



THIRTEEN WEEKS FOR A MEN'S CLASS

THE MAN THEY ACTUALLY LIVE WITH

LEADER GUIDE

Everything a man needs to lead thirteen sessions, including
the weeks it gets heavy.

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JAKE MCCLUSKEY
STAND YOUR WATCH

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READ THIS BEFORE YOU AGREE TO TEACH IT

I am going to be more direct in this guide than in most, because this study is heavier than most, and a man who walks into it unprepared will get somebody hurt.

WHAT THIS BOOK ACTUALLY IS

It is one man's account of being the worst thing in his own house, and what God did about it. The drinking, the anger his family navigated like weather, the night he tried to end his life and did not.

It is written to a man who is currently doing damage at home and does not fully know it.

That means your class will surface things. Over thirteen weeks with a room of men you should expect at least one of these, and probably more than one:

- A man who realizes in week one that he is the problem, and takes it hard
- A marriage that is further gone than anybody in the church knew
- A man whose drinking is not a habit anymore
- A man in real despair
- A house where somebody is not safe

None of that is a sign the class went wrong. It is the class working. But you have to be ready for it, and that readiness is most of this section.

BEFORE WEEK ONE, DO THREE THINGS

One. Tell your pastor you are running it. Not as a formality. Tell him what is in the book, tell him you expect things to surface, and ask him now what he wants you to do when they do. You want that conversation before you need it, not at ten on a Sunday night.

Two. Know where your church sends people. A counselor's name. A recovery group. Whatever your church actually uses. Have it written down before week one. "I will find out" is a much worse answer than a name.

Three. Read the whole book yourself first. All of it, before you teach week one. Chapters four, fifteen, and eighteen especially. Do not teach this one a week ahead of the class.

WHO SHOULD NOT LEAD THIS

I would rather say it than have somebody find out the hard way.

Do not lead this if you are in the middle of it yourself right now. If your own house is where this book is aimed, be a man in the class, not the man in front of it. There is no shame in that and it is the right call. Take the class first, lead it next year.

Do not lead this as your first time leading anything, unless a pastor or an experienced leader is co-leading with you.

You do not need to be a Bible teacher. You do need to be steady, and you need to be a man who can hear a hard thing without flinching or fixing.

THE FOUR MISTAKES

One. Making it about information. Nobody needs to know more about this. They need to do one small thing. Protect that.

Two. Letting it become confession theater. A room where men compete to disclose is not safe, it is a performance with worse consequences. Keep the room on the work and let the deep material happen in pairs and with pastors.

Three. Fixing. A man tells you about his marriage and every instinct says solve it. Do not. Ask what he is going to do this week and who is walking with him.

Four. Teaching too long. Twenty minutes is the ceiling.

THE SHAPE OF EVERY WEEK

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0-5	The question. One question, one sentence each, around the room.
5-25	Teach. One idea from the week's chapters. Twenty minutes maximum.
25-35	Write. Silence. Men work the two questions.
35-50	Pairs. Each man tells his partner his answers and what he is doing this week.
50-60	The one thing. Each man says out loud what he is doing before next week. Then close in prayer.

Week one does not fit in sixty minutes and you should plan for that rather than discover it. Setting the room, the confidentiality rule, the never-made-to-share rule and assigning partners all sit on top of the hour. Budget seventy minutes for week one, or tell the room up front that the first night runs long. **What you must not do is cut from the top of the hour to catch up,** because that is exactly where the safety material lives.

Notice the difference from a normal study: **the last ten minutes are commitments, out loud, in front of the room.** That is the accountability engine and it is why men actually do the work. Do not cut it.

ABOUT THE PAIRS

Assign them in week one and keep them all thirteen weeks. Do not rotate. By week eight a man is telling his partner something about his marriage, and that only happens because the same guy has been listening since January.

Put men together who are not already close friends if you can.

THE CONFIDENTIALITY RULE, AND ITS ONE EXCEPTION

Say this in week one, in these two parts, and say both parts every time you say the first:

Nothing said in this room leaves this room.

The one exception is if somebody is in danger, or has been. If a man tells me he is thinking about ending his life, or that somebody in his house is not safe, or that a child has been hurt, I am going to go get help. I would do exactly that for any of you, and I would want you to do it for me.

