



HOAW Newsletter

Keep your heart with
all vigilance, for from it
flow the springs of life.
Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)

February 2024

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

Reject Passivity

Dr. Greg Bourgon

Most men I know are living lives of suppressed desperation unsure of their future, yet, frantically trying to get there—wherever there is. These men are living in the moment in search of an illusion they believe is reality. They have bought into a pattern of life that is sucking the life out of them, a desperate pursuit of an evasive and moving target.

Just when they think they are within reach the target moves again. In the journey they **sacrifice their integrity on the altar of expediency**, the realization of which happens in a moment of time of startling clarity—usually just after the loss of someone dear to them or something dear to them. In a painful and reflective moment, they ask questions like this. **“How in the world did I get here?” “Why did I expend my life and resources on a perishable dream of such little substance and significance?” “How did I lose my way?”**

Most men I have talked to are unclear about their identity, their role in life, their purpose for existence, and the trajectory they should take to reach their divinely ordained potential. We have allowed **society and culture** to stand in a privileged vantage point of authority and influence over us which has shaped our perceptions about these issues.

The term **‘toxic masculinity’** has become a popular cultural label applied to all males. Toxic masculinity typically implies that all things masculine, are inherently toxic. It originally and legitimately applied to **men behaving badly** (hypermasculinity, bullying, misplaced aggression, promiscuity, etc.). Over time it began to be applied to **men simply behaving** (any behavior stereotypically associated with men (chivalry, protectors, providers, etc.)). Now, it applies to all men and maleness rather than on truly inappropriate behaviors (hatred of men and all things masculine). “The result is an environment where boys

expressing more typically “boyish” behavior feel ashamed or rejected for being male.” (*GotQuestions.org – What is toxic masculinity?*)

To add insult to injury, our progressive society struggles to define or explain what a woman or man is. This has created misperceptions, misunderstandings, confusion, and lack of clarity about what we, as men, are to believe and how we are to act.

The root of these lies is **driven deep** early in life **reinforced** by society, **shaped** by our relationships, **engineered** by our academic institutions, **promoted** by our government and many of its leaders, **enforced** by our courts, **supported** by many of our churches, and are **amplified** by poor lifestyle choices and decisions throughout our lives—unless we decide to take a stand to do otherwise. They will lead us to insignificance and mediocrity unless they are corrected with God’s **truth**.

Robert Lewis, a pastor committed to helping men gain their true and

authentic identity defines **authentic manhood** this way. **An authentic man is one who rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously, and expects God's reward.**

Passivity is an unguarded openness to be acted upon by outside impressions or influences, lacking in energy or will; apathy, inaction, languor, resignation; indifference, disinterest, withdrawn, listless, heartlessness, neutrality; do-nothingness, dormancy, stagnation, idleness.

There are instances where passivity is appropriate when we are being submissive to the will of God (i.e., Jesus' on the night He was arrested) for a higher purpose (i.e., giving Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world). However, there is no place for passivity when God calls us to action. Joshua had to take action to root out the evil in Israel (Joshua 7). Jesus cleared out the moneychangers in the temple. Paul, the apostle, was bold in his proclamation of the Gospel. The instructions throughout Scripture rarely require passivity!
(*GotQuestions.org What does the Bible say about passivity?*)

Authentic, biblical manhood *rejects passivity*. Let's look at five deadly lies that encourage passivity in men. These 5 deadly lies will lead to insignificance and mediocrity—to passivity. These corrupted beliefs are common to all men of all ages.

Five Deadly Lies

1. Being masculine is a bad thing and must be restrained...

This lie only leads to a loss of identity and confused masculinity. Societal pressures have distorted our understanding of **true masculinity**. Our culture feminizes men and tries to make women more masculine. Men are encouraged to become softer, and women are admonished to become harder to get ahead in this world. Those divinely ordained qualities that

celebrate the distinct differences between men and women are vilified and discouraged by a society that has lost its way.

