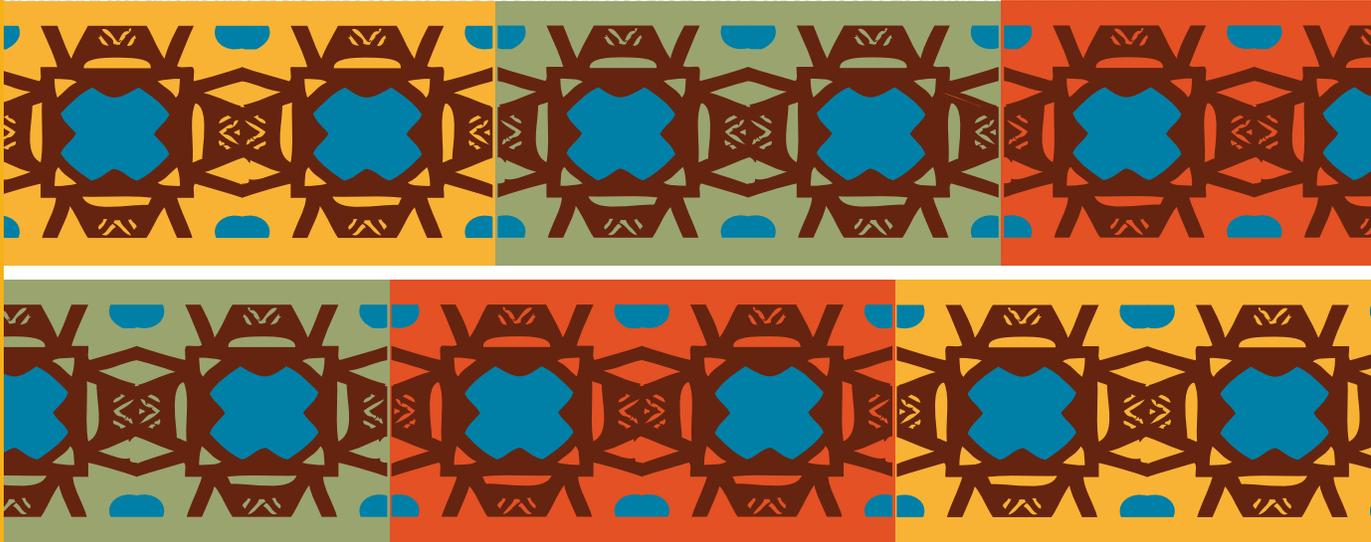


Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation: A Spiritual Supplement for Facilitating the Men As Partners® Group Education Manual in Christian Settings



EngenderHealth and LifeLine/ChildLine



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EngenderHealth and LifeLine/ChildLine



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Contents

Acknowledgments	v
Introduction	vii
Section 1: Gender and Power	1
Section 1.1: Women in the Bible	1
Section 1.2 What Does It Mean to “Be a Man”?	5
Section 2: Sexuality and Relationships.....	13
Section 3: Men’s Health and Substance Abuse.....	21
Section 4: HIV Prevention and Living with HIV	25
Section 5: Fatherhood.....	29
Section 6: Violence and God.....	31
References	33
Appendix A: Suggestions for Supplementing MAP Group Education Activities with Spiritual Perspectives	35
Appendix B: Guidance on Using This Supplement to Develop a Sermon	37
Appendix C: Guidance on Using This Supplement for Pastoral Counseling.....	39

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Introduction

Purpose

This book is a supplement to *Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual*. It was created to:

- Promote gender transformation through biblical and spiritual discussion
- Stimulate conversation and deeper reflection on topics from the Men As Partners® (MAP) Group Education Manual with Christian audiences
- Support facilitators in dealing with difficult questions, of a religious or spiritual nature, from training participants
- Give facilitators religious and spiritual justifications for gender equity and equality, as well as deepen training participants' understanding of the topics covered

A free copy of *Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation* can be downloaded from EngenderHealth's web site at: www.acquireproject.org/archive/files/7.0_engage_men_as_partners/7.2_resources/7.2.3_tools/Group_Education_Manual_final.pdf/.

How to Use This Supplement

We hope that this supplement will help bring the issue of gender equality into conversations within churches and other religious organizations. Each section has been designed to support issues in corresponding sections from *Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation*. The supplement is not a replacement for any section of that manual; rather, it is meant to complement MAP® programming with biblical references and discussion.

MAP® workshop facilitators should read through this supplement and familiarize themselves with its contents. It is unlikely that every part of this supplement will be used during a conversation or training. Facilitators should feel free to use the information in this supplement as needed and where appropriate. We recommend that facilitators who use this supplement also have a copy of the Bible to refer to during workshops.

Throughout this supplement, the sources of Bible excerpts are identified in brackets after the quotation. GNB stands for the *Good News Bible*, produced by the American Bible Society and published by Harper/Collins. NRSV stands for the *New Revised Standard Version*, produced by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States.

Appendix A (Supplementing MAP® Group Education Activities with Spiritual Perspectives) is a table that suggests how this supplement might be best used to complement particular activities in *Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation*.

Section 1: Gender and Power

Part 1—Women in the Bible

The Bible shares with us the stories of many women, in many situations and of varied character. Today's world also has a variety of women who take on many roles, such as wife, mother, teacher, and leader. While at times women are described in religious texts as weak or submissive, there are other instances where women are described as leaders and decision makers. An expanded understanding of women's Biblical roles can help us to have more comprehensive discussions with religious audiences about the diverse roles that women play in our society today.

Women as Property

Women in Scripture are often identified as property, first of their father, then of their husband. Some examples of women being referred to as property appear in the following examples:

- In *Deuteronomy 21:28–29*, the punishment given to a man for having sex with an unmarried virgin is that the offender must pay the bridal price to the girl's father, must marry her, and is never able to divorce her. It is clear that because she is no longer a virgin, she has no economic value to her father, and she is therefore unmarriageable. With that, she then becomes the property and burden of the man who took her virginity.
- In *Exodus 21:22–25*, the punishment for injury to a pregnant woman or her baby is payment to the woman's husband. Because the woman and the expected child are considered property of her husband, damages are given to him instead of to her.

Some additional quotes from a book on sexual ethics in the Bible further elaborate on this view (Countryman, 2007, pp. 147–148):

- "The languages of Biblical Hebrew and ancient Greek do not make the distinction between 'woman' and 'wife' as we do in the English. There was little occasion to make such a distinction, for it was the ideal, if not invariable destiny, of an adult female to be some man's wife. In childhood, a woman was a member of her father's house, and she might become so again in the event of divorce or widowhood—particularly if she were childless. Normally she was transferred to the household of her husband about the time of puberty, and from this time onward, she lived in a kind of familial limbo, being a full member of neither household. A woman never became a true member of her husband's family because she could be separated from it through divorce. The Torah gave the right of divorce only to the husband, preserving a unique power to him in the relationship (*Deuteronomy 24:1–4*)."
- "The power of the father and the husband meant that women could enjoy, at most, only a secondary role in whatever household she belonged to—a status pointedly underlined by the right that the Torah gave to her father (before her marriage) or her husband to annul even her vows before God (*Numbers 30: 3–15*).

Discussion Questions

1. Is the idea of women as property relevant today (lobola, control in relationships)?
2. How does thinking of women as property or as belonging to a man disempower women? How does this status affect her health and well-being?
3. How does thinking of women as property affect relationships? Men's well-being?
4. How does treating women as property contradict other biblical teachings about love and social justice?
5. How can we, as members of this religious community, work to challenge how women are often treated as second-class citizens?

Section 1: Gender and Power

Key Points

- In Judeo-Christian scriptures, women were defined in most cases as property of their father and then of their husband.
- It is important to remember that women in scriptures had very limited rights.

Women as Caretakers

Women are not exclusively identified as property in scriptures. They are also often characterized as wife and mother. The following example tells the story of women who were strong, who were dedicated, and who acted in the best interest of their families.

- The Book of Ruth tells the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, after leaving their homeland. Not much later, Naomi's husband and sons died, leaving her and Ruth without means of support and lost identities as wives and mother. While Naomi sends her other daughter-in-law, Orpah, back to her father's house so that she can find a man to marry and have children, Ruth refuses to leave because she cares too much for her mother-in-law. Naomi, out of a dedication to her daughter-in-law, never stops trying to find a suitable husband for Ruth. Naomi eventually finds Boaz to marry Ruth and thereby provides security for Ruth and herself. Ruth is blessed for her care and concern for her mother-in-law.

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. In this story, we see women identified by their roles of mother, wife, and daughter. How are women's roles different now than in the times of the Bible? What roles do women play in society today?
2. Does changing the roles that women play in society create challenges for what it means to be a man? What are some concerns that people may have about women's roles changing?
3. What are the benefits to society when women have the ability to play multiple roles?
4. How can we, as members of this religious community, help women and men, boys and girls, reach their full potential?

Key Points

- Women had complex roles in scriptures that were mostly defined by their relationship to men.
- Women not in a direct relationship with a man had to work hard to define and support themselves.

Women as Leaders

While it is clear that the main role of a woman in scriptures was to have children to carry on her husband's family line, a number of examples show women taking on leadership roles.

