that pregnancy and parenting are not burdens but profound blessings bestowed upon us. Rejecting the notion of inconvenience, I acknowledge the inherent sanctity of bringing new life into the world. It is my unwavering conviction that there exist no circumstances wherein abortion is justified, as the gift of life is paramount and should be safeguarded at all costs.

In alignment with the noble principle that I am my brother's keeper, I stand resolute in defending those who cannot defend themselves, especially the unborn. I reject passivity and vow to actively declare the inherent right of every baby to be born and to live out their life, as it is both a moral duty and an honorable commitment to uphold the sanctity of human existence.

Section 4

Your Brother's Keeper

1Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." 2And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 3In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

8Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. 9Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

- Genesis 4:1-9

This biblical account records the first murder in the Bible. We see the complete disregard Cain has for his brother by rising up and striking him dead over jealousy and in bitter anger. His response to God when asked where Abel was is both flippant and confirmation that Cain's heart did not honor God, and that the curse of sin was a very present player in the newly fallen world.

This story is tragic, and shows how Satan was bound even from early on, to destroy the nuclear family, and usurp the rule of God in the process. It demonstrates exactly the opposite of what God expects from brothers.

Did you know? If you are a believer in Christ, then you are a part of God's family. You are actually a brother of Christ, and brothers of every other male believer past, present, and future.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters;

- Romans 8:29

So how should we treat our brothers? Consider these two verses

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

- 1 Peter 3:8

20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

- 2 Corinthians 12:20

We see two important things:

1. We should have brotherly love for one another.
2. We should not bring harm to our brothers.

In 1 Corinthians 12, we learn a lot about what the church body looks like when each person is living out their gifts for the benefit of the body. It is a beautiful picture of symbiotic relationships bringing collective glory to God by fulfilling their purpose. Then in the next chapter, we are told how love transcends even faith and hope. The point is the way we treat people is a reflection of our faith and hope. When we trust in God and receive his love experientially, we grow in faith, are filled with hope, and love exudes from us naturally as an overflow of God's goodness. We can see in the following verse the imperative directive toward loving our brothers.

Let brotherly love continue.

- Hebrews 13:1

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

- Romans 12:10

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,

- 1 Corinthians 4:9

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

-Romans 14:19

The word "love" is thrown around in ways that are heretical. When something is heretical it is contrary to the word of God, no matter how nice it sounds. Often, heresy comes from the mouths of spiritual leaders and can be confusing because it is being spoken authoritatively. It will sound good, but it is not consistent with the truth of the Word.

One of the first ways love is misappropriated is by acting like we should love everyone and that one way we can do so is by accepting of people's choices. When love turns a blind eye to sin, it is not love, it is complicity and enablement.

We should love everyone, but we shouldn't accept everything people do on the basis of love alone. Love is not always warm and mushy. Sometimes love is warning and rebuke.

Love is not affirming people's sinful choices, it is lovingly wanting them to be their best self while living under the authority of the word of God.

Love forgives but then charges to go and sin no more. We see this in the story of Jesus with the woman caught in adultery. The scribes and Pharisees had caught a woman who was engaged in extra-marital conduct, an offense punishable by stoning. In an act of mercy, Jesus saved her from punishment because he loved her and wanted something better for her than her current way of living. But he didn't just shoo

her accusers away and then high five her and walk off. No, he charged her to “go and sin no more.” His act of mercy was laced with a command to leave her present life of sin. Read below:

Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

- John 8:10-11

This is our model for acting as our brother’s keeper. While we should avoid wrongdoing to our brothers, we should also love them, and sometimes that love means bringing to their attention their poor life choices.

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

- 2 Corinthians 3:13-15

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

- Matthew 18:15

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

- Galatians 6:1

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

- Ephesians 4:15

Check out this last verse. It says we are to “speak the truth in love.” What do you think that means?

If you have siblings, you are probably very accustomed to the feeling you get when your brother or sister is annoying you. You want to call them out, and sometimes that is justified. But sometimes, if you were honest, it is not as if they are doing anything bad, it is just that your preference in that moment is that whatever they are doing is annoying. In essence, it is not that they are caught in sin, it is that they are just pushing your button, whether they know it or not.

The verses we are exploring above are not tied to some sort of personal annoyance. While there are times to ask your sibling to be more respectful of your personal space, the point of these verses finds its foundation in compassion. Yes, when our brother is caught in sin, it is compassion that drives our response, not our annoyance or anger.

If we are to speak the truth in love, we must first have compassion for our brother and see that how he is acting is not in accordance with the word of God. When we approach him, we do so with the intent of helping him see his error, and ultimately develop a conviction to become more Christ-like. Again, rebuking someone doesn’t not originate in trying to alleviate personal annoyance.

