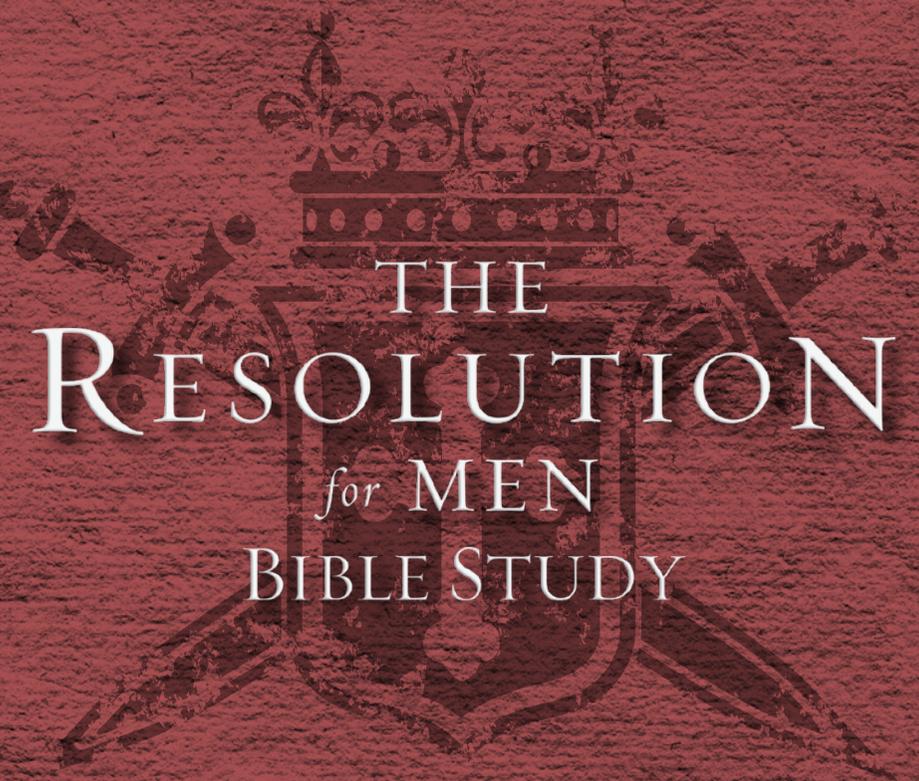


MEN'S GROUP CURRICULUM

THE
RESOLUTION
for MEN
BIBLE STUDY

WHILE MOST MEN WILL DIE WITH
DEEP REGRETS, OTHERS WILL RESOLVE TO
LIVE FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST.



THE
RESOLUTION
for MEN
BIBLE STUDY

By Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick
As developed with Travis Agnew

B&H Publishing Group
Nashville, Tennessee

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Stephen and his brother, Alex, cowrote *Honor Begins at Home*, *Courageous Living Bible Study*, and *The Resolution for Men*, around which this Bible study is built. Their most recent books are *The Love Dare for Parents* and *The Love Dare for Parents Bible Study*.

Before joining Sherwood in 2001, Stephen served as a youth minister in Atlanta. He and his wife, Jill, live in Albany with their five children. Stephen is most excited about watching his kids grow up and change the world for Christ.

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Travis is a worship pastor at North Side Baptist Church in Greenwood, South Carolina. Married to Amanda, he is the proud father of two sons and one daughter.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The award-winning movie *COURAGEOUS* follows law enforcement men who encounter a variety of personal, spiritual, and family challenges. A pivotal outcome of the journey for the five men was deciding *as a group* to commit themselves to God and being willing to take hard actions to be better husbands and fathers. This study unpacks biblical principles for the promises that make up the Resolution (see p. 6).

The Resolution for Men Bible Study is designed for use in a men's accountability group or other short-term study. An accountability group is a small group of three to seven men who meet regularly to pray, study, and support each other in their walk of faith. Choose a schedule—weekly, semimonthly, or monthly—and a location—church, home, office, or restaurant—based on what best meets the needs of your group. A study can easily grow out of viewing the movie *COURAGEOUS*, as follow-up to *Courageous Living Bible Study* or *Honor Begins at Home*, or to jump-start your men's ministry.

Your member book is formatted into eight sessions built around the twelve promises of the Resolution. Work your way through the discussion questions in each Bible study or choose one or two questions to focus on as a group. If you desire, your group could decide to focus on one commitment per meeting, resulting in twelve sessions for study and application.

The My Resolution section allows you to personalize what you have learned from Scriptures and the group's insights. Talk together about applications and commit to pray for each other as you seek to live out your commitments. Five devotions per session further reinforce each week's focus and increase motivation.