- *Luke 10:38–42*: "As Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him in her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to his teaching. Martha was upset over all the work she had to do, so she came and said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!' The Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubled over so many things, but just one is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her.'" [GNT]

A further interpretation of this story (Bailey, 2000, p. 2) tells how women have the right to a variety of roles that go beyond the domestic:

"...in Luke 10:38, Jesus enters the house of Martha. Luke tells us, 'And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching'. In Acts, Paul describes himself as having been 'brought up at the feet

of Gamaliel' (Acts 22:3). To 'sit at the feet' of a rabbi meant to become a disciple of a rabbi. So Mary became a disciple of Jesus. Martha, we are told is 'distracted' (not burdened) with much serving. To be distracted one must be distracted from something or by something. Clearly Martha is distracted from the teachings of Jesus by her cooking. In the account, Martha then asks Jesus to send Mary to the kitchen to help her. The point is not the need for someone to peel the potatoes. In our Middle Eastern cultural context, Martha is more naturally understood to be upset over the fact that her 'little sister' is seated with the men and has become a disciple of Rabbi Jesus. It is not difficult to imagine what is going through Martha's mind. She says to herself: This is disgraceful! What will happen to us! My sister has joined this band of men. What will the neighbours say? What will the family think? After this who will marry her? This is too much to expect! Jesus does not reply to her words, but to their meaning. In context his answer communicates the following:

Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about *many* things. I understand the entire list. One thing is needed. What is missing is not one more plate of food, but rather for you to understand that I am providing the meal and that your sister has already chosen the good portion. I will not allow you to take it from her.

A good student is more important to me than a good meal. The word 'portion' can mean a portion of food at a meal. Jesus is defending Mary's right to continue her 'theological studies' with Jesus as one of his disciples."

Additional Examples of Women as Leaders in the Bible

- *John 20:16–18*—Mary becomes the first person to see Jesus in the Resurrection, and becomes the Apostle directed to tell the disciples about Jesus's resurrection.
- *Acts 9:36* [as a disciple]—"Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity." [NRSV]
- *Romans 16:1–2* [as a deacon]—"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well." [NRSV]
- *Romans 16:7* [as an apostle]—"Greet Andronicus and Junia,¹ my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was." [NRSV]

Discussion Questions/Activities

In the examples above, we see women identified by their roles of mother, wife, and daughter; how are women's roles different now than in the times of the Bible?

1. What are leadership roles that women play in society today?
2. Have there been benefits to women's taking on more leadership roles?
3. As in the case of Martha and Mary, women also enforce gender roles on one another. Do you see this kind of conflict taking place in your families and communities?
4. Have you seen instances of women who judge one another for not taking on "proper" roles?
5. How can we, as members of this religious community, help women and men, boys and girls, reach their full potential?

Key Points

- Although women were considered property, Jesus expanded their role into a wide range of leadership positions.
- Women were students, teachers, disciples, deacons, and apostles.

¹ Junia, the female apostle, is a woman's name and was understood as such until the 13th century. It was later changed to Junius, reflecting a man's name, and remains as such in most modern translations of the Bible.

Section 1: Gender and Power

Women in Creation, in Paul, and in the Letters

Perhaps more than any other part of Scripture, the letters of Paul have influenced the ways in which we view gender roles in our society. Men are quick to quote this or that verse to “prove” that they have the “right” to act in any way they please in regard to women. These verses have also been used to define very specific roles for men and women, both in the Church and in the world. This is, of course, a very simplistic reading of Paul’s letters and of those written under his supposed authority. Paul is a complex person, and his writings are not so easily used to subjugate women when read in their entirety.

Many times, people use verses out of context and ignore other verses that might contradict a very specific interpretation. The table below is a quick reference of the Scripture passages most commonly used to subjugate women and of verses that might challenge the common understanding of men and women in the training. This table is meant to be used to keep lines of communication open and to challenge participants to think more broadly about biblical standards for gender roles.

Scriptures showing inequality of genders (and women’s lesser status)	Scriptures showing equality of genders (or female leadership)
<p>Genesis 3:16—“And he said to the woman, ‘I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him.’” [GNB]</p>	<p>Genesis 1:27–28—“So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, ‘Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.’” [GNB]</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 11:3—“But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme over Christ.” [GNB]</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 7:3–4—“A man should fulfil his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfil her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other’s needs. A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is.” [GNB]</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 11:7–9—“A man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man; for man was not created from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for woman’s sake, but woman was created for man’s sake.” [GNB]</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 11:11–12—“In our life in the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman was made from man, in the same way man is born of woman; and it is God who brings everything into existence.” [GNB]</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 14:34–35—“...the women should keep quiet in the meetings. They are not allowed to speak; as the Jewish Law says, they must not be in charge. If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in a church meeting.” [GNB]</p>	<p>Acts 18:24–26—“At that time a Jew named Apollos, who had been born in Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent speaker and had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he proclaimed and taught correctly the facts about Jesus. However, he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home with them and explained to him more correctly the Way of God.” [GNB]</p>

Scriptures showing inequality of genders (and women’s lesser status)	Scriptures showing equality of genders (or female leadership)
<p>Ephesians 5:22–24—“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Saviour of the church, his body. And so wives must submit completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ.” [GNB]</p>	<p>Ephesians 5:21, 25, 28, 33—“Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ... Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it... Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself... But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.” [GNB]</p>
<p>1 Timothy 2:11–15—“Women should learn in silence and all humility. I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet. For Adam was created first, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and broke God’s law.” [GNB]</p>	<p>Galatians 3:28—“So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.” [GNB]</p>
<p>1 Peter 3:7—“In the same way you husbands must live with your wives with the proper understanding that they are weaker than you. Treat them with respect, because they also will receive, together with you, God’s gift of life. Do this so that nothing will interfere with your prayers.” [GNB]</p>	<p>1 Peter 3:7—“In the same way you husbands must live with your wives with the proper understanding that they are weaker than you. Treat them with respect, because they also will receive, together with you, God’s gift of life. Do this so that nothing will interfere with your prayers.” [GNB]</p>

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. Give each participant a piece of paper with one of the verses listed in the chart. Go around the room and have each person read aloud the verse they are assigned. After each verse is read, have the group vote on whether they believe the verse promotes gender equality or inequality. Discuss why and how the participants can take action in their own lives and communities to remedy those that promote gender inequality.
2. Guide a discussion among the participants exploring the changing roles of women in their communities and how these changing roles benefit women, men, families, and society.

Key Points

- It should be emphasized that for every quote in the Bible that says men are superior to women, there is one that notes how women and men are equal in God’s eyes. These quotes can stir discussion and help the participants to understand that women can and should play a variety of roles in modern society.
- Some people may have a very hard time changing their ideas about gender. Traditions concerning how men and women are supposed to act are deeply ingrained. Even so, it is important to push people to challenge their traditional ideas, remembering that culture and tradition are shifting ideas.

Part 2—What Does It Mean to “Be a Man”?

The problem with using the Bible to define what it means to be a man is that there is a wide variety of definitions that could be used. From the “warrior” to the “prince of peace,” it is challenging to find one pattern that fits for all times in all places. This section will explore five men of the Bible and look at what type of man they were and how they might help to challenge our stereotypes of masculinity. This section relates to the section above on the roles and status of women in the Bible, and it would be helpful to read them together.

Section 1: Gender and Power

Below you will find brief outlines of five men from the Bible. Each presents different aspects of what it means to be a man and depicts some of the conflicts that might occur when defining masculinity in Biblical terms.

Abraham

Abraham is considered a patriarch by three major religions—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In Genesis 12–32, we begin with the Father Patriarch and stories of Listening and Compassion.

1. Abraham was first and foremost a listener.

- *Genesis 12:1–4*—[God calls Abraham] “The Lord said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations.’ When Abram was 75 years old, he started out from Haran, as the Lord had told him to do; and Lot went with him.” [GNB]
- *Genesis 22:1–15* [Another story of Abraham listening to God is found in the story of Abraham and Isaac.] *Genesis 21:12*—“God said to Abraham... whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you...” [NRSV]

2. Abraham was compassionate.

- Genesis 18 tells the story of Abraham negotiating with God to not destroy Sodom. The point of the story is not that God was going to punish Sodom for their sin, but that Abraham cared for the innocent and had compassion for their plight. Abraham felt so strongly about this that he was willing to debate with God about the decision to destroy Sodom. *Genesis 18:23–32*—“Abraham approached the Lord and asked, ‘Are you really going to destroy the innocent with the guilty? If there are fifty innocent people in the city, will you destroy the whole city? Won’t you spare it in order to save the fifty? Surely you won’t kill the innocent with the guilty. That’s impossible! You can’t do that. If you did, the innocent would be punished along with the guilty. That is impossible. The judge of all the earth has to act justly.’ The Lord answered, ‘If I find fifty innocent people in Sodom, I will spare the whole city for their sake.’ Abraham spoke again: ‘Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. I am only a man and have no right to say anything. But perhaps there will be only forty-five innocent people instead of fifty. Will you destroy the whole city because there are five too few?’ The Lord answered, ‘I will not destroy the city if I find forty-five innocent people.’ Abraham spoke again: ‘Perhaps there will be only forty.’ He replied, ‘I will not destroy it if there are forty.’ Abraham said, ‘Please don’t be angry, Lord, but I must speak again. What if there are only thirty?’ He said, ‘I will not do it if I find thirty.’ Abraham said, ‘Please forgive my boldness in continuing to speak to you, Lord. Suppose that only twenty are found?’ He said, ‘I will not destroy the city if I find twenty.’ Abraham said, ‘Please don’t be angry, Lord, and I will speak just once more. What if only ten are found?’ He said, ‘I will not destroy it if there are ten.’” [GNB]

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. Is it seen as more masculine to listen or to speak? Why?
2. How do men show compassion for others in their life? What makes it difficult to show compassion and care for others? Give examples.
3. What do men gain from demonstrating emotion and/or showing compassion?

Key Points

- Abraham was a careful listener and did his best to hear God.
- Abraham listened to his wife on key points during their relationship.
- Abraham did not seek revenge, but asked for God to be merciful and compassionate.

