

STUDENT EDITION

Thank you for sampling,
**HOW TO BE A MAN: LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF THE BIBLE STUDENT EDITION.**

“How To Be A Man: Learning From the Real Men of the Bible” is a 40-day devotional that will challenge and equip you to become the young man God has called you to be by learning from the real-life examples of men you encounter in the Bible. The devotional, by Andy Blanks and Bryan Gill, examines the ups and the downs of eight biblical characters, calling men to learn from their examples.

If you have any questions about
**HOW TO BE A MAN: LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF THE BIBLE,**
please don't hesitate to call us
at 1.888.969.6360.

HOW BE^{TO} A MAN

LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF
THE BIBLE

ANDY BLANKS & DR. BRYAN GILL

TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	9
REAL MAN 1: ABRAHAM (ANDY BLANKS)	12
REAL MAN 2: JOSEPH (BRYAN GILL)	24
REAL MAN 3: JOSHUA (ANDY BLANKS)	36
REAL MAN 4: DAVID (BRYAN GILL)	48
REAL MAN 5: ELIJAH (ANDY BLANKS)	60
REAL MAN 6: JOHN THE BAPTIST (BRYAN GILL)	72
REAL MAN 7: PETER (BRYAN GILL)	84
REAL MAN 8: PAUL (ANDY BLANKS)	96
CLOSING	108
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	120



INTRODUCTION

Who are the men who are shaping your life?

Think about it for a moment. Think about the guys in your life who are making an impact on the person you are becoming. Many of you can point to your dad. But there are other guys too. Maybe some of you have grandfathers, or uncles, or brothers, or even friends who routinely influence your character. Maybe they are guys in your neighborhood. Or men from your church. Or teammates of yours. Whoever these guys might be, many of us find ourselves surrounded by guys who help teach us what it means to be the kind of man God has called us to be.

We learn from their examples. We watch how they interact with their family, friends, teachers, and coaches. We watch the way they act in public. We notice how they deal with tough situations. We watch them. And we learn.

Let's be clear about one thing. These guys, these examples, they aren't perfect. They make mistakes. They may have even let us down before. But these type of guys, the kind that is worth watching and imitating, take responsibility for their mistakes. They own the good and the bad, and our lives are better off as a result of knowing them.

As many of you read the previous paragraphs, you thought of the guys in your life who are making just such an impact on you. But how many of you thought about the men of the Bible? It's safe to say, probably not a lot, which is a shame.

The Bible is the true Word of God. The people we meet in its pages are real

people. They are not fairy-tale characters. They aren't made up. They are real men and women who lived real lives. They're complicated, just like the people you do life with every day. We can look at their lives and trust that what we are seeing is a snapshot of people who went about their days thousands of years ago much like we do today.

If we believe that the Bible was given to us by God and that it's the main way He wants to teach us about Himself and His ways, then we have to believe we can learn from the stories of the people we read about in its pages. Especially the stories of the men of the Bible.

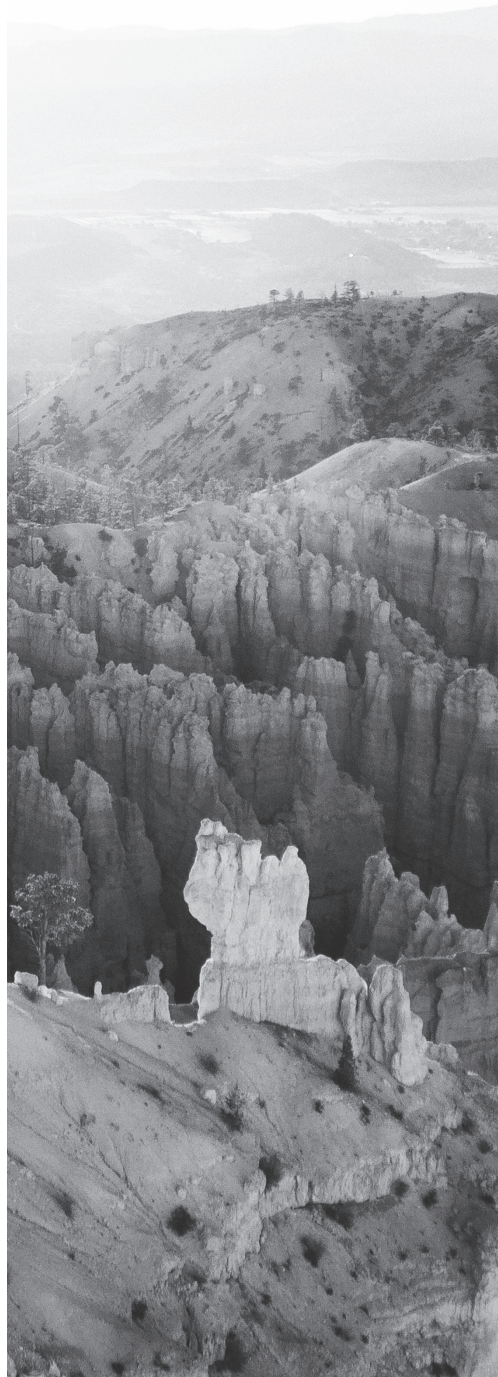
In the men of the Bible, we see examples of what it looks like to follow after God. We see men forced to wrestle with their faith and how to live their lives in a world that often seems set against them. (Maybe that sounds familiar to how you approach YOUR faith.) We see them experiencing successes and failures. We see them taking stands for God. And we see them falling short of what God wants for them. In short, we see ourselves.

