

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

The Pursuit 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, or purchase the eight, five-week sessions independently.

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



COMMITMENT

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

BY RICK BURGESS

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

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CURRICULUM FOR MEN

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MEN
A MINISTRY OF IRON HILL PRESS

**LUKE
9:23**
THE MAN CHURCH
BE A MAN...FOLLOW JESUS

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DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS

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 discipled.

But when men ARE being discipled, 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 THE PURSUIT?

The Pursuit is a 40-week, video-driven curriculum designed to help men live out a masculinity that is found in the person and example of Jesus. *The Pursuit* takes eight core characteristics that Jesus embodied and fleshes each one of them out 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 *The Pursuit*, you're a part of the growing tide of men who are looking to awaken men to embrace their calling as Christ-followers.

START HERE GETTING

Commitment was something Jesus knew well. After all, He stepped out of heaven to embrace the brokenness of our world. He was mocked, doubted, and ridiculed. He knew what it was to be tired and hungry. And He ultimately died at the hands of the very beings He created. At any given time, Jesus had the power and authority to say, “enough is enough.” He could have walked away from the grand experiment, and He would have been justified in doing so. But He was unfailingly committed to humanity, and all of creation was changed as a result.

Commitment is a virtue that is hit-or-miss in our culture today. Many men aren’t that committed to the idea of commitment. Thankfully, there are still many men who are. And if we want to communicate to the world a masculinity that is rooted in Christ, we will be men of commitment as well.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

FIRST, preview your video. Every *Pursuit* 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.

- **Main Passage:** John 14:15
- **Secondary Passages:** 1 John 2:4-6; 1 John 3:6, 9-10
- **Purpose:** To understand that we show our commitment to Christ through our obedience to His commands.
- **Session Snapshot:** Biblical commitment looks a lot like obedience. Not obedience out of guilt or shame, but obedience out of love and gratitude. There are some exceptions, but cultural commitment today is almost non-existent. If something takes too long, or doesn't go our way, or is too hard, culture tells us to bail. Scripture tells us that our love for Christ will manifest in obedience to Him.

GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by introducing a new theme or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, if you're using all 40 weeks of *The Pursuit*, go back to the previous lessons and highlight one or two of the main points that stood out to you in your Passion sessions. These could be points made by either your group or Rick.

NEXT, explain to your group that they will be beginning a new series on Commitment. Commitment is a foundational trait in our pursuit of a masculine life that is centered in Christ. Remind them that commitment in today's world is somewhat of a novel idea. Marriages break up. Employers move on. People cancel on you. Promises are made and then not kept. The concept of commitment is foreign to many in our world. But as men of God, we are to model commitment in all that we do. This five-session study will help challenge us to do just that.

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 you have any new participants, explain to them the basic structure of your time together. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 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. Encourage them to take notes as they watch the video.

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

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

- **What is the significance of identifying ourselves as the bride and Christ as the bride groom?**
- **How can we draw a connecting line between love, obedience, and action?**
- **How does a commitment to Jesus impact our relationship with temptation and sin?**
- **If someone from another culture observed our habits and statistics regarding our marriages, what would they say about the state of marital commitment in our country?**
- **How can we measure or evaluate our commitment to Christ?**
- **How do our daily decisions reveal our commitment to Christ?**

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

- **Commitment may be lacking in today's society. However, it's our commitment to Christ and our obedience to His commands that should separate and define the life of a Godly man. Let's spend a few moments looking more intently at each of these passages and see precisely why commitment is foundational in our faith.**

OPENING THE WORD

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

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at John 14:15, 1 John 2:4-6 and 1 John 3:6, 9-10. As Rick stated in the video, there is no commitment to commitment! Scripture shows us that we cannot love Jesus without being committed to him. These passages highlight the importance obedience plays in showing our love and our commitment to Christ.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Because we have multiple passages to discuss, provide a broad context for each passage using the following bullet points:

