

## **Group Discussion Guide**

### ***What God Does When Men Lead***

#### **About the Study**

Manhood is under assault—and not just from feminists and cultural elitists. Schools, churches, and at times our own families have neglected to affirm what God created men to be and do, raising questions about our leadership role. In *What God Does When Men Lead*, I hope to help you grasp what God says about manhood and respond appropriately. God made men to lead, but not in a zero-sum contest with women. He created us to be servant leaders or—more accurately—*steward leaders*.

I am delighted that you have chosen to study *What God Does When Men Lead* in a group setting. God designed us to grow and learn together. That's why we need to find other men who can challenge us and sharpen our understanding of what it means to be a man under Christ's authority.

As you study this book, some parts you may find easy to grasp and others more difficult. God shapes each of us differently. That's where other men can help open our eyes to see things that we miss. Every man needs a cohort of brothers who know him and are willing to “get in his face” about the choices he makes, when need be. We also need men to lift us up when life knocks us down. This book can help build that group for you if you will face God's word openly and honestly with each other.

#### **Leading a Group**

You have a great adventure ahead as you lead a small group discussion. *What God Does When Men Lead* contains fifteen chapters divided into six sections. I hope that you will be able to spend one group meeting per chapter plus an extra week going through the Bonus Chapter on prayer. If your time is limited, however, I suggest that you cover one of the six sections per week.

A good group size is six to twelve participants. For larger groups, consider dividing into smaller groups for discussion. If you are organizing a new group, ask the men who you've invited to read the assignments and make a commitment to be present for the number of weeks you decide to meet.

Don't neglect prayer because it is prayer that changes lives. If you want more than an academic exercise, make sure you reserve time at the end of each session for prayer. You might consider dividing the group into pairs and asking them to pray for each other between meetings.

#### **Report In**

I would count it a privilege to hear about what God does in your group. You can write to me at [menlead@24sevenfaith.com](mailto:menlead@24sevenfaith.com).

## **Introduction and Chapter 1: Wanted: A New Kind of Leader**

### **WARM-UP**

How would you assess the quality of leadership in our culture today? Where do you see the biggest problems?

How does this affect our country?

Your community?

Your church?

Your family?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read aloud Larry Crabb's quote on page xii in your group. How does a male's tendency to passivity contribute to our problems? How does this affect you?
2. On page 4, Bill George suggests that "wrong-headed" notions about leadership have led to the wrong people leading. Where have you experienced poor leadership?
3. Read Jethro's advice to Moses on page 13. How does this good advice counter egotistical leadership tendencies?
4. Contrast the notions of leadership described in the first pages of chapter 1 with a biblical model of leadership. Has this chapter changed your perception of leadership? How?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Do you think of yourself as a leader? Why or why not?
2. Read aloud Booker T. Washington's quote on page 13. Since God has entrusted you with leadership responsibilities, how should you respond?
3. What barriers get in the way of you becoming the leader God intends you to be?
4. What actions and attitudes have you become aware of that need to change for you to be the leader God has called you to be?
5. Read Ephesians 3:20. What does it mean to you that God has this much confidence in you to invest His power and entrust work to you?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 2. Using the chart on page 27, list the areas of responsibility you have been given.
2. Contact your prayer partner, exchange prayer requests, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 2: Everyday Leaders**

### **WARM-UP**

What comes to mind when you think of stewardship?

How does the concept of stewardship differ from common perceptions of leadership?

If stewardship is the inherent standard by which God evaluates leaders, how are men as a whole doing?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read Paul's description of a man's leadership responsibility in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12 (page 16). According to Paul, what is the nature of a man's leadership?
2. Note the opposite of leadership (page 17). Why is this so critical?
3. How does Paul describe the scope of a man's leadership?
4. Discuss each of the four principles of stewards on pages 20–26 and what difference they should make in leading others.