Joseph

In Genesis 37–45, we find a story of Joseph demonstrating *survival*, *forgiveness*, and a *lack of a desire for revenge*.

- *Genesis 37*—Joseph is one of the sons of Jacob (renamed “Israel”). Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son, since he was a son of his old age. He made him a long robe with sleeves. Joseph had several dreams that he related to his brothers that he interpreted as them bowing to him. He was 17 years old at the time. His father’s favoritism and these dreams brought a huge amount of jealousy and anger from his brothers. They plotted to kill him. They threw him into a pit and then decided to sell him into slavery to passing traders for 20 pieces of silver. They then told Jacob that Joseph had been killed by wild animals.
- *Genesis 41*—Joseph was then taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphor, one of the officers of Pharaoh. He was put in charge of the whole household. After a while, he was wrongly accused of trying to rape Potiphor’s wife. He was then thrown in to prison for two years.
- *Genesis 41:38–42*—After two years, Joseph was given the chance to interpret several dreams of Pharaoh predicting famine in Egypt. Joseph suggested a way forward that would save Egypt, and this greatly pleased Pharaoh. [GNB]
 - *Genesis 41:38–39*—[Pharaoh said] “‘We will never find a better man than Joseph, a man who has God’s spirit in him.’ The king said to Joseph, ‘God has shown you all this, so it is obvious that you have greater wisdom and insight than anyone else.’”
 - *Genesis 41:40*—“‘I will put you in charge of my country, and all my people will obey your orders. Your authority will be second only to mine.’”
 - *Genesis 41:41*—“‘I now appoint you governor over all Egypt.’”
 - *Genesis 41:42*—“The king removed from his finger the ring engraved with the royal seal and put it on Joseph’s finger. He put a fine linen robe on him, and placed a gold chain around his neck.”
- *Genesis 45*—When the predicted famine occurred, Joseph’s family came to Egypt to get grain. They did not know what had happened to Joseph. After several episodes with his brothers where they did not recognize him, Joseph made himself known. He brought his entire family to Egypt and settled them in the best land.
 - *Genesis 45:15*—“And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them.” [NRSV]

Joseph shows himself to be a strong, smart and honorable man. For many years he is treated horribly, but he remained a person of honor.

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. What does honor mean to you? Is it difficult to remain a person of honor when faced with extreme challenges? This could be a drawing activity in which the participants are asked to draw a picture of honor or of an honorable person. Using this picture, try to explain how to remain an honorable person throughout life, especially during times of difficulty.
2. How did Joseph act when given the chance to exact revenge? How did he deal with so much betrayal and pain? In the end, Joseph weeps over his brothers. Is it difficult to weep and forgive family betrayal? Ask individuals (maybe in pairs) to give an example of a time when they were betrayed, then reflect on how they responded.
3. What does the example of Joseph tell us about how men might deal with betrayal, especially by family?
4. What is the difference between humility and humiliation? How can one lead to health and the other to destruction?

Section 1: Gender and Power

Key Points

- Joseph had an opportunity to exact revenge and did not take it.
- Joseph remained a person of honor, even while acting differently than his culture might have expected.

David

David is known in scripture as the greatest king of Israel. It is through his royal line that the Gospels tell us Jesus was born. Two episodes in the life of David help us to explore what it means to be a man and to think about the meaning of strength and weakness.

1. 1 Samuel 17—David and Goliath

This story shows young David as a brave warrior, standing up to a giant to defend his tribe and people. He shows strength and skills given by God in defeating a much stronger and armored foe.

2. 2 Samuel 11–12—David and Bathsheba

This story shows David overcome with lust and committing adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. He has sex with her, and she becomes pregnant. He invites her husband back from battle and attempts to get him to have sex with Bathsheba. He would not go, and so David has the commanders of the army send Uriah to the forefront of the fighting so that he may be struck down and die. Uriah is killed in battle; David then takes Bathsheba as his wife.

God sends the prophet Nathan to David to explain to David that what he has done is evil in the sight of the Lord. He is guilty of adultery and murder. David confesses his sin. "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'" [2 Samuel 12:13, NRSV]

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. Why is it difficult for men to admit their weaknesses? Is it difficult for you to admit when you have done wrong? Why?
2. Does the need to look and be strong make it harder to admit mistakes?
3. What benefits come from admitting weaknesses and living in truth?

Key Points

- David shows how men can show both strength and weakness. David's strength and victory is seen as a gift of God. His weakness, however, is taken as his own personal responsibility, and he repents for what he has done wrong. He is still punished, but he is also forgiven.

Paul

Introduction to Paul

Moving from men of the Old Testament to men in the New Testament, we need to take a moment to understand the very different cultural world in which these men lived. By the time of the New Testament, the Roman Empire ruled much of the known world. With their empire came a worldview in which the Emperor was considered a God and Son of the God. First-century Palestine, where historic Israel had been located, was under Roman control. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Palestine. The towns and cities mentioned in the Gospels and in Paul's letters are Roman towns and cities. In these towns, there were visible reminders of the power and control of the Roman Empire.

"In Paul's lifetime, Roman emperors were deemed divine, and first and foremost, Augustus [Caesar] was called Son of God, God and, God of God. He was Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour of the World. People knew both verbally

from Latin authors like Virgil, Horace and Ovid and visually from coins, cups, statues, altars, temples, and forums..." (Crossan & Reed, 2004).

This was the world in which Saul (who would become Paul) lived, preached, and taught. Paul's life represents for men the greatest example found in Scripture of the ability to change and be transformed into a new creation. Paul stands as a person who is changed and at the same time challenged by different aspects of life.

Paul Persecutes the Church

- *Acts 8:1*—We are told in the Books of Acts and in various letters from Paul what his life was like before his transformation. Saul is introduced to the stoning of Stephen. We are told that he approved of the killing.
- *Acts 8:3*—"But Saul was ravaging the Church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison." [NRSV] Saul was a Pharisee and intent on destroying the Church.

Paul's Transformation

- *Acts 9:3–18*—"Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized." [NRSV]

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. Paul had an extraordinary experience of being called to change. He was transformed. One of the most difficult experiences after transformation and change is facing your old life and trying to explain to family and friends how and why you are different. Who would be the hardest person to tell if you had an experience like Paul? What do you think he or she would say?
2. Have the participants prepare a role-play activity that shows Paul going back to his friends and family to explain his change. How does he explain that once he killed Christians and now he has become one?
3. In your life, how would you explain a transformation in your thinking about what it means to be a man?
4. Not everyone has an experience as profound as Paul. What are other ways that we might be transformed? Who are the people in your lives who have challenged us to change? How did you respond?

Section 1: Gender and Power

Key Points

- Paul went through a major transformation in his self-understanding.
- It was probably difficult for Paul to explain this transformation to others.

Jesus

When we look at the stereotypes of men, it is difficult to find many of them that describe Jesus. Jesus is a single man who preaches peace and patience. He forgives and heals, and he cares for men and women. He is also a teacher.

Male Stereotype	Teaching of Jesus	Example of Jesus
Men must always be strong/ tough.	Mark 9:35 —“He sat down and called the twelve, and said to them, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’” [GNB]	Matthew 19:13–16 —Jesus healed the weak and was kind to the suffering and to children.
Men must have sex with many women and/or have many children to “prove” their masculinity.	Mark 10:5–9 —“But Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, “God made them male and female.” “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’” [NRSV]	Jesus was single, and there is never any indication in Scriptures that he had sex.
Men must fight and seek revenge when someone hurts them, or must use violence to resolve conflicts.	Matthew 5:43–44 —“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you....”	Luke 4:29–30 —Jesus was attacked by the leaders of the synagogue, who took him to throw him off a cliff. He did not fight, but escaped and went on with his ministry
Real men don’t cry/ignore pain/don’t talk about their problems.	Mark 14:33–36 —Jesus in the garden of Gethsemene. Jesus expressed his sorrow through tears and conflict and talked with God about his problems.	John 11:35 —“Jesus wept” at the death of his friend Lazarus.
Men must control women and tell them what to do.	Matthew 12:46–50 —Jesus respected women as mothers and sisters: “...‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ And pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’” [NRSV]	Jesus taught Mary when it was seen as culturally wrong for women to be taught. He healed women and touched them.

Male Stereotype	Teaching of Jesus	Example of Jesus
Men must have money and status to have worth/they must be the breadwinner.	<p>Luke 9:3—"He said to them, 'Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic.'" [NRSV]</p> <p>Mark 10:25—"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." [NRSV]</p>	Matthew 19:16–22 —Jesus recognizes worth as a child of God as unrelated to individual wealth (the story of the rich young man).
Men are brave and courageous.	John 15:13 —"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." [NRSV]	John 8 —Jesus defends the woman caught in adultery.

Discussion Questions/Activities

1. This activity could be related to the "Act Like a Man" Section 1.2 in the MAP® Group Education Manual. Take a few minutes and have the group list as many attributes of Jesus as possible. Compare this list to the flipchart answers from the group for "acting like a man." Does the difference in these answers indicate that Jesus was not a real man?
2. Transformation is not something that happens overnight. How does the process of transformation begin?
3. What are some of the potential benefits for a man who accepts a transformed life? What's "in it" for men?
4. Will men who have a transformed understanding of gender roles be more or less attractive to women? (This question could be asked of groups of men and women separately, and the answers compared later.)
5. Will men in relationships have more or less of a complicated family life with a different understanding of gender roles?
6. Does age make a difference in the ability to accept new understandings of gender roles?

