



HOAW Newsletter

“Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.” Proverbs 4:24-27

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HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

Living with Intentionality

Dr. Greg Bourgon

As I sit here in Ireland before a glowing fire on a cold morning, I am reminded that as followers of Christ we are expected to live in bold relief against the backdrop of a culture that has lost its moorings. It used to be quite comfortable to have one foot in the world and the other in the Kingdom. But the gap has gotten so wide that this option is no longer possible. We must make a choice to live in bold relief against the backdrop of our culture prepared to give a defense for the hope that is in us.

I also hear the growing noise of the rattling of sabers on a distant battlefield calling us to put on the armor of God to await our orders where we will be called to make our stand against the growing secularism, casual dismissal of all that is sacred, and calls to abandon the faith in favor of embracing the prevailing winds of discord and disharmony. When sin goes unabated its shrill voice grows louder.

Paul, in his letters to his protégé Timothy, correctly sums up our current state of affairs.

“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain (1 Timothy 6:3-6 ESV).”

In his second and final letter to Timothy written shortly before his death at the hands of Nero, he elaborates on the condition of society in the last days. His remarks could be an editorial for today reflecting the current state of affairs we are witnessing today.

“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless,

swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men (2 Timothy 3:1-9 ESV).”

What an apt description for today!

It is no surprise that a favorite movie of mine is Gladiator. The character of Maximus is especially noteworthy. Maximus was a leader other men willingly and enthusiastically followed. He lived intentionally, devotedly, ferociously, and single-mindedly for four values – Rome, his family, strength and honor.

He was a value-centered man!

We live in this wonderful in-between time . . . One day, God will call each of

you to a battlefield – will you arrive wearing the full armor of God?

- the **belt** of truth buckled around your waist,
- the **breastplate** of righteousness in place,
- your **feet** fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace,
- the **shield** of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one,
- the **helmet** of salvation,
- the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

In addition to the armor, winning requires --

- a heart tuned for the battle,
- a heart calibrated for the struggle,
- a heart focused for action,
- a heart reflective of God's Son, Jesus Christ, a heart full of God's values!

Proverbs 4:24-27 suggests as much. **“Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”**

How can we be men after God's own heart? What does it mean to be men of God today? How can we live with intentionality?

I suggest to you that our families, our friends and the world at large takes notice of men who are **authentic**, have **integrity** and are **courageous**.

One of the major reasons that **Gladiator** was so popular is that it depicted a man who was **authentic**, full of **integrity** and **courageous**. Other men followed him because of his commitment to these principles. He lived and breathed them; they were the core of his being. He caused other men to rise above their capabilities to accomplish great feats.

I believe God is looking for **authentic men, men of integrity**, and **courageous men** today. I believe God can do great and mighty things through such men. I also believe that men were made to do great and mighty things for

the Lord. What does it take to be a man of authenticity, man of integrity, and value-centered man?

Men of Authenticity

What does an authentic man look like? According to Robert Lewis of Men's Fraternity, an authentic man is one who rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously, and anticipates God's reward.

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 wholeheartedly agree) is that men are created for three primary purposes: a **cause** to die for, a **challenge** to embrace, and loved ones to **protect**.

During impeachment hearings some years ago, a politician was asked to explain why the president did what he did. She responded, “Men will be men!” The implication of course is that men have a base nature from which they can't escape—a lecherous, self-indulgent need for gratification. Is that really true?

What makes a man a man? The Bible is clear—we are created in the image of God. Sin has marred that image. Christ has repaired it. When men receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord, He gives them back their true selves. He, in essence, resurrects our true identity as men.

What makes a man a man? Jesus Christ is our 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.
- Loved ones to **protect**—the redemption of mankind.

As men we too 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. 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**?

Definition of Authentic: Trustworthy; not imaginary, false or imitation; conforming to an original so as to reproduce its essential features; being actually and exactly what is claimed. Synonyms: bona fide, genuine, legitimate, real, true, unexaggerated, valid, and verifiable.

What does an authentic Christian man look like?

An authentic Christian is one who conforms to the original, Jesus Christ and reproduces those features that reflect His character. Such a person leaves little doubt to whom they belong because they bear the imprint of the Master. They carry in their person God's **certificate of authenticity**.

The question I want at this point is “Do we, as men, bear the imprint of the Master? Does our life, our behavior reflect His character? Would He authorize a *certificate of authenticity* for us?”

Men of Integrity

We don't act in accordance with what we already are in Christ. We are called to be authentic Christians, men of integrity. John Maxwell offers a compelling portrait of a man of integrity.

“Integrity binds our person together and fosters a spirit of contentment within us. It will not allow our lips to violate our hearts. When integrity is the referee, we will be consistent; our beliefs will be mirrored by our conduct. There will be no discrepancy between what we appear to be and what our family knows we are, whether in times of prosperity or adversity. Integrity allows us to predetermine what we will be regardless of circumstances, persons involved, or the places of our testing.”

Abraham Lincoln describes character this way. *“Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing. I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.”*

Men of Courage

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people (Hebrews 8:10)."

