

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@ironhillpress.com) or call (800) 307-9366



COMPASSION

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

BY RICK BURGESS

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

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LUKE
9:23
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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

Are you a compassionate person? Many men find that they are compassionate toward those who find themselves dealing with tough circumstances out of their control. But we often don't have compassion with the person we think should know better. Or with the guy raised in a Christian home who continues to ruin his life with wrong decision after wrong decision. Or for our children after we've asked them to do the same thing for the 100th time.

How eternally grateful we should be that Jesus never approached compassion toward us in this way.

We're going to spend our time over the next five sessions discovering that compassion is at the heart of whom God is, and how, as men striving to live out a Christ-centered masculinity, we must also be men of compassion.

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:** Psalm 103:13
- **Purpose:** To commit ourselves to a life of Christ-like compassion towards others.
- **Session Snapshot:** Compassion begins with God. We deserve condemnation from Him as a result of our sin. What we receive instead is compassion. Compassion is at the heart of both who God is and what His mission is. Without compassion, there is no cross and, thus, no redemption. We are, as followers of Christ, a people completely reliant on God's compassion. Our lives should follow this model. Fortunately, Scripture guides us in how to live this out in our own lives.

GETTING STARTED

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

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning the next video series, which focuses on the Christ-centered characteristic of compassion. This is part of a larger study on what it means to pursue a masculinity that is centered in Christ. If you're working through the 40-week version of *The Pursuit*, remind them of any previous series you've covered.

THEN, ask for volunteers to share what they are getting out of their time in *The Pursuit* up to this point. Ask what they initially thought when they saw that compassion was the next characteristic to be covered. Ask what your group hopes to get out of a study on compassion.

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 need be, remind your group of the group the basic structure of your time together (watching a 15-minute video, followed by a short discussion of the video, a few minutes in Bible study, and then a closing activity). Encourage men 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 similar to those below:

- **Rick mentioned that compassion is a characteristic of a Christ-like character that hasn't come naturally for him. Share any of your struggles in this area.**
- **Have you ever struggled to reconcile our idea of "toughness" with compassion? Why do we think these two are at odds with our concept of masculinity?**
- **Are you withholding compassion from someone in your life? Why do you think that is?**
- **Do we confuse compassion with being "soft"? Was Jesus "soft"? I doubt we'll get too many "yes" responses on that question. So why do we confuse those two? In what ways is compassion a sign of strength?**

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

- **In our passage today, the psalmist draws a beautiful comparison of how a father shows compassion for his children to the way God shows compassion for us as His**

children. This is a personal and intimate act that, as we examine our text, we should find both relatable and challenging.

OPENING THE WORD

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

FIRST, 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:

- **With 116 chapters, Psalms is the longest book in the Bible.**
- **Psalms is a collection of praises, denoting an association with musical accompaniment. It is closely tied to worship and can be seen as a hymnbook.**
- **There are more than seven composers in the book of Psalms, with David being the most frequent contributor. The time in which the book of Psalms was written spans close to 900 years.**

THEN, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Psalms 103:13. Have a member of your group read the verse. Then, move into the following discussion:

- **Our Scripture uses the example of a father showing compassion for his children. For the fathers in the room, describe ways in which you are compassionate toward your children. Was compassion one of the Christ-centered traits modeled by your father?**
 - Answers will vary. As it feels appropriate, ask follow-up questions from your group to help create deeper discussion.
- **Continuing with the example, is compassion at odds in your mind with things such as discipline or authority? What do we see with the character of Christ that reconciles these traits? Think of specific examples in Scripture.**
 - Answers will vary. Passages like Mark 6:34, Matthew 14:14, and Luke 7:13 come to mind.
- **Let's think for a moment about the issues of discipline vs. exasperation when it comes to our children. Has this been a struggle for you as a father? Have you fallen guilty of disobeying the words of Ephesians 6:4, where your desire to discipline has crossed the line into exasperating your children? What does that look like? And what have been the results of it? (Think of the role compassion plays here.)**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Think about the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15). Has obedience, specifically as it relates to our call to be compassionate, become burdensome for us? How do you find yourself "going your own way" against compassion? Have you, like Rick, ever found yourself in "the hog's pen"?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **As we wrap up, it's OK for us to admit that compassion may be something that, as men, may not come easily to us. But it's not OK to stop there. Jesus was both powerful and compassionate. We are to model the same commitment to engagement in other's lives and concern for their well-being. That's what compassion is all about.**

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:

- **We need to evaluate our attitude toward compassion and see where in our lives we can begin to move to a more Christ-like standard. Let's consider the following three questions as we wrap up our time.**
- 1) The prodigal son was hopeful that his father would allow him to work as a servant. His father accepted him back as a son. Not only that, it was with much rejoicing. The father ran towards him. Our Father runs towards us in our repentance. Think about the compassion God has shown you as an individual, the times He has run toward you. Are you living this out with others in your own life? Are you running toward them?
 - 2) Are you waiting for someone to "fully get their act together" before you show them compassion? The father in the parable of the prodigal son didn't. It was immediate and overwhelming at the moment of repentance. Do others in our lives need only to "top that hill"? Or are we placing other conditions there before we exercise compassion?
 - 3) Who specifically in your own life are you withholding compassion from? What practical steps can you take to repent of this behavior and live out the Christ-centered characteristic of compassion in your relationships?

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.