We can learn from the men in the Bible in the same way we learn from the men in our lives.

Maybe you read the first book in this series. The first book released in this line, *How To Be A Man: Pursuing Christ-centered Masculinity*, guided guys to look to Jesus to define what it means to be a man. In Jesus, we see God as He was walking on this earth, fully God, fully man. Jesus is the ultimate example of what it means to be a man.

We continue to hear stories from guys just like you who read the first book and found themselves challenged and convicted by God. These stories are amazing. And while God is still using that book in powerful ways, we knew we wanted to follow the first *How To Be A Man* book with a different book, one that still called guys like you to embrace a biblical model for masculinity. We prayed and thought about what that book might look like.

It didn't take long for us to decide to focus on the men of the Bible. Through their stories, we learn so much about God and ourselves. Their faith challenges us, and their mistakes convict us. Deciding who to focus on was the hard part. We sat down with Rick Burgess, host of the nationally syndicated radio show *Rick*



and Bubba and co-author of the first *How To Be A Man* book, and talked through the men of the Bible who had the most to teach us. We came up with a pretty good list. In this book, you'll study the lives of eight real men from the Bible, including:

- ABRAHAM
- JOSEPH
- JOSHUA
- DAVID
- ELIJAH
- JOHN THE BAPTIST
- PETER
- PAUL

By examining the lives these men lived, you'll be challenged to live a life of impact and influence, changing the world around you for the sake of the Gospel.

Take a look around you over the next few days and weeks. Pay attention to the kind of examples you see that teach you what it means to be a man. It won't take long to notice that the world around you is in serious need of young men to step up and live the life God intends them to live. Every day you see the effects of guys who have chosen not to boldly pursue Christ. God has called you to Himself and placed you where you are so that He might work through you to bring glory to Himself. And yet, too many guys your age aren't faithful in living out the role God has in store for them. We're passionate about trying to challenge men of all ages to embrace God's call on their lives. It is our prayer that God will work through this book, and each book in the *How To Be A Man* line, to call His children to a kind of faith that shakes up the world around them.

On behalf of Rick, who served as the Executive Producer for this book, and the entire YM360 team, we want to thank you for taking your faith seriously enough that you'd pick-up this book. It's our prayer that God would work through you to impact your world for Christ. As you do, we'd love to hear from you.

God Bless,

Andy Blanks and Bryan Gill

WEEK 1:

ABRAHAM

We do a lot in the name of love, don't we? We love our families, and you've probably found yourself doing some stuff you didn't think you'd ever do simply because you love your family. Dance recitals you've attended. Pictures you've had to take (and retake, and retake . . .). Places you've been. Things you've done. All for love. You could probably share with me a list of things you've done all because you love your sport or hobby. And while it may not technically be true love, you've most likely gone to great lengths before to make sure you were on the radar of a specific young lady.

Love will lead us to do a lot. But what if I asked you to tell me what your love for God has led you to do?

How has your love for God motivated you to serve Him? To obey Him? To see His will done in the world and your life? What would your story be? This week you'll be studying the life of Abraham, and pretty quickly you're going to see that if you're Abraham, you'd have no problem answering the question, "What has my love for God motivated me to do?" Abraham's love for God kick-started him on an awesome journey, one that would impact history.

Over the next five days, you're going to learn about Abraham's life and his faith. You're going to see that he was super-trusting in God but also capable of doubt. And through learning about Abraham's faith, you'll be challenged to look at your faith and to consider just how far it will take you.