Say “or has been” and mean it. In many states your duty to report attaches to disclosed past harm to a child, not only to danger tonight. If you promise an exception that covers only present danger, and a man in week nine tells you what he did six years ago, you have already told him it did not apply to him and you are going to have to act anyway. Ask your pastor that same day what your state requires of you personally.

Do not promise blanket confidentiality. A leader who promised it and then hears a disclosure is trapped by his own word on the night it matters most.

IF A MAN DISCLOSES THAT HE IS IN CRISIS

If he is in danger tonight, meaning a plan, or the means, or he tells you he does not intend to be here tomorrow, do not send him home and do not wait for the week. Stay with him. Call 988 together.

While you wait, ask him one plain question: “Is there a gun in your truck or your house tonight?” If there is, ask him to let you or another man hold it until he has seen somebody. Ask about pills the same way. That question does more good than anything else you will say, and

asking it does not put the idea in his head. If he will not answer it, or will not stay, call 911.

Then call your pastor that night, not Monday. Then put eyes on him the next day, in person or on the phone. The day after a disclosure is the one that gets missed.

If it is serious but not tonight, take it seriously in the moment, get him to your pastor or a counselor this week, and follow up personally within a few days. Most men never make the call on their own.

Either way you make a call too. “Get him connected” does not mean handing over a phone number and hoping.

Numbers: 988, any hour, call or text. Veterans dial 988 then press 1, or text 838255.

IF A MAN’S HOUSE IS NOT SAFE

This one is different from crisis and you need to handle it differently.

If what a man describes is that his wife or kids are not safe from him, that is not a study topic and it is not something patience fixes. Get your pastor involved this week. He needs real help and probably professional help, and he needs it now rather than at the end of the quarter.

If what he describes is somebody else harming his family, same answer, plus this. If a child is being harmed, tell your pastor the same day and follow your church’s reporting policy. Then three things you do not do. Do not interview the child. Do not confront the person he named. Do not decide it can wait until you know more. Ask your pastor that same day what your state requires of you personally, because a church policy is not the law. If a child is in danger tonight, call 911. You are not the one who decides whether it is serious enough.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Men call that number too, and some of the men in your room may need to hear you say that out loud.



ONE LAST THING BEFORE YOU START

You are going to feel unqualified. Every man who has ever led something like this has.

The men in that room do not need you to have it figured out. They need somebody willing to say a true thing about himself first, and then keep showing up. That is the whole job.

PART ONE: ALL MEN



SESSION ONE

TWO MEN, SAME NAME



READ

front letter, How to Read This Book, chapters 1 and 2

Your one job: get the room honest about the gap between the man at work and the man at home, without anybody getting crushed in week one.

SET THE ROOM FIRST (5 MIN, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE)

Do these three things at the top of week one and do not skip any:

1. Say the confidentiality rule and its exception, both parts. 2. Say that nobody is ever made to share with the room. 3. Say the safety line out loud: “If what is happening in your house right now is worse than a bad mood, if the people who live with you are not safe from you, come talk to me after and we will get you help. That is not a thirteen-week problem.”

Then assign partners.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What is one thing you are better at when other people are watching?”

Non-threatening, and it opens the exact door the book walks through.

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **the man your family lives with is the real one.**

- Two men, same name. The one at work is careful. The one at home is whatever is left when the effort stops.

- The scoreboard. Bills paid, food in the kitchen, nobody hit. Most of us grade ourselves on the easiest possible test.
- The line to say slowly: “Nobody in my house was starving. They were just scared of me. But the scoreboard didn’t have a column for that.”
- The doorway math from chapter two. A house where the smallest people read one man’s face before they ask him anything.

Go first. Say something true about your own gap. Not a testimony, one sentence. If you skip this the room will stay polite for thirteen weeks.

Do not let week one become a competition over who was worse. Redirect with: “We are not doing damage reports. We are doing one honest look.”

35 MIN WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING

Standard shape. The one thing this week is the truck question from chapter one.

Watch for: the man who goes very quiet. Chapter one lands hardest on the man who recognizes himself completely. Find him during the week.

SESSION TWO

WHAT YOU REACH FOR



READ

chapter 3

Your one job: get every man to name his own, privately, without the room turning into a confession contest.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What do most men reach for at the end of a hard day?”

