

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



INTEGRITY

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

BY RICK BURGESS

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

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Video: Rick Burgess

Video Production: Chris Adler

Leader Guide Authors: Andy Blanks, Zac Condie, Bryan Gill, Josh Sisk, Clay Wyatt

Executive Editor: Andy Blanks

Art Director: Laurel-Dawn Latshaw

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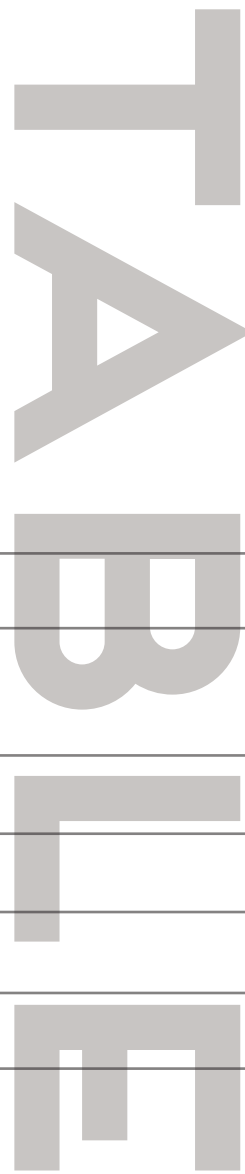
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**LUKE
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BE A MAN...FOLLOW JESUS

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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 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 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.

STARTED GETTING

To be a man of integrity is so much more than being a man who doesn't lie. If we allow the definition of integrity to be oversimplified, we risk failing to become the man God desires for us to be.

To be a man of integrity is to be a man who is "undivided." He is the same all the way through. He is a man who doesn't follow one set of rules in one situation and another set in a different one. To have integrity as a man of God is to live your life inline with your faith. A man of integrity is a man who is consistent, steadfast, and true.

The next five sessions will help you and your group discover how to passionately pursue integrity. Here's how to get started.

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.



INTEGRITY

SESSION 1

- **Main Passage:** Proverbs 12:22; John 8:44; Colossians 3:9
- **Purpose:** To understand that our integrity identifies us as a Christ-follower.
- **Session Snapshot:** Now that we know what it means to have our identity found in Christ, it's time to start fleshing out those traits and characteristics that identify us as Christ-followers to those around us. Integrity is the condition of being unified, unimpaired, uncorrupted, or morally upright. We cannot live a divided life between truth and lies. As believers, we have been given the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13), and our lives must reflect that.

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 IDENTITY 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 integrity. Integrity is a foundational trait in our pursuit of a masculine life that is centered in Christ. Remind them that integrity in today's world is somewhat of a novel idea. Culture sees truth as relative, and if truth is relative, then so is integrity. That's not what Scripture tells us. Our Christ-centered masculinity must be built on a foundation of truth. (If you want, use the Session Snapshot as a guideline for an introduction to this new series of videos.)

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, or if this is your first series in the Pursuit curriculum, explain to your group 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 challenge. 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 similar to those below:

- **What factors tempt us to take sin less seriously than we ought to? Not just big sins, but every sin?**
- **Why do you think lying may sometimes seem like a small thing to us, but is called an abomination to the Lord?**
- **Have you ever considered the fact that our sin grieves the heart of God? What do you understand that to mean?**
- **What did you think of the illustration of us being either children of God and telling the truth, or children of Satan and lying? How does it make you feel that lying is a characteristic of the devil and a reflection of his influence?**
- **If you've come out of the 5-week study of Identity, then you just learned all about your "new" self that we put on in Christ. According to Scripture, lying is an old practice. What steps can we take to put off the old practice of lying?**
- **Rick brought up our work life. Do you go about your work life with the same integrity that you do your home life? Why or why not?**

- **Are you laying a solid, Biblical foundation of truth in your relationships (whether single or married)? Are you building trust in those relationships with the truth?**

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

- **Integrity -- building our lives on a foundation of truth -- is a key characteristic in growing a Christ-centered life. Let's spend a few moments looking more intently at each of these passages and see precisely why a lack of integrity is so damaging to that foundation.**

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 Proverbs 12:22, John 8:44, and Colossians 3:9. As Rick stated in the video, our integrity identifies us with Christ. Scripture is full of passages that point toward the importance of truth vs. lies. These specific passages magnify the implications of living a life that tolerates lies.