ABRAHAM DAY I

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 12:1-9

What's the most you've ever had riding on a risky decision?

In 2009, a friend and I started YM360 (the ministry that published this book) from scratch. We raised enough money from investors to leave our jobs and build a website, but that was about it. We were launching a publishing company with nothing to sell and no one to sell it to. We had no email list, no customers. Nothing.

What we did have were families, and house payments, and car payments, and a million other needs. And let me tell you, those first few years were tough! Our families made huge sacrifices for us to step out on faith and give birth to a dream God had put on our hearts. Through God's faithfulness, YM360 has thrived. Looking back, we can see that God was with us the entire time. But during those early years, it still felt super risky.

Read Genesis 12:1-9. Here we see one of the truly foundational moments in the Bible. God called Abram, who would become known as Abraham, to be the father of a great nation. The nation God was talking about was the Israelites, God's chosen people. When God tells Abraham "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," He is predicting the salvation that would one day be offered through His Son, Jesus. Of course, the main issue here is that Abraham and Sarah were unable to have children. When God told the couple that He would work through them to make a mighty nation, it shows once again that there is nothing God can't accomplish. But for this devotion, I want to focus on Abraham's response in verse 4.

Abraham risked everything to respond in faith to a call from God! God didn't even tell Abraham much about where he would be going, only that He'd show him on the way. Abraham uprooted all his people, all his flocks, everything, for the sake of obeying God's call. The question you have to ask yourself is, what am I willing to risk to be obedient to God's call on my life?

God's plan for you is probably not for you to be the father of a great nation. I mean, He could if He wanted to, but that's most likely not it. Don't worry, though. God DOES have a plan for you. He knows you, and just like with Abraham, He wants to work through you to accomplish His purposes. What you have to decide is whether or not you will listen and obey. Are you willing to put it all in God's hands and trust Him to lead you, no matter what?

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Be honest: do you find yourself hesitant to "risk" your image, comfort, or popularity to follow God? How much do these concepts impact the decisions you make in your life?

2. Have you ever let your comfort impact the way you think about your faith? If you were to make a list of things that are too important to you to risk to follow God, what would that list look like? Feel free to use this space to write out your list.

3. When we put our comfort over God's call, we're saying that we know better than God about how best to use the life God's so graciously given us. What's wrong with this way of thinking?

4. When we look at Abraham and his response to God, it all comes down to trust. Ask yourself today, "How much do I trust God? Do I trust God enough to follow Him where He leads me?" Only you know the answer to this question. Spend some time in prayer today allowing God to show you where your heart is when it comes to how much you trust Him.

ABRAHAM DAY 2

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 15

OK, so, maybe I'm not the most patient person in the world. It's not that I'm impatient all the time. I'm pretty patient in a boat with a fishing rod, or in a tree stand with a rifle. But put me behind a slow driver in the fast lane, and my patience goes out the window.

Read all of Genesis 15. (It won't take you long, and it's big-time important.) Here we get a look at how God chooses to interact with people. God interacts with Abraham in a way that highlights His perfect plan and Abraham's imperfect faith. What we see at the beginning of this passage is Abraham asking questions about God's plans. He looked at God and said, "I continue childless." In other words, Abraham is impatient. He knows God has promised Him a son. But at this time, God has not yet delivered.

I love how God treats Abraham here. There were a lot of things He could have done. What He did is quite powerful. God showed Abraham the stars. God, basically said, "If you can count these it will give you an idea of just how big your family will one day be." And something in the way God showed this to Abraham got his attention and assured him of God's promise. "And he believed the Lord."

But God wasn't done. What happens next seems kind of strange to us as 21st-century Christians. God conducts what's called a covenant ceremony. There were animal parts and blood, and God represented as a smoking pot and a torch. It all feels kind of weird to us, right? Here's what's going on: this is God making a covenant with Abraham the way covenants were made during this time (a covenant is a binding promise between two parties). For the sake of this devotion, don't get too caught up in how God went about it. Focus on what God did.

The eternal God of the universe, the perfect creator of all things, made a binding, eternal promise to one of His imperfect, created beings. Abraham didn't walk through the pieces of the animals. God did. God bound Himself to a promise to Abraham, and God always keeps His promises. Let that sink in. God didn't shy away from personally interacting with humanity. He doesn't look at you and see someone to be avoided. God blesses you with His presence and His promises.