Ownership

Responsibility

Accountability

Reward

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Take a moment to consider your everyday leadership using the chart on page 27. In what areas are you doing well? Where do you need help? Where have you failed?
2. Read and discuss the Parable of the Three Stewards (Matthew 25:14-30). What's encouraging about this passage? discouraging?
3. What are you most afraid of when it comes to leadership?
4. Read 2 Timothy 2:13 and Philippians 2:4-8. How does Jesus' example of leadership relieve your fear of failure?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 3. Consider how the Fall has affected you and your leadership responsibilities.
2. Contact your prayer partner, exchange prayer requests, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 3: The Leaders God Intended**

### **WARM-UP**

Have you ever stopped to think about how the world would be different if sin had not entered the world? What would your week be like if we were still living in paradise?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Look at each of the four commands found in the Cultural Mandate in Genesis 1:26-27. If you were writing a job description for Adam using the information in Genesis 1 and 2, what would you include?
2. Read Genesis 3. Where do you see Adam's passivity emerging?
3. Think about your daily work. How has the Fall impacted your work?
4. Think about your relationships. How has the Fall impacted them? What would they be like if the Fall had never occurred?
5. Read God's commands to Noah after the Fall and after the Flood in Genesis 9:7. Note that the command to subdue the earth is not repeated. Why? What are we still responsible for as stewards after the Fall?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. How has the Fall affected your ability to lead as a man? Is the biggest problem internally in you or externally in the world?
2. Where are you experiencing the impact of the Fall most painfully in your life?
3. Have you ever tried to manipulate God into blessing you? What help does the book of Ecclesiastes give us in waiting for the blessing?
4. Think about standing before God and giving an account as His steward. What would be the most fulfilling thing He could say to you?
5. Read Romans 8:38-39 and Philippians 4:13. How do these passages give you hope to live in a fallen world?
6. Name one thing you can do to make your life reflect the Garden reality of a perfect relationship with God.

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 4. Think about how you tend to define success.
2. Contact your prayer partner, exchange prayer requests, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 4: Following the Real Leader**

### **WARM-UP**

When you trusted Christ, what were your expectations about what life would be like as a Christian? Is it all you expected or has there been some—or a lot of—disappointment?

### **WRESTLE**

1. How have you seen the drive for men to “make their mark” in this world? When men are able to (seemingly) make their mark, does it bring them the satisfaction they hoped for?
2. Why do you think God thwarts us from gaining the satisfaction we work so hard to create?
3. Can we really enjoy success if we believe that our success defines who we think we are?
4. Read Mark 10:35-45. What do we learn about making our mark in God’s Kingdom?
5. Read Mark 8:34-37. What does Jesus mean by *deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me*?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Have you ever tried to use Jesus to get what you wanted out of life? How did it work out?
2. Is your hope in Jesus or in what you expect Him to do for you? How would you respond if you lost your job, title, or work?
3. As you examine your life, what is it about your agendas, values, and trajectory that need to change? What needs to “die” in your life?
4. Read Philippians 2:6-11. How did Jesus get his name?
5. How do we get the only name that matters?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 5. Consider whether your work is valuable to God.
2. Contact your prayer partner, exchange prayer requests, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 5: Don't Miss Your Calling**

### **WARM-UP**

What's the best job you ever heard of?

Are most people fulfilled in what they do? What's your experience?

### **WRESTLE**

1. How do most people you know choose their work?
2. What jobs do most Christians consider valuable to God and his Kingdom?
3. Read Ephesians 2:10. What can you learn about God's calling from this verse? What kind of good work is Paul talking about here?
4. Read Nancy Pearcey's quote at the bottom of page 68. Do you think God is really interested in politics, economics, music, and sports?
5. What did you learn from William Wilberforce's life about following your calling?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. How did you come to choose your current work? How do you know it is what God wants you to do?
2. How have you defined "working for God" in the past? Do you need to adjust your viewpoint?
3. How does your work serve the common good of men and women? Do you think God is interested in what you do? Why or why not?
4. Read Colossians 3:17. What about your current work would change if you did it for God?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 6. Consider whether your life has a destiny.
2. Call your prayer partner, exchange prayer requests, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 6: Discovering Your Destiny**

### **WARM-UP**

What do you consider the most important jobs in the world?