Many commercials today depict men as weak and helpless. The message is clear, men are not as equipped for life as women, and they need support and assistance to put one step in front of the other. To be sure, we are incomplete without women, we do need assistance and support, but we are not helpless. Expressions of maleness are not appreciated in our society and are often suppressed for the gentler, kinder model of masculinity.

The masculinity we speak of is not the **macho kind**—the kind that says women are here to serve my needs, strict obedience to my commands is expected, or “my way or the highway.” John Eldridge, author of *Wild at Heart*, has been roundly criticized for proposing that men are indeed different than women. Essentially, his premise (to which I agree wholeheartedly) is that men are created for **three primary purposes**; a **CAUSE** to die for, a **CHALLENGE** to embrace, and loved ones to **PROTECT**.

Jesus Christ is our true model for manhood. He had a **cause** to die for—atonement for the sins of the world, a **challenge** to embrace—the suffering of the cross and loved ones to **protect**—the redemption of mankind. As men we have a **cause** to die for, a **challenge** to embrace, and loved ones to **protect**. Take anyone of these away and you rob a man of his true identity. Gradually, vibrancy, engagement, and passion drain from a life that has no reason to live for. What **cause**, larger than yourself, are you prepared to die for? What **challenge** does God want you to embrace? Who has God called you to **protect**?

Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant

commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:7–9 (ESV) *Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:13–14 (ESV)* *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*
Ephesians 6:10–13 (ESV)

God's Truth: Man up and do what God calls you to do. Decide what hills God is calling you to die on, what hills He is calling you to bleed on, and what hills He doesn't want you to climb at all.

2. Performance is all that matters...

This lie leads to **performance overload**, an achievement orientation that is never satisfied. **Most men get their sense of significance by what they accomplish.** Culture rewards that mentality. We have bought into the lie that success is determined by what we do. So, we spend our lives **'doing.'**

We rationalize our behavior by believing that the next promotion, the next closed deal, the next degree, and for those of you that are pastors—the

next church, the next ‘whatever’ will permit us to focus our attention on what really matters. We fool ourselves. Once we have ‘conquered’ the ‘next’ thing we find yet another ‘thing’ we must first do. Once we finally get off the treadmill, we find that there is no one left to share our victories with except the awards that adorn the walls of our study or office.

Neil Anderson, author of *Victory Over Darkness and Bondage Breaker*, was absolutely right. ***It’s not what we do that determines who we are. It’s who we are in Christ that should determine what we do.*** In God’s eyes ***beingness*** is more important than ***doingness***.

Samuel, prophet and judge, went to the home of Jesse to anoint the next king of Israel. Jesse had eight sons. The first son, Eliab, was paraded before Samuel. He thought, “Surely the anointed is before him.” God immediately interjected, ***“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*** (1 Samuel 16:7)

The “heart” in the Bible refers to your character. ***Proverbs 4:23*** *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life* (NLT). It really matters what you allow to inform and condition your heart—will it be your friends, your culture, your heritage, your experiences, or street smarts, or your distorted view of masculinity?

God’s Truth: God calls us to be centered—to live from the inside out. How are you going to effectively navigate an ever-darkening world without a calibrated internal compass? Your ‘heart’ must be tuned to the heart of God.

3. Problems go away over time...

The attitude is that “given enough time all problems go away.” This lie leads to conflict compartmentalization or

“**Siloing.**” When it comes to resolving conflicts men and women respond differently. When you have had an argument with your girlfriend or wife have you noticed how long a memory a woman has? As men we have a tendency to compartmentalize conflicts. We stuff them in compartments until we’re ready to deal with them. The trouble is we often leave these toxic issues in their compartments without ever dealing with them. The ultimately seep out and contaminate our relationships with the opposite sex. We think the issues that gave rise to the original argument are over and are astonished that the residual effects still linger in the minds and hearts of our loved ones. Our attitude is that the argument is over – what’s her problem.

