

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

Impact 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 at once, or purchase the 5-week studies independantly. .

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

The background of the cover is a photograph of a majestic mountain range. The mountains are rugged and dark, with patches of snow or light-colored rock. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. In the foreground, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees. A large, solid blue rectangle is positioned in the center of the image, containing the word 'VIRTUE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

VIRTUE

A 5-Week, Video-Driven Discipleship
Curriculum for Men

RICK BURGESS

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

Leader Guides

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Published by Iron Hill Press in the United States of America.

Videos

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



PUBLISHED BY IRON HILL PRESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MAN CHURCH

DISCIPLESHIP IMPACT

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 IMPACT ?

Impact is a 40-week, video-driven curriculum designed to help men discover what it means to have a fruitful life and faith. *Impact* takes the eight traits from 2 Peter 1:5-8 and unpacks them 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 *Impact*, you're a part of the growing tide of leaders who are looking to awaken men to embrace their calling as Christ-followers.

START GETTING STARTED

In 2 Peter 1:5–8, Peter provides a list of attributes every Christian should pursue. Peter gave an excellent explanation for why striving to obtain these attributes is so important. He said that if Christ-followers "own" these attributes and continue to grow in them, their lives would be effective and fruitful for the Kingdom of God. This fruitfulness should be the goal of every mature Christian.

One of the attributes Peter mentioned is "virtue." In this 5-week series, Rick Burgess will help you guide men in your group to understand precisely what "virtue" is and how pursuing it will lead men to lives of impact for the Kingdom of God.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

FIRST, preview your video. Every *Impact* 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.

EDGE ELEMENTS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



RICK BURGESS is the Co-Host of the nationally syndicated *Rick and Bubba Show*. He has co-authored multiple New York Times Bestselling Books covering topics such as politics, marriage, business, comedy, and what it looks like to be a follower of Christ in secular entertainment. Rick has appeared on the Fox News programs *Hannity's America*, *Your World with Neil Cavuto*, and *Fox and Friends*.

Rick speaks regularly at men's events and marriage conferences across the country, all while teaching youth and men's Bible studies on a weekly basis. Rick is married to the former Sherri Bodine, and they have five children: Brandi, Blake, Brooks, Brody, and Bronner. Rick's wife Sherri is the author of the book "Bronner: A Journey to Understand," a powerful story about what she and Rick learned about God through the earthly death of their youngest son, Bronner. Rick's eulogy for Bronner became the most-viewed video in the world on YouTube the week of the service.

ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO *IMPACT: Virtue*

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Main Passage: Philippians 4:8-9

Purpose: To understand that a Christ-centered life of virtue results from holy thinking that leads to holy doing.

Session Snapshot: As men of God, we should all desire to live virtuous lives. This should be the fruit of the transformation that has taken place in our hearts through the Gospel. However, Paul tells us that before we can practice these righteous actions, we must reorient our thoughts. Virtuous living is a product of a Christ-centered thought-life. If we want to be men of virtue who honor God with our living, we must be men who set our minds on the right things.

GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by introducing a new theme.

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning a video series that breaks down the individual characteristics of 2 Peter 1:5-8. If this is your first video series in *Impact*, read the following set-up statement:

- **In 2 Peter, Peter encourages his readers to pursue lives that honor God. In the introduction, we see Peter reveal the heart of his letter in just a few powerful verses. Peter says that because of God's grace, we have been saved from the death our sins rightfully earn and have been given a new life and a new purpose. As a result, we are to pursue spiritual maturity. Peter says we should strive to grow in our faith, "supplementing" our faith with "virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love." Why did Peter encourage this? Because if we grow in this way, we will be men whose lives are truly fruitful, real assets to the advancement of God's Kingdom. That should be the goal of every man! In *Impact*, we'll look at these characteristics individually and learn how to see them increase in our lives.**

(If it's not your first series in *Impact*, consider summarizing the previous paragraph, reminding men that you're looking at the characteristics from Peter's second letter.)

THEN, if this is your first session as a group, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. You may even ask men what they hope 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.

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 this isn't your first session, transition straight into the video. If it is your first study in *Impact*, explain to the group how your time together will work. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 12-15 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. Remember, a participant guide is available to you if you would like to distribute it to your group.

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

When the video ends, 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:

- **Which do you think is a bigger threat to your faith: an opposition from *outside* the church (such as persecution from the world) or dangers that arise *inside* the church? What about issues that arise inside your own heart? Explain your answer.**
- **What are some examples of dangers to our faith that can come from within us or our churches?**
- **If we are saved by grace through faith in Christ and not based on our efforts, why is it important to supplement our faith with this list of qualities from 2 Peter? Isn't our simple faith in Christ sufficient?**
- **What dangers can arise if our faith remains stagnant? Conversely, what qualities would you expect to arise if a believer's faith is vibrant?**
- **Rick described virtue as "moral excellence." What picture (or specific qualities) come to mind when you hear that phrase?**
- **Can you think of someone in your life who displays this kind of moral excellence? How does their life look different from the world around us?**
- **Can you think of examples of things the world views as acceptable or good that Christ-followers should abstain from in pursuit of moral excellence?**
- **What similarities are there between legalism and the virtue of obedience? What is the difference between them that causes one to be viewed negatively and one positively?**

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

- **If we want to guard our faith from growing stagnant and unhealthy, we must make every effort (through the power of Christ) to supplement our faith with the list of qualities Paul mentioned. Today we will spend some time considering the quality of virtue and what it looks like for men of God to pursue this in their lives.**

