



valiant man journal

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The Valiant Man Journal forms an important part of the Valiant Man course. It comprises a variety of Scripture readings, quotes, reflective opportunities and questions that follow the teaching content of the course.

Involvement in the Valiant Man course centres on the weekly teaching and small group experience. However those who are willing to engage in daily reflection, journaling and prayer will encounter the best outcomes. Many of our struggles are more felt than understood. When we quieten ourselves and reflect on an issue we discover that thoughts, impressions and insights begin to emerge. When we take the time to write down those impressions our thoughts and feelings slow down to walking pace, allowing us to capture them. These insights are precious. You cannot change what you will not acknowledge. You cannot acknowledge what you do not see or understand.

In the first session we introduced the concept of the morning and evening sacrifice. Do your best to create a quiet moment each morning and evening. Record these moments in your journal; they will be an important aid to your journey. When appropriate share experiences from you journal with your small group. Your insight may hold the key to another brother's breakthrough. Be a giver in your group, not just a taker.

Comedian Tim Allen was in jail for selling drugs. He was placed in a holding cell with ten other men he didn't know. Located in the middle of the cell was a toilet. It was hard not to notice. Though most men are not very modest, going to the bathroom in front of ten strange inmates would have been difficult, to say the least. After surveying the situation, Allen knew that he would not use the toilet. "Digestion being as it is," confessed Allen, "things must emerge. I ambled tentatively to the can. I turned away and started back to my seat, but knew it was no good. I was committed. I dropped my pants and sat down, suddenly all the men began moving toward me. I panicked. What they did was form a horseshoe around me with their backs in my direction," said Allen. Why would they do that for someone they didn't even know? "Because they're men too," said Allen. "It was a big revelation. These aren't losers just like me, but they are men. They do this so you can have some privacy and no one can see in from the outside."

Confidentiality is the first of our group agreements, intended to create a safe place where men can tell the truth to one another. How do you feel about your group? Are you willing to help other men have a safe place to be transparent? Are you willing to give it your best, not just for yourself, but for them as well?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour, not in passion of lust like the gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

Read again Pages 2.3 and 2.4 in your manual. The greatest healer the world has ever known says that it all begins with Humility. How do you feel about your past and your present when it comes to your management of your sex drive? Tell yourself the truth as honestly as you can at this stage. You don't have to share this in your group, but it is important that you be honest with yourself.

A man can counterfeit love, he can counterfeit faith, he can counterfeit hope and all other graces, but it is very difficult to counterfeit humility. DL Moody

Session 2: The Arena of Healing - Emotional Honesty Day 3

Read Psalm 51. It is one of the most emotionally honest confessions you could ever read. When we engage in significant reflection on how we have handled the challenge of our sexual passions it can be emotionally painful. It requires significant courage to be emotionally honest about our past and our less-than-perfect present. Read the notes on Pages 2.5 and 2.12-13. God resists the proud but He has great grace for the Humble. Write your own version of Psalm 51: confess the mistakes that most disturb your heart and lean, as David did, into the gracious arms of God's grace and mercy for help.

At the root of every large struggle in life is the need to be honest about something that we do not feel we can be honest about. We lie to ourselves or other people because the truth might require action and action requires courage. We say we don't know what's wrong, when we do know; we just wish we didn't.
Ritu Ghatourey.

Session 2: The Arena of Healing - Teachable Day 4

Read the notes on Teachable – Page 2.6. In Matthew 13:1-23 Jesus taught the Parable of the Sower. He described this parable as the first of all the parables. He used the picture of sowing seed to describe the importance of truth – if you can allow the truth to do its work in you the truth will set you free. Yet truth doesn't change everyone – truth can lie on the surface and be lost, it can begin its work but then be resisted when it requires too much of us, and it can be crowded out by distractions. If you let it in – if you let it have its way – it will change your life. Write down any of the insights you have already heard which you know would change your life if you let them grow on you.

The unteachable man is sentenced to being taught only by experience. The tragedy is he reaches nothing further than his own pain. Criss Jami

Session 2: The Arena of Healing – Proactive

Day 5

Read the notes on Page 2.7. Everyone wants to be happy, to experience pleasure and be delighted with life. Sex is a point of access to delight, pleasure and excitement - yet the more humanity has put the pursuit of sexual fulfilment at the centre of life the more sex has become a source of distress and emptiness. Jesus said being hungry and thirsty for righteousness was the key to being filled. What am I hungry and thirsty for? In this context the desire for **righteousness** is not only the desire to be right with God because of the gift of forgiveness but to be right with God because he is at work in us, making us increasingly like himself – free from sin and its rule. What do you really want? If there is a war going on in you about the desire for happiness versus the desire for holiness, be honest about it. Write how you feel about this tension.

Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry his own weight, this is a frightening prospect. Eleanor Roosevelt

Session 2: The Arena of Healing – Forgiving and Forgiven Day 6

Read the notes on Page 2.8 and 2.9. Mercy is a marvellous thing. Mercy is an expression of love so profound that it is willing to reach through an offence to love the offender again even though their behaviour disqualifies them from such an expression. The Bible says God is rich in mercy. Because of Jesus our God reaches through our offences again and again to renew a hope and a future in our lives. Putting my life in the hands of Jesus allows me to rest in the love of God though I know I am in need of restoration. He is rich in mercy. Now, extend that mercy beyond yourself. Learn to reach through offences to renew kindness and hope in those around you. Do it in your own home. Are you married? Reach through your latest peeve and be kind, gentle, encouraging. Write to yourself about mercy. Talk to your own heart about the need to give and receive forgiveness. Talk to yourself about mercy.

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.
Abraham Lincoln

Well done for persisting over 7 days of devotions and reflections. No work for you today. Take a rest. For today, simply read and reflect on the significance of Courage in the journey. You may have repeated old mistakes over the past week even while in the midst of a journey intended to help you find a new strength for a better life. Get up and keep going. If you're on a 10 mile bike ride and you fall off at the three mile mark you don't have to go back to the start. Get up, get back on your bike, and pedal to the finish. Today I invite you to read *The Race* by D H Groberg. Endurance counts for something in heaven. Just don't quit.

A children's race, young boys, young men - How I remember well
Excitement sure, but also fear - it wasn't hard to tell.
They all lined up so full of hope, each thought to win that race
Or tie for first or if not that at least take second place.
And Fathers watched from off the side each cheering for his son
And each boy hoped to show his Dad that he would be the one
The whistle blew and off they went young hearts and hopes afire
To win - to be the hero there was each young boy's desire.
And one boy in particular whose Dad was in the crowd
Was running near the lead and thought "My Dad will be so proud".
But as he speeded down the field across a shallow dip
The little boy who thought to win lost his step and slipped.
Trying hard to catch himself his hands flew out to brace
And mid the laughter of the crowd he fell flat on his face.
So down he fell and with him hope, he couldn't win it now
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished to disappear somehow
But as he fell his Dad stood up and showed his anxious face
Which to the boy so clearly said "Get up and run the race."
He quickly rose, no damage done, behind a bit that's all
And ran with all his mind and might to make up for his fall
So anxious to restore himself, to catch up and to win
His mind went faster than his legs, he slipped and fell again.
He wished that he had quit before with only one disgrace
"I'm hopeless as a runner now, I shouldn't try to race."
But in the laughing crowd he searched and found his Fathers' face
That steady look that said again "Get up and run the race"

So he jumped up to try again 10 yards behind the last
"If I'm to gain those yards" he thought "I've got to move real fast"
Exerting everything he had he regained eight or ten
But trying so hard to catch the lead he slipped and fell again.
Defeat! He lay there silently, a tear dropped from his eye
"There's no sense running any more - three strikes you're out, why try?"
The will to rise had disappeared, all hope had fled away
So far behind, so error prone - a loser all the way.
"Get up" an echo sounded low, "Get up and take your place"
"You were not meant for failure here, get up and run the race."
"With borrowed will get up", it said, "You haven't lost at all,
For winning is no more than this; to rise each time you fall."
So up he rose to run once more and with a new commit
He resolved that win or lose at least he wouldn't quit
So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been -
Still he gave it all he had and ran as though to win.
Three times he'd fallen stumbling, three times he rose again,
Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end.
They cheered the winning runner as he crossed the line first place
Head held high and proud and happy; no falling, no disgrace.
But when the fallen youngster crossed the line last place
The crowd gave him a greater cheer for finishing the race.
And even though he came in last with head bowed low, un-proud
You would have thought he won the race to listen to the crowd
And to his Dad he sadly said "I didn't do so well"
"To me you won" his Father said "You rose each time you fell".

Session 3: The Sexual Man

Day 1

Read Page 3.3 of your manual. Dr Archibald Hart says: "... From the moment the sex hormones start to flow, the male begins a battle."

With the privilege of freedom comes the responsibility of discipleship. Psalm 139 is titled Fearfully and Wonderfully Made. That's you. You are fearfully complex and wonderfully constructed. God has not made a mistake. We are made in His image; this has conferred on us amazing privileges that we were never designed to handle alone. My brain is the most complex formation of matter in the universe. Woven into all my complex chemistry is my male sex drive. Because he created me in his image, only God fully understands my needs and my struggles. How do you feel about bringing your sex life under the Lordship of Jesus? Write your feelings and thoughts.

Horizontal lines for writing.

No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. Jesus (Matt 6:24)

Session 3: The Sexual Man

Day 2

Psalm 139: 13-14: You formed my innermost being, shaping my delicate inside and my intricate outside, and wove them all together in my mother's womb. I thank you, God, for making me so mysteriously complex! Everything you do is marvellously breathtaking. It simply amazes me to think about it! (The Passion Translation).

As a man you are a miracle and you are complex. Your brain is the most complex formation of matter in the universe. Woven into all your complex chemistry is your male sex drive. God did not make a mistake in forming you as a male – but your sexuality demands discipleship. As Dr Archibald Hart says: "It is a battle for control, and the male who doesn't engage in this battle is dangerous to women and society." The Valiant Man journey is intended to be a discipleship journey through which you increasingly learn how to control your body as a follower of Christ. Where are you in terms of deciding that you will allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your complex sexual makeup? Write about it.