Men, you changed the taste of the food of your relationship. We move on to the next meal, forgetting what the last one tasted like. For our wives the bitter taste of the first meal still lingers—for a long time. Men forget; women do not. Men move on to the next thing—women do not until the first thing is resolved.

Compartmentalization is a sure formula for time released toxic poison for your character, your relationships and your God-ordained potential. **Remember, men compartmentalize—women absorb.**

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. **James 1:23–25 (ESV)** So, whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. **James 4:17 (ESV)***

God’s Truth: God calls men to man up and deal with the problem now, not later. Accept responsibility, ask for

counsel on how to deal with the problem—don’t bury it. Frankly, some of you men need to lean into your fear and engage!

4. What I do is more important than who I am...

This lie often leads to incongruence between what we say we believe and how we actually act. Spiritual impotence is the result. Many of us are living lives of incongruence. We might proclaim a biblically informed belief system, but it bears little resemblance to our actual behavior. What we verbally affirm as our beliefs may have little relationship to how we behave. What we say we are does not always align with who we really are.

Your behavior over time will reveal who you really are on the inside. We all have moments of goodness but does our life show a long pattern of goodness. When you die, what will your loved ones, your associates, your friends say about you? What aroma will linger after you are gone—a stench or a pleasing fragrance?

The enemy has convinced us that the real battlefield is our behavior. So, we spend a great deal of energy trying to corral our behavior, trying to get our behavior to conform to acceptable standards. In our attempt to master the sinful corruption overtly displayed in observable behavior, we adopt constraining strategies to control our sinful behavior.

The first strategy we employ is to put in place a ‘**Steel Band of Discipline**’ to conform our behavior to acceptable standards kept in place by the tenacity of our will, the fellowship we keep, and the rules we obey. When that strategy fails, we move to...

The Strategy of More – we read our Bible more, we fellowship with other Christians more, we worship more, only to find our ‘more’ is producing ‘less’ in our lives. The spiritual disciplines are important. However,

when they become the primary objective rather than a 'means' to the primary objective, producing Christlikeness, the strategy will fail. We move on to another strategy.

The Hail Mary Pass – this strategy involves seeking out resources to dig out principles for living a godly life. We buy a book hoping to find within its pages the 'answer' to producing godly behavior. Or we seek out a 'role model' to emulate in hope that someone else's godliness will somehow rub off on us. When embracing these 'resources' fail to produce lasting transformational change, we employ the final strategy.

Surrender and Acceptance - we move to the back bench. We take our place in what A.W. Tozer, a gifted writer and theologian, called the "misty lowlands of mediocrity." We take up residence in a cage of our making and live as clipped-winged birds because of the poor decisions we have made along the way, unable to soar to spiritual heights, Eagles were meant for the crags not for cages!

The road to congruence begins on the inside (*Proverbs 4:23*). Character matters. *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Proverbs 4:8 (ESV) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)*

God's Truth: In God's economy it matters what you believe, it matters what you value, it matters how you view the world, and it matters what motivates you—your behavior will reflect the condition of your heart.

5. Real men do not need anyone...

This lie leads to relational isolation and produces a withdrawal mentality when difficulties arise. When we men face conflict or criticism or failure, we have a tendency to either confront the issue aggressively or withdraw. Withdrawal will certainly be our final option, if not the first. We isolate ourselves to sweat out the consequences until we regain our equilibrium. Once the storm passes, we re-engage. Many of us never regain our equilibrium; we remain isolated and open to the influence of the Enemy. When men face conflict or are struggling with a difficult issue, they believe they need to step away from commitments or responsibilities until they resolve the issue. We see it all the time in Heart of a Warrior Ministries.

- A man facing the threat of divorce feels he needs to step out of his group to deal with it.
- Another man struggling with sexual immorality feels he needs to deal with it alone.
- A man facing the threat of losing his job is embarrassed and leaves his accountability partners until his job stabilizes.
- A man dealing with his demons (alcohol, drugs, sex) tries to conquer them on his own.