Note the phrasing. Most men, not you. It lets a man answer honestly about himself under cover, and several will.

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **it works, and that is exactly why it has you.**

- Nobody gets taken by something that does not work. Say that first. It disarms the man who is braced to be lectured.
- The trade: a few hours of quiet for something, and it goes through every time until the thing owns him.
- The broken cistern from Jeremiah 2:13. A tank a man digs to hold water he controls. The tell is not that it fails. It is that it never holds, so you go back tomorrow.
- Widen it deliberately: the glass, the screen, the browser tab, the garage, the office, a rage that feels better than the sadness under it. **Say all of those out loud.** The man whose cistern is not alcohol needs to hear his named or he will sit out the whole session.

35 MIN WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING

Handle this carefully in pairs. Tell the room before they break: “You are not required to name yours to your partner. Tell him you have one and tell him what you are doing about it this week. That is enough.”

The medical guard, say it out loud: if a man’s pour is daily and heavy, he talks to a doctor before he stops. Coming off some things alone can hurt him. Do not let that get lost as a box on the page.

Watch for: the man who jokes about his. That is usually the one to follow up with.

ASSIGN CHAPTER FOUR CAREFULLY (2 MIN, DO NOT SKIP)

Do this in week two. By week three they have already read it alone.

Say it as you assign it: “Next week is chapters four and five. Chapter four is about the night the author tried to end his life. He tells it in one line and does not paint the scene, but you should know it is coming before you open it by yourself at your kitchen table. If that is close to home for you right now, call me before you read it, not after.”

Then hold up the numbers page. Ten seconds, no speech.

SESSION THREE

THE BOTTOM, AND WHAT CAME AFTER



READ

chapters 4 and 5

Your one job: handle the heaviest chapter in the book responsibly, and get the two ledgers into every man's hands.

This is the session that most needs you prepared. Read chapter four twice before you teach it, and have your pastor's number in your pocket.

BEFORE YOU OPEN

Say plainly at the top: "Chapter four is about the night the author tried to end his life. If that is close to home for you right now, you are not in trouble for it and you do not have to sit through this. Come find me and we will talk instead."

Then point at the crisis numbers on the last page of the study guide. Hold the page up. Ten seconds, no speech.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

"What is something you thought you would never come back from?"

Keep it general. Men will take it wherever they are able.

20 MIN TEACH

Two parts, and give the second one more time.

Chapter four, briefly and carefully. The book tells that night in one line and does not paint the scene. Follow its lead. Do not add detail, do not

speculate, and do not make it the centerpiece. The chapter is about what happened after: a weight lifting that his circumstances had not earned, and a first prayer that was two sentences and tears.

Chapter five, and this is the useful half. The two ledgers.

- You cannot earn God's forgiveness. It is a gift, it cost Him a cross, and trying to pay for it is its own kind of insult.
- You do have to earn your family's trust. All of it. Slowly.
- Both are true at once. Get them backwards and you wreck yourself.
- The man who thinks God's ledger works like his family's spends his faith trying to out-perform his past and quits.
- The man who thinks his family's ledger works like God's stands in his kitchen a month in, offended they do not trust him yet, demanding grace instead of earning trust.
- Grace is free. Trust is earned. God gives the first so you have the strength for the second.
- Say it out loud for the man with an empty house: the family ledger still runs when nobody is left to audit it, and none of that earning is wasted. There is at least one of him in your room and he will not raise his hand.

Say plainly: "If you keep one thing from thirteen weeks, keep the two ledgers."

35 MIN WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING

Aftercare: check on at least three men this week. This is the session that opens things, and some men will not come to you.

SESSION FOUR

ON YOUR KNEES, AND NOT ALONE



READ

chapters 6 and 7

Your one job: lower the bar on prayer, and get every man to name one person who could actually know him.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“Who is the one person who knows the most about what you are actually carrying?”

Some men will not have an answer. That silence is the session.

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **a man was never built to carry this alone, and there are two places to set it down.**

- Prayer, and how small it can be. A prayer in the truck before work counts. God does not care how you pray, He cares that you are honest. Say the second half too: He hears you because of Jesus, not because you found the right words.
- Most men treat prayer like a meeting they did not prepare for, so they do not knock.
- Then chapter seven, which is the one that stings: a man can be surrounded his whole life and known by nobody. “I was known of by a hundred men and known by none.”
- We call that strength. It is a hiding place.
- The fix is not a program or a men’s breakfast. It is one man who knows your name, who you will see again, who will ask you next month.

