

Thank you for downloading one of the eight, five-session small group studies from *Impact*.

*Impact* is a 40-week, video-driven small group study for men. Each session features a video from best-selling author, Rick Burgess, and a small group leader guide. You can purchase all 40 weeks at once, or purchase the 5-week studies independantly. .

If we can help answer any questions about *Impact* or any other of the Iron Hill Men resources, please don't hesitate to email ([customer care@ironhillpress.com](mailto:customer care@ironhillpress.com)) or call (800) 307-9366

A majestic mountain range with snow-dusted peaks and a dense forest in the foreground. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The mountains are rugged and layered, with patches of snow clinging to their slopes. The foreground is dominated by a thick forest of evergreen trees, their colors ranging from deep green to a golden-brown hue, suggesting an autumn setting. The overall scene is serene and awe-inspiring.

# FRUITFULNESS

A 5-Week, Video-Driven Discipleship  
Curriculum for Men

**RICK BURGESS**

**IMPACT: FRUITFULNESS A 5-WEEK, VIDEO-DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM FOR MEN**

Leader Guides

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Videos

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A 5-WEEK, VIDEO-DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP  
CURRICULUM FOR MEN



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# DISCIPLESHIP IMPACT

## DISCIPLE MEN, CHANGE EVERYTHING.

There is a discipleship problem affecting Christian men today. Too often, men are absent from both the church pews and from the vital work the church is doing in the world. These men are not engaged spiritually in their homes and aren't making a Kingdom impact in their workplace. And it all points back to one major issue:

Many men aren't being disciplined.

But when men ARE being disciplined, powerful things happen as a result. They impact the church, their family, and culture. We have seen the influence godly men can have. The purpose of *The Pursuit* curriculum is to equip and empower men to become the man God has called them to be.

## WHAT IS IMPACT ?

*Impact* is a 40-week, video-driven curriculum designed to help men discover what it means to have a fruitful life and faith. *Impact* takes the eight traits from 2 Peter 1:5-8 and unpacks them through video and small group Bible Study.

Rick Burgess, best-selling author and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show *The Rick & Bubba Show*, starts off each session with a 10-15 minute video introducing the session's focus. Then, for each small group session, there is a leader guide to help facilitate a meaningful time of discussion and Bible study.

The reason men aren't living a more authentic faith is simple: they have yet to embrace the call to real discipleship. By leading a group through *Impact*, you're a part of the growing tide of leaders who are looking to awaken men to embrace their calling as Christ-followers.

# STARTER GUIDE

In 2 Peter 1:5–8, Peter provides a list of attributes every Christian should pursue. Peter gave an excellent explanation for why striving to obtain these attributes is so important. He said that if Christ-followers "own" these attributes and continue to grow in them, their lives would be effective and fruitful for the Kingdom of God. This fruitfulness should be the goal of every mature Christian.

One of the attributes Peter mentioned is "fruitfulness." In this 5-week series, Rick Burgess will help you guide men in your group to understand precisely what "fruitfulness" is and how pursuing it will lead men to lives of impact for the Kingdom of God.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

**FIRST**, preview your video. Every *Impact* session starts with a video. You'll need to preview your video ahead of time and be prepared to show it to your group. You can access your videos through your Iron Hill Press account.

**THEN**, get ready for your small group discussion and Bible study by preparing your lesson. Use this leader guide to help lead a time of discussion based on the video and Bible study based on the passage Rick covered. Pray that God would lead your preparation and your facilitation of the material.

**FINALLY**, lead your time of small group Bible study using this leader guide. It's that simple.

If you have any questions or feedback, don't hesitate to let us hear from you at [feedback@ironhillpress.com](mailto:feedback@ironhillpress.com).

# EDGE ELEMENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



**RICK BURGESS** is the Co-Host of the nationally syndicated *Rick and Bubba Show*. He has co-authored multiple New York Times Bestselling Books covering topics such as politics, marriage, business, comedy, and what it looks like to be a follower of Christ in secular entertainment. Rick has appeared on the Fox News programs *Hannity's America*, *Your World with Neil Cavuto*, and *Fox and Friends*.