Key Points

The previous sections are meant to introduce the participants to a different understanding of gender roles from the Bible—specifically, the role of women; the relation of women's roles to culture and religion in Biblical times; and the concept that men are not always what they seem to be in Scripture. It is not meant to replace any section of the program, but to supplement it where needed. It is also not meant to promote one point of view or agenda over another. Remember that the role of the facilitator is to be neutral about religion. This does not mean that the facilitator should ignore the goals of the program so that no one will become upset. It means that people are transformed in many different ways, and facilitators must be aware that what affects one person may not affect another in the same way.

What is most important is to challenge common understandings of gender roles. One of the biggest difficulties with this section may be the comparison between modern men and Jesus.

The theological study of Jesus's relationship with God, the world, and individuals is called *Christology*. Some people hold what is known as a "high" Christology. They view Jesus as God and have less concern with Jesus as man. To those who hold this view, no comparison can be made between humans and Jesus, and any comparisons or suggestions to "be like Jesus" come close to heresy. They will argue that no human can be like Jesus, and therefore any attempts will end in failure and frustration. Those who hold a "high" Christology will most often quote the gospel of John, especially *John 10:30*, where Jesus said "The Father and I are one."

Section 1: Gender and Power

Others hold a view known as “low” Christology. For these people, Jesus was fully a man and our life as Christians is a process of becoming like Christ. For them, Jesus is the pattern after which we are to organize and live our lives. Those who hold this view will most often quote the gospel of Mark, especially *Mark 8:34*—“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” [NRSV] Following Jesus means literally following in his footsteps.

It is likely that you will see both of these understandings while training groups.

Section 2: Sexuality and Relationships

Introduction

Sexuality can be a difficult topic to discuss with some religious people. Many in the church are taught that sex is dirty and/or unclean and that it defiles a person to have sex or think about sex in any way. Older members of the church may also feel that it violates certain cultural norms and taboos. The church has in some cases ignored an important opportunity to talk about healthy sexual relationships—a topic that many of its followers want to discuss. This section is meant to help open the conversation about sexuality by using several biblical texts.

Use of Euphemisms in the Bible

The Bible is full of references to sexuality—sometimes erotic and loving, other times brutal and violent. Most of the time, sex is referred to by a number of euphemisms. (Euphemisms are words or phrases used to describe culturally sensitive or taboo topics.) The ancient Israelites used euphemisms to describe many things, including bodily functions, genitalia, and sexual acts. The most common and well-known euphemism for sexual intercourse in the Bible is the phrase “to know.” Some others that can be found in the Bible are: “to go into,” “to come in unto,” “to lie with,” “to approach,” and “to uncover nakedness.” It is important that we recognize the use of these euphemisms and are able to interpret them correctly.

Genesis 4:1—“Now Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived and bore Cain.” [NRSV]

There are euphemisms for genitalia in the Bible as well—the “thigh” and “feet” being the main two.

Ruth 3:4—“When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.” [NRSV]

Be Fruitful and Multiply

The Bible is filled with references to God’s direction to have sex and have children—“be fruitful and multiply.” At least one of the reasons for our creation is for sexual activity:

Genesis 1:27–28a—“So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, ‘Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.’” [GNB]

Many times, people like to place sexuality in the category of “our fallen human nature,” but we must be careful to note that the command to have sex is given *before the fall*. Adam and Eve are not taken from the Garden of Eden until Chapter 3 of Genesis. Our sexuality is given as a gift from God. As with all gifts, we must be careful with and attentive to how we use them.

Masturbation

Masturbation is never explicitly mentioned in the Bible. In the one place where it might be mentioned, referring to men only, it is not condemned, but placed in the same category of ritual uncleanness.

Leviticus 15:16–18—“When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body, and he remains unclean until evening. Anything made of cloth or leather on which the semen falls must be washed, and it remains unclean until evening. After sexual intercourse both the man and the woman must have a bath, and they remain unclean until evening.” [GNB]

Section 2: Sexuality and Relationships

Verses 16–17 are clearly talking about a different act from Verse 18. Verses 16–17 speak of “a man,” who must bathe his whole body, and they say that he will remain unclean until evening. All of these terms are singular, someone who is alone. The other point to be made is that there is never any mention of female masturbation anywhere in scripture.

For years, masturbation was also known as *onanism*. This term comes from the story of Onan and Tamar in Genesis 38, but it does not actually have anything to do with masturbation. It deals explicitly with the action of withdrawal before ejaculation. Onan knew that any child born of Tamar would be considered the son of Er, his brother, whom God had killed for being wicked. Under Jewish law, the brother-in-law of a widow was meant to take over sexually for him and produce a child. Onan refused to complete the act of intercourse with Tamar. This was his sin, *not* masturbation.

Genesis 38:9—“But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so whenever he had intercourse with his brother’s widow, he let the semen spill on the ground, so that there would be no children for his brother.” [GNB]

Notwithstanding the lack of scriptural evidence, many Christian denominations frown on masturbation, see it as “disordered” sexual desire, and link it incorrectly to fornication.

Fornication

Fornication is the English translation of the Greek word *pornei/a* and the Hebrew *zanah*. Most often, *porneia/zanah* is defined as prostitution, whoredom, being a harlot, or visiting a prostitute. The term has been expanded, incorrectly, to mean all sex outside of marriage. In other places, *porneia* is translated as “sexual immorality.”

In *Galatians 5:19*, *porneia* means “‘the love which is bought and sold—which is not love at all.’ The basic error of this, is that the person with whom such love is gratified is not really considered as a person at all, but as a thing. He or she is a mere instrument through which the demands of lust and passion are satisfied. *Porneia* describes the relationship in which one of the parties can be purchased and discarded, as a thing is discarded, and where there is neither union of, nor respect for, personality” (Barclay, 1976, p. 24).

Many Christians use Paul’s letter to the Romans to define what sexual conduct is appropriate or inappropriate. Paul does speak very strongly about the need for healthy relationships. But at the same time, Paul comments to the community that they should not judge one another based on the list he is giving.

Romans 1:24–32 speaks in a very strong way about all types of immorality. But then, in *Romans 2*, Paul says do not judge:

Romans 2:1–6—“Do you, my friend, pass judgement on others? You have no excuse at all, whoever you are. For when you judge others and then do the same things which they do, you condemn yourself. We know that God is right when he judges the people who do such things as these. But you, my friend, do those very things for which you pass judgement on others! Do you think you will escape God’s judgement? Or perhaps you despise his great kindness, tolerance, and patience. Surely you know that God is kind, because he is trying to lead you to repent. But you have a hard and stubborn heart, and so you are making your own punishment even greater on the Day when God’s anger and righteous judgements will be revealed. For God will reward every person according to what each has done.” [GNB]

Additionally, *Matthew (7:1)* reports that Jesus says “Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you.” [GNB]

Homosexuality

Perhaps one of the most hotly debated subjects in the Christian world today is homosexuality. The topic receives much attention despite receiving almost no direct discussion in the Bible and never being spoken of by Jesus. Yet the topic has led to violent and angry debates. The Men As Partners® program should *not* be a place where the religious

debate over homosexuality takes over the program. This would be a poor use of time and resources. This section provides an overview about how to have a discussion on homosexuality in a respectful and life-giving way.

There are three verses of scripture in which homosexual relationships are rejected.

- *Leviticus 18:22*—“No man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that.” [GNB]
- *Leviticus 20:13*—“If a man has sexual relations with another man, they have done a disgusting thing, and both shall be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.” [GNB]
- *Romans 1:26–28*—“Because they do this, God has given them over to shameful passions. Even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they bring upon themselves the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing.” [GNB]

These are the most likely scriptures to come up in a discussion of homosexuality. Several scholarly books written on this subject have explained the deeper meaning of these scriptures. Without a great deal of study, it is not suggested that anyone try to facilitate this debate; instead, work toward an open discussion of homosexuality. We cannot allow people to end the discussion with the line of reasoning that “God says it’s wrong..., if they would just stop..., then everything would be OK.” To keep the discussion open, the following path can be taken:

- Admit that there is disagreement.
- Bring to light the fact that Jesus never speaks directly on the subject.
- Remind the group what is said by Paul in *Romans 2* and by Jesus in *Mathew 7:1* about not judging others.
- Suggest that Jesus’s commands to love your neighbor and have mercy should frame the debate, reminding participants that Jesus ate and drank with outcasts. Jesus reminds us that there is no one who is outside of God’s love.

Polygamy

Polygamous marriages have both positive and negative connotations. In a recent research study from Namibia, women responded in various ways when asked why polygamy was still practiced. One said:

Polygamy dignifies a woman, and marriage is a status symbol. It prevents immorality in the community and controls diseases. Polygamy is a strategy to insure that almost all women get married in order to wipe out all evils that accompany the existence of a large population of eligible unmarried women. It also reduces the large number of men’s extra-marital affairs. Polygamy offers more children for the security of family life without the stigma of being born out of wedlock. (Anyolo, 2008)

Another woman responded that polygamy was a way for men to display their wealth and their greed:

There are many reasons why the women in this agricultural society practise and value polygyny: human labour is essential, and polygyny provides more hands to work the *mahangu* [pearl millet] fields, and so produce more food for [their] own consumption and sale. In this respect, polygyny produces wealth not only for the man, but for the whole family... (Anyolo, 2008)

Others disagree, however, and believe that polygamy is just a form of patriarchal control of women. By making women’s survival dependent on their marriage, men keep women from being able to make certain choices free from coercion. As noted above, some see polygamy as a way for men to show their wealth and virility and to put women on par with livestock and allow men to satisfy their sexual “needs.”