Name a person you think has really made a difference in the world. Why do think this was the case?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Do you agree with Gladstone's statement on page 74? Why or why not?
2. Read Romans 12:1-8. How important is it to do the work for which God designed you?
3. If gifts are a stewardship from God, what does it mean when we choose work and volunteer activities for which we are not suited?
4. Read James 2:14-17. How do you balance this passage with doing what God a person to do?
5. What did you learn from Nehemiah's example about following God's calling?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Saying yes to one thing always means saying no to something else. How have you seen this work out lately in your own life?
2. How does your current work, volunteer job at church, and role at home fit who God designed you to be? How can you go about making adjustments for a better fit?
3. What open doors would you like others to be praying with you for?
4. What can you do to move one step closer to what God is putting on your heart to do?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 7. Consider why the women in your life need you.
2. Contact your prayer partner, share a specific prayer request that relates to calling, and pray for each other.

**OPTIONAL:** Take the next session to talk about how God might be leading people in the group. Ask everyone to take time beforehand to write down answers to the questions on page 77.

## **Chapter 7: Why Women Need Men (and Vice Versa)**

### **WARM-UP**

Read Carol Ann Culbert Johnson's quote on page 88. Male bashing is a popular pastime in some circles. When was the last time you read, heard, or saw something demeaning portrayed about manhood? Why do you think males receive so much negative press?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read Genesis 3:1-12. How did men fail women from the beginning? How do men these perpetuate tendencies today? What effect does that have on women?
2. Read Genesis 2:24-25. Why is a permanent covenant commitment important in marriage? What happens when men and women abandon God's intention for marriage to include a permanent, unconditional commitment?
3. Read Proverbs 5:15-21. How do unconditional commitment and romance fit together? How is one important to the other?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. When you married, did your vows include any "if-then" conditional statements? What kind of promises did you make?
2. What is the biggest barrier standing in the way of you loving a woman as the Bible describes?
3. When you last saw the woman you love, did you remind her of her acceptance and security in Christ? If so, how? If not, how could you do so in the future?
4. Read the following verses and discuss what they mean to you as a man attempting to love a woman as God would have you love her.

Romans 8:38-39

1 Corinthians 10:13

Philippians 4:13

Colossians 2:9-10

1 John 1:9

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 8. Consider how God intends for man to love a woman.
2. Contact your prayer partner, share one thing you intend to do to express love to the woman in your life, and pray for each other.



## **Chapter 8: Bringing Out a Woman's Beauty**

### **WARM-UP**

Why do you think women spend so much money on cosmetics and cosmetic procedures? Is this just vanity or is there something much deeper, something innate in a woman's design?

What do you think a man's passivity says in unspoken words to a woman?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read Ephesians 5:21, 25-33 aloud. From this passage, discuss what it means for a husband to submit to his wife.
2. C. S. Lewis defines *agape love* as "a state not of feelings but of the will: that state of the will which we have naturally about ourselves, and must learn to have for other people." How does that guide us in learning to help a woman make needed changes in her life?
3. Where does the power come from that gives us the strength to love a woman unconditionally when she is acting her ugliest?

### **ROLE UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. In most of your interactions with your wife, does she bring out your feelings of inadequacy, or does she express confidence in your leadership?
2. Evaluate your passivity factor at home. Rate yourself between 1 and 10; 1 being totally passive, 10 being totally engaged.
3. What has passivity cost you in the long run?
4. What will it cost you to re-engage as a leader?
5. How could you help each other become better steward-leaders to your wives? Are you willing to ask for help and accountability?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 9. Consider how God intends for man to help his wife discover her calling.
2. Call your prayer partner, share one thing you intend to do to express love to the woman in your life, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 9: The Wind Beneath Her Wings**

### **WARM-UP**

Consider how domestic life has changed in the last sixty years. Who used to do most of the housework? How has that changed today?

Do you think most women find life more or less enjoyable than sixty years ago?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Why do you think women did most of the domestic work in the past in most cultures? Can you find a biblical justification for this notion? How do you think work should be divided around the home?
2. George MacDonald wrote that the highest calling of every husband and wife is to help each other do the will of God. What does this mean for men?
3. Read Ephesians 2:10, 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Timothy 3:4. What do these verses indicate about a man's responsibility to steward the gifts of others in his household?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. How do you divide the work around your house? How do you make decisions about who does what? Is your wife happy about this arrangement? Have you asked her lately?
2. What gifts and abilities does your wife have that are going unused? How can you help her use them?
3. What have you done lately to help her move in the direction of her dreams?
4. What are the biggest barriers to helping your wife reach for her dreams?
5. What will it cost you to be a dream builder for your wife? What will it cost you if you're not?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

3. Read chapter 10. Consider how important your contribution is to your family.
4. Contact your prayer partner, share one thing you intend to do to help your wife do the will of God, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 10: The Inestimable Value of a Father**

### **WARM-UP**

How engaged in the lives of their children are the fathers you know?