Consider planning a Resolution Ceremony with your group after the study. And then you can take other men through this study so they can grow in Christ as well.

When a man completely resolves to live his life for Jesus Christ, his path changes, his priorities change, his passions change, his purpose changes, and his legacy changes.

Will you become a man of resolution?

THE RESOLUTION FOR MEN

The basis of what you will be unpacking with your group over the next eight weeks, the Resolution for Men expresses who you desire to be as a man and reminds you of your priceless influence on the next generation. It consists of these commitments to God and your family.

- ___ 1. I DO solemnly resolve before God to take full responsibility for myself, my wife, and my children.
- ___ 2. I WILL love them, protect them, serve them, and teach them the Word of God as the spiritual leader of my home.
- ___ 3. I WILL be faithful to my wife, loving and honoring her, and be willing to lay down my life for her as Jesus Christ did for me.
- ___ 4. I WILL bless my children and teach them to love God with all of their hearts, all of their minds, and all of their strength.
- ___ 5. I WILL train them to honor authority and live responsibly.
- ___ 6. I WILL confront evil, pursue justice, and love mercy.
- ___ 7. I WILL pray for others and treat them with kindness, respect, and compassion.
- ___ 8. I WILL work diligently to provide for the needs of my family.
- ___ 9. I WILL forgive those who have wronged me and reconcile with those I have wronged.
- ___ 10. I WILL learn from my mistakes, repent of my sins, and walk with integrity as a man answerable to God.
- ___ 11. I WILL seek to honor God, be faithful to His church, obey His Word, and do His will.
- ___ 12. I WILL courageously work with the strength God provides to fulfill this resolution for the rest of my life and for His glory.

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

JOSHUA 24:15, NASB

To get a head start on this study, read the Introduction and chapters 1–3 (pp. 1–52) in *The Resolution for Men*.



SEVEN COMMITMENTS FOR GROUP SUCCESS

All men need accountability. We need to know that others are supporting, encouraging, and praying for us as we walk faithfully before God. This is why we urge men to form Resolution Groups.

An accountability group is a small group of three to seven men with whom you meet weekly or monthly for encouragement, accountability, and prayer. A group may meet at a church, home, office, or restaurant.

Meetings should start and end in prayer, and each man should feel free to share openly and honestly in this safe circle of believers. Times of accountability should be motivated by love, and yet be firm and direct when necessary.

Be sure to allow time for everyone to have input and for expressing thanks to God for the things He is doing in men's lives. Engaging in time together outside the group can strengthen those relationships. Consider memorizing Scripture and commit to pray for each other.

Choose a leader or group member to facilitate the group each time you meet. Always keep in mind your purpose—not just to socialize but to help each other grow and live for Christ.

As your group begins this study, it is vital to agree on principles that contribute to Christian community and growing more like Christ together. Here are seven to consider and adapt for your group:

PRIORITY: We will give high priority to group meetings and to the commitments we need to make, especially to God, our church, and our families.

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION: We will participate without dominating. We will strive to come to group having read through the study material, ready to discuss it.



RESPECT: Our group will provide a safe place to share our hearts openly without fear of judgment or ridicule. Scripture teaches us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (Jas. 1:19). We will speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and value one another's opinions, while allowing Scripture to help us come to godly conclusions.

CONFIDENTIALITY: In sharing thoughts and feelings related to our home, marriage, and relationship with God, we will keep all information in the strictest confidence. What happens in group time stays in group time. However, no one will be required to share.

LIFE CHANGE: The goal of any small-group experience is transformation. In each session we will identify aspects that need attention in our walk as believers, parents, spouses, and friends.

CARE AND SUPPORT: We agree to provide care and encouragement for every member, praying for each other. (Some group members may want to enlist prayer warriors not in the study, but should not reveal anything shared in confidence, positive or negative.)

ACCOUNTABILITY: We agree to let the members of the group hold us accountable to the commitments we make in whatever loving ways we decide upon. As a group, we choose to commit together to the accountability necessary to stay the course and answer the call to become men who are faithful to what we have resolved.

Signed

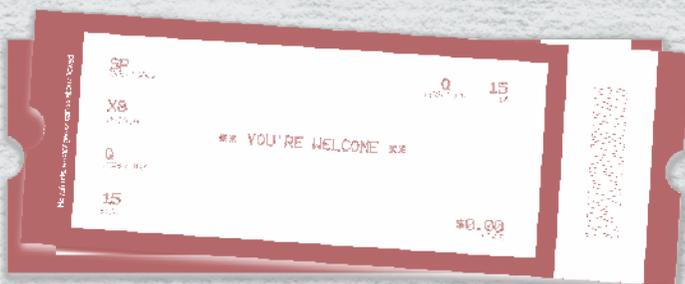
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SESSION 1

“I RESOLVE”



To resolve is to decide once and for all what you are living for. It's not new to today's society.