Polygamy in scripture is another subject that, while never explicitly condemned, seems to have developed over time. Abraham and David both had multiple wives, but in several places, scripture holds up monogamous marriage as the

Section 2: Sexuality and Relationships

proper ethical standard. Consider the following excerpts from *Families in ancient Israel: The family, religion and culture* (1997):

Monogamy was the preferred marriage arrangement in ancient Israel and early Judaism (see *Gen. 2:24; Hos. 2:3–15; Mal. 2:14–16*) though there are notable exceptions.

Polygamy, which included concubinage,² allowed a household to increase its labour force and its chances of providing a living male heir to inherit the estate (*Gen 12:22*). This arrangement also provided a support system for women who would not have otherwise married, widows, divorcees and any children of the last two groups as well as for aged parents. However, there is no explicit evidence for how the management of a household would have been carried out by two or more wives. Perhaps the favourite wife enjoyed a special status (*Gen 29:30–31; Ex 21:10; Deut 21:15–17; 1 Sam 1:6*) though presumably each wife had responsibility for her own children.

Deuteronomy 21:15–17 not only presupposes the existence of polygamy (at least bigamy) but also legislates against the husbands being partisan to the younger son of a more favoured wife in the distribution of the household's patrimony. In actual practice, however, polygamy seems to have been limited to the very wealthy, including the patriarchs (*Gen 29:15–30; 30:1–9; 36:1–5*), judges (*Gideon: Judges 8:30–31*) and royalty (e.g., *2 Sam 3:2–5, 5:13, 15:16, and 16:21–22; 1 Kings 11:3*). Save for Samuel's father (*1 Sam 1:5–6*), no commoner in the entire Deuteronomistic History (Samuel-Kings) had more than one wife." (Perdue et al., 1997, p. 185).

Erotic Love as a Blessing from God

Rather than spending all of our time on the negative or controversial side of sexuality in the Bible, we should move to the place in the Bible where erotic love is seen at its most beautiful, *The Song of Songs*, or the *Song of Solomon*. *The Song of Songs* was seen as so risqué by the early Church and Synagogue that leaders tried to allegorize its meaning to tone it down. They argued that the Song was an allegory of Christ and the Church or Israel and God. But this argument just does not stand the test when we look at the text itself. It is more likely that the *Song of Songs* is an erotic love poem, celebrating love and healthy erotic sexuality. Below are a few verses to use to open discussion.

- *Song of Solomon 1:2*—"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine..." [NRSV]
- *Song of Solomon 4:1–5*—"How beautiful you are, my love, how very beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them is bereaved. Your lips are like a crimson thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. Your neck is like the tower of David, built in courses; on it hang a thousand bucklers, all of them shields of warriors. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies." [NRSV]
- *Song of Solomon 4:11–16*—"Your lips distil nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the scent of your garments is like the scent of Lebanon. A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed. Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices—a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden that its fragrance may be wafted abroad. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits." [NRSV]
- *Song of Solomon 5:4–6*—"My beloved thrust his hand into the opening, and my inmost being yearned for him. I arose to open to my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and was gone." [NRSV]

² Concubines were generally women who lived with men but who for some reason could not marry them. Sometimes, they were part of a larger family unit that included a wife.

Paul, Marriage, and Sex

Introduction

The apostle Paul makes his arguments about marriage and sex most clearly in his letter to the church in Corinth. He believes that marriage is a mutual agreement between two partners who each satisfy the other's needs and perform their duties in the partnership.

1 Corinthians 7:1–9—“A man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfil his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfil her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is. Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while in order to spend your time in prayer; but then resume normal marital relations. In this way you will be kept from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self-control. I tell you this not as an order, but simply as a concession. Actually I would prefer that all of you were as I am; but each one has a special gift from God, one person this gift, another one that gift. Now, to the unmarried and to the widows I say that it would be better for you to continue to live alone as I do. But if you cannot restrain your desires, go ahead and marry—it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” [GNB]

We can read in Paul's words that he believes there is concession to be made for a healthy sexual relationship. He encourages the people of Corinth to get married rather than “burn with passion” because there is so much “immorality.” This would suggest that Paul expected those who got married to be faithful to their partners and fulfil their passionate desires within that relationship *only*.

Healthy Relationships

There are examples of men in different types of relationships in the Bible. Some of these relationships were normal during their day but are no longer seen as such; these include women being the property of men, and polygamy. Today, most Christians would define a healthy relationship in terms of: monogamy, having one partner or spouse; faithfulness (i.e., not having other sexual relationships or committing adultery); and respect, taking shared responsibility in the household, and having mutual care and concern for one another. This section contains several Bible quotes related to monogamy and faithfulness, respect, and singleness and spirituality.

Monogamy and Faithfulness

The book of Proverbs and Paul's letter to the Corinthians give us our best understanding of what is expected in a monogamous and faithful relationship. These texts show us partnerships of mutuality and call on men to be faithful to their wives.

- *Proverbs 5:15–23*—“Be faithful to your own wife and give your love to her alone. Children that you have by other women will do you no good. Your children should grow up to help you, not strangers. So be happy with your wife and find your joy with the woman you married—pretty and graceful as a deer. Let her charms keep you happy; let her surround you with her love. Why should you give your love to another woman, my son? Why should you prefer the charms of another man's wife? The Lord sees everything you do. Wherever you go, he is watching. The sins of the wicked are a trap. They get caught in the net of their own sin. They die because they have no self-control. Their utter stupidity will send them to their graves.” [GNB]

(Other translations have verse 19 as “May her breasts satisfy you at all times; may you be intoxicated always by her love.” [NRSV])

- *1 Corinthians 7:2–3*—“...every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfil his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfil her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs.” [GNB]

Section 2: Sexuality and Relationships

Respect

Scripture is clear that no matter what type of marital relationship we have, it should be defined by mutual respect for the other partner.

- *Ephesians 5:21, 25, 28, 33*—“Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ. . . . Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. . . . Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. . . . But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.” [GNB]
- *1 Corinthians 7:4*—“A wife is not the master of her own body, but her husband is; in the same way a husband is not the master of his own body, but his wife is.” [GNB]

These verses from Ephesians and 1 Corinthians come as close as we can get to a Christian understanding of mutual respect. Each partner is to give his or her self to the other and treat the other the way he or she would want to be treated. This in no way dictates the type of activities that should take place in a household, and the division of labor in a household can be divided in any number of ways. What it does mean is that in a healthy relationship, each partner should be concerned for the other’s well-being.

Singleness and Spirituality

There are also some people in society who choose not to get married and to remain single. This is a valid and holy choice and one that is commended by the apostle Paul.

- *1 Corinthians 7:6–8*—“I tell you this [to get married] not as an order, but simply as a concession. Actually I would prefer that all of you were as I am; but each one has a special gift from God, one person this gift, another one that gift. Now, to the unmarried and to the widows I say that it would be better for you to continue to live alone as I do.” [GNB]

It is important to note that a marriage relationship is not what every person is called to and that there are places in Scripture, such as the passage above, where singleness is seen as the standard. Just because a man or woman is single does not mean that he or she ceases to have a sexual nature. We were all created with a sexuality that can be lived out in healthy and life-giving ways. Sexuality does not mean having sex, but has been more broadly defined as the ability to give and receive love. Each human is created with this ability, but it must be developed in a way that gives life. Any discussion of sexuality should include this broader question of singleness.

Questions and Activities

- Why are monogamy and faithfulness not seen as masculine, even though they are clearly held up as the standard for healthy relationships in the Bible?
- What are ways that men can show respect to their wives or partners? Have men brainstorm ideas and discuss in small groups.
- In Romans 1 and 2, Paul gives a list of practices that he views as not fitting with being a Christian and then says that we are not to judge others. What do you think he is trying to say? Why would he place these two things so close together in his letter?
- What do you think are the characteristics of healthy relationships? What are healthy characteristics of your relationship? How can you improve the “health” of your relationship?
- There many cases in the Bible in which sexuality is written about in a positive light. Why do you think so many of us have difficulty talking about sexuality openly and honestly without feeling embarrassment?

Facilitator Notes

Focus on Self

This section of the Supplement should not be seen as an ethics guide to “proper” behavior. Many who come from religious backgrounds have a difficult time with ambiguity and see ambiguity as a path to destruction. If there is no clarity about a teaching, then there can be no morality in living that teaching. The problem with this line of reasoning is that many people stop thinking and reflecting for themselves and allow others to tell them what is moral and immoral. This may be the first time that the participants have looked closely at the Scriptures when it comes to issues of sexuality. Try and make sure that the participants are focusing on their own transformation and not the transformation of others. Always bring them back to how this affects them personally. One of the tricks for a facilitator is to not let participants start talking about people who are not in the room—“they,” “them,” “those people,” and “that kind of person” are code words that allow people to focus on others instead of on themselves and on their experiences. Participants do not truly know other people’s experience.

Purity Code

In the introduction to masturbation, there is a comment about ritual uncleanness. These regulations of what is clean and unclean are found in what is known as the purity code of the ancient Israelites. “Although individual purity rules are scattered through most of the first five books [of the Bible], the two most substantial collections of purity laws appear in Leviticus (chaps 11–16 and 17–26)... The two have significantly different interests. The first is the priestly code concerned primarily with those aspects of uncleanness that called for ritual purification and often, priestly involvement; the second, usually called the ‘Holiness Code’, is concerned rather with the historical consequences of uncleanness for the land of Canaan and the people of Israel resident there.” (Countryman, 1988, p. 19).

Since Israelites were required to give sacrifices and burnt offerings to God for forgiveness of their sins, they had to undergo ritual cleaning before they were allowed to give those sacrifices. In some instances, they were required to stay away from the Temple for a time, until they could wash and be made ritually clean.