Horizontal lines for writing.

Man is the greatest marvel in the universe – not because his heart beats 40 million times a year, driving the blood stream a distance of over 60,000 miles; not because of the wonderful mechanisms of the eyes and ears; not because of his conquest over disease and the lengthening of human life; but because man alone has the capacity to walk and talk with God. QV.7497

Session 3: The Sexual Man

Day 3

Jesus said: "I say to you, if you look with lust in your eyes at the body of a woman who is not your wife, you've already committed adultery in your heart." Matt 5:28 (The Passion Translation).

In the Aramaic text Jesus is speaking of more than adultery with a married woman; it uses the word for any sex act outside of marriage. Jesus knew the problem men have with their eyes. Jesus knows the importance of winning the battle for you eyes. "The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your entire body will be full of light." Matt 6:22.

It's time to fight for control of your eyes! What are your thoughts and feelings about rising to this challenge?

Horizontal lines for writing.

If we define "lusting" as staring open mouthed until drool pools at your feet, then a glance isn't the same as lusting. But if we define lusting as any look that creates that little chemical high, that little "pop", then we have something a bit more difficult to measure. This chemical high happens more quickly than you realise. Stephen Arterburn et al, Every Man's Battle, p.125

Session 3: The Sexual Man

Day 4

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman." Job 31:7. That's a valuable covenant for a man to make. Covenant Eyes is a tool that was created as an aid to any man who owns a digital device and realises he needs support in maintaining that covenant. Here's the link. Check it out today. <https://www.covenanteyes.com>.

Now write your thoughts and reactions to the idea of downloading it as an aid to your growth as a Valiant Man.

Horizontal lines for writing.

It's a new day, and we are learning to bounce the eyes away from every sight that provokes lust and impurity in us. No matter what happened yesterday, this is the day the Lord has made. It is a day in which you can experience growth in your personal purity.

However we may set out on the path of pilgrimage, we spend a lifetime walking it. There are no rest stops, no plateaus at which we can stoop down and say that we've gone far enough. At the beginning, God accepts us in all our sinfulness and selfishness, but this does not mean that he is content to have us remain in that state. We are all - in the New Testament's terrifying phrase - "called to be saints". Our Father knows our weaknesses even better than we do, and he does not expect us to become saints overnight. But he does demand that we keep moving in that direction, or as the good old Methodist phrase puts it, "groaning towards perfection". At each step of the journey, the question that really matters is not whether we are a little further along than some of our friends or neighbours, but how far we have progressed since yesterday. Louis Cassels

Write about how your journey is progressing thus far. What direction are you choosing?

Morality is not only correct conduct on the outside, but correct thinking on the inside where only God can see. Oswald Chambers, QV.7832

One of the most important insights for our future health is understanding the reality of "junk sex". Review your notes on Page 3.8. Junk sex is simply nibbling with your eyes. A look here, a look there - each look creating a little jolt of chemistry.

The Bible says, "a full soul loathes even a honeycomb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet." Proverbs 27:7.

One of the emerging evidences of how powerfully this dynamic affects our sexuality is the rising tide of impotence amongst young men in their twenties and thirties who have indulged relentlessly in pornography. We are called as Valiant Men to guard our eyes and our hearts. Write about the challenge or success of your initial attempts to guard your eyes. What presents you with the greatest challenge?

No nation has ever made any progress in a downward direction. No people ever become great by lowering their standards. No people ever become good by adopting a looser morality. It is not progress when the moral tone is lower than it was. It is not progress when purity is not so sweet. It is not progress when womanhood has lost her fragrance. Whatever else it is, it is not progress!

Peter Marshall, QV.7834

Session 3: The Sexual Man

Day 7

Let's review our goal before we head into the teaching for Session 4.

"God's will is for you to be set apart for him in holiness and that you keep yourselves unpolluted from sexual defilement. Yes, each of you must guard your sexual purity with holiness and dignity, not yielding to lustful passions like those who don't know God. Never take selfish advantage of a brother or sister in this matter, for we've already told you and solemnly warned you that the Lord is the avenger in all these things. For God's call on our lives is not to a life of compromise and perversion but to a life surrounded in holiness. Therefore, whoever rejects this instruction isn't rejecting human authority but God himself, who gives us his precious gift—his Spirit of holiness." 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 (TPT)

Reflect on your Small Group time last week. What has impacted you most over the past week? Did you share anything from your Journal?

Horizontal lines for journal reflection.

Forget community standards for purity and adopt a brand new standard for purity. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Philippians 4:8 (NASB)

Session 4: Origin, Power and Purpose of Sex

Day 1

".... You cannot arrive at your life's purpose by starting with a focus on yourself. You must begin with God, your Creator. You exist only because God wills that you exist. You were made by God and for God - and until you understand that, life will never make any sense. It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our destiny. Every other path leads to a dead end." Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life, p. 18

Sex is not the product of evolution. Sex is profoundly complex in every way. It is the product of God's creative thought. Where did He get the idea? - from his own eternal experience of being. Sex is a physical representation of an intimacy that existed before the world began. It is holy. How has this insight impacted the way you view sex? Does it make any difference?