As has been stated in earlier sections, being our brother's keeper means we have our brother's back. That means we are willing to help them remain spiritually sound as we just discussed, but that we will also be there for them mentally and physically.

Life is not always peachy keen. If we were to look at a timeline of life as it relates to high and low points, we would see that people fluctuate up and down between peaks and valleys. This is the nature of living in a fallen world. Sometimes life is good, and sometimes it's not good. You could be happy at one moment, and sad at another, depending on your circumstances. A guy may be secure in his salvation but is just going through a rough time mentally for a number of reasons. If left to ruminate in this state too long, he may lose his focus on the sovereignty of God and start to deal with doubt and depression.

For that reason, we need to be aware of how our brothers are doing. Instead of asking the "yes-no" question "You good," you might tell them that you sense they are not themselves and that you are concerned about their well-being. Whether that guy is willing to be open or honest is up to him, but your job is to be present and honest with them. We don't leave men to just wallow in distress. No man is designed to be an island. We need each other and must be willing to step into situations with them. This is another act of compassion and love.

Finally, it goes without saying, but brothers do not stand around and let physical harm befall another. Real men who care for one another are willing to engage in the moment to protect them from harm. This goes back to our section on self-preservation. You may be willing, but are you able? Hopefully you never even enter into a situation where someone is threatening to hurt a friend, but if it occurred, could you assist? I have seen numerous videos online showing assailants in broad daylight assaulting an innocent bystander to steal their car, personal affects, or to just do harm. Rarely do I see anything more than people standing around recording the video with their phones to post on social media. Where are the people willing to thwart the attack? While I can't put context to many of those videos, if it were you and a buddy in that situation and he was attacked, surely you can understand this is not a time to be passive.

I started this section out by sharing the story of Cain and Abel. Cain represents the person none of us should strive to be in life as his actions demonstrate the attitude and desire of Satan, and the outworking of a poisoning of the heart. But we can contrast Cain with the ultimate man, our archetype, Jesus. Look at the beauty of the Bible and how Jesus continues to be the remedy for the effect of sin in the lives of men.

Cain killed the righteous

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

- 1 John 3:12

Jesus was killed for the unrighteous

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Romans 5:6-8

Cain was punished for his sin

“And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.

- Genesis 4:10-13

Jesus was punished for the sins of man

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21

Cain was motivated by pride

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

- Genesis 4:3-5

Jesus was consistently humble

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, 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.

- Philippians 2:5-8

Cain hated his brother

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

- Genesis 4:8

Jesus loved those who hated him

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him

- Colossians 1:21-22

Cain received mercy

If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

- Genesis 4:15

Jesus is the merciful

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

- Romans 5:15

Manhood Orthodox Statement Exercise

Now take some time to think about this section. How can you be a better brother to believers? How is the example of Jesus a worthy one to follow? Formulate your understanding into a statement that will guide how you think and act as it relates to living as your brother's keeper.

See the example below:

I wholeheartedly acknowledge all believers as my brothers in Christ, destined to share eternity in the praise of God. While we may be freed from the penalty of sin, I recognize that we still navigate the challenges of a fallen world.

In adherence to the principles of brotherhood, it is my solemn duty to stand by my brothers, extending both compassion and unwavering support. With a heart full of love and empathy, I commit to the noble cause of encouraging and, when necessary, engaging in the fight alongside my brothers as we tread the narrow path of holiness. It is through this shared journey that we embody the true essence of brotherly love.

Inspired by the ultimate example of brotherhood in Jesus Christ, I aspire to emulate His boundless love, compassion, and sacrificial spirit in my relationships with my fellow believers. May our bond be a testament to the transformative power of brotherly love, reflecting the divine connection that unites us on the path to eternal praise and holiness.

Section 5

Secular Progressivism

Awareness of Academic Progressive Agenda

When God created the world, He created it free from sin. With that freedom came ultimate satisfaction, union with Him, and enjoyment of His presence. Man was placed in the garden with his wife, and they were commanded to work the land, subdue it, and to reproduce. They were bestowed a reign over all God had made. Their purpose was to continually discover the love and wonder of God through things like, exploration, adventure, handiwork, re-creation, building, innovation, family, fellowship, and discipleship. God wanted us to enjoy Him in every aspect of life whether it was planting a garden, having sex with your wife, or inventing something to benefit society. He endowed freedom to His creation for the sole purpose of bringing Himself glory and sharing His goodness with mankind.