Science and Sexuality

It is very important to remember that the Bible comes from a prescientific era in which causes of illness and disease were not readily known. How to cure these diseases or treat those who were sick was also not well-known. How life was created through sex was also not well-known. For centuries, semen was seen as holding the entire key to life, and men were viewed as the ones who created life. The Bible is not a science textbook and was never meant to be one. It is sometimes said that science tells the “how” of life, but the Bible tells us the “why.” One example of this conflict of understanding comes from *Leviticus 11:9–12*. These verses tell us that shellfish is an abomination and should not be eaten. Abomination is the same word used to describe male-male sex in Leviticus. Most scientists now do not describe homosexuality, bisexuality, being transgendered, etc., as disordered or abnormal. They are seen as different but not “wrong” from a scientific standpoint.

Cohabitation (Living Together) before Marriage

One of the questions that may come up in this section has to do with cohabitation—living together before marriage. It is a reality that for a number of reasons, many couples live together before they get married. The best way to deal with this question is to make it part of the reflection about monogamy. The facilitator can also ask the group to discuss some of the consequences of cohabitation. For example, positive consequences can be sharing finances and avoiding the costs of a marriage or wedding. A negative consequence could be the avoidance of real commitment.

Section 3: Men's Health and Substance Abuse

Caring for One's Body

Men are notorious for not taking care of their bodies, physically or spiritually. Harmful gender norms about not asking for help, use of violence, and risk-taking are largely responsible for this. The Bible provides multiple words of guidance on the importance of caring for one's body. Consider Paul's 1 Corinthians letter:

- *1 Corinthians 6:19–20*—“Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory.” [GNB]

Our bodies were gifts given to us in creation and reflect the image of God. It is our responsibility to make sure that we continue to reflect God's image in our bodies. This means refraining from activities that damage us physically (i.e., a poor diet, risky sexual activity, excessive use of alcohol, drug use, etc.).

Alcohol Use

There are several references to the use of alcohol in the Bible. Below find a list of these references.

References to Alcohol Use in the Bible	
Positive or Neutral	Negative
Genesis 14:18	Proverbs 21:17
Deuteronomy 14:26	1 Samuel 1:14
Psalms 4:7	Ephesians 5:18
Psalms 104:14–15	1 Timothy 3:3, 8
John 2:1–12	Titus 1:7
1 Timothy 5:23	1 Corinthians 6:10

Consequences of Self-Destructive Behaviour

Drinking too much, addiction

Proverbs 23:29–35—“Show me people who drink too much, who have to try out fancy drinks, and I will show you people who are miserable and sorry for themselves, always causing trouble and always complaining. Their eyes are bloodshot, and they have bruises that could have been avoided. Don't let wine tempt you, even though it is rich red, though it sparkles in the cup, and it goes down smoothly. The next morning you will feel as if you had been bitten by a poisonous snake. Weird sights will appear before your eyes, and you will not be able to think or speak clearly. You will feel as if you were out on the ocean, seasick, swinging high up in the rigging of a tossing

Section 3: Men's Health and Substance Abuse

ship. 'I must have been hit,' you will say; 'I must have been beaten up, but I don't remember it. Why can't I wake up? I need another drink.'" [GNB]

Anger

Proverbs 15:18—"Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace." [GNB]

Gluttony

Proverbs 23:20–21—"Don't associate with people who drink too much wine or stuff themselves with food. Drunkards and gluttons will be reduced to poverty. If all you do is eat and sleep, you will soon be wearing rags." [GNB]

Self-control over one's anger is a virtue that is not usually associated with being a real man. But Proverbs counsels everyone to practice self-control and patience.

Proverbs 16:32—"It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities." [GNB]

Proverbs 19:11—"If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it." [GNB]

Asking for Help

Men have a difficult time accepting that they may have any type of weakness. Sickness and weakness are seen as being not masculine. The challenge therefore is to overcome pride and arrogance. In the gospel of *Mark 7:21–23*, Jesus compares pride to murder in the same list of evil things that come from within and defile person; *Proverbs 16:18* delivers a similar message.

James 4:5–6—"Don't think that there is no truth in the scripture that says, 'The spirit that God placed in us is filled with fierce desires.' But the grace that God gives is even stronger. As the scripture says, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" [GNB]

Proverbs 16:18—"Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall." [GNB]

Getting help from a doctor or going for counseling are not weaknesses, but actually strengths, because it takes a strong person to overcome fear and pride and get help.

2 Corinthians 12:9—"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." [NRSV]

When Christ dwells in us, we all the more want to reflect the image of God in a healthy way. This does not mean that people who are sick do not reflect the image of God, because we know that God is with us, his children, when we suffer.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you take care of your body? What actions could you take to take better care of your body?
2. Why is it difficult for men to ask for help? How is asking for help a sign of strength?
3. Why do you think men are more likely to die younger than women in most cultures?
4. How do you think harmful gender norms affect our health behaviors?

Facilitator's Notes

The references above are meant to assist you in the conversations that may follow a presentation on men's health issues. Some members of the group may have very strong religious views against drinking and may cite some of the verses listed about alcohol use. The table is provided to keep the conversation open and free. It is too easy to say "the Bible says it is wrong" and end the conversation. The remainder of the section is meant as a supplement to the gender transformation program material and may be used in any number of creative ways.

When discussing topics from this section of the Supplement, the facilitator should be clear that a healthy person without physical disabilities is not a more clear image and reflection of God than someone who may have physical limitations. God is reflected as clearly in someone who has one arm, or who has HIV, or who is paralyzed as in someone who does not have these issues. This section is suggesting that we are the reflection of God no matter how we were created and that we have a responsibility to care for God's creation the best that we can, by not destroying it with unhealthy behaviors.

Section 4: HIV Prevention and Living with HIV

Sickness in the Bible

In several instances in the Old Testament, God makes use of plagues and curses as a way of forcing people to change their ways (see the Pharaoh and Exodus, Chapters 7–12). But there is another way of viewing these “curses.” In Biblical times, there was an understanding that all sickness in the body, mind, or spirit was caused by an individual’s sin or by the sins of the father (see John 9, and the story of the man born blind).

But rather than being caused by God as punishment, some of these illnesses can be seen as the natural consequences of certain behaviors. In this way, they are not a punishment from God, but a consequence of human freedom. As an example, we know that excessive drinking can lead to damage to the liver. We would not call liver disease a curse on someone who drinks too much, but a consequence of the freedom humans are given to ingest alcohol. In the same way, we know that certain diseases, like diabetes, can be brought on as a consequence of dietary habits. One of these consequences is damage to the eyesight. We must also understand that in Biblical times, there was not a scientific understanding of disease; all illnesses were seen to have a spiritual component.

Women are affected in enormous numbers by HIV and AIDS, but they have less freedom over their sexuality. Therefore, when men live out their “freedom,” this has a huge impact on women. Children are perhaps the most vulnerable and have no freedom at all, but they are being born with HIV and may suffer from the neglect and bereavement as a result.

Scripture also shows an image of God in Jesus, who never curses but only shows love and compassion. He forgives people of sin and heals them. But He never equates sin with punishment. Sin is a human decision that separates us from the love of God and keeps us from loving our neighbor.

There are 18 stories of Jesus healing the sick in the Gospels. In the healing stories of Jesus, he many times says “your sins are forgiven” after healing someone, but he never asks for a profession of faith before he heals them. He never says “I will only heal you if....” In the same way, we should never turn our backs on anyone who is HIV-positive, never make them feel like an outcast. We should bring them close and care for them as our brothers.

Circumcision

Several verses in the New Testament tell us that there is no requirement for a Christian man to be circumcised:

Galatians 5:6—“For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works through love.” [GNB]

Galatians 6:15—“It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised; what does matter is being a new creature.” [GNB]

1 Corinthians 7:19–20—“For whether or not a man is circumcised means nothing; what matters is to obey God’s commandments. Each of you should remain as you were when you accepted God’s call.” [GNB]

However, a little background might be helpful to put these texts into context. In the first century after Christ died, there was a huge growth in followers, and, many of those followers were non-Jews. Jesus and all of his disciples were Jews, and they would have been circumcised according to Jewish law, eight days after they were born. Peter’s understanding was that everyone who was trying to become a Christian should be circumcised according to the old covenant:

Section 4: HIV Prevention and Living with HIV

Genesis 17:11—“[God said to Abraham] ‘You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.’” [NRSV]

Paul disagreed, as we can see from the Scriptures above. Peter eventually comes to understand that circumcision is not required in a story found in *Acts 10:11–18*. The debate in Acts and in Scripture has everything to do with becoming a believer and nothing to do with men’s health.

The Scriptures dealing with circumcision are totally unrelated to the health benefits of circumcision. As Paul says in Galatians, “neither circumcision nor lack of it makes any difference at all,” meaning from a spiritual or religious point of view. There is no biblical command against circumcision, and therefore men should act in their own best interests in preventing disease. Several well-conducted recent studies have demonstrated that circumcision provides some protection against the transmission of HIV.³

Men as Caretakers

Mark 2:1–5—“A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum, and the news spread that he was at home. So many people came together that there was no room left, not even out in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them when four men arrived, carrying a paralysed man to Jesus. Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat. Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralysed man, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’” [GNB]

In this healing story from the Gospel of Mark, we have an incredible account of men caring for other men in a time of sickness. It is not known what the relationship is between the paralyzed man and the four men who carried him to the home and dug a hole in the roof to lower him down. What is known is that Jesus commented on the faith of the friends and not of the man who was paralyzed: “Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralysed man, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’” [GNB]

Men must see this story as a call to show their faith by caring for those in their community who may be sick and in need of care. Not only did they carry the man to Jesus, they climbed on the roof and dug a hole through it, then lowered the paralyzed man down. They put in a lot of work for the sake of their brother.