Point at the room: “For most of you that man is the one you have been sitting across from for four weeks.”

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

Two assignments this week: the door prayer from chapter six, and telling one man one true thing from chapter seven.

Make the second one concrete. Before they leave, each man says who he is telling. Not what. Who.

SESSION FIVE

THE YEARS YOU DON'T GET BACK



READ

chapter 8, and the Part One prayer

Your one job: teach men what to do with grief that has no fix, and close Part One well.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What is something you would run again if you could?”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **some things do not get fixed, and there are two ways to carry that.**

- The photographs of days a man cannot remember. Present and accounted for, and gone.
- Be honest that some of it is permanent. The book refuses to promise a rewind and so should you. The book's words: “Anybody who tells you otherwise, any preacher who promises the rewind, is selling you something.”
- The two sorrows from 2 Corinthians 7:10. One turns a man toward God and moves him. The other turns him inward and grinds him down, and it is the one that reaches for a drink.
- The practical move, and it is the whole session: in the moment you cannot tell which sorrow you are feeling. So do not sort it. Pray immediately, before diagnosing anything. If it is godly sorrow God turns it into fuel. If it is shame it dies on His doorstep.
- Joel 2:25. He does not rewind the years. He repurposes them. Teach the guard the book teaches, because this verse gets abused: that promise

was made to Israel after locusts God Himself had sent, and the eaten harvests stayed eaten. What God promised was that the seasons still coming would carry more than they had any natural right to carry. Do not hand a man Joel 2:25 as a guarantee that he gets back what he lost. The book does not, and neither do you.

CLOSE PART ONE (10 MIN OF THE LAST BLOCK)

Read the Part One prayer aloud, or have a man read it. Then have the room pray it together or in silence.

Mark the transition out loud: “That was the man underneath. Next week we start on the marriage.”

PART TWO: HUSBANDS



Handle the single men at the top of session six, once, plainly: “If you are not married, these next four weeks are not off. Most of what is in here is about a man’s character before it is about his marriage, and you are going to need it.” Then do not single anybody out again.

SESSION SIX

SHE MARRIED THE MAN YOU WERE GOING TO BE



READ

chapter 9

Your one job: get men to measure the gap honestly without spiraling, and handle the boundary teaching correctly.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What did you promise her, out loud or not, back when you were winning her?”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **the drift is slow, and the vow it breaks is the one about safety.**

- How it opens: nothing happens. An empty church seat, one reasonable excuse at a time, and something else fills the space. A man drifts from God first and everything follows.
- The sentence, and let it sit: “I became what she needed protecting from.” Not with fists. With weather.
- **The boundary teaching, and get this right.** When a wife draws a line, that is not a betrayal of her vows. It is love with a spine in it. A man’s job is not to argue the door. It is to become the man it was worth opening for.
- The close: no gap is too wide for God. But the gap He promises to close is the one in you, and what happens in the marriage after that is His business and her choice.

Do not let this become a room where men complain about their wives. The first time it starts, redirect: “We are only working on the one man in this room we can do anything about.”

And name the wife who never drew a line, once, so no man in your room walks out having decided his wife was weak for carrying it. Her carrying was love too, paid in a harder currency.

Also do not let a man leave thinking the book promised him his marriage back. Say the honest version out loud: some men get the marriage back and some get rebuilt for a different road, and the rebuilding is real either way.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

Watch for: the man whose wife has already left, or is leaving. This session lands hardest on him. Find him this week.

SESSION SEVEN

YOU SET THE WEATHER, AND THE APOLOGY THAT STOPPED LANDING



READ

chapters 10 and 11

Your one job: move men upstream of their own front door.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“What happens in your house in the first sixty seconds after you walk in?”

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **the weather in your house is coming out of you, and the fix is upstream of the door.**

- A man leads whether he means to or not, and the first thing he leads with is his tone.
- Kill the two speeches. “I can’t help how I feel,” half true, and the half that matters is that weather is not the feeling arriving, it is what you do with it in front of people who cannot leave. And “at least my moods are honest,” which the book answers flatly.
- **The guard, and do not skip it:** this is not about the sadness a man cannot pray away in a day, or the wiring a war left in him. That is real, it is medical, and getting help for it is faith, not failure. Say that out loud every time you teach this chapter.
- The move that works: hand it to God while it is still gathering, in traffic, at 4:45, not at the door.