In a world that denies the will or pervasive existence of God, freedom is threatened. In situations where God is not seen as the ultimate authority, man becomes subject to his own desires and goals. We can see this in the early history of the Israelites. For years, Israel had been guided by a succession of ten judges who also were either priests (Eli) or prophets (Samuel). They were appointed by God and were meant to act situationally rather than to rule indefinitely. They did not exist to form a government over the people. God had made it clear that He was their ruler and king. The use of prophets, priests, and judges appears to be one of the ways God established an earthly authoritative go-between for He and His people.

However in 1 Samuel 8, we see the Israelites reject Samuel's wicked sons as judges and ask instead for a king. The act of rejecting his sons was warranted, as they had perverted their roles by acting contrary to God's command, but to ask for a king instead was wrong. God warns them of the folly of their ask:

¹⁰ So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked him for a king. ¹¹ And he said, "This will be the practice of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and put *them* in his chariots for himself and among his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots. ¹² He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and *some* to do his plowing and to gather in his harvest, and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will also take your daughters *and use them* as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. ¹⁵ And he will take a tenth of your seed and your vineyards and give *it* to his high officials and his servants. ¹⁶ He will also take your male servants and your female servants, and your best young men, and your donkeys, and use *them* for his work. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. ¹⁸ Then you will cry out on that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you on that day."

I am sure it is not hard to see prevailing theme of the warning from God. Each verse starts with a “he will.” Israel was willing to give power to an imperfect human and let “his will” reign over them rather than allow God alone to rule over them as the ultimate king. A king wasn’t appointed for temporary intervention, but was established for a lifetime and with ultimate authority. With the kingship came government and the suppression of freedom under the personal will of the ruler of that time. The warning of God about establishing a king turned out to be true.

(See visual depictions of God’s warning to Israel and an example of bad kingship [HERE](#).)

"The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness."

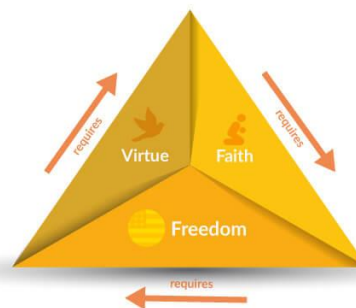
George Washington, January 9, 1790

At the end of the American Revolution, George Washington was hailed as an icon, a man among men for his bravery and leadership in helping the Americans defeat the British and turn back their monarchical governing style. He was so popular, the people were bound to make him the first king of the “new” world. He could have stepped into that role without opposition and taken on the power granted him, but he didn’t. In a stunning act of humility and foresight, George showed his character and the virtue at its root and denied the offer. Instead of becoming possibly the “greatest man alive” according to King George III, he chose to help America lay down new roots, and a new, more virtue driven government.

One of the beauties of the American experiment has been the establishment of checks and balances within the different branches of government and the extension of the voice of the people as a force in driving who is in office and what types of policies are put in place to govern. Our founding fathers believed it essential to remove the opportunity for oppression by a ruler by not giving full power to any one person or group of people. While this can slow the process of governing down considerably, like a filtering system, as it passes through the different branches, it should have to pass considerable scrutiny before being engrained in our law books.

Since government has come to dominate virtually every society in the world, there lies an important weight on the rulers, and in the case of America, on the American people as a whole in order for a government and a society to run properly and for freedom (the original intent of God) to allow people to seek the best in life.

Os Guinness has suggested this can be best described through the idea of what he calls “The Golden Triangle of Freedom.”



The Golden Triangle of Freedom

“Freedom requires virtue, which requires faith, which requires freedom.”

More formulaically, it might read:

Freedom requires virtue.

Virtue requires faith.

Faith requires freedom.

The idea is for a society to function properly and to exhibit true freedom, it must require more than just rules and regulations. Citizens must exhibit the internal characteristic of virtue to balance the giving of liberty with personal self-restraint. Just like a government doesn't want to give liberty to citizens without good character, citizens have no desire to follow leaders who can't provide the same, virtue is a pre-requisite to a free society. Erode the character of the people, and you will erode the confidence and reality of what it looks like to be free.

Virtue doesn't exist in a bubble but is coupled with faith. While the majority of the founding fathers were orthodox Christians, even those who claim people like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were not believers must understand even they had high reverence for Christianity, Jesus Christ, and the religious value of the Judeo-Christian faith. Faith provides a moral compass from which to guide behavior and motivations behind actions. This is because the root of faith is in something outside of, and grander than the self. Without faith, there are not the same reasons to act in virtuous ways. History would show that where the walls of faith are lowered, there is a raising of public tolerance and a movement away from hope in transcendence. When individuals in a society start to lose their faith, they resort to self-reliance, trust in the here and now, and act in ways that are ultimately self-seeking.