Are they the key shapers of their children's lives or just the ones who dole out the money?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read George Barna's assessment in the second and third paragraphs on page 124. Why do you think children feel they are not getting enough attention from their parents?
2. Look at the research findings listed on page 125. Which ones strike you the most?
3. According to Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21, what unique contribution does a father make to his children?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

Look over the four components of good parenting and discuss these questions.

Incarnation: How do my children know that I am a committed follower of Jesus?

What decisions have I made that show my commitment to my children?

What areas of my life need a spiritual tune-up? Are there things I would be embarrassed for my children to know?

Instruction: How am I creatively teaching my children the truth?

Initiation: What limitations have I put on my children?

What appropriate freedoms am I extending to them?

How can I best control consequences to teach them responsibility?

Immersion: Do my children see what's going on in our home as different when compared to the homes of non-Christian friends?

Do they understand that my decision-making process is based on pleasing Jesus?

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 11. Consider how God intends for man to help his children discover their calling.
2. Contact your prayer partner, share one thing you intend to do in response to this study, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 11: Launching Children into the World**

### **WARM-UP**

Why do people choose the work they do? Is it something they always wanted to do? Their parents wanted them to do? They just stumbled into? They chose with money in mind?

In your opinion, how many people feel called to do what they are doing?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read Romans 12:1-8. This passage is not directed to fathers, but what can a man learn about his stewardship responsibility for his children's gifts?
2. Read Psalm 139:13-16. How does this passage square with the common American belief that we can become anything we want to be? What can we become?
3. What obligation do you think a father has to cooperate with God's design? What are the consequences for not cooperating?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. What led you to the work you are currently doing? Is it something you always wanted to do? Your parents wanted you to do? You just stumbled into? Is it something you feel called to?
2. What type of help do you wish your parents had given you? Was there any help that you wish they wouldn't have given you?
3. How serious are you about helping your children find the work God has for them? What are you doing to help them find it?
4. When you think of your interaction with your children, would you say you are a dream builder or a dream buster?
5. What can you do to better steward your children's calling?

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 12. Consider what impact God intends a man's faith to have on his work.
2. Contact your prayer partner, share one thing you intend to do in response to encourage your children to follow their calling, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 12: Your Monday Morning Mission**

### **WARM-UP**

How often have you heard a sermon that applied directly to your work?

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of mixing your faith and work?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read Colossians 3:22-4:6. When Paul says “whatever you do” in verse 23, what kinds of work did Paul include in work that could be done for the glory of God?
2. According to Paul, which attitudes is a follower of Christ to have about his work? Make a list and contrast them with the normal attitudes people have at work.
3. What makes work “secular” or “sacred”?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. How would you do your daily work differently if you knew God cared about what you did and why you did it?
2. What do you see as the biggest difficulties in taking your faith to work? What would be the disadvantages? What would be the advantages?
3. When people watch you do your work, can they tell that you are working by a different value system? How would they know you are a follower of Jesus?
4. What can you do to transform your work into an experience of worship?
5. What help do you need from this group to “do your work as unto the Lord”?

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 13. Consider how God might use you to influence your co-workers for Christ.
2. Contact your prayer partner, share one thing you need prayer for in your work, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 13: Stewards of the Message**

### **WARM-UP**

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of evangelism?

Do most Christians you know feel comfortable or uncomfortable about sharing their faith? Why?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read aloud Acts 1:8 and Ephesians 4:2-6. Many evangelism methods teach a person to talk with perfect strangers about Christ. How does this square with these passages?
2. Where do most people have the most contact with the most non-Christians?
3. Discuss the view of evangelism described in these passages.
4. What do you think non-Christians want to see in a Christian's life before they would be interested in hearing about his faith?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. How many Christians do you work with in your workplace? Are the non-Christians in your workplace attracted or repelled by them? Why?
2. Look back at the Acts 1:8 chart on page 169. Name some people in each group who come to mind. What opportunities do you have to touch them with Christ's love?
3. Think of the people who played a role in your spiritual journey. Share with your group some of the key individuals and how they affected you.
4. What are the things you saw in others that attracted you to consider Christ?
5. Does your life attract others to Christ? What needs to change? If you told the people you work with that you are a follower of Jesus, what would they say? Would they be surprised? Would they want to know more about your faith?

