

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



PASSION

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

BY RICK BURGESS

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

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IRON HILL
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 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.

STARTER GUIDE

While there will always be exceptions on both sides of the argument, it's safe to say that most men don't have the same emotional filter as women. Sometimes this is a good thing. Other times our lack of emotional hardwiring is a bad thing. But there's a difference between passion and emotion.

Most men may not be very emotional. But if we're going to be the men of God we're called to be, we have to embrace the concept of passionate living. Passion is defined as "a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept." It's an approach to life that's profoundly stirring or intense. It's the driving feelings or convictions we have about the things that matter to us.

Our goal as men seeking a Christ-centered definition of masculinity is to be able to say "yes" to each of these questions. This week's devotions will help us do just that.

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.



PASSION

SESSION 1

- **Main Passage:** Psalm 43:3-5
 - **Purpose:** To assess our passions and to understand what fuels a primary passion for the Lord.
 - **Session Snapshot:** We all have various passions in life, but only one passion can lead us to authentic joy and true eternal hope, and that is a wholehearted pursuit of the Lord. To faithfully pursue Him, we must reflect on who He is and what He has done for us. This will drive us toward a deeper desire to know Him and worship Him. Other passions will lead us astray, but delighting in the Lord is the only thing that will truly satisfy our hearts (Ps. 37:4).
-

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 a video series on passion that is part of a larger study on what it means to pursue a masculinity that is centered in Christ. Remind them that the world sends many messages about what it means to be a man. Culture is no guide, as the target is always moving. We must look to Christ and strive to imitate His example in our context. This pursuit of Christ-centered masculinity involves steering our passions toward the things of God and not the things of this world.

If this is your first session as a group, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. Then, ask for volunteers to share what they want 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 to do it.

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.

As this is the first session, let your group know how your time will be spent. Explain that you will watch a video that is 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. Consider encouraging 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 suggested that we’ve allowed the concept of masculinity to come under attack because we’ve let the world define what masculinity looks like. In what ways does the world define masculinity?**
- **Why is it more important to care what the Creator says about masculinity than what the world (the created) says?**
- **Rick explained that to know someone’s passion, we just need to spend time with them. In what ways do people’s passions play out over time?**
- **Regardless of what we say we believe, we will always live out what we believe. Can you think of an example where someone lived out their passions differently than they claimed? How did this disparity make you view this person?**
- **What about you? What would you claim your passions are? Do you think your actions back that up?**
- **Sometimes our judgment of ourselves is clouded, but others can see us clearly. What**



PASSION

SESSION 1

- do you think those who know you best would say your passions are?**
- Rick was honest about how his passions took him away from his family but was adamant that this will not happen to others if our greatest passion was the Lord. What is different about being passionate about the Lord compared to other passions?**
- Do you agree that one of man's greatest needs is to be respected? In what ways do you personally yearn for respect?**
- How can our passions influence the way people respect us and see us?**

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

- To pursue Christ-centered masculinity, we must redirect and reorient our passions in such a way that our greatest passion and zeal is for the Lord Himself. Today we're going to see how the psalmist reflects on the character of God and how this leads to a passionate pursuit of Him.**

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 Psalm 43:3-5. As Rick stated in the video, our role as men will fall into place if the Lord is our primary passion. In this passage, the psalmist explains what it is that leads him to pursue the Lord and what he experiences when he does this.

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:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the psalms, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Sons of Korah (including Psalm 43), and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other psalms remains unknown.
- Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e., Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e., Psalm 119).
- Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection, or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e., Psalm 51).

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Psalm 43:3-5. When the volunteer has finished, direct their attention back to vs. 3. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- What does it mean to be "led" by the light and truth of God?**
 - Answers will vary. When we are led by something, it goes before us as a guide, and it leads us to a destination. The psalmist is suggesting that dwelling on the character of God and the truth of His Word will take us somewhere. In this case, that somewhere is deeper into fellowship with God.
- How do we practically dwell on his light and truth?**
 - Answer: By studying his Word, praying to the Lord, listening to faithful preaching, teaching, or podcasts, meeting in small group fellowship, etc.
- Being led by these things will bring us to his "holy hill," the dwelling place of God. To what is the author referring?**
 - Answer: The word for "dwelling" here is the Hebrew word for "tabernacle," the place that was filled by the glory of the Lord in the tent of meeting. The Israelites had to go to a physical location to experience the fullness of communion with God.
- Is the psalmist saying that to pursue God, we must go to a specific physical location? Is that true for us today?**