Finally, faith requires freedom. In America, faith is optional. It is not coerced or forced on anyone. But in order for a society to experience freedom in its true sense, each individual must exercise faith. In the Bible are the famous words from John 8:32, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The truth of God and exemplified in the Gospel provides us the clear pathway to freedom. It is there we can understand we can be freed from sin, bound to a perfect God and His will, confident in a future heavenly reign with Christ in Heaven, and secure from all earthly threats. To have true freedom is to live without fear, to act in courage and with sound resolve, to live as much for self as for others, and to be full of hope, knowing this life is but a training and testing ground for eternity.

If you have ever read or watched the Lord of the Rings trilogy, you understand the power of the ring. When any individual comes in contact with it, the power it possesses is difficult to resist, almost impossible. It is the exposure of the weakness of man's personal strength, and the struggle for ultimate power that drives much of the narrative of the movies.

The first attempt to subvert the throne of God was in the garden. This is where the snake convinced Eve that God was withholding something from them, and that if they would partake of the forbidden fruit in Eden, they would become like God and know good and evil. However, what the devil did not tell Eve is that she and Adam were not created to know good and evil, but to leave that to God; the only One who has the power to deal with that knowledge in a holy way. And so, just like in “Lord of the Rings,” we see men, time and time again, men unable to handle the power gifted by the ring.

Mankind was meant to hold power under the ultimate power of God. By placing God as the ultimate authority, His holiness can become our holiness and lead us to make righteous decisions. In 1 Peter 1:5-6, God calls us to be holy just as He is holy. That is a big ask. However there is a simple logical solution to it.

First of all, understand the word “holy” means to know what is right and to do what is right. God always adheres to this in every sense of the word and in every situation. Conversely, man, because we are fallen creatures, fail to act righteously apart from God. Romans 3:23 tells us that we are all sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God; the glory being His expectation of holiness. At the same time, consider this verse spoken by Jesus during His ministry on earth:

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

The simplest way to explain how we can be holy like God is by staying hooked into Him. How do we do so? We can abide in Him through by practicing the disciplines of the faith (hearing, prayer, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating) and by submitting the position of our heart (confession, worship, applying God’s word faithfully) in obedience to Him. We must first understand our position OUTSIDE of Christ to understand our need for Him (death and eternal separation). Then we must accept His gift of salvation, the result of our placing our trust in Him, and understand our new position IN Him as a believer (right standing with God and eternal life with Him).

From this point, we must then understand what it means to be sanctified. Major Ian Thomas wrote a book called “The Saving Life of Christ” to illustrate the ongoing work of Christ in us after we become believers. Becoming a believer in Christ is not just a singular event, like going on a once in a lifetime vacation to some exotic place. It is not a “been there, done that” type of experience. A believer in Christ understands the implications of his decision; that life without Christ is impossible to live in the right way.

When a person accepts the gospel, they become right with God, meaning they are given rights to enter Heaven and live there forever, not because of anything they have done to earn it, but because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus for their sins. It is His work alone that allows us access to God (see Ephesians 2:8-9). But from that point, as Major Ian Thomas points out in His book, it is not the saving blood of Christ that continues to work in our life after conversion, but the saving life of Christ. He establishes the absolute importance of sanctification in the life of the believer. This is the idea behind John 15:5. We may be washed clean by the blood of Christ, but we cannot live right apart from the life of Christ. Each and every day we must wake up and make a conscious heart decision to lay aside our desire to be the commander of our life and to instead, submit to the authority of Christ, following His lead wherever and however He calls. So that we don’t get caught up in the theological weeds here, quite simply put, sanctification is a full-on commitment to hearing and responding to God’s truth.

Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth. John 17:17

To be sanctified then, is to become holy. So, over time, as we stay rooted in Christ through His word, we will grow to know what is right and to do what is right more consistently, ultimately for His glory, and not our own. This means that as we receive authority to rule or lead over others, our thoughts and decisions will be influenced by the truth of God because we will filter all situations through Him first, seeking the holy response to questions and dilemmas we face.

Apart from the Vine

When we start with individual responsibility toward holiness, we can work outward from there as it relates to what that looks like for a believer to serve in places like the home, or managing people in a work setting, even running a community organization, or ultimately advocating for large groups of people on the governance level.

As much as it may appear that church and state are separate things, there is no denying that every law that has ever been created or signed is the product of a worldview. Our overarching beliefs on life direct our decision-making. All laws are based on morality, and morality exists because God created it. Therefore, if someone says the church and its biblical morality has no place in the state (government), they are spewing a lie and show they misunderstand the meaning of the phrase completely.

When we expect that government should exist apart from God-given truth, we are saying we believe there is a life we live under God (i.e., going to church or youth group), and another life we live under man, depending on the day or time. To believe this way is to in fact separate your life into compartments with different rulers for each, which violates the most basic reasoning behind our design.