When you are tempted to be impatient with God's timeline for your life, remember that just like His promises, His timing is perfect. God will always act for His glory and your good, in line with His perfect understanding of timing. That's a promise you can rely on.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Why is it so hard for us to wait on God? When we want to "rush" God, what does that say about our faith in Him?
2. There are a ton of stories from Scripture of people waiting on God. Abraham would wait 25 years before Isaac, his son, was born. David would wait 15 years between the time God promised him that he would be king and when he took the throne. Simeon waited his whole life to see the Messiah. Why do you think God allows us to wait on Him to work? What is it about waiting that teaches us so much?
3. If you could make a list of the things you're waiting on God for, what would that list look like? What do you want God to do for you that He hasn't done yet? If you choose, use the space below to write your list.
4. Spend some time today in prayer, thanking God for His faithfulness, and asking Him to help you to be more patient, and to trust that His perfect plans will ultimately be accomplished in your life.

ABRAHAM DAY 3

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 20

Read Genesis 20. And just know that you're about to see Abraham blow it. Here we see Abraham lying about Sarah being his sister and not his wife. (Ouch.) Abraham had a bad habit of doing this; he did it three times throughout his journey to the land of Canaan. He did this because he was scared that if the rulers of the lands he passed through knew Sarah was his wife, they'd kill him and take her. If he lied and told them Sarah was his sister, these rulers would probably still take her but wouldn't kill Abraham. (Still a pretty crummy deal for Sarah.) Abraham shows us here the very real truth that as men, we can faithfully follow after God one minute, and sinfully act in our own self-interest the next.

What happened as a result of the lie Abraham told Abimelech? First, Abraham put Abimelech in the position of sinning in God's eyes. God had a heart-to-heart convo with Abimelech. God told Abimelech He'd kill him for taking Abraham's wife. As a result, Abimelech was understandably a little ticked off at Abraham. Second, in his "apology," Abraham tips his hand that he assumed the people of the Negeb didn't know God. But Abimelech did know God. Abraham allowed his fears to get in the way of his faithfulness. Abraham showed a huge lack of faith in God in this instance, and in the two other cases in which he lied about Sarah.

Abraham proved faithful in many aspects of the journey (both physical and spiritual) that God called him to undertake. After all, when God commanded, Abraham obeyed. But Abraham proved over and over that there were moments where even as he obeyed God's big-picture commands, he failed at being faithful in the day-to-day questions of life like a man of God should.

When things got rough, Abraham acted like a coward. He put his well-being ahead of the welfare of those he loved. In doing so, he showed a lack of faith in God.

How you respond when you encounter obstacles goes a long way in defining your character. When life throws you a curveball, and you respond in faith, you honor both God and the people He has given you influence over. When you fail to seek God during trials, you not only fail God, but you can easily lead others in your life to go astray as well. It's easy to respond in faith when the road is smooth. But when things get a little bumpy, the real depth of your faith is tested.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. If you were to ask the important people in your life how you react in times of crisis, how do you think they might respond?
2. What does this say about your faith in God? Are you convicted by how you imagine they might respond? Or does it confirm the closeness of your relationship with God?
3. Remembering God's past faithfulness in times of trials goes a long way in how you handle trials in the future. Too many of us never stop long enough to recall how God saw us through the challenges we've faced in our lives. Stop now and reflect on some specific challenging times in your life and God's role during the midst of those trials. Write them down in the space provided if you want.
4. Now, spend some time thanking God in prayer for how He has walked with you during life's trials. Thank Him for never leaving you and for acting within His goodness and mercy. Let this time of prayer give you the strength to overcome the next trial you encounter.

ABRAHAM DAY 4

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 22:1-14

Yesterday you read about Abraham showing a fragile faith in the face of a challenge. Today, you're going to see Abraham demonstrating a level of faith in God that is so deep it's hard to put into words. But before you read, let's get caught up. Find Genesis 22 in your Bible or Bible app. At this point in the story, God has been faithful to Abraham. He and Sarah had a son, Isaac. This passage starts by telling us that some time has passed, and Isaac is most likely a young adult.

Now, read Genesis 22:1-14. Let's get straight to the question you're probably asking right now: Why would God have asked Abraham to sacrifice his child? It seems super un-Godlike, doesn't it? There are a couple of things you need to know. First, verse 1 tells us that God wanted to test Abraham's faith. God wanted to see what Abraham's first love was: God or Isaac. Second, child sacrifice was common in many of the pagan cultures in Abraham's time. Even though it's still crazy to consider, it would have been a practice that would not have been unheard of to Abraham. Furthermore, God wasn't asking Abraham to do anything He wasn't willing to do; all you have to do is think about Jesus on the cross to know that.