Horizontal lines for journal reflection.

For everything, absolutely everything, everything above and below, visible and invisible... everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.

Colossians 1:16 (MSG)

Session 4: Origin, Power and Purpose of Sex

Day 2

For some men their sex drive has been a stumbling block - an area of moral defeat and personal disappointment. The Valiant Man journey is intended to turn defeat into a magnificent victory, if that's what you need. How does that happen? How can that be possible? The answer is to see your sexuality as an area of partnership with God, a journey of discipleship. Read the way the Apostle Peter understood the journey from defeat to victory.

"... he has given you magnificent promises that are beyond all price, so that through the power of these tremendous promises you can experience partnership with the divine nature, by which you have escaped the corrupt desires that are of the world. So devote yourselves to lavishly supplementing your faith with goodness (virtues of courage, nobleness and moral valor), and to goodness add understanding, and to understanding add the strength of self-control, and to self-control add patient endurance," 2 Peter 1:4-6 (TPT)

It starts with FAITH. God wants you to escape. Do you believe it? Christ died for you: trust him and the outcome is total forgiveness. Open your heart to Jesus: Christ in you adds up to inner strength to change. You need to believe it. Jesus has made us tremendous promises: *"Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me ... and you will find rest for your souls". Matthew 11: 28-29*

Now ADD to your faith – GOODNESS (virtues of courage, nobleness and moral valor). Add moral valor – be a Valiant Man. Fight for yourself and your future. Do the work. Fight the fight. Bounce your eyes. Write your own prayer today and then pray it out loud.

Session 4: Origin, Power and Purpose of Sex

Day 3

" ... so devote yourselves to lavishly supplementing your faith with goodness (virtues of courage, nobleness and moral valor), and to goodness add understanding, and to understanding add the strength of self-control, and to self-control add patient endurance," 2 Peter 1:4-6 (TPT)

This passage is a summary of the Valiant Man journey. Discipleship is a partnership with Jesus that is founded on faith – we trust his Word, we trust his love and we trust his promises. Out of that faith we determine that our sexuality will honour his purposes in our life. For this to be so we must add **goodness** to our faith. Through the teaching in the course we aim to add **understanding** to our goodness. The origin of our sexuality is found in God's purposes. The more we understand why sex exists the more we can choose to co-operate. Review page 4.6. What have you come to understand about sex that is new to you? Write about it.

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though chequered by failures, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much or suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows no victory or defeat. T. Roosevelt

Read 1Cor 6:13-20 and review your notes Pages 4.5 and 4.6.

"The body was not created for illicit sex, but to serve and worship our Lord Jesus, who can fill the body with himself. Don't you know that your bodies belong to Christ as his body parts? Should one presume to take the members of Christ's body and make them into members of a harlot? Absolutely not! Aren't you aware of the fact that when anyone sleeps with a prostitute he becomes a part of her, and she becomes a part of him? For it has been declared: The two become a single body. But the one who joins himself to the Lord is mingled into one spirit with him. This is why you must keep running away from sexual immorality. For every other sin a person commits is external to the body, but immorality involves sinning against your own body. Have you forgotten that your body is now the sacred temple of the Spirit of Holiness, who lives in you? You don't belong to yourself any longer, for the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, lives inside your sanctuary. You were God's expensive purchase, paid for with tears of blood, so by all means, then, use your body to bring glory to God!"(The Passion Translation)

There is a unique power at work in sexual relationships. Keep running away from sexual immorality in all its forms. How do you respond to this passage?

Men face sexual challenges. Some of those challenges will never go away. They are woven in to your humanity. Focus on changing what you can change. Our passions may rise and fall in ways that are involuntary, but the choices we make and the way we manage those passions are things we can change. Review Page 4.7.

Are there ways in which you have misused your sexuality in the past? How do you want things to be in the future? Write about it.

It is a great thing to see a man of physical pluck, and greater still to see a man of moral pluck, but the greatest of all is spiritual pluck, to see a man who will stand true to the integrity of Jesus Christ no matter what he is going through.

Oswald Chambers, QV.8545

Review Pages 5.14 and 5.15.

"Our contention is that the vast majority of men stuck in sexual sin are living between Level 0 and Level 1." This is the view of Arteburn and Stoeker in their book Every Man's Battle.

Addictions work on a continuum – if you drew a line starting at 0 and ending at 100, zero would be a life free from compulsion and 100 would be a full on prison of addiction. The idea of being stuck between Level 0 and Level 1 would put that behaviour somewhere in the bottom third of compulsion. They describe this as "fractional addiction", where a person experiences the drawing power of need and desire rather than a compulsion that is irresistible. When it comes to issues like masturbation, pornography and sexual fantasy where would you locate yourself on such a continuum? Write your thoughts.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

At every stage, addiction is driven by one of the most powerful, mysterious, and vital forces of human existence. What drives addiction is longing - a longing not just of brain, belly, or loins but finally of the heart. Cornelius Platinga

In John 4 the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well gives us an insight into the heart of God toward those caught in a repeated pattern of behaviour. Jesus sees her as "thirsty". We were made for intimacy – in Chapter 4 we called it "perichorisis". Unmet needs make people thirsty. Unmet needs make people hurt. She has connected her cry for intimacy with having a man in her life. She is unaware of the true nature of her thirst, so she is drinking from the wrong well. Jesus re-directed her to the well of Spirit she had been unaware of.