We are worshippers by nature. We will all worship someone or something, just as we learned in the study on idolatry (see Gent I). God created us to worship Him alone, to make Him the central figure in all our decision-making, to pervade every aspect of our life with the truth He has established through the creation He has created. To act like a government is higher than, or beyond God, is to live a duplicitous existence.

²⁴No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

- Matthew 6:24

When we read the Bible, it is clear there are battles raging in an unseen realm. The Bible calls this spiritual warfare and it exists between angels and demons. Books like “This Present Darkness” by Frank Peretti or C.S. Lewis’s “The Screwtape Letters” highlight this “behind the scenes” war between the forces of evil and God’s spiritual beings. In fact, Ephesians 6:10-18 speaks directly to the source of the turmoil we experience both internally and externally on a daily basis. We are to put on the armor of God in order to stand against these forces.

There is a very interesting passage in Daniel that provides us insight into the spiritual realm. We gain a glimpse into the spiritual battles that wage behind the veiled dimensions on earth. Specifically, we can receive insight into Satan’s strategies to influence the decisions of rulers of countries.

10 A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

12 Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

- Daniel 10:10-14

The reason this angel was coming to Daniel in the first place is because he had prayed to gain understanding about a vision that no one knew how to interpret. In the past, Daniel had prayed for understanding to be able to interpret previous visions and had received almost an immediate answer. Yet this time, he prayed a didn't hear anything for three weeks because of a spiritual battle waging in another dimension. The king at the time of Daniel was Cyrus, yet the ruler mentioned in this text is the Prince of Persia. This prince is not a human, but a demon. In the spiritual realm, Satan assigns his underlings to different people or places based on their rank in his army. From there, they implement strategies to sway people away from God and to secular ideologies that compliment the plans of the devil.

This is precisely why we should pray for our leaders. We need people in office who fear God and submit to the wisdom and direction of God's word. When leaders fail to heed to the absolute biblical truths, they leave themselves open to attacks from demonic forces. These attacks are often extremely subtle, slowly conditioning those under their influence that there is a better way than God's way. Over time, they start to resemble Romans 1 leaders, who deny the truth of God and push a progressive agenda meant to move their constituents in a secular direction. Much like a frog in a pot of luke-warm water, if place on a stove and the temperature is slowly increased, you can boil the frog without it realizing it. If you were to look back over the last 250 years of our country and compare the conservative values with what we value today, you should be able to easily see the erosion that has occurred over that period of time. If you were to point that out to leaders today, they would say things like, “times and people change and that which we value changes with it,” or “that way of thinking is antiquated and outdated.” God's truth never becomes outdated or irrelevant. These statements are utterly false and meant to condition us to thinking God's way no longer applies to culture. All of this is the product of Satan's exploitation of people in power who do not fear God. He uses time and pride to do his work in the lives of men.

There is an ex-KGB defector from what was the USSR, now Russia and its split countries, who went on television in 1984 to discuss the communist strategy for overthrowing enemy countries through psychological warfare. What you see here is a deliberate outflowing of a secular ideology that seeks to remove virtue and replace it with oppression. Click the [LINK](#) or scan the QR code right to see this chilling warning from Yuri Bezmenov.



When a society and does not heed to God's truth, they have to invent their own way of living. This may plausible, but practically, the results of redefining truth are like building a house on sand. What may look amazing on the surface is built on shifting ground that does not hold up to the strains of life. Yet society apart from God will try again and again to build something utopian on the backs of sinful people, and will

always fail. The biggest difference between society under the guidance of God and the one under the guidance of man is sin. With God, the sinner is brought back to a state of humility on a regular basis, and it from his experience with a perfect, loving, merciful and gracious God, he learns to extend the same love sacrificially to others without condition. With man, the sinner is encouraged to choose his own way as long as his truth doesn't harm anyone, but the relative fluid nature of truth ultimate makes this ideology impossible, and eventually leads to exploitation of others and perpetual selfishness.

Secular Ideologies

One of the things you need to be aware of is the myriad of philosophies of living circulating through our culture and throughout the world. So many of them have an ounce or two of truth in them, but they all disregard biblical truth in its purity when it comes to practical application.

“Why wouldn't God want two people who love each other deeply to be together in holy matrimony?”

He wouldn't accept in the case that these two people do not follow the established institution of marriage He put into place in the beginning (see Gen. 2:23-24).

“Why wouldn't God want all people to be equal in opportunity and reputation?”

He certainly does hold to showing no partiality, except when men use the terms “oppressed and oppressor” to bring awareness to the exploitation of one people group by another people group, and in doing so attempt to drag the offending group into a perpetual state of shame.