- **John 14 is right in the middle of Jesus' teaching during the Passover feast with His disciples. Throughout this feast, Jesus is urging His disciples to understand who He is as the Son of God. The end of Chapter 13 and all of Chapter 14 is Jesus' discussion of His death, the role He plays as the bridge between humankind and God, and the promise of the coming Holy Spirit.**
- **First, John is different from other epistles in the New Testament. It lacks the salutation and conclusion of more traditional New Testament letters. So, we can look at it more like a pamphlet or loosely structured sermon. The focus of 1 John is positive. He urges readers to refine their theological understanding, sharpen their ethics, and heighten their devotional intensity. They must grow in faith, obedience, and love. It is not a list of dos and don'ts, but a declaration of "Done!" by what Jesus accomplished with the cross and His resurrection.**

THEN, read or have a volunteer read John 14:15. When the volunteer has finished, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What is the difference in a suggestion and a command?**
 - Answers will vary. Translated from the Greek term *proteínō* (prot-i'-no) to suggest means "to stretch out" or "extend before." There is no imperative. There is only a suggestion. Translated from the Greek term *entolē* (en-tol-ay'), a command is "an ordinance, injunction, or law." There is the expectation of obedience.
- **Why is it important that we keep a command?**
 - Answer: There are penalties associated with disobeying an ordinance or injunction or law. If the disobedience is severe enough or the law important enough, the penalty can be as severe as jail time or even death.
- **What parallels can we draw in the penalties of not keeping the commands of the world and not keeping the commands of Jesus?**
 - Answers may vary. Settle on the idea that there are physical consequences in this world for not keeping the commands set before us here on earth, but the spiritual consequences for not keeping the commands set before us by Christ are much direr.

Before transitioning to the next Scripture, say something like:

- **Commitment and obedience go hand in hand. If you're going through all 40 sessions of The Pursuit, then you've likely discussed the characteristic of submission. If we have indeed submitted our lives to the authority of Christ, commitment and obedience**

are the only logical steps forward in our walk with Christ.

NEXT, direct your group's attention to and read 1 John 2:4-6. Then, ask:

- **Where have we heard this sentiment before?**
 - Answer: John 8:44 says, "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." This sounds a lot like verse 4.
- **What assurances are we given in these verses?**
 - Answers may vary. Settle on these thoughts: By keeping the Word of God (keeping His commands), the love of God will be perfected in us. By abiding in Him (keeping his commands), we will know we are in Him because we will walk in the same way in which He walked.

FINALLY, transition to the final Scripture by saying something like:

- **Our identity in Christ is revealed in our commitment to Christ. If we have been saved by faith in Jesus and born again into a new life in Christ, we will desire to obey Christ. We will desire to grow in our commitment to Him.**

Have a volunteer read 1 John 3:6, 9-10. Then, say something like:

- **What does it mean to abide?**
 - Answers may vary. Translated from the Greek term menó (men'-o) to abide means "to stay, remain, continue, stand, live, endure, or wait."
- **"Abide" is a word we're familiar with, but one that we have maybe not ever thought about how to apply it in our lives. How do we practically abide in Christ in our daily lives?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Why should we abide in Christ?**
 - Answers may vary. There is a myriad of different reasons for abiding in Christ, but specifically, in these verses, we see that abiding in Christ keeps us from sinning. As Rick noted in the video, we're not talking about slip-ups. We live in a fallen world, and we are all sinners that will not be perfected until we see our Lord face to face. "Sinning" in this passage is the present participle. It means perpetual sin. If we are truly abiding in Christ, perpetual sin should no longer be a part of our life.

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're faced with a concept like commitment, it forces us to respond in evaluation. As we wrap up our time here, there are three different questions we can ask to evaluate ourselves.**
- 1) After listening to Rick and studying these passages of Scripture, we need to ask ourselves, "Is there perpetual sin in my life? If so, what is that sin, and what is keeping me from giving it to God and being more committed to him?"
 - 2) If you find that sin is more of a stumble than a habit, ask yourself, "What does obedience to Christ look like in my life?"
 - 3) If you are certain of your commitment to Christ, ask yourself, "What steps am I taking to show my commitment to Christ in other areas of my life? In my work? In my marriage? In my moment to moment decisions?"



COMMITMENT

SESSION 1

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow there to be 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 trying to tell them, and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.