THE RESOLUTION FOR MEN

Jonathan Edwards, who preached the classic "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," made resolutions—70, in fact—and strived to review them once a week: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake."

ARE YOU READY?

Meet Jay Jones, sheriff in Lee County, Opelika, Alabama. In his role, Jones courageously strives to keep his county safe—and often has to get creative with how to enforce the law.

On July 29, 2011, Sheriff Jones and his police force created a sting. Operation Iron Snare was launched to round up suspects owing more than \$270,000 in unpaid child support.

Each individual received a letter saying he had won two tickets to the year’s Iron Bowl game between Alabama and Auburn. The return address was the same one used in unsuccessfully trying to get them to pay child support. One by one, the suspects festively filed in to claim their tickets. Each was promptly arrested and transported to the Lee County Detention Facility.¹

Each person who had been unwilling to show up to provide for his family willingly appeared to receive a gift of football tickets. This story reveals what we often see in human hearts: an unwillingness to resolve to do the right things.

It’s time to decide and commit to be the spiritual leader in your home. To accept responsibility for your family’s well-being. To make the Resolution. Maybe you are providing financially for your family, but are you providing all that *God* has required of you? Are you ready to be all that *God* has called you to be?

This Bible study will take men through all of the Resolution commitments featured in the movie *COURAGEOUS* and covered in depth in the book *The Resolution for Men*. We start by looking at two overarching challenges: to take full responsibility for ourselves and families and to be the spiritual leader of our home.



Commitment 1

I DO SOLEMNLY RESOLVE BEFORE GOD TO
TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MYSELF,
MY WIFE, AND MY CHILDREN.

Commitment 2

I WILL LOVE THEM, PROTECT THEM, SERVE
THEM, AND TEACH THEM THE WORD OF GOD
AS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF MY HOME.

Truth to discover: God's Word makes it very clear that the man is the spiritual leader of the home and is accountable to God for his family's well-being.

If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

JOSHUA 24:15, NASB

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

I DO SOLEMNLY RESOLVE BEFORE GOD TO
TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MYSELF,
MY WIFE, AND MY CHILDREN.

First Corinthians 13 is commonly called the love chapter. It also speaks directly to how men need to take responsibility for their home.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

You are called to take responsibility for your family, and love is an essential ingredient to success. Read this passage again, but this time, replace the word “love” with your name. Try your hand at evaluating your success in loving your family and be ready to share with your group one area in which you would like to improve.

NOT TOO BAD

“Concerning loving my family, I’m pretty decent at being ...”

List 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 descriptions that you do fairly well—for example, “patient” or “not boastful.”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

COULD USE SOME WORK

“Concerning loving my family, I need to improve my ...”

List actions from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 that you still need to work on.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:11 aloud. In your mind and heart, do you truly consider yourself a man? If so, at what point in your life would you say you “became a man”?

The apostle Paul explained that part of his becoming a man was letting go of childish and immature thinking, words, and behaviors. List some immature things you stopped doing when you became a man, as well as some more mature actions you began to take as a man.

CHILDISH THINGS
(What I stopped)

MANLY THINGS
(What I started)

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

As a group, share your lists. As other men speak, record additional actions or behaviors that belong in each column.

What immature or childish things are you still doing that you need to let go of?

What are some things God expects from a man that you know you need to start doing?

I WILL LOVE THEM

I WILL LOVE THEM, PROTECT THEM, SERVE
THEM, AND TEACH THEM THE WORD OF GOD
AS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF MY HOME.

First Corinthians 13 calls us to love our families. God expects each man to be patient, kind, and humble. A few chapters later, Paul takes that message a step further.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. Paul gives five instructions for men. What does each command mean in your family?

1. Be on your guard.
2. Stand firm in the faith.
3. Act like a man.
4. Be strong.
5. Let all you do be done in love.

God created men in His image. He expects us to act like men—not passive observers—loving and leading our families into a deeper relationship with Him. Even as Jesus led others by the powerful motivation of love, so God calls us to walk and lead our wives and kids with love.

Each session concludes with My Resolution pages to help you apply what you are learning. As you read these, start making plans for specific, personal commitments regarding your closest relationships. Then, each week, you will complete five days of devotions meant to help you apply the biblical principles behind them. Get deep into God’s Word and deepen your resolve to be the man God has called you to be.