“Why wouldn't God want someone to become exactly who they want to be?”

He has no problem with that, but He designed each person just the way He wanted, and identifying as a different gender because you feel you're trapped in the wrong body is not consistent with His truth or His design.

Below is a collection of current cultural philosophies that attempt guide thinking and behavior. Take some time to review these videos and websites for a better understanding of the philosophies vying for our attention on a consistent basis. These are all apart of a secular worldview that is contrary to the Christian worldview. You need to know about them because they are pervasive in school systems, through media outlets, and via social media. The sheer number of times we are exposed to these ideas necessitates that we know and understand how God teaches us to live. When we know His word, we will recognize when competing world views digress.

[Critical Race Theory](#)



[Diversity, Equality, Inclusion](#)



[Gender Identity](#)



[Just War Theory](#)



[Gun Control](#)



[Christian Nationalism](#)



[Social Justice \(vs Biblical Justice\)](#)



[Climate Change](#)



[Moral Therapeutic Deism](#)



[Moral Relativism](#)



[Abortion and Euthanasia](#)



[Third and Fourth Wave Feminism](#)



Manhood Orthodox Statement Exercise

Now that you have walked through this section, gather your thoughts about how the information you have learned should help guide your practice of protector and defender? What was democracy and freedom founded on? Where has society made a serious wrong turn? What is your responsibility to yourself to protect yourself against psychological warfare? How might you use what you have learned to protect others from the same? Summarize your thoughts into a statement of belief and pray this will create a conviction in you that will result in steadfastness and glory to Him who gives you truth.

Here is an example:

"As a man firmly anchored in a masculine orthodox worldview, I acknowledge that truth is inherently inscribed on the heart of mankind, bestowed through the wisdom of God's word. In our quest for righteousness, it is paramount to recognize that Satan cunningly subverts the Christian worldview, camouflaging a secular and humanistic perspective that, while appearing good, is inherently evil and self-serving.

In steadfast commitment to biblical principles, I, as a man, uphold truth as an unwavering standard, rejecting the psychological warfare waged against absolute truth. To shield myself from the insidious influence of secularism, I dedicate myself to a profound understanding of God's word, fortifying my mind against the deceptive allure of false ideologies.

Embracing the call to boldness, I recognize the responsibility to confront and expose the folly of erroneous thinking. With courage and conviction, I engage in the battle of ideas, bringing awareness to society and protecting others from the pitfalls of distorted perspectives. It is my duty to stand as a bulwark against the encroachment of falsehood, defending the sanctity of truth and upholding the timeless principles of a Christian worldview. With this I am an advocate for freedom, which is built and sustained on the foundation of virtue and faith.

Section 7

Taking a Stand

It is time now for you to challenge yourself. You have been inundated with information and have been asked to summarize it into personalized statements you can learn to live by in the coming months and years. You will have the opportunity to put these individual section MOs into one at the end of this study.

However, in this final section, it is your turn to prepare to take the stand against truth in front of your father and peers at our Gent Event. This can be intimidating if you have never done this before, but with the information you are going to be provided, you should gain confidence before the actual day. This is simply an exercise meant to give you the experience engaging skeptics and seekers alike as you come across them throughout your life.

Why are we doing this? Because it is our calling as believers to do so.

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

- 2 Timothy 4:2-5

There is a logical progression for why we should persuade people to come the knowledge of Jesus.

1. God created everyone and everything for Himself.
2. God loves everyone and desires them to know and glorify Him forever.
3. Sin has blinded people from knowing God, and will ultimately result in eternal punishment.
4. The Gospel of Jesus is the remedy for sin, and the full display of God's love and grace.
5. Believers have been given the Gospel to proclaim.
6. God's love and compassion should become our love and compassion; we should not want any person to die in their sins and face eternal separation from God.
7. Persuading people to consider Jesus is an act of compassion and in line with our purpose.

There are then two main ways we can be persuasive, depending on our situation and opportunity.

1. Sharing our testimony.
2. Sharing logic in response to skepticism or false belief.

Testimony

A testimony is unique because it goes beyond simple facts and adds in personal experience. To become a Christian, you need to understand your position with God as a sinner, understand what Jesus did and why you need Him, and then you need to accept the gift of grace while putting your faith in Him. The Bible tells us when we do that, the old person is then gone, and a new person has arrived in its place (2

Corinthians 5:17). That means a believer moves from separated from God to in good standing with Him, and the power of sin has been removed from us. the verses below

14 For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 6:14-23

So there is a radical change in our life. There is victory over our sin through Jesus, and a release from its bondage. That means when we receive the Holy Spirit, we are actually receiving God's power so that we can battle against temptation and the evil one (see Ephesians 6:10-18, and Acts 1:8).