- Then chapter eleven: after years of weather, apologies stop landing. Not because she is bitter. Because she was paying attention. An apology written on an empty account.
- Only fruit funds the account. Stop trying to get this week's apology accepted.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

The first-sixty-seconds assignment is the one to hold them to. It is small, it is daily, and men report back on it.

SESSION EIGHT

THE DEAD ZONE, AND STRENGTH THAT MAKES HER SAFE



READ

chapters 12 and 13

Your one job: keep men from quitting in the stretch where nothing moves, and get gentleness reframed as strength.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“When have you done the right thing for a long time with nothing to show for it?”

20 MIN **TEACH**

Two ideas and they need each other.

The dead zone. You do the work and nothing happens. She is polite, careful, and careful is worse because you cannot argue with it. The line that keeps a man from turning bitter: her guard is not the obstacle to your rebuild, it is the evidence of why the rebuild is necessary. Every wall he is staring at was built from materials he supplied.

Gentleness. Most men never noticed how loud they got or how big they look. Voice and frame are amplifiers and at home they are turned all the way up. What feels like fifty percent lands at a hundred on somebody smaller.

Then: gentleness is the greatest strength. Not the absence of power. Power that has sworn itself to protect instead of win.

Ask the room the question the chapter asks: what was your loud strength actually winning?

Say plainly to the man six months in with nothing moving: there is no credit for time served, and she owes him no thaw. He is not farming for a harvest he can schedule.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

The break assignment from chapter thirteen is the practical one. Make sure they take all of it: say what you are doing, go to God with it, and come back.

PART THREE: FATHERS



SESSION NINE

THE TRAFFIC PATTERN, AND THE KIDS WHO LEARNED TO TIPTOE



READ

chapters 14 and 15, and the Part Two prayer

Your one job: let the blunt chapter land, and make sure the guard lands with it.

5 MIN **OPENING QUESTION**

“In the house you grew up in, who did you take your problems to?”

Start with their childhood, not their kids. It gets honest answers and it sets up the inherited-pattern material two weeks out.

20 MIN **TEACH**

The one idea: **kids take their problems to the safest person in the house, and the traffic pattern is a map you drew.**

- Not the biggest or the smartest. The safest.
- Colossians 3:21, lose heart. An exasperated kid does not rebel first. He quits first. The questions dry up and the door closes softer.
- Chapter fifteen: tiptoeing is not a moment, it is the floor. A thing that happens daily stops looking like anything.
- “If the kids were quiet, I wouldn’t be irritated.” They were being happy kids. That was the whole crime.

Now the blunt paragraph, and teach both halves in the same breath.

The book says a man’s kids’ careful feet are his report card, not theirs. That is aimed at a man who has been blaming his kids for how they walk.

Immediately after it, every time: if part of it is not his, if there is anxiety in a kid's wiring or something that happened where he was not, he will not sort it out by arguing over who caused what. Get steady, stay steady, and get her the help she needs. That is his job either way.

Never teach the first half without the second, and never teach either without the third. The book puts all three in one paragraph. So do you.

One. It is your fault, and their careful feet are your report card.

Two. If part of it is not yours, a kid's wiring or something that happened where you were not, you will not sort that out by arguing over who caused what. Get steady, stay steady, get her the help she needs.

Three. Christ took the guilt of it to the cross and did not leave a balance for you to pay off with better fathering. You are not rebuilding to earn your way back. You are rebuilding because you have already been forgiven.

There is a father in your room whose kid's struggle is genuinely not his doing, and the blunt paragraph without the second half lands on him wrong. And there is a whole room that will go home flattened if you skip the third. Say all three or teach none of it.

35 MIN

WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING

SESSION TEN

THE FIRST PICTURE OF GOD THEY GET



READ

chapters 16 and 17

Your one job: let men feel the weight of it and then make sure nobody leaves crushed.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What did the word father mean in the house you grew up in?”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **you are the first picture of God your kids get, and God is not trapped behind your face.**

Teach it in that order and do not stop halfway.