1. “Iron Bowl Sting Catches Alleged Deadbeat Parents” [online] July 29, 2011 [cited January 2012] Available on <http://www.wrbl.com/video?clipId=8513578&autostart=true>.

MY RESOLUTION

PUTTING TRUTH INTO PRACTICE

In His Word, God lays out clear expectations for us. He wants us to man up and put away childish things. He desires that we think the thoughts, speak the words, and be about the things of mature men. Knowing God's expectations is one thing; applying them is something completely different. You must get specific and practical about how you resolve to change.

In the space provided, make some personal resolves concerning the people closest to you. If you are married, your spouse gets the first spot. List your children next. Use a separate piece of paper as you need.

For each family member, take one action in each of the categories in this week's resolutions.

1. I resolve to be all that God has called me to be for _____ (name's) sake.

- I will take responsibility for him/her by:

- I need to do this more often because it shows him/her love:

- I need to protect him/her from:

- I need to serve him/her this week practically by:

- I need to teach him/her this biblical truth:

2. I resolve to be all that God has called me to be for _____ sake.

- I will take responsibility for him/her by:

- I need to do this more often because it shows him/her love:
- I need to protect him/her from:
- I need to serve him/her this week practically by:
- I need to teach him/her this biblical truth:

3. I resolve to be all that God has called me to be for _____ sake.

- I will take responsibility for him/her by:
- I need to do this more often because it shows him/her love:
- I need to protect him/her from:
- I need to serve him/her this week practically by:
- I need to teach him/her this biblical truth:

DIG DEEPER THIS WEEK:

Read chapters 4–5 (pp. 54–85) in *The Resolution for Men*.

PRAYER

Take time to pray over each person on your list. Commit to putting these resolutions into practice and be open to holding one another accountable. Pray that the men in your group will be able to faithfully apply these truths in their homes this week.

Day 1

THE BLESSED MAN

PSALM 128

Every man wants a better life. While you may be somewhat pleased with things at the moment, chances are you deeply wish that they would be better. The blessing of the Lord is one of the greatest assets any man can obtain in life. But how does that happen?

Read Psalm 128 and record the characteristics of a blessed life.

A blessed life is characterized by happiness and enjoyment of the fruit of hard work (v. 2). A blessed man's wife is vibrant and refreshing (v. 3a). His children grow and thrive (v. 3b). His legacy will benefit generations to come (vv. 5-6). All of that sounds great, doesn't it?

What do these verses indicate is necessary to receive such a rich blessing from God?

To receive God's blessing, we must live according to God's ways. In Scripture the blessed man is known as one "who fears the LORD" and "walks in His ways" (v. 1). The man who truly honors and obeys God will be blessed.

It's simple. Fearing the Lord means greatly reverencing and respecting Him. Walking in His ways means doing exactly what He asks in the way that He asks: you love your wife the way *He* says to love her; you lead your children the way *He* says to lead them; you do your job in a way that pleases *Him*. You live to "walk worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph 4:1). If you want your life to change, to be better, then you must resolve to follow His commands.

Are you willing to do all that it takes to receive such blessing? Ask God now to make you into a man who fears the Lord and walks in His ways. Offer your commitment to God as a prayer.



Day 2

MAKING UP YOUR MIND

JOSHUA 24:14-28

God used Joshua, Moses’ successor, to bring the Israelites out of the wilderness and into their long-awaited promised land. After the Israelites procured the land, Joshua delivered a final challenge. Would they follow the Lord (Yahweh) exclusively?

Joshua chose to lead as a bold preacher to combat Israel’s spiritual problems. He pointed to God’s past work among the Israelites. Joshua quoted the Lord’s words to remind the people that every victory was His, not theirs (Josh. 24:2-13). Then Joshua drew a line in the sand.

Read Joshua 24:14-28 and highlight phrases or verses that stand out to you.

With every ounce of his being, he would lead his family to serve the Lord. He took full responsibility for those specifically under his care. Joshua could relentlessly chase off the influence of any god but Yahweh in his own home, but he could not lead every family through the spiritual battles in their dwellings.

Have you made up your mind? Will you serve God exclusively or give Him divided attention while you serve other “gods”? While Israel faced the influences of pagan idols made of clay or stone, other issues vie for lordship in our homes: relentless pursuit of wealth and pleasure, elevation of sports or social activity above all else, and living in ways that dishonor God.

Which god will be lord of your home? Does your family know? Like the Israelites, we often are good at verbal commitments, but fall short in action. Only strong men who learn to rely on God daily will be standing and proclaiming years from now: “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15, NASB).