Conversions happen in a myriad of ways. You could have made that decision at a church camp, in a church service, around a campfire, in a desperate moment, or even the quite of your own room. The one thing that is important for all professing believers is that they realize just how bad they were off without Christ, what exactly Christ did for us and why, and how that act provides them a way out of eternal damnation. This is called understanding your salvation. It is not just a decision you make because everyone else is going down front at a revival event. It is a decision you make because you understand your need, see Christ's remedy, and humbly accept that, knowing there was no other way you could be saved from the second death.

Someone giving their testimony should be able to walk someone from lost to found with a Gospel presentation, but should also be able to walk someone through:

1. Who I was before Christ
2. What Christ has done for me
3. How I am now different because of Christ

There are some key verses everyone should know when sharing the Gospel with someone.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, - Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-Romans 6:23

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Romans 5:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- Ephesians 2:8-9

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

-Revelation 3:20

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

-John 5:24

The above verses show a person their need, show what Christ has done, explains to them how they are saved, and provides them assurance that if they confess with their mouth and believe in their heart that Jesus is Lord, they are saved (Romans 10:9-10). Everyone should be able to share their testimony clearly.

Your Part:

Imagine you have two to three (2-3) minutes with someone who is lost. You want to share your testimony with them and show them how the Bible provides them direction on how to become right with God through Jesus. Prepare a testimony that does the following:

1. Who were you before God? This helps establish you were a sinner and separated from God. Romans 3:23, and 6:23 apply here.
2. What prompted you to consider Jesus? This connects experience with fact.
3. What is it that Jesus did for you? This allows you to share verses like Romans 5:8, and to explain that it was not only His death on the cross, but the fact that He was the perfect sacrifice because He Himself was perfect. His resurrection gives us ultimate hope of overcoming death.
4. What did you say to God when you decided to put your faith in Him. This allows you to explain how you asked Jesus to save you from sin, and it allows you to share verses like Ephesians 2:8-9, and Revelation 3:20.
5. Finally, tell how your decision and Christ now living in you has changed you. Sharing Romans 6:14 and John 5:24 allows you to explain how it is the Holy Spirit that gives you strength and that you have assurance of your salvation.

Come prepared at the Gent Event to give a short testimony that follows this outline.

Not a believer?

If you have not made a decision to follow Christ yet, please go ahead and participate in learning and verbalizing how the Gospel message provides sinners a remedy from their separation from God. Use this as an exercise to help you become more familiar with what the Bible says about salvation. You will still be asked to share the Gospel message as if you were doing so with a stranger, family member, or friend.

Logic

The second way we speak to people is through logic. As we have seen, secular humanism has had a deleterious effect on the way we understand the world around us. People actually believe something came from nothing and developed into everything we see over billions of years, completely separate from a Creator. People believe Jesus either didn't exist or was just a good man which is dishonest and frankly, an impossibility. People think the here and now is all there is or ever will be, but they advocate for morality and virtue without being able to point to a source of either.

Many, if not most, have learned to regurgitate what they have heard from others without deeply thinking through the implications of those statements, but have rather, somewhat blindly decided to believe them and apply them to their worldview because it fits with how they want to live their life.

It is safe to say the vast majority of people want to know what is true because it helps them understand how life works. Whether they choose to accept what is true is a different matter. However, many do not understand how their belief systems do not stand up to basic scrutiny, and most don't have anything more than a superficial understanding of their beliefs because they have never fully wrestled with them.

It is your job to point out errors in their thinking and help them consider new information they may have never considered.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

- 1 Peter 3:15

This verse is instructive. We are never out to win an argument for the sake of doing so, but for persuading the lost to consider Jesus as the answer to life's problems, namely their own. Engaging the lost in conversation over faith is one to be done with an attitude of compassion and love. If we are more interested in tearing a person's false views apart than we are helping a person become a child of God, we are missing the boat, and our motives are likely to be a turn off.

There are a few foundational arguments you need to be familiar with in order to have logical conversations with people who are skeptics to faith and God. They are below.

Existence, God, and Morality Videos



Why is there something rather than nothing? [CLICK](#)



Does God Exist? [CLICK](#)



AND [CLICK](#)



AND [CLICK](#)



Does fine tuning of the universe prove God's existence? [CLICK](#)



Can you be good without God? [CLICK](#)



Is there meaning to life? [CLICK](#)

The videos you have just watched are a wonderful representation of logical arguments for the very basic beliefs about life, existence of God, morality, and meaning. These are excellent arguments to memorize and consider presenting to people you encounter who have doubts about God. What was your favorite and why?

Greg Koukl wrote a fantastic book called “Tactics.” It highlights the importance of argument, the strategy for engagement, and the principles of leading people to the truth through logical reasoning.