"Believe me, dear woman, the time has come when you won't worship the Father on a mountain nor in Jerusalem, but in your heart. 22 Your people don't really know the One they worship. We Jews worship out of our experience, for it's from the Jews that salvation is made available. 23-24 From here on, worshiping the Father will not be a matter of the right place but with the right heart. For God is a Spirit, and he longs to have sincere worshipers who worship and adore him in the realm of the Spirit and in truth." John 4:21-24 (TPT)

Yes, you do have a deep longing for intimacy, but Jesus is saying the primary well we need to drink from is not sex. Are you trying to get something out of sex it was never designed to give? Write your thoughts.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

"If you come to worship for any reason other than the joy and pleasure and satisfaction that are to be found in God, you dishonor Him...God's greatest delight is your delight in Him." Sam Storms

Session 5: The Cycle of Addiction

Day 7

Reflect on the journey of the past week. What have I learned over this past week? What have I seen about Jesus, my Heavenly Father and about myself? What questions do I have? What progress have I experienced?

Write your thoughts and be willing to share what is appropriate with your group.

Horizontal lines for writing.

"The first element in worship is adoration. The Hebrews expressed this by their posture and not alone by their word. For they prostrated themselves before God. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. They did not come with an easy familiarity into the presence of God, but were aware of his greatness and majesty, and came with a sense of privilege to His house." H.H. Rowley "Worship in Ancient Israel" p. 257

Session 6: The Understanding Man

Day 1

This week we are focussing on a man and his sexual relationship with the woman he is married to. The design of sex is heterosexual and the purpose of sex is for marriage between a man and a woman. "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh." Gen 2:24. A woman experiences her sex life at the hands of her husband. She deserves to be loved and cherished by an understanding man. Your ignorance is her loss - so learn for her sake. Your distortions become part of her experience - so grow in purity.

To Single Men: Don't tune out. This has everything to do with you and your future. Now is the time to develop wisdom and understanding. Now is the time for you to deal with distortions from the past and develop a profound purity of life, for yourself and the woman who will one day look to you as her husband.

What did you hear in the teaching session that challenged your thinking or alerted you to a need for more understanding on your part?

Horizontal lines for writing.

The woman was formed out of man - not out of his head so as to rule over him; not out of his feet so as to be trampled upon by him; but out of his side to be his equal, from beneath his arm to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved. Matthew Henry, QV.11982

Session 6: The Understanding Man

Day 2

Review the notes on Page 6.5. One quote from those notes:

It is very easy for a man to be self-centred and ignorant of his wife’s perspective and experience of sex. He can pressure, complain, criticize, belittle, bargain, threaten, manipulate, and occasionally get what he wants. When a husband treats his wife like this so that his sexual needs are met, she begins to live self-defensively and sex becomes a burden.

Here as a Testimony from a participant of the Lifekeys Man to Man course:

During the Man to Man session about sexuality, I became aware that for all of my married life I had been making unreasonable sexual demands of my wife. I became convicted that I had in fact been sexually abusing her. This came about because my perception of sex had been distorted by my exposure, from a young age, to pornography. I went to her and asked forgiveness for all the years that I had treated her like an object that was available for my sexual gratification. After many tears and long talks she forgave me, and ever since then the intimacy in our marriage has been increasing, so much so that it is now at a level that I once would have thought impossible. Now we both look forward to lovemaking.

How do you feel when you read this testimony? What are you prepared to do to ensure that this story is not repeated in your experience? Write about it.

Session 6: The Understanding Man

Day 3

Some would say that “having sex” and “making love” are one and the same, but there’s an important distinction between the two. The physical act of intercourse can be accomplished by any appropriately matched mammals, as well as most other members of the animal kingdom. But the art of making love, as designed by God, is a much more meaningful and complex experience – it is physical, emotional, and spiritual. In marriage we should settle for nothing less than a sexual relationship that is expressed not only body to body, but heart to heart and soul to soul. James C. Dobson, Night Light – A Devotional for Couples, p. 107

Review Page 6.4. The Song of Solomon portrays a love life that is a delight to the woman who is the centre of her husband’s attention. To the married: Does your wife view her sexual intimacy with you as an anticipated delight? If not, are you beginning to become aware of some of the issues that might be marring your relationship?

Write your thoughts.

Most of the so called sexual incompatibility in marriage springs from the delusion that sex is an activity, when it is primarily a relationship; if the relationship is faulty, the activity cannot long be self sustaining or truly satisfactory.

Sydney J. Harris, QV.10227

Session 6: The Understanding Man

Day 4

The truth is, as God entered chaos to create his world and as Christ entered the chaos of our sinful world (and the chaos of engaging intimately with his fallen people) to win his Bride through suffering and sacrifice, so each man is called to enter the chaos of his wife's world, willing to suffer and sacrifice on her behalf.

"Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church" is no simple command. It touches at the deep terror in every man's soul - the terror of chaos and the threat of exposed incompetence. Most men don't bargain on this when they marry. But the man who longs not only to stay committed to his marriage, but to richly impact for good the woman he has covenanted to love, this man will have to face the darkness of his terror and enter it with the intent to bless his wife, though he won't have a clue how to do it. Nancy Groom, Risking Intimacy, p. 148

One of the greatest delights in a husband's experience is the thrill of being able to truly please and bless his wife in sexual intimacy. The reality is that it's not as easy as the movies make out. Three minutes of huffing and puffing does not make for a happy woman. Review Pages 6.6 and 6.7. Contemplate carefully the nature of the woman good has made you responsible for. You don't have to understand women, you just have to know one woman well enough to be a blessing to her. Ask her to help you understand her better. What are you reading that helps you understand how things could be better? Write about it.

Session 6: The Understanding Man

Day 5

The book *Every Man's Battle* by Arterburn, Stoeker and Yorkey includes comments from the wives on what their men had written while they were undertaking their journey. Below are some of their thoughts about their husband's battle for sexual purity. It demonstrates just how differently the two genders experience and understand the battle for purity. It also demonstrates how much it matters to a woman that her man cares about his purity.

I was surprised to learn that Christian men have this problem even after they are married. I didn't know the depth that men would go and the risk they would take to satisfy their desires.

I don't want to sound mean, but because women don't generally experience this problem, it seems to us that some men are uncontrolled perverts who don't think about anything but sex. It even affects my trust in men, knowing that pastors and deacons have this problem. I don't like it that men lustfully take advantage of women in their thoughts, although I realize that women can be largely to blame because of what they wear. It's at least some comfort to know that many men have this problem. Since most men are affected, we really can't call you guys perverts.

After hearing about this, I was surprised that married men would have so much trouble. I feel sorry for them. When I asked my own husband about it, he was honest with me that he had some struggles, and at first I was hurt. Then I just felt thankful that he would share with me. He hasn't had a major problem in this area, for which I'm thankful.

My husband is regularly bombarded with sexy images, and I was pleased with his honesty regarding that. I want to know the temptations he faces. It will only help me be more sympathetic to his plight. I didn't feel betrayed because he's proven faithful in his battle. Other women aren't so lucky.

*When my husband and I talked about this he was honest, and I was very angry with him. I was hurt, I felt deeply betrayed because I'd been dieting and working out to keep my weight down so that I would always look nice for him. I couldn't figure out why he still needed to look at other women. *Every Man's Battle*, pp.33, 34, 35*

Pray that God would work in you in a big way to produce the kind of personal purity that allows the women around you to live in safety. Pray that God would bring you into a profound partnership with your wife in which Christ is honoured.

A word to singles

A young woman wants to be loved by a man who will sacrifice his own agenda for her protection. One of the greatest gifts a man can give to the woman he loves is his self-control. To have to constantly fight off the pressure for sexual interaction is damaging to a woman. The Valiant Man guards the ones he loves; he doesn't prey on them. To gain an understanding of how to relate to a woman and honour her prior marriage, see the Lifekeys course The Search for Intimacy.

Read this testimony from a respondent to Dr. Hart's survey:

Since you can only give it once, I decided at an early age to give "the gift" only to the man who would love me for the rest of my life. I was blessed to marry a man with the same goal, and now coming up to our one year anniversary we cherish this gift. I am saddened, even angered, by the lies society tells us about premarital sex. It is stealing a beautiful experience from so many young people. Waiting was the best choice I ever made! Archibald Hart, The Sexual Man

Singles – write down your thoughts about how you determine to cultivate sexual purity until marriage and how you will guard the heart of the woman you court.

For the already married – write some reflections about how you handled your pre-marriage relationship and be honest about both regrets and good things.

It's the end of another week of our journey. Reflect on your thoughts and feelings over the past week. What are the really big issues that have emerged for you over the past seven days? Share them in your group if they are appropriate for the ears of others. Some things may be so personal as to be inappropriate. Share with care.

Someone once said that in matters of sex, men are like microwaves and women are like crock pots. There is certainly some truth to that cooking analogy - husbands can reach their "boiling point" before many wives have even decided what's on the menu! Why would God make men and women this way? Don't our different make-ups set us up for conflict when our attention turns to physical intimacy? I believe the Lord knew what he was doing when he established these fundamental differences between us. After all, if women were more like men, we'd probably spend so much time in the bedroom that we'd never get anything else done. And if men were more like women, we'd enjoy many more meaningful conversations but the species might just disappear!

Shirley Dobson, Night Light – A Devotional for Couples, p.114

The challenge involved in renewing the mind is significant. In Session 3 we introduced the first step to sexual purity – bouncing or averting your eyes. In the Introduction to his book, *Wired For Intimacy – How pornography hijacks the male brain*, William Struthers makes these comments:

“What is it about pornography that makes it so appealing to so many men? Why does a naked female body or a movie of a woman having sex seem to hijack a man’s brain, hypnotizing him and rendering him incapable of making good decisions? Why might a man who is married to a lovely wife risk that relationship for a ten-second video clip of a couple having sex? What is it about being male that makes it so difficult for men to look away?”