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, as you cover each, consider providing a broad context for each passage using the following bullet points:

- **Proverbs:** Proverbs initially is attributed to Solomon in its earliest chapters; however, chapter 22 reveals that some of the sayings of the book were articulated by a circle of other wise men, referred to as "the sayings of the wise." The primary purpose of a proverb is to offer a short, compact truth that leads to wisdom, a godly life, and a fuller understanding of choices and consequences.
- **John:** The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also wrote the Book of Revelation, as well as the 1, 2, and 3 John. His goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah.
- **Colossians:** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. His purpose was to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Proverbs 12:22. When the volunteer has finished, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What comes to mind when you hear the word "abomination"?**
 - Answers will vary. Translated from the Hebrew term *shiqquts* (*shik-küts*), it means "that which is exceptionally loathsome, hateful, sinful, wicked, or vile."
- **Can you think of any other times abomination is used in Scripture?**
 - *Answer:* The word is used approximately 28 times, depending on your translation. Specifically, in Proverbs 11:1 and 8, we see that "A false balance" and "those of a crooked heart" are abominations to the Lord. Proverbs 15:8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."
- **What is the common thread here?**
 - *Answer:* Dishonesty. A lying tongue, a false balance (for weights and measures in the marketplace), a crooked heart, a sacrifice/offering/prayer of the wicked can all be put in the category of being untruthful.
- **What is the counter to each of these examples of dishonesty?**
 - *Answer:* Truthfulness. Those who act faithfully; a just weight; those of blameless ways; and the prayer of the upright are all marks of truth. A man of integrity is acceptable in God's sight.

Before transitioning to the next Scripture, say something like:

- **There is no second-guessing God's stance on deceitful actions. They are an abomination to Him, a very strong word when we consider who we're talking about. Certainly, if we have a proper fear and respect for God, we would never**

want to be in a position where our actions are seen as an abomination to Him. It is only through lives of integrity that we can draw nearer in our relationship with God and His Son.

NEXT, direct your group's attention to and read John 8:44. Then, ask:

- **What does it mean to be "of your father" in a practical, worldly sense? What about in a spiritual sense?**
 - Answers will vary. Physically we may look like our fathers. Walk like them. Speak like them. It isn't that different from a spiritual perspective, either. To spiritually be "of" God means we should look like God. Our character should reflect His. We should speak like Him and His Son, Jesus.
- **Why is this such a big deal for us to understand? Why is it important for others to understand?**
 - *Answer:* This goes back to our understanding of identity. If we understand that our image, our integrity, is based on our father, then as Christians, we know that we have an example to look toward. If we can draw others to this same understanding, we can draw others to Christ and away from their "old" selves.
- **Why is it important for us to make the distinction that the devil is the father of lies and that truth is found only in the person of Jesus Christ?**
 - *Answer:* We touched briefly on it earlier, but in today's culture, truth is relative. According to most of the world, there is no absolute truth. However, as Christians, we cannot operate under these conditions. Satan wants us to live in a reality that is selfish and self-absorbed. Jesus wants the exact opposite. Matthew 20:16 says, "So the last will be first, and the first last." Satan is a liar. If we do not draw the hard line between living as a child of lies or a child of truth, then our integrity and, in turn, our identity will be compromised.

FINALLY, have a volunteer read Colossians 3:9. Then, say something like:

- **This is a common theme throughout Paul's many letters, and we see him reference it here. What Rick didn't mention in the video is verse 10. It says, "and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." Between verses 9 and 10, Paul is suggesting that this is an event that has already taken place. A qualitative change of identity has already occurred! We are already a "new" person. It now only remains for us to bring our behavior into line with our new identity. Take joy in the fact that our "new" lives grant us access to new behaviors, like being truthful. Take heart in the fact that our "new" lives are being renewed because changing those behaviors is a continual process.**

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 we have been studying today, 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, "What actions am I taking to approach dishonesty as the abomination before the Lord that it is?"
 - 2) As Rick asked us to do at the end of the video, evaluate your life. Ask yourself, "What fruit am I producing that shows I am a man who speaks like Jesus? Or what fruit is present that shows I am more like Satan, who has



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SESSION 1

been lying from the beginning?"

3) We also need to evaluate our truthfulness in the way we live our lives. Some of us need to ask, "How am I establishing a foundation of integrity, in both the small things and the big things, in my day-to-day 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.