Day 3

SHOWING YOURSELF

FIRST KINGS 2:1-4

David was anointed king of Israel at a very early age. As a young man, he killed Goliath when the bravest soldiers of the kingdom held back. He would go on to make worship of God a priority. David, in fact, was a man after God's own heart, and while he sinned greatly during his lifetime, he found his way back to God through honest repentance.

After a long life filled with ups and downs, the dying king summed up his desire for his son Solomon.

To discover what David wished to instill in his son, read 1 Kings 2:1-4. Identify David's instructions.

David wanted Solomon to have God's best for his life. To live a life of honor, strength, and faithfulness. To stand firm in the face of temptation and do the right thing even when it was not popular or easy. Furthermore, he wanted Solomon to keep his "obligation to the LORD" (v. 3), not commit to one thing and do something else.

This father desperately wanted to know that his son would walk in the ways of the Lord. He wanted Solomon to keep God's statutes, commandments, ordinances, and decrees (v. 3).

Imagine that all of your family lived in such obedience. Can you think of a better legacy to leave than that of complete, generation-to-generation devotion to God?

Such a legacy is possible, but not just through verbal instructions on godliness. It is imperative that you live in such a way that your family cannot help but follow. Regardless of your past, pray now that God will give you the daily grace to model the way your family should live. Ask Him to make you a man who is truly found faithful to the Lord.



Day 4

FAITHFUL LOVING

FIRST PETER 3:7

Loving and leading your wife is an important part of living out your resolution. Perhaps you’ve never seen what it looks like for a godly man to unconditionally love his wife. Maybe you try to show your wife love but find some of your efforts met with resistance.

No matter your background or her response, you are responsible for loving the woman you married. God will not hold you responsible for what your wife says to you or how she acts toward you, but He will hold you accountable for how faithfully you love her and lead her.

Read 1 Peter 3:7 aloud three times to internalize the truth of the apostle’s instructions for the home.

What does it mean that your wife has a “weaker nature”? Does it mean she cannot lift heavy objects? Maybe. Does it mean she is more prone to cry or be emotional than you are? In some situations, yes. But this verse speaks more to the role of the husband than that of the wife.

To be stronger means that God has wired a man with extra strength to bear the greater stress, pressure, and responsibility on his shoulders. It means that in trying times, as the leader of your home, you are resolute. When the world seems to be falling apart, you are unwavering in your faith in God. Even if your bride begins to question God in a situation, you stand firm without insulting or degrading her. The apostle Peter states that if you cannot understand that your wife is a coheir of the “grace of life,” your prayers themselves are hindered.

Pray now for your wife and your marriage. Ask God to give you the daily grace to lead her and your family with faith, wisdom, and strength during tough times.



Day 5

ANGRY KIDS

EPHESIANS 6:4

So many in this generation seem to have massive chips on their shoulders. Some children and teens are noticeably volatile, unable to restrain their fists or tongues. Many blame cultural influences like the media and peer pressure for their behavior.

Paul's instructions to the Romans seem to fit the claim as he describes a depraved culture (Rom. 1:24-32). In a list highlighting idolatry, homosexual sins, malicious acts, and hatred of God, Paul notes that a culture devoid of God will be characterized also by children who are "disobedient to parents" (Rom. 1:30). Interestingly, he seems to trace this condition not to the culture, but to the home.

Read Ephesians 6:4.

When fathers are harsh or hypocritical and try to correct behavior without supporting it with spiritual instruction and a good example, children grow angry. They lash out in disobedience. Temperamental fathers can actually cause further disobedience in their children.

Our kids are desperate for love and leadership. Being a dad is about much more than providing a roof over their heads and three daily meals. Successful parenting regularly shows children that nothing is more important than following God.

What are some ways your parenting makes your children joyful? Helps them know more about God? Commit to add to this list.

You can and must discipline your children, but you don't have to discipline them in such a way that pushes them away from you. Pray today that you can find out how to lead your family ever closer to God.



LIVE FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST.

Inspired by the movie *COURAGEOUS*, this study contains twelve commitments related to characteristics men of God want to pursue—responsibility, faithfulness, honor, justice, forgiveness, integrity, courage, and more. In eight sessions, Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick lead men through these “I Will” commitments, identifying the biblical message and ways to live out each principle in real life, especially with their families.

With a clear resolution, you can see exactly where you are going as a believer, husband, father, and churchgoer. Accept the Resolution challenge to go beyond merely following Jesus to wholeheartedly surrendering to His lordship in your life and family.



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