Women generally seek solace in relationships with other women when they are dealing with a crisis. Men, on the other hand, tend to want to deal with their problems alone. Most of the time it's a pride issue. Men have to be trained to act counter-intuitively to their natural inclination to climb into their caves and lick their wounds. They have to be taught to act opposite to what they normally do and to seek out other men to help them in their time of need. Men need each other in the midst of a struggle, not in the absence of struggles.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

The Enemy knows if he can isolate a man who is in trouble, he can devour him. Like most predators, a carnivore waits until the weak prey separates itself from the herd. Once separated, it cannot effectively defend itself. If a dumb animal knows this, why are we so oblivious to this tactic? The Enemy knows that men committed to becoming who God has designed them to be are a formidable force he can't control.

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:8-11 NIV As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

The Scriptures also urge us to encourage one another and build each other up (**1 Thessalonians 5:11**), to spur one another on toward love and good deeds (**Hebrews 10:24**), and to carry each other's burdens, and in this way we will fulfill the law of Christ (**Galatians 6:1-5**).

Scripture is clear about the need to stay together, when at all possible. The worst thing a man can do is separate himself from sources of strength and

encouragement as he tries, on his own, to work things out. The Enemy wins, and the weak sheep loses. That is the way it has been for ages.

God's Truth: God calls men to band together because there is strength in numbers. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Conclusion

I am asking you to search your hearts to see if there is anything in there preventing you from being a fully devoted follower of Christ. Examine your conscience before God to determine if there is any duplicity in your life, any barriers that need to be removed, any sins that need to be confessed, any unfulfilled commitments that need to be acted upon?

Is there someone who needs your forgiveness? Is there someone you must ask for forgiveness? Is there something in the past that needs to be addressed? Is there someone you have been neglecting? Is there someone who you have withheld love? Is there someone you have hurt? Is there someone in need of your unconditional love? Is God calling you to be more than you have been, to be all that you can be, to be His in all you think, say, and do? Are there inconsistencies between what you say you believe and how you act? Is there incongruity between what you say you value and how you actually live your life?

Action Plan

- **Pray** about this and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal all to you so that He can begin to clean up your life.
- **Confess** it before Him, declare what you intend to do about it.
- **Follow through** with your commitment.
- **Ask** another trusted brother to hold you accountable to it.

OTHER NEWS



to be.

Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who God created you

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

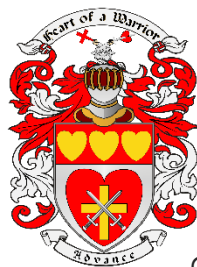
The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.
www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

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www.heartofawarrior.org/newpage-1

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org



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depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on heartofawarrior.org.

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Check out **The Store** on our website (www.heartofawarrior.org). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

Websites for Men

Heart of a Warrior Ministries
www.Heartofawarrior.org

A Chosen Generation
www.achosengeneration.info/

Band of Brothers
www.bandofbrothers.org/

Church for Men
churchformen.com/

Every Man's Battle
<https://newlife.com/emb/>

Every Man Ministries
www.everymanministries.com

Iron Sharpens Iron
ironsharpensiron.net/

Iron Works
www.ironworksmen.com/

Legacy Minded Men
www.legacymindedmen.org

Life Way Men
www.lifeway.com/en/shop/ministries/men

Man in the Mirror
maninthemirror.org/

Man 2 Man
www.man2man.org/

Man Up God's Way
www.manupgodsway.org/

Men's Alliance
www.mensalliancetribe.com/

Men's Fraternity
www.mensfraternity.com/

Men's Ministry Catalyst
mensministrycatalyst.org/

Men with No Regrets
www.menwithnoregrets.org/

National Collision of Ministries to Men
ncmm.org/

Ransomed Heart Ministries
www.ransomedheart.com/

Resolute
beresolute.org/

Restoration Generation
resgen.org/