You should consider grabbing a copy for yourself to read and reference. For the sake of what you are doing now, I am posting videos from a series he filmed based on the book. I would like you to watch these and take some notes on each, as this will help you during the Gent Event. There will be an opportunity for you to banter with one or more of the participants regarding their beliefs. It will be wise of you to know how to engage someone who is a skeptic about God, Jesus, or religion altogether.



Tactics Session [ONE](#)



Tactics Session [TWO](#)



Tactics Session [THREE](#)



After these three sessions, you should have a clearer sense of what Koukl deems the “Columbo Tactic.” This is only half of the series. There are three more sessions you could watch, but for now, we will stop with this.

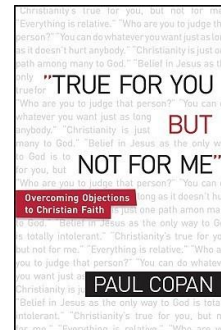
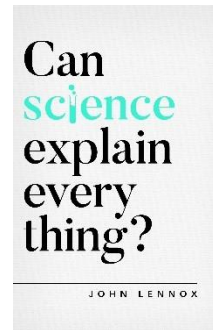
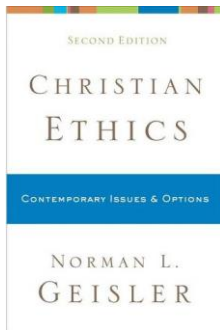
What are some of the key things you took away?

I know for me, not bearing the burden of proof was a huge one for me. Additionally, learning to ask clarifying questions was paramount. It’s hard for me to address their belief if I am not absolutely certain what they mean. One final take-away for me is the fact that if I loose sight of the fact that I care about the person I am talking to and resort to sarcasm or snide comments, I lose. The best way for me to be effective is to genuinely want someone to see the truth, or at least to walk away with a stone in their shoe.

Laying Out a Logical Argument

Finally, as a part of a test of understanding and application of everything we have discussed, you are going to pick one of the topics listed below and put together a 3-5 minute statement based on your research on the subject. You are to make as “air-tight” a case for the biblical stance on one of the topics, and respond to rebuttal with tact and in kindness. There are several texts where you can find sound reasoning for any of the ones listed below. They are laid out here, however, if you want to search places like YouTube for your answers, that is up to you.

Key Texts:



Apologists found online or on social media: [CLICK](#)

Topics (Pick One)

1. Did the Resurrection Occur? [CLICK](#) and [CLICK](#)
2. Should all abortion be banned?
3. Is all euthanasia wrong?
4. Is capital punishment appropriate in certain instances?
5. Is war wrong?
6. Is the Bible a reliable piece of literature?
7. Is hell a real place?
8. Are miracles real?
9. Can we legislate morality?
10. Is gambling unethical?
11. Is the existence of evil proof of an unloving God?
12. Which god is the right god to follow?

Your position statement should follow like this:

1. I am going to make the argument that God is real
2. Point 1
3. Point 2
4. Point 3...as needed
5. Conclusion

Section 8

Wrapping up your MOs

In almost all of the sections we have covered, you have summarized your thoughts into a MOs. As it is now, you have parts of a whole. Let me challenge you to bring all of you individual statements together and meld them into one statement. It will allow you to get rid of redundances and make your statement more concise. It does not have to be a specific length. It should however cover what you are trying to communicate regarding growing into a biblical protector and defender.

Once you have created your final MOs, print it and make sure you bring it to the Gent Event. You will read it to the group at some point during our time. I think you find it inspiring to hear others read theirs, and you will be encouraged by the unity it will foster among the group.

THE GENT EVENT

The event itself will give you and your fellow squires the opportunity to get to know each other more, to work on a task or challenge relevant to overall theme, and to be encouraged by the older men present. It should be a memorable time, and a definite fortifying step toward manhood.

Summary of Expectations:

1. Finish this study. The links are there because they are relevant. Put in the work to get the most out of your time and the event itself. You are doing important work for yourself and your legacy.
2. Fill out the MOs in each section. Use your brain. Think, meditate, consider...don't rush through your thoughts. Let God guide you through prayer and listening to His guidance.
3. Prepare a short testimony that clearly explains the Gospel and weaves in personal experience.
4. Take notes on the Tactics videos by Greg Koukl. Soak up what he has to say about engagement in arguments with others without bearing the burden of proof on the front side.
5. Pick a topic to defend and prepare a biblically based logical argument for it. Think through what counterarguments or rebuttal you might encounter.
6. Bring all of you individual MOs together and form one condensed version you are proud of and that communicates your feelings and convictions of becoming a biblical protector and defender.