OPENING THE WORD

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

FIRST, explain that you will take a more in-depth look at what it means to pursue virtue in our lives by examining a few verses from Paul's letter to the Philippians. As we encounter God in His Word, one of our goals is to grow in our knowledge of the Bible. A major part of understanding the Bible is understanding the context in which we encounter a passage. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would have

a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

- **Time frame:** Philippians was one of Paul's last letters before he was martyred, sometime around AD 62.
- **Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he encouraged them not to lose faith because of his persecution.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Philippians 4:8-9. When the volunteer has finished, direct their attention back to verse 8. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **Before we focus on the list of “whatever’s” in verse 8, what is Paul's actual command (or action step) in this verse?**
 - *Answer:* The command is at the end of verse 8: “to *think* about these things.”
- **Does it seem easy to “think about” this list of things, or does this feel like a challenging exercise to you? If so, why is it challenging?**
 - Answers will vary. This can feel like a challenging command because some of these thoughts are very abstract. We sometimes don’t know what it means to “think about whatever is honorable,” for example.
- **But what about the opposite? If Paul warned you NOT to think about certain things—things that are *untrue, dishonorable, impure, and unlovely*—do things more readily come to your mind? What kind of things do you think of?**
 - Answers will vary. Surprisingly, this feels easier for many of us. We can think of inappropriate TV shows or music, things on our phones that we shouldn't be looking at, or even worldviews that contradict the Gospel (e.g., "The American dream").
- **How can these opposite things—the “not good” things—negatively influence your faith and your relationship with God if you allow yourself to dwell on them too much?**
 - Answers will vary.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **We all know what sort of things we *shouldn't* be dwelling on. We know it's not honoring God when we think lustful thoughts or get caught up in pursuing money or our own glory. But it seems harder to know what kind of “whatever’s” we *should* dwell on. And yet, that is exactly what Paul is calling us to do here, and that is our goal in this session—to learn to think about these things.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention back to the “whatever’s” in verse 8. Have someone read the verse again. Then, ask:

- **If you had to summarize or condense this list into one short thought, how would you describe what Paul is saying here?**
 - Answers will vary. When we take all these different “whatever’s” together, perhaps we could describe the list as "Whatever is honoring to God" or "Whatever is holy." Maybe even, "Whatever is not tainted by sin."
- **In short, these qualities are associated with God's holy character. Instead of focusing on each of these traits, which can feel abstract, as we have acknowledged, how can we reinterpret this list more concretely? What can we dwell on that encompasses *all* of these things?**
 - *Answer:* We can dwell on God! We can remind ourselves of the truth of the Gospel, of our holy and just God, who is pure and untainted by sin, yet who still loves rebellious sinners and

graciously offers salvation, and who is alone worthy of praise. (Consider reading Psalm 119:9-16.)

- **Why is it important for us to “think about” these holy and righteous things?**
 - Answers will vary. If we truly want to live each day for Jesus, we must constantly be aware of what He’s done for us. A constant awareness of God’s love and mercy will compel us to no longer live for ourselves but for Him who gives us life and breath and salvation, and every good gift that we have.
- **How might your life look different if you were *constantly* reminded of God’s deep love for you and aware of His desire for you to live a holy life?**
 - Answers will vary.

THEN, re-read verse 9. Whereas verse 8 was all about *thinking*, verse 9 is all about *doing*, about putting this into practice. We will never get the action right without the proper thinking that compels us to live this way. Paul lived as he did because his mind was convinced of the absolute certainty of who Jesus was and how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus changed his life. Our actions will fall short without the proper motivation. Ask:

- **Paul calls us to imitate his own life. From what you know about Paul, what were some virtues or qualities on display in his life?**
 - Answers will vary. Paul was bold. He was burdened for those who were lost or who misunderstood the Gospel. He cared for the poor. He was willing to endure hardship for the sake of the Gospel. He developed many friends and co-laborers in ministry. He was committed to prayer. He trusted God. In short, he could only urge people to imitate him because he sought to imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).
- **How might Paul’s well-known ministry efforts have differed if he lacked these qualities?**
 - Answers will vary. It is very likely that part of the reason for Paul’s fruitful ministry was because people saw in him a life and a faith that matched the Gospel message he was proclaiming. God was pleased to bless his ministry because his walk matched his talk.

FINALLY, have a volunteer read Philippians 4:8-9 one final time. Then, say something like:

- **Paul concludes this section with a beautiful reminder that the God of peace will be with us when we practice these things. Christ-followers are called to set our minds on holy things, which leads us to live holy lives. When we do this, our lives will not be marked by fear, guilt, and shame, nor will we shrink back before God, but we will know the peace of walking with God in joyful obedience. If anyone longs to have this peaceful contentment with God, it must begin with the right thinking.**

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 the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Ask volunteers to share what THEY think the main application is of the passage you've just studied. You may ask something like:

- **How do we practically apply this call to pursue virtue by thinking and doing virtuous things? What does this look like on an everyday basis?**

Allow men to share their responses and discuss them as a group. If you choose, supplement their responses with the following takeaways:

- 1) Some of us must ask, "Am I daily setting my mind on the truths of God's Word and the good news of the Gospel?" If not, how will you commit to reading and studying God's Word this week?
- 2) Others of us need to consider what Rick asked in the video, "Am I allowing garbage into my life?" Is your thought-life tainted, and could some of these unholy thoughts be causing you to stumble? If so, what do you need to cut out of your life?
- 3) Some of us must repent of specific areas of our lives that are not holy and honorable. We must confess to God that our wayward thinking is leading us to wayward actions and plead with Him to change our hearts as we yearn to set our minds right moving forward.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is telling them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.