God tested Abraham to find out what Abraham wanted more: the gift or the Giver. If God was going to set-up Abraham as the father of His people, He had to make sure Abraham loved Him more than anything else. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering, and amazingly, Abraham agreed. By doing so, he demonstrated a remarkable faith in God.

Abraham must have been emotionally wrecked. Can you imagine the three-day journey to the mountain? Even in verse 5 as they prepare to go up the mountain, Abraham tells his servants that he and Isaac will return. Abraham trusted God to find another way through it!

God did make a way out for Isaac in the form of a ram in a thicket. The ram in this story foreshadows another time, on another hill, when God would miraculously provide the sacrifice that saved us from death. But at the heart of this story is a father who loved his son, and was willing to lose him for the sake of his trust in God.

You live in a fast-paced world full of distractions. It's easy for you to forget that God's isn't going to compete for your heart. God is not satisfied sharing your love or attention with anything else, whether that's video games, sports, a girlfriend, a job . . . If God tested you today, what would you have a hard time withholding? What does that say about where your heart's affection lies?

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Deep down, Abraham had faith in God's character. He showed in verse 5 that he believed that God would provide a way to save Isaac's life. Who is God to you? Do you know Him well enough to count on His goodness? In your own words, describe God's character in the space below.

2. If you had to make a list, what in your life competes with God for time and energy? Be honest.

3. What does it say about us guys that we are so quick to allow things to come between God and us? And why is it that so many of the things that we allow to come before our commitment to God have so little eternal value?

4. Here's a question for you to think about: What are you missing out by NOT allowing God to be the primary focus of your life? How would school be different if God were your priority? How would your team be different? How about your relationships? Maybe the biggest question is, "what are you waiting for"?

ABRAHAM DAY 5

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 25:7-11

The older I get, the more I think about the impact my life is having. I think this is something most men consider as they age. I find myself living with a greater sense of purpose. There is a genuine desire not to waste the time I have been given. I want my life to count for something. I want the impact of my life to be felt long after I leave this world. But you don't have to be a grown up like me to think about the difference your life makes.

The word legacy is a powerful word and a concept you can already begin to think about at your age. When we think about living a life with an impact that is felt long after we're gone, it can seem like a tall task. But I want to help you think about the idea of legacy in a way that is not quite so overwhelming.

A legacy is what happens when you string together a lifetime's worth of days spent living in the center of God's will. It's accomplished in day-sized chunks. It's merely a matter of faithfulness over time.

Read Genesis 25:7-11. This is the period at the end of Abraham's life story. Abraham lived a long, long life. By all accounts, he lived a full life. The biblical language here in these verses is rich with meaning. If you read it in its original Hebrew and from the perspective of the original cultural context, everything about these verses speaks to Abraham having lived a fulfilling, blessed life. He was able to experience the realization of God's call on his life. His two sons buried him in the land God had promised him would be his and his family's home. His life was complete, and while history recognizes that Abraham wasn't perfect, his legacy is one of faithfulness and steady obedience to the Lord.

Every day, you build your legacy. Every day, the things you do and the things you don't do shape the world around you. You can leave a legacy at your school or in your youth group or on your team after you graduate, all because you were intentional about how you live each day. But to do so, you have to use your talents and time to advance God's Kingdom. You have to invest in the people around you. Your life has to tell the story of God's faithfulness.

It's too late to wait until you're an adult to begin thinking about a legacy. Decide today that you're committed to making the most of what God has given you.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Think about the people in your life who left or will leave a powerful legacy. What impact have they had on you and those around them? In what ways did their lives bring glory to God?
2. If you had to put a number on your legacy with "0" representing a completely negative legacy and "10" representing an amazing one, where would you be? How do you feel about where you rate yourself?
3. Have you ever taken a moment to write out how you would like to be remembered by your family and friends? Try it now. It may seem awkward at first, but give it a shot. Think about the people in your life and write a sentence or two about how you'd like for them to remember you and the impact you made on them.
4. The exercise you just did should serve as a huge encouragement for you to think of your life in terms of daily faithfulness. Pray to God today, asking Him to convict you of any sin in your life. Ask Him to give you the strength to be the young man you are called to be, today. Then live today for the Lord. When you wake up tomorrow, do the same thing. And don't stop.