I trust that you have come to appreciate, at least in part, the answer to that question is rooted in the chemistry set in your own head and the impact of sexualized material on the pleasure centres of your brain. This is what makes the journey to wholeness so challenging – the allure of pleasure and the relentless opportunities for exposure.

Struthers goes on to say: *“... I delete dozens of emails each day that solicit pornographic material, sexual enhancement products or opportunities for sexual encounters. My workplace has an Internet filter, but sexually explicit material is easy to access if you are determined. I put on self-imposed blinders as I wade through tantalizing advertisements with Victoria’s Secret models in the margins of my weather forecast. My Internet service provider homepage is littered with dating services and my sports websites have galleries of scantily clad cheerleaders. If I watch a soccer match on television with my children, I have to be vigilant to change the channel when commercials for Viagra are aired. In a world that has been hyper-sexualized, it is hard to get through the day without being battered and numbed by the intrusions of pornography.”*

Renewing the mind in an environment of hyper-sexualized media is not going to be a walk in the park – although a walk in the park might actually help. It will take deliberate application to retrain your brain, especially where pornography and fantasy have taken a significant hold. Man up – what we learn in this session will need to be applied with diligence.

Start and finish your day by reading Psalm 27.

What is pornography? What am I called on to eliminate from my life?

Porneia – the Greek word is often translated as “fornication”, “whoredom” or “sexual immorality”.

The Bible teaches us that our bodies are not made for porneia (1 Cor 6:13), we should run from it (1 Cor 6:18), we should not seek it out (1 Cor 7:2), and we should repent if we fall prey to it (2 Cor 12:21). Lyndon Bowring, *Searching for Intimacy*, pg 30.

So what is pornography? The Catechism of the Catholic Church has a definition that might be difficult to improve on.

2354 Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.

If you were to apply this definition of pornography to your life and respond to it in the way the Bible counsels, how would it affect the life you are now living? Write honestly and from the heart.

How does pornography and fantasy get such a grip on a man's life? Below is a cluster of excerpts from Chapter 4 of Wired for Intimacy, by Struthers:

"Why do so many men find it difficult to look away after that first glance? ...The visual scanning of the naked image has a power to it that forces itself on the male brain. The peculiar proficiency that the male brain has to relay this signal, combined with a man's personal history and thought habits (his experience with looking at pornography), are why so many men have difficulty looking away. The signal is received and then projected onto the display, the visual experience of the viewer. The depiction of nudity and sexual acts have a hypnotic effect and the ability to hold their attention similar to a High Definition television."

"As men fall deeper into the mental habit of fixating on these images, the exposure to them creates neural pathways. Like a path is created in the woods with each successive hiker, so do the neural paths set the course for the next time an erotic image is viewed. Over time these neural paths become wider as they are repeatedly travelled with each exposure to pornography. They become the automatic pathway through which interactions with women are routed ... They have unknowingly create a neurological circuit that imprisons their ability to see women rightly as created in God's image."

If we are to have a different future we must discover how to employ the skill of DISRUPTING those thoughts and deliberately, on every occasion, create another pathway – one of worship, thanksgiving, honour and purity.

Review Pages 7.6 and 7.7 in your manual. Take one of the scriptures and write it out below:

Review Page 7.10 – Summary on building and off-ramp.

Let me remind you of one of the off-ramps that I spoke about in the video teaching of Session 7. I have a friend in ministry who was raised on a farm with a bunch of boys and pornography was one of the things that became part of his life as a teenager. Pornography formed a channel in his mind that didn't bother him until Jesus Christ became real and dear to him later in life. Struthers speaks about this further on page 106:

"Each time that unhealthy sexual pattern is repeated, a neurological, emotional and spiritual erosion carves out a channel that will eventually develop into a canyon from which there is no escape. But if this corrupted pathway can be avoided, a new pathway can be formed. We can establish a healthy sexual pattern where the flow is redirected toward holiness rather than corrupted intimacy. By intentionally redirecting the neurochemical flow, the path toward right thinking becomes the preferred path and is established as the mental habit. The path to recovery relies on the very rules that govern how the wounds were initially created."

How does that work? What do I actually do? My friend was passing a Newsagency window with pictures of women displayed in various stages of undress and up flashed that river of pornographic memories. He was longing to be free of the torment of those memories and cried out in his heart, "God help me. How do I beat this?" Immediately he had a responsive thought from heaven: "Turn and praise me for my creation". His eyes focused on a tree. He began to praise God for the wonder and beauty of that tree. He allowed the beauty of creation to be the off-ramp for that flood of unclean thoughts and began in worship to create another pathway; one of beauty, holiness and worship. It became his way of escape. When an unclean memory surfaced he would deliberately look for a tree or a flower – anything God made – and release a flow of worship and thanksgiving. He made a new pathway of worship.

Write your reflections on his experience.

At the beginning of this last week of the Valiant Man journey here are some vital thoughts from Dr Neil Anderson taken from his book Victory Over The Darkness and the chapter on "Winning the Battle for Your Mind".