It takes courage to live a value centered life. My friend, Erwin McManus, defines courage this way. "Courage is not the absence of fear but the absence of self." When you choose to set aside your own safety for the sake of a God-given cause it may be a fearful experience. We are to lean into our fear and do what is write not just for the sake of ourselves but for the sake of others. That is real courage.

When we come to Christ and receive Him as our Savior and Lord, He gives us a new heart – His value system is written on our hearts! We receive a corporate set of values the Bible calls the **Fruit of the Spirit**—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

If the fruit of the Spirit were firmly established as your core values what changes would happen in your life?

What are values? **Values are the hills we will die on, the principles we intend to live by. Values are the filter through which all of life's decisions are processed.**

Many of us can't name our values. That doesn't mean that they aren't there. The key is to identify them and determine whether they are biblically informed values or values of the world.

Many of us aspire to certain values. In most cases, they are aspirations with little evidence that we are committed to them. We don't always act in accordance with what we verbally proclaim we value.

Hunter Lewis, an author who written extensively on the subject describes values as *personal commitments that propels us to action, to a particular kind of behavior and life.*

Leith Anderson, former senior pastor of Wooddale Community Church in Eden Prairie and author of several books dealing with values, says values explain why we do what we do. They govern our underlying thoughts, attitudes and decisions that result in behavior.

The degree to which values are observable in a man's life depends on the level of resolve we have regarding our values. We may have an interest in certain values, a preference perhaps, maybe even a respect for them. We may even be so bold as to affirm certain values. However, they remain as aspirations rather than actual until we decide to commit ourselves to them. When faced with a circumstance, event, or encounter that challenges the values we say we hold, we act on those values in the same direction and over time they become a virtue where we act on them without thinking. We can't imagine doing anything else.

It takes courage to live a biblically informed value-centered life. I have a number of men who come to me to talk about values. In many instances they list their values. I ask the following question. **"Can you give me a concrete example in the last three months of how your behavior was influenced by your values?"**

What are your core values? What is it that you treasure so highly that you are irritated when other people don't? What are the things you respect so deeply that you tend to be resentful of those who treat them with disrespect? What core value(s) do you hope your children will adopt?

It is possible to one day make a decision that honors God and the next day make a decision or take an action that dishonors God. Unless you have made a decision to put God on the throne of your life your behavior will be inconsistent, incoherent, and incongruous. When God is on the throne of your life, your decisions and actions will be consistent, coherent, and congruous.

I have tried to live out certain values in my life. When faced with a situation or an integrity check I recall these values and attempt to act accordingly. I'm not always successful, but I don't give up. If

I fail the test, I commit to realignment and seek to act on them when a situation presents itself again. These are the values I try to live my life by. They have formed over time.

- Devotion to God
- A Promise Keeper
- A Truth Seeker
- A Loyal Servant
- A Man of Integrity
- Faithful to Family
- A Life-long Learner
- The Bible is my Authority
- Committed to Responsible Behavior
- A Man of Strength and Honor

Men who make a positive difference in the world are men who commit to living their life from the inside out, men who consciously, proactively live by a set of values that influence their decisions, and result in behavior that brings glory and honor to the Father and all who fall within their sphere of influence.

I recommend you do the following...

1. In prayer, and by the power of the Holy Spirit identify the corrupted values that have affected your decisions and your behavior.
2. Name them before God, confess them, and ask for His help to eradicate them from your life.
3. Identify five biblical values you intend to live by.
4. Ask God to bless you as you volitionally act on them.

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham

considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead (James 2:14-26)."

Act on them repeatedly in the same direction over time. Then you will become a man after God's heart.

In the face of a society that has lost its way, choose to live your life with intentionality—a life of authenticity, courage, and integrity!

Do you know what I want to hear when I get to heaven? "Welcome home Greg, you are a man after my heart." I hope that is your desire as well.

OTHER NEWS



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

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

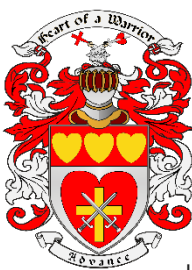
The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

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/

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at HOAWMinistries.com.



Donations

Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on [heartofawarrior.org](http://www.heartofawarrior.org). Thank you for being a subscriber.

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.

NOTE: Throughout the course of the year, I will be adding helpful and informative resources to [Heartofawarrior.org](http://www.heartofawarrior.org). They may be found on the **RESOURCES** page of the website.

Websites for Men

Heart of a Warrior Ministries
www.Heartofawarrior.org

Legacy Minded Men
www.legacymindedmen.org

Church for Men
<http://churchformen.com/>

Resolute
<https://beresolute.org/>

Life Way Men
<https://blog.lifeway.com/leadingmen/>

Men's Fraternity
<http://www.mensfraternity.com/>

Man in the Mirror
<http://maninthemirror.org/>

Men with No Regrets
<http://www.menwithnoregrets.org/>

National Collision of Men's Ministries
<http://ncmm.org/>

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

Iron Sharpens Iron
<http://ironsharpensiron.net/>

Ransomed Heart Ministries
<http://www.ransomedheart.com/>

Band of Brothers
www.bandofbrothers.org/

Man Up God's Way
<http://www.manupgodsway.org/>

Iron Works
<http://www.ironworksmen.com/>