- Jesus taught men to pray “Our Father,” which handed every dad on earth loaded vocabulary. Nobody has to teach a kid bad doctrine out loud. Every slammed door is a sermon.
- **Then the mercy, and give it more time than the weight.** Matthew 7:11. Jesus looked at a crowd of ordinary flawed fathers, granted that even they hand their kids bread instead of rocks, and swung it upward. How much more.
- God is not your dad scaled up. That phrase is the crowbar that pries a kid’s real picture of God loose from a bad father’s face.
- “I was never the painting. I was the frame.”
- And the line the guilty man needs: God is not trapped behind your face. A bad father muddies the picture. He does not get to veto the painter.

- Chapter seventeen: the line you inherited is not stronger than God.

Timing matters here. If you spend fifteen minutes on the damage and five on the mercy, you will send men home worse than they came. Flip it.

And end the teaching on the mercy, not on the assignment. The last thing they hear before they pick up a pen should be how-much-more.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

The assignment is to ask their kids what they think God is like, and then listen without defending. Prepare them for the answer to sting.

SESSION ELEVEN

THE APOLOGY A FATHER OWES, AND BEING IN THE ROOM



READ

chapters 18 and 19

Your one job: get the exits sealed, and make sure nobody holds the apology meeting badly.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What is your exit? The glass, the screen, the office, the garage.”

20 MIN TEACH

- The apology a father owes is harder than the one a husband owes, because it makes the bad years real. “Your children’s faces are where denial goes to die.”
- Two guards on that meeting. They get the truth and none of the weight, and whose fault it was gets said out loud. And honest does not mean the whole archive: “That part isn’t mine to give you yet” is a true answer.
- The fear that stops most fathers is losing respect. They will respect him more, over time, though it may not look like it the night he does it. Matthew 8:9, the centurion, a man under authority who therefore has authority. **Say what that passage is before you use it:** it is a healing story and Jesus commends the man’s faith, not his humility. You are borrowing his logic, that a man under authority is the one who carries any, and that is a fair borrow if you name it.
- Chapter nineteen: present and absent. The house counts you present, the family knows better. Every checked-out father has his exits.
- Kids do not care about the money you make. Say the guard with it, because you have men working two jobs in that room: a man who

feeds his family is doing a real and holy thing and nobody here is shaming necessary work. But the floor is not the house.

The guard, and say it before anybody goes home and holds a meeting: an adult hears it first. His wife, his pastor, you. That meeting is for a man telling his kids about weather that is passing, not for handing them a storm still running. If a man in your room is in the middle of it right now, he seals the exit this week and holds the meeting later.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

This week's assignment is the exit, not the meeting. Be clear about that.

SESSION TWELVE

RAISING THEM TOWARD THE FATHER WHO NEVER FAILS



READ

chapters 20 and 21, and the Part Three prayer

Your one job: land the goal of the whole thing, and set up week thirteen.

5 MIN OPENING QUESTION

“What do you actually want your kids to have when they leave your house?”

20 MIN TEACH

The one idea: **the aim is to become unnecessary in exactly one place.**

- Not at the table, not at the midnight conversation. You stay in the room, that was last week.
- Unnecessary between your kids and God. There was never supposed to be a man standing in that gap. Christ holds that job alone.
- 3 John 4, “no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.” **Say plainly that John’s children there are his converts, not his sons,** and then borrow it, because the picture is exactly right: the joy is watching them walk on their own legs, not being carried on yours.
- Then chapter twenty-one, and it is deliberately the most boring scene in the book. A calm man in a chair, in a house that is not bracing for anything. After twenty chapters, that is the trophy.

Tell them what next week is. Each man reads his week one answers and says one thing out loud to the room. Some men will want to prepare and that is fine.

35 MIN **WRITE, PAIRS, THE ONE THING**

Read the Part Three prayer together to close.

SESSION THIRTEEN

THE MAN THEY ACTUALLY LIVE WITH



READ

the Final Prayer

Your one job: every man says something out loud to the room, and nobody leaves without a next step.

10 MIN **OPEN DIFFERENTLY**

No question. Have them read their own week one answers silently, then their week seven answers.

Then ask one thing: “What is different?”