Rick speaks regularly at men's events and marriage conferences across the country, all while teaching youth and men's Bible studies on a weekly basis. Rick is married to the former Sherri Bodine, and they have five children: Brandi, Blake, Brooks, Brody, and Bronner. Rick's wife Sherri is the author of the book "Bronner: A Journey to Understand," a powerful story about what she and Rick learned about God through the earthly death of their youngest son, Bronner. Rick's eulogy for Bronner became the most-viewed video in the world on YouTube the week of the service.

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**ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO IMPACT:** *Fruitfulness*

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**Main Passage:** Matthew 7:15-20

**Purpose:** To come to grips with our standing with Christ based upon the fruitfulness of our lives.

**Session Snapshot:** Think of this lesson as a mirror. However, it's not like a gym mirror that makes us look slightly better when we flex. This Gospel mirror we're looking at today exposes the inconsistencies and shortcomings in our relationship with God that will prayerfully cause us to respond in repentance and pursuit of Christ. As Jesus said in John 3:17, He did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it. Today, we'll look at how we can expose the darkness in our lives and walk in Christ's freedom.

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## GETTING STARTED

*Kick off your time together by introducing a new theme.*

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning a video series that breaks down the individual characteristics of 2 Peter 1:5-8. If this is your first video series in *Impact*, read the following set-up statement:

- **In 2 Peter, Peter encourages his readers to pursue lives that honor God. In the introduction, Peter reveals his letter's heart in just a few powerful verses. Peter says that because of God's grace, we have been saved from the death our sins rightfully earned and given a new life and purpose. As a result, we are to pursue spiritual maturity. Peter says we should strive to grow in our faith, "supplementing" our faith with "virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love." Why did Peter encourage this? Because if we grow in this way, we will be men whose lives are truly fruitful, real assets to the advancement of God's Kingdom. That should be the goal of every man! In *Impact*, we'll look at these characteristics individually and learn how to see them increase in our lives.**

(If it's not your first series in *Impact*, consider summarizing the previous paragraph, reminding men that you're looking at the characteristics from Peter's second letter.)

THEN, if this is your first session as a group, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. You may even ask men what they hope to get out of their time in this study. If you want to pass around a contact sheet or do any other first-session "housekeeping tasks," this is the time.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

## DIGGING IN

*Jump into the session by watching this week's video.*



FIRST, if this isn't your first session, transition straight into the video. If it is your first study in *Impact*, explain to the group how your time together will work. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 12-15 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by a closing activity.

Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video. Remember, a participant guide is available if you want to distribute it to your group.

THEN, play the video. (You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.)

When the video ends, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Do you see false teachers being a problem in our day and age?**
- **Why do you think Satan wraps his lies in partial truths? How do we combat his strategies?**
- **Why do you think God cares deeply about your effectiveness for the Kingdom?**
- **The evangelist D.L Moody once said, "Out of 100 men, 99 men won't read the Bible, but they will read you." What sentiment is he expressing?**
- **Do you think Gospel fruit precedes your salvation or proceeds from your salvation?**
- **Rick confessed that he had to stop saying, "A good tree SHOULD not bear bad fruit," and instead had to remember Jesus' statement, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit." How does His realization strike you?**
- **What's the distinction between a Christian falling into sin and someone bearing fruit?**
- **In order to be a tree that bears good fruit, where should your roots be getting life from?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **The message from our pulpits has fallen short in some ways when moralism has been preached as the main tenant. The adage, "Don't drink, smoke, or chew or go with girls who do," doesn't exactly cut it from the teachings of Christ. Today we're talking about how our love for God naturally results in a life filled with fruitfulness and good works.**

## **OPENING THE WORD**

*Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.*

FIRST, explain that you will look more deeply at Matthew 7:15-20. As Rick stated in the video, fruitfulness is a non-negotiable for every believer. Jesus says if you don't have it, you must seriously consider whether you know him. Let's take a deeper look.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late A.D. 50s or 60s, though some think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70.

- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Matthew 7:15-20. When the volunteer has finished, direct their attention back to verse 15. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What do you think Jesus means when He calls these false teachers “ravenous wolves”?**
  - *Answer:* He means that they are out to destroy you. The primary thing that wolves do is hunt, and that's exactly the point Jesus makes. Their end game is your destruction. We should identify them and steer clear.
- **What do you notice about the false teachers’ methods?**
  - *Answer:* They don’t come out screaming, “I’m a false teacher!” Jesus says that they will disguise themselves in sheep's clothing. They might appear caring, intelligent, or endearing. However, in the end, they don't handle the Word of God accurately, and they don't care that God receives glory because they're in it for themselves.
- **Why does fruitfulness matter?**
  - *Answer:* Jesus says that fruitfulness is a separator. Fruitfulness signals to the flock who is really a part of the family of God and who isn’t. It is the external sign of the internal transformation the Holy Spirit has enacted.
- **How does the idea of fruitfulness run countercultural to the traditional moralistic Christianity model?**
  - Answers will vary. Help your group see that traditional American Christianity bought into the idea that you were good if you walked an aisle when you were younger, got baptized, or prayed a prayer. If you added some moralism on top of that, then you were living a Christ-centric life. However, fruitfulness differs from that because it's rooted in faith and a deep love for God. The fruit that comes into the believer’s life is not because they tried harder. It’s because they gazed upon Christ more.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **Before we panic, we must establish that war goes on inside the believer. The believer will still wrestle with sin his entire life, but the Spirit has enabled us to have victory over sin. Romans 6 and 7 are good illustrations of what goes on at the soul level. If there is no tension between wanting to do what is right and good and between sin, then you probably don’t know Christ. The Spirit inside of us moves us toward righteousness and gives us a distaste for unholy things.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention back to Matthew 7:16-18.

- **How should our identities as Christ-followers affect the way we live?**
  - *Answer:* It should mean that we are fully bought into the message of Christ and follow it with our lives. For example, being sexually perverse is something that our culture prizes. It says there is freedom in sleeping around or having homosexual relationships. Scripture clearly says that God expects no sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage. As a result, we choose to deny the world's message and pursue God's design of sex. It's impossible to hold both viewpoints.
- **Could you describe what you think a healthy tree looks like?**
  - *Answers will vary.* Help your group to see that a healthy tree doesn't have to look like one set of circumstances. It doesn't have to be a married man with kids. A single man can be just as much of a healthy tree. The identifying marks of a healthy tree would be the fruits of the Spirit found

in Galatians 5:22, a desire to know God more, repentance, humility, care for others, etc. Help your group see what that could look like in their lives.

- **Does “a diseased tree cannot bear good fruit” in verse 18 mean that the lost are incapable of good works?**
  - *Answer:* No. Those who are lost still have the capability to do good in this world. However, they can't please God because it's impossible without faith. The diseased tree has a heart problem that leads to bad fruit. The healthy tree's heart posture is one of thankfulness and gratitude toward God and can bear good fruit because it originates in faith.

NEXT, direct your group's attention to Matthew 7:19-20.

- **What kind of emotions does verse 19 stir up in you?**
  - *Answers will vary.* Help your group to see that Jesus is cutting straight to the heart here because He desperately wants to avoid the words in Matt. 7:23, "Depart from me for I never knew you." Additionally, it may cause discomfort when thinking about others who proclaim Christ but don't walk with Him. Empower your guys to make that a point of conversation with those God brought to their minds.

FINALLY, have a volunteer read Matthew 7:21-23. Then, say something like:

- **The sad reality is that Jesus says many will stand before Him and fully expect to be in heaven. They will have done what appeared to be godly things. They may give a testimony of their parents' or grandparents' faith. They may testify to the leadership positions they've held at church. They may lean on their moral compass, explaining they've always tried to do what's right. However, Jesus will tell them that He's never known them. Men, it's important to understand our standing before God. Have you ever given your life to Him? Is there fruit that serves as evidence of that? Wherever you're at, God's grace meets you on the journey and compels you to take your next step toward Him.**

Ask if there are any questions and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

## ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

*Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.*

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **Whenever we face a concept like the one we have been studying today, it forces us to respond in evaluation.**

THEN, ask volunteers to share what THEY think the main application is of the passage you've just studied.

Allow men to share their responses and discuss them as a group. If you choose, supplement their responses with the following takeaways:

- 1) After listening to Rick and studying Jesus' illustration of the good and bad tree, some of us must ask ourselves, "Have I ever actually surrendered my life to Christ and seen him transform me more into his likeness?"
- 2) For others of us, you know that you have a relationship with Christ and have seen fruit at some points in your life, but currently, there is a lack of fruit. You need to ask, "What is it that is holding back my fellowship with Christ?"
- 3) Some might say that we are right in the center of God's will and that our relationship with Him is thriving. You need to ask, "What opportunities has God set before me to reach my circle for Christ?"

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is telling them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.