PASSION

SESSION 1

- Answers will vary. We must understand that we are in a new covenant with God through Christ, in which we now have “access” to the Father through the Spirit (Eph. 2:18). This is good news, as we can commune with God from anywhere. We might most often do this from specific places like our churches or our bedsides at night, but we can also do this from our office, our cars, and more.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **The main point from verse 3 is that reflecting on the light and truth of God will lead us deeper into fellowship with Him. For the psalmist, this meant physically being in the presence of the Lord. But we can experience this anywhere through the indwelling Spirit of God. Next, we are going to see the attitude this reflection cultivates in the psalmist.**

NEXT, direct your group’s attention to verse 4 of Psalm 43, and have someone re-read this verse. Then, ask:

- **What was the significance of the altar in Old Testament worship?**
 - Answer: The altar was the place where sacrifices and offerings were made to God. Though there were numerous types of offerings, one of the most common and well-known was the burnt offering, in which animals were sacrificed on the altar to make atonement for sin.
- **Churches today (hopefully!) no longer sacrifice animals at the altar. Why don’t we do this anymore?**
 - Answer: We no longer need to make atonement for our sin, because Christ himself has made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross. We no longer take birds and lambs and slaughter them, because the blood of the Lamb has been poured out once and for all for the sins of the world!
- **With this in mind, why is it appropriate for us to approach the altar with exceeding joy, and to overflow with praise?**
 - Answer: The psalmist had this joy as he reflected on the light and truth of God. Everything he knew about God pointed him to the Lord’s compassionate, gracious, and loving character. Christians today have an even fuller revelation of God’s character through Christ and a deeper relationship with Him, and this should fill us with a consuming joy and cultivate hearts of praise.
- **Do most Christians today seem to have this joy? If we want to have it, how do we produce it?**
 - Answer: We cannot simply conjure joy out of thin air. As with the psalmist, our joy will result as a by product of dwelling on the character and person of God—reflecting on who He is and what He has done for us. When these truths are deeply ingrained in our hearts, He will become our most passionate pursuit, and our lives will be filled with joyful praise to Him.

THEN, re-read Psalm 43:5. We see a three-fold progression developing in these verses. First, the psalmist has been dwelling on who God is and drawing near to Him in fellowship. Because of this, his life is filled with joy and praise in the present. But more than this, it also gives him something tangible to hold onto as he moves forward in life: hope. Knowing that our lives are in God’s hands helps us look beyond our circumstances to a better future. Ask:

- **If we are finding true joy in the Lord and overflowing with praise, how could we ever be downtrodden like the psalmist is here?**
 - Answer: Jesus Himself promised that we would have trouble in the world (Jn. 16:33). Sin is a present reality that causes destruction all around us and creates hurt and heartache in us. It is not only OK to sometimes feel this way, but it’s expected that we will have tribulation in the world.
- **In light of this verse and all that we’ve talked about, what is the key for Christians going through difficult times?**
 - Answer: Regardless of what we are going through in the present, we can always look forward with confidence because Jesus on the cross has secured our salvation and eternal hope. The pains of the present may hurt us, but we know that God has given us the most supreme and costly gift of salvation, purchased with the blood of Christ, and that one day we will be with Him when tears and mourning and pain are no more (Rev. 21:4).

FINALLY, have a volunteer read Psalm 43:3-5 again. Then, say something like:

- **In these verses, the psalmist shows us why pursuing the Lord above all else is the one passion that will never fail us. It will not only lead us to authentic joy and a heart of praise, but a deep passion for the Lord also provides a safeguard amid trials, as the Lord is the only one who can promise that there is hope beyond our circumstances. If we want to become true men of God who are steadfast and immovable in our faith, our greatest singular passion must be for the Lord Himself.**

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 reflecting on a concept like our passions, it forces us to respond in evaluation. As we wrap up our time here, there are three different questions we can think through and ask to evaluate ourselves.**
- 1) After reading the psalmist's words, it's possible that some of us have never felt this way about the Lord, nor have had much desire to pursue Him at all. If this is the case, we need to ask ourselves, "Do I know the Lord as my Savior? Has he done a grace-filled, saving work in my life for which I am grateful? Have I ever actually surrendered my life to Christ through saving faith"?
 - 2) For others of us, we need to evaluate what passions are competing with our passion for the Lord. Some of us need to ask, "Am I pursuing something in my life with greater passion than I'm pursuing the Lord? What other passions do I need to lay down or get under control"?
 - 3) Some of us need to consider what steps we need to take to cultivate a deeper passion for the Lord. Reflecting on Psalm 43, we need to ask, "Am I moved deeply by the light and truth of the Lord? Do I fully understand the depth of what He's done for me? How can I grow in knowledge and depth of insight of Him"?

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.