10 MIN **TEACH, SHORT**

- Nothing in thirteen weeks fixed anybody. That was never on offer.
- What it did, if it worked: got them honest, got them praying, got them one honest friendship, got them doing one small thing at a time.
- The book’s own frame: not the man you were, not yet the man He is building, the man in the middle, which is exactly where it turns.

25 MIN **THE ROOM**

Each man says one sentence out loud about what changed or what has not. Go in order rather than asking for volunteers, and go last yourself.

Give this the time. It is the most valuable half hour of the quarter.

15 MIN **CLOSE**

Three things, concretely:

1. **Keep the partner.** Before anybody leaves, each pair sets the next time they are talking and puts it in a phone, in the room, in front of each other. 2. **Keep the one thing.** Each man names the practice he is keeping. 3. **Point at the numbers page** one more time, briefly, without a speech.

Then read the Final Prayer, or have a man read it, and close.

APPENDIX A



WHAT TO DO WHEN A MAN SAYS HE IS THE PROBLEM

It will happen, probably in week one or three, and how you respond sets the tone for the whole quarter.

Do not reassure him out of it. “You’re being too hard on yourself” is the worst available answer. He may be right, and if he is, you just taught the room that honesty gets managed.

Do not pile on either. He does not need agreement, he needs the next sentence.

Say something like: “That took something to say. What are you going to do about it this week?” Then help him make it small.

Then find him during the week. A man who says that in a room and hears nothing afterward concludes he should not have said it.

And keep one branch open, because this guide sends you to an action item every time and sometimes that is the wrong door. This book is written to a man who is currently doing damage at home, and some of the men who end up in that chair have never trusted Christ at all. If what he says is closer to “I do not think I am a Christian,” or “how do I get right with God,” do not answer that with a small next step for the week. **Stop the conversation and stay on it.** Tell him plainly that the issue is not his performance, that Christ paid for the whole thing, and that a man comes in by turning and trusting rather than by improving. Then get your pastor to him that week. You are not equipped to disciple that alone and you are not supposed to be.

APPENDIX B



WHEN NOBODY TALKS

Answer first, honestly, about yourself. This class more than most runs on whether the leader will go first.

Go around instead of asking the room. Almost nobody refuses a direct low-stakes turn.

Ask a smaller question. If the room is silent the question was too big.

Move to pairs early. Two men talk when twelve will not.

APPENDIX C



THE EIGHT-WEEK VERSION

If your calendar will not hold thirteen weeks:

1. Two men, same name (ch 1, 2) 2. What you reach for (ch 3) 3. The bottom and the two ledgers (ch 4, 5) 4. Not alone (ch 6, 7) 5. The gap and the weather (ch 9, 10) 6. The dead zone and gentleness (ch 12, 13) 7. The traffic pattern and the picture of God (ch 14, 15, 16) 8. In the room, and the close (ch 19, 21)

You lose chapters 8, 11, 17, 18 and 20. That is a real loss, especially chapter 18. But eight weeks finished beats thirteen abandoned.

Do not cut session 3. The two ledgers are the load-bearing idea of the whole book.

And know that cutting chapter 8 is a safety cut, not just a content cut.

It is the only place the book teaches a man what to do with grief that cannot be fixed, and you are removing it from a study that still spends a week on the night the author tried to end his life. If you run eight weeks, fold the protocol into week 3: when the wave comes, do not sort it, pray on the spot.

APPENDIX D



A NOTE TO THE MAN LEADING THIS

You are going to hear things in these thirteen weeks that you cannot unhear.

That is the cost of running a class like this, and it is worth paying, but you should know it going in. Have somebody you talk to as well. A pastor, a friend, your own partner in the class. Do not carry twelve men's houses by yourself while teaching a book about not carrying things by yourself.

And know what you are actually doing here.

Most of the men in that room have never had a place to say the true thing out loud. Not at work, not at church, not at home. You are building that room for thirteen weeks.

You do not have to be impressive to do it. You have to go first, and keep showing up.

Thank you for teaching it.

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS



If you have questions, you can reach me through jakemcccluskey.com.

You just spent thirteen weeks with a room of men, so you know things about this study that I don't. I want to hear how it went. What worked, what didn't, what you had to change to make it fit your church. If something in here was wrong, tell me that too. I would rather know.

If there is anything I can do to help your men, ask.

Jake