Luke 10:25–37—“Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’” [NRSV]

In the story of the Good Samaritan, we have a man showing incredible care for a fellow man. Not only does the Samaritan stop to help the man, he pours oil and wine on his wounds and bandages them. Then he carries the man

³ Among recent research studies demonstrating this relationship are the following: Bailey, R. C., Moses, S., Parker, C. B., et al. 2007. Male circumcision for HIV prevention in young men in Kisumu, Kenya: A randomised controlled trial. *Lancet* 369(9562):643–656; Gray, R. H., Kigozi, G., Serwadda, D., et al. 2007. Male circumcision for HIV prevention in young men in Rakai, Uganda: A randomised trial. *Lancet* 369(9562):657–666; and Auvert, B., Taljaard, D., Lagarde, E., et al. 2005. Randomized, controlled intervention trial of male circumcision for reduction of HIV infection risk: The ANRS 1265 Trial. *PLoS Med* 2(11):e298.

to an inn and pays for the rest of his care. Jesus teaches in this parable that to show mercy is the way to eternal life. Remember that this is the answer to the original question “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Activities and Questions

- Why do some people continue to see HIV as a curse from God? Does it help explain the suffering? Does it help people avoid their own responsibility?
- In some traditions, there are cultural practices of circumcision that have nothing to do with ancient Israel or the covenant between Abraham and God. Does this culture practice circumcision? What are some traditions or myths about circumcision?
- Do men care for one another when they are sick? If you were unable to care for yourself, would you rather have a man or woman care for you? Why? After the participants have given a few answers, it would be helpful to ask if every woman they know is consistent with those stereotypes.
- Has anyone experience the care of a “good Samaritan?” Has anyone here acted as a good Samaritan? How did this feel? What rewards did you receive?

Facilitator’s Notes

There is actually no way to argue with someone who believes that AIDS is a curse, because it is a statement of faith in a certain type of God. It will be more helpful to try and move the conversation to healthy lifestyles than to debate this. But, the Scriptures showing who God is in Jesus Christ should be pointed out. For Christians, we call Jesus the incarnation of God. This means that Jesus is showing us what God is like and how we are supposed to act. Jesus did not curse; He healed and cared for the sick.

Section 5: Fatherhood

Patience, Vision, and Support

In the story of Samuel (*Samuel 1:2–3*), we learn that Samuel's father was named Elkanah and his mother was Hannah. It seems as though Elkanah had very little to do with Samuel, and as soon as Samuel was weaned from his mother, he was taken to Eli the priest and consecrated a nazirite. This meant that Samuel did not know his biological father at all.

Eli is a priest, who has two sons Hophni and Phinehas, who are “scoundrels” (2:12) and whose sin “was very great in the sight of the Lord” (2:17) [NRSV]. Eli asks them “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people” (2:23) [NRSV], “But they would not listen to the voice of their father” (2:25) [NRSV]. What this story shows is that there are many things that make a father, not just biology. After the death of his two sons, Eli becomes like a father to Samuel:

1 Samuel 3:2–9—“One night Eli, who was now almost blind, was sleeping in his own room; Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, where the sacred Covenant Box was. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning, the Lord called Samuel. He answered, ‘Yes, sir!’ and ran to Eli and said, ‘You called me, and here I am.’ But Eli answered, ‘I didn’t call you; go back to bed.’ So Samuel went back to bed. The Lord called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the Lord, because the Lord had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, ‘You called me, and here I am.’ But Eli answered, ‘My son, I didn’t call you; go back to bed.’ The Lord called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, ‘You called me, and here I am.’ Then Eli realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, so he said to him, ‘Go back to bed; and if he calls you again, say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went back to bed.” [GNB]

The story from *1 Samuel 3:2–9* shows three characteristics of a good father:

1. **Patience:** Several times throughout the night, Samuel comes into Eli’s room, thinking that he is calling him. Samuel wakes Eli, but Eli never gets upset; he patiently tells Samuel to go back to sleep.
2. **Vision:** Eli can see the potential in Samuel and realizes that the Lord is calling him. He helps Samuel reach his true calling before the Lord.
3. **Support:** Eli helped Samuel become the man God wanted him to be.

Of course, what is true between Eli and Samuel would also be true for fathers and daughters. The characteristics of patience, vision, and support are what is important. Some other verses also speak of these characteristics:

Deuteronomy 6:5–7—“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.” [GNB]

Proverbs 22:6—“Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their life.” [GNB]

Ephesians 6:4—“Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, bring them up with Christian discipline and instruction.” [GNB]

Helping children to learn the right way to live takes a great deal of patience and support. It also takes the ability to see the potential in a child and to help him or her reach it.

Section 5: Fatherhood

Human Fatherhood and the Fatherhood/Motherhood of God

One of the mistakes that has been made by humankind is to confuse human fatherhood with how we speak of God as a Father. Throughout history, many Christians have made the argument that because God is referred to as a Father in Scripture, men, and especially fathers, deserved privileges not afforded to women.

In Creation, God creates humans, both male and female, in “his” image.

Genesis 1:27—“So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” [NRSV]

We need to understand that God is not a male-gendered deity and that there are several instances in Scripture where God is referred to in feminine terms, and even as a mother.

Deuteronomy 32:18—“You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.” [NRSV]

Isaiah 66:12–13—“For thus says the Lord: I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm, and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” [NRSV]

In Proverbs, God’s divine attribute of Wisdom is referred to on several occasions in the feminine:

Proverbs 1:20—“Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice.” [NRSV]

Proverbs 4:6—“Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.” [NRSV]

Proverbs 8:1, 11—“Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?... For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.” [NRSV]

Proverbs 9:1—“Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars.” [NRSV]

Jesus refers to this Wisdom tradition in Matthew 11:19: –“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” [NRSV]

Activities and Questions

- Ask group members to name a time when they have either experienced patience from a father figure or shown patience to a child. Ask them to share the benefits and rewards of being patient.
- The quality of vision may be a difficult concept to understand. What other words or characteristics might describe the ability to see a child’s potential?
- “Support” could mean many different things in relation to fathers and their children. Name as many types of support as you can, then have pairs act out ways of providing that support.
- Why is it important to recognize the feminine nature of God? Does this change how you think about what it means to be a Father?

Section 6: Violence and God

Violence and God

An argument it sometimes made about human violence that goes something like this: “God is shown using violence in Scriptures; therefore, it must be OK for us, as humans, to use violence in our everyday lives.” There is a fallacy in this argument that is so simple that it seems to escape most people. Humans are not God, and we as Christians have been explicitly commanded to not use violence in our interactions. When we use violence in our interactions, we are in fact committing idolatry, because we are putting ourselves in the place of God and making judgments that belong to God alone. Several Scripture passages attest to the sovereignty of God in regards to violence:

Deuteronomy 32:35—“Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; because the day of their calamity is at hand, their doom comes swiftly.” [NRSV]

Proverbs 20:22—“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; wait for the Lord, and he will help you.” [NRSV]

Proverbs 24:29—“Do not say, ‘I will do to others as they have done to me; I will pay them back for what they have done.’” [NRSV]

Romans 12:17–19—“Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” [NRSV]

Hebrews 10:30—“For we know the one who said, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’” [NRSV]

Jesus teaches that we should find other ways than violence to resolve our problems:

Matthew 5:39—“But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too.” [GNB]

Matthew 5:43–44—“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies.’ But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” [GNB]

Matthew 26 tells the story of Jesus’s arrest in the garden of Gethsemane and is one of several examples where Jesus could have used violence but chooses not to. Instead, he tells those gathered that “all who take the sword will perish by the sword”:

Matthew 26:47–56—“While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.’ At once he came up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you are here to do.’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?’ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.” [NRSV]

Section 6: Violence and God

This does not mean that we should allow others to physically abuse us or others, and in many instances “*loving your enemy*” means physically intervening to stop their violence toward us or others. We love them by showing them the way of nonviolent interaction. It is clear that violence is not seen as a proper way for humans to interact and that God, through Jesus, has given us new commandments in how we should deal with one another. Violence in any situation clearly violates our command to love God, because we cannot simultaneously love God and destroy his creation, and it violates the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, because certainly none of us wants to be the victim of violence.

Activities and Questions

- Ask the group to think of as many types of violence as possible and then ask which of these types of violence are condoned by God and encouraged by Scripture?
- It may be important to note that all things that occur in Scripture are not condoned. Take the example of apartheid or slavery. Both of these are types of violence that occur in scripture but are not encouraged.
- What are some alternative to violence in dealing with conflict and anger?
- What could you do if you saw a friend using violence against another man or woman?