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 14. Consider how God might want to impact your community for Christ.
2. Contact your prayer partner, pray for one person in your workplace you would like to come to know Christ, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 14: A Leader's Place in the World**

### **WARM-UP**

What do you consider to be the biggest problems in your community? Poverty? Homelessness? Crime? Drug abuse? Unemployment?

How do most Christians respond to these problems?

How influential are Christians in your community?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Consider the three mistakes described on pages 180–182. Where have you seen these in your experience? How effective were they in creating long-term change? Describe the problem with each approach.
2. How do the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Cultural Commission (Genesis 1:28) fit together in a Kingdom approach to serving our communities?
3. Read Jeremiah 29:5-7. Name different ways that Christians can seek “the peace and prosperity of the city.”
4. From your reading, describe how early Christians had such an impact on the cities of ancient Rome.

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Of the three mistakes Christians make in responding to culture—assimilation, isolation, takeover—which are you most tempted to fall into? Which of these do you see as most dangerous?
2. How do you avoid assimilation if you don't isolate?
3. How are Christians seeking the physical, social, economic, and spiritual peace in your community?
4. Read aloud Helen Keller's quote on page 177. To which of the four areas listed in question 3 above can you make a contribution?

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read chapter 15. Consider how God might use you in your local church.
2. Contact your prayer partner, pray for something wonderful you would like to see happen in your community, and pray for each other.

## **Chapter 15: Stepping Out of the Pew**

### **WARM-UP**

In the average Christian man's life, where does being actively involved in church fit on his priorities list?

Read aloud Dorothy Sayers' description of the domesticated Jesus on page 202. Is this the Jesus most men hear about on Sunday? Is He someone real men can relate to?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Read aloud Hebrews 10:24-25. Why do men need to be involved with other Christians in some meaningful way? What happens when we bail?
2. Why do you think there needs to be appropriate male and female leadership in the church? What happens when either is lost?
3. Read aloud Ephesians 4:11-16. What is God's promise when each "part does its work"?
4. Discuss the manly side of ministry that you see in Ephesians 4 (see page 202). How does experience with church stack up to this standard?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Do you feel comfortable as a man at church? What characteristics of your church attract men? What might repel them? Contrast your level of comfort at a ball game and at church.
2. Can you point to men in your church who model what a serious commitment to Christ as a man looks like? What makes them stand out as men and as Christ followers?
3. What gifts has God given you that your church needs?
4. How might you encourage those within your church to welcome non-Christians into your body? to work to influence culture rather than attempt to protect church members from it?
5. As you consider Chesterton's words on pages 205–206 in light of your involvement at church, do you see any way in which you need to courageously step into responsibility?

### **ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

1. Read the bonus chapter on prayer and consider how important prayer is to you as a man.
2. Contact your prayer partner, pray for something wonderful you would like to see happen in your church, and pray for each other.



## **Bonus Chapter: Caution: Men at Prayer**

### **WARM-UP**

How comfortable do you think prayer is to most men?

Read the account of prayer from the *Denver Post* on pages 4 and 5. Can you imagine something like that happening today?

### **WRESTLE**

1. Why do you think God singles out males for prayer in 1 Timothy 2:8?
2. Read the following verses aloud. What do you learn about God that encourages you to pray? Numbers 23:19; Psalm 86:5; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:9, 11; Ephesians 1:11; and Ephesians 3:20-21.
3. How do you think Daniel could run the province of Babylon and still find time to pray three times a day?

### **ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES**

1. Is prayer something that comes easily for you or is it hard? Why?
2. What are you depending on that gets in the way of prayer?
3. What are the biggest barriers to prayer in your life?
4. What do you want so badly that you are willing to pray every day for it?

### **WRAP-UP**

Name one thing you want to do to take prayer more seriously.

Make time to talk about the most important things that happened in your group during this study.

Discuss where the group will go from here.