We can live God's way: operating by faith, which I like to call plan A, or we can live our way, plan B. The strength of plan A in your life is determined by your personal conviction that God's way and your obedience to him is the right way. The strength of plan B is determined by the amount of time and energy you invest in entertaining thoughts that are contrary to God's Word.

Where do plan B thoughts come from? There are two primary sources. Firstly our flesh. Our flesh is that part of us that was trained to live independently from God. Second there is a person active in the world today who has opposed God's plan since the garden of Eden. Satan and his demons are actively involved in trying to distract you from your walk with God by peppering your mind with his thoughts and ideas. He is relentless in his attempts to establish negative, worldly patterns of thought in your mind that will in turn produce, negative, worldly patterns of behaviour.

Whenever you are stimulated to conform to plan B instead of plan A you are experiencing temptation. The essence of all temptation is the invitation to live independent of God and fulfil legitimate needs in the world, the flesh or the devil, instead of in Christ.

That's the great contest. And Satan knows just which buttons to push to tempt you away from dependency on Christ. He has observed your behaviour over the years and he knows where you are vulnerable, and that's where he will attack.

The moment you are tempted to get your need met in the world instead of in Christ, you are at the threshold of a decision. If you don't immediately take that thought captive to Christ, you will begin to consider it as an option. And if you mull it over in your mind, immediately your emotions will be affected and the likelihood of yielding to that temptation is increased.

Once your consideration of a temptation has triggered an emotional response leading to a plan B choice, you will act upon that choice and own that behaviour. You may resent your actions or claim that you are not responsible for what you do. But you are responsible for your actions at this stage because you failed to take a tempting thought captive when it first appeared at the threshold of your mind.

Better to shun the bait, than struggle in the snare. John Dryden, QV.11049

Review the 8 Principles for guarding your heart in your manual.

Every one of these principles are part of the armoury with which I guard my heart from the assaults of my own flesh and the kingdom of darkness. I find every one of them effective as weapons of my warfare – weapons that are not carnal but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Perhaps the most empowering of these principles for me is the Ewe Lamb Principle. The photo of my wife as a 2 year-old child sitting on a rocking horse is in front of me as I'm typing this reflection. As a 19 year-old girl she stood beside me at the altar where I said to her and to God: "... forsaking all others and cleaving only unto you, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part."

On that day that little human miracle, made in the image of the Maker of Heaven and Earth, pinned her future to my promise. She trusted me. I have the power to make her life miserable. I have the power to guard my heart, and in so doing, guard her's as well. I have the power to fill her life with tears and regret. I have the power to nurture her, honour her and treasure her till we meet Jesus face to face. I choose her above every temptation.

This principle empowers me every day. What does it do for you?

Temptation is not a sin, it's a call to battle. E.W. Lutzer, QV.11087

Review Principles 1 and 2.

One of the greatest gifts my father gave me was to love my mother. He saw in her a profound gift of God’s grace. He was satisfied. As a result I grew up never hearing a single moment of household distress that was the result of my Father’s unhappiness with his lot in life. My father was deeply and constantly committed to Jesus and to us as his household. My Dad was an Ox; a schoolteacher who became a Primary School Principal and served the community in numerous ways. My Dad was an Eagle – every night round the table he would read us the Bible. Every morning at 6.30 am he would be at the kitchen table doing his morning devotions. God was his refuge and his strength. My Dad was a Lion and my Dad was a Good Man.

Dad has marked my heart. I was foolish and all too often a contradiction to his example during my teen years. Then there came a moment when God got my attention and my approach to life began to change. The older I get the more I am grateful for my father.

Guard your heart and grow. Some day you will be someone’s hero. Do the work. Be the Valiant Man you set out to be. Generations will be grateful that you did. You didn’t have the privilege of the example I had? Change the future. Be the future. It’s your calling in Christ.

Write your thoughts.

Into the Future – but not alone:

9 Two are better than one because they have a more satisfying return for their labor; 10 for if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and does not have another to lift him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, then they keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? 12 And though one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Eccl 4:9-11 (AMP)

The Valiant Man journey is best done with friends who have a common faith and a common commitment to a Godly future. You don’t have to do the journey alone.

You are coming to the end of a 10 week journey – yet it is not the end. Some of you will feel that the time has been well spent; you have learned new things and adapted new skills into your life. Some will feel they have gained what they came for and can move on to other things. Some will realise they have begun a process but it is nowhere near complete. Some will realize it is more tenuous than that – you know that left to yourself there is a real danger that you will regress and lose your way. It’s time for a sober assessment.

Where to from here? For some the best step you could take would be to engage in another Lifekeys course as soon as possible – perhaps Man to Man or Search for Life. If your experience with pornography, fantasy and masturbation has been more than fractional you will need to continue to pursue the skills we have been learning for more than the 10 weeks you have experienced. You may need a Life Transformation Group (LTG).

An LTG is a group of two or three men who have done the journey this far who know they need to continue together. In your small group experience this week, before you conclude the last meeting, put your need on the table. Find one or two willing to continue. Secure your future together.