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Appendix A

Suggestions for Supplementing MAP Group Education Activities with Spiritual Perspectives

Spiritual Supplement Section	MAP Group Education Manual Activities
Section 1:1—Gender and Power: Women in the Bible	Looking at Our Attitudes, p. 61: Include two or more Bible verses from the chart on pp. 4–5 of the Supplement to this activity.
Section 1:2—Gender and Power: What Does It Mean to Be a Man?	Act Like a Man, p. 69: Read through any of the stories from pp. 6–12 of the Supplement about famous men of the Bible and reflect with the group how they may be similar to or different from what the group came up with.
Section 2: Sexuality and Relationship	<p>The Erotic Body and Messages about Sexuality (Group Education manual, pp. 97–99); page 16 of the Supplement contains several erotic verses from the Song of Solomon. Use these verses in some way to express a different Biblical view of erotic love and sexuality that is blessed by God as a gift.</p> <p>Pleasure Brainstorm (Group Education manual, p. 109); explore with the participants how religious messages might limit their imagination in terms of what is “right” or “wrong” when it comes to receiving or giving pleasure. This may be a great place to discuss masturbation as a safe alternative to intercourse. (See p. 13–14 of the Supplement.)</p> <p>Sexual Orientation (Group Education manual, p. 119); see p. 14–15 of the Supplement to open a respectful Biblical conversation about homosexuality.</p>
Section 3: Men’s Health and Substance Abuse	<p>Caring for Oneself: Men, Gender, and Health (Group Education manual, p. 125); see Men’s Health and Substance Abuse, pp 21–23 of the Supplement. The chart on page 21 (References to Alcohol Use in the Bible) can be used to stimulate and open discussion in religious contexts. Have groups read the specific Bible passages and expand their understanding of alcohol use in the Bible.</p> <p>Page 22 of the Supplement discusses other activities and emotions that have an impact on men’s health.</p>

Appendix A

Spiritual Supplement Section	MAP Group Education Manual Activities
Section 4: HIV Prevention and Living with HIV	<p>Stigma Problem Tree (Group Education manual, p. 261); Reflect with the group on how Sickness in the Bible (p. 25 of the Supplement) might change understandings. Could a different understanding of sickness lessen stigma?</p> <p>Male Circumcision as an HIV-Prevention Strategy (Group Education manual, p. 245; see Circumcision (p. 25–26 of the Supplement) for a definition of the Biblical understanding of circumcision.</p> <p>Men, Women, and Caregiving (Group Education manual, p. 279); at the end of the activity, reflect with the group on the stories in the Men as Caretakers section (p. 26–27 of the Supplement).</p>
Section 5: Fatherhood	<p>Thinking about Fatherhood (Group Education manual, p. 287); during this activity, read the story of Samuel and Eli (p. 29 of the Supplement) and ask the same questions found in Step No. 3 in the manual.</p>
Section 6: Violence and God	<p>What Is Violence? (Group Education manual, p. 301); the text on pp. 31–32 in the Supplement discusses religious aspects of violence in the Bible.</p>

Appendix B

Guidance on Using the Spiritual Supplement to Develop a Sermon

This guidance has been prepared to help those who preach in Christian settings better use this Spiritual Supplement to develop sermons. The first section is a general guide to sermon preparation. The second section gives examples of how to use specific parts of the Spiritual Supplement in a sermon.

Five Keys to a Spirit-Filled Sermon

1. Prayerfully read and reread the passages of Scripture that you will be using for the sermon. Read the preceding verses and the verses that follow. This should be done several days to a week prior to preaching. Write down or make a mental note of the first thoughts that come to mind. How is God speaking to you from the Scriptures? What images or words do you focus on?
2. Prayerfully sit with the words, images, and Scriptures. Allow God to speak to you from the experiences of your everyday life. Ask yourself if any of the experiences you are having relate to the Scriptures. Pay attention to dreams. Remember: Listening is the most important activity to good preaching.
3. Reread the Scripture passages and make an outline of the main themes from the readings. Begin relating these themes to the words and images God has given you.
4. Look at outside materials, such as commentaries or the Spiritual Supplement, to see if you find new insights into the Scriptures. Prepare your sermon in writing or memorize what you will say.
5. Pray and preach.

A Prayer before Preaching

*May God use and overrule my words,
May God's word only be spoken and
God's word only be heard.*

Examples for Sermon Topics from the Spiritual Supplement

The Life of David

The story of David and Bathsheba (Samuel 11–12—Spiritual Supplement, p. 8)

Key Points

- David acted in a way that was very disrespectful to women and to God.
- He admitted that he had made a mistake and was forgiven and blessed.
- David is an example of a godly man who had made mistakes but did not let his pride get in the way of his relationship with God or his wife.

Section 1: Gender and Power

The Story of Jesus, Mary, and Martha

Jesus teaches Mary (Spiritual Supplement, p. 2–3)

Key Points

- Jesus allows Mary to sit at his feet and learn just as the men do.
- Jesus breaks social norms by teaching a woman.
- Jesus changes the relationship between women and the church, by allowing and encouraging women to get involved.

Jesus and Sickness

Jesus heals without question (Spiritual Supplement, p. 25)

Key Points

- Jesus never demands anything from the people that he heals.
- Sickness (e.g., HIV) is not a curse from God, but an opportunity for Christians to serve one another as caregivers.
- We are called by Jesus to a ministry of healing, not condemnation, judgment, and stigma.

Appendix C

Guidance on Using the Spiritual Supplement for Pastoral Care and Counseling

This guidance was prepared to help those providing pastoral care and counseling in a Christian setting to better use the Spiritual Supplement. It should be clear through the information in the Spiritual Supplement that there is no room in pastoral care for judgment or stigmatization of those who are living with HIV or AIDS. It is against the spirit and teaching of the Gospels to exclude individuals and families from care because of disease or other trouble.

Five Tips for Effective Pastoral Care

1. **Listen, Listen, Listen.** Listening is the most important aspect of good pastoral care. Ministers often assume they know what the problem is and how to solve it. Sometimes, those in crisis need a kind and sympathetic ear more than words or advice.

Examples from the Spiritual Supplement

- Abraham: Abraham listens before doing anything else (p. 6).
- Paul: Paul listens and is transformed (pp. 8–9).

2. **Be Present.** Make sure that you have contact with the people whom you serve. Go out to those who are sick and sit with them, pray with them, sing with them. You are not providing answers, you are carrying the spirit of God within yourself.

Example from the Spiritual Supplement

- Naomi and Ruth: Ruth stays with Naomi because she loves her, and Naomi continues to be present to Ruth (p. 2).

3. **Take the Attitude of Jesus.** Jesus was never harsh or judgmental to those whom he cared for. He never told those who were sick that they were condemned or cursed. He showed the love of God through his actions, by standing with and healing those who needed help.

Example from the Spiritual Supplement

- Jesus is a healer: There are 18 stories of Jesus healing the sick in the Gospels. In the healing stories of Jesus, he says many times, “your sins are forgiven” after healing someone, but he never asks them for a profession of faith before he heals them. He never says, “I will only heal you if...” In the same way, we should never turn our backs on anyone who is HIV-positive, never making him or her feel like an outcast (p. 25).

4. **Remember that God Is in Charge.** God loves all that He has created and wants abundant life for all His creation. Never assume that you know the mind of God or how God may be working mysteriously in someone's life.

Appendix C

Example from the Spiritual Supplement

- Story of Joseph: Joseph's life was very difficult: His brothers tried to kill him and sold him into slavery. But he became one of the most powerful men in Egypt, forgave his brothers, and helped save many people from famine (p. 7).

5. **Create an Atmosphere of Love and Acceptance.** In many places, those who are most in need of love and care feel left out and stigmatized by the Church, its leaders, and its members. The Church should be a place of sanctuary, peace, and healing. Church leaders and members must make sure that those most in need feel as though they have a safe place to turn to for healing.

Example from the Spiritual Supplement

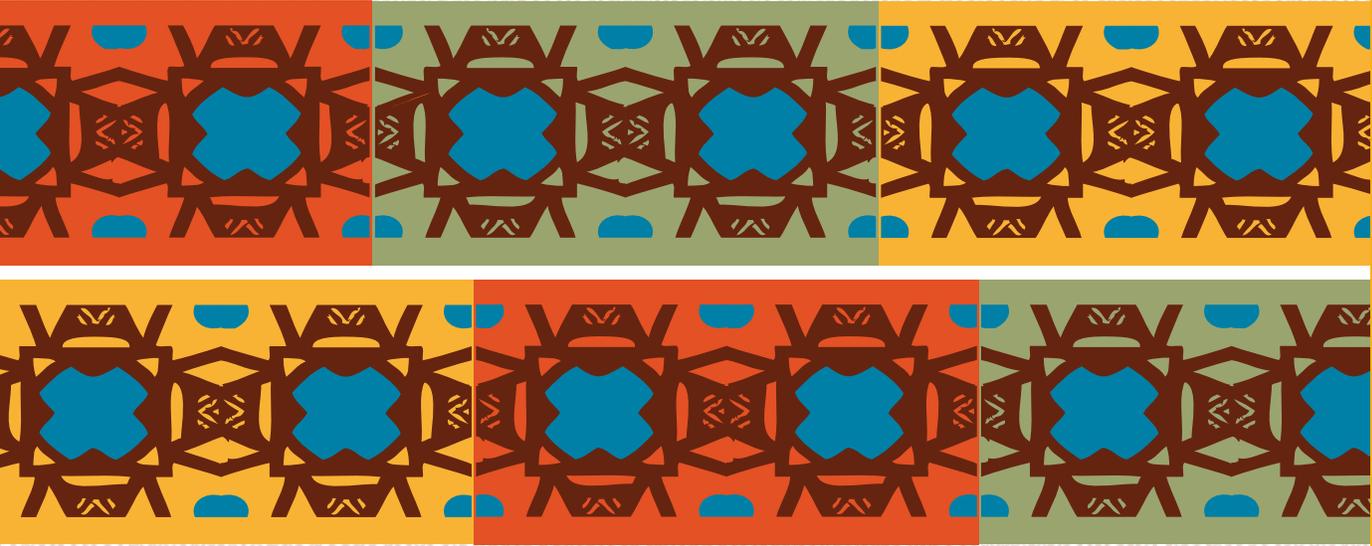
- Story of the Paralytic: In Mark 2:1–12, a group of men reach out to a friend and carry him to Jesus for healing. They did not reject their brother because he was paralyzed but actively reached out to him in love (p. 26).

A Prayer for Those Who Care for Others

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen



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