

one & one

Real Men

Exploring together what a
Christian man thinks and does

14 sessions in Ephesians

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With thanks to Tom C, Tom F, Jack and Tom D.

One2One Real Men

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Introduction A real man

What is a man? When do you become a man? What are men supposed to do, anyway?

When Jesus walked on earth, He called men to follow Him. All sorts of men. Fishermen, soldiers, accountants, rich and poor, leaders and beggars.

He called them to come on an adventure, to turn their life into a challenge. He told the men He met to become real men—by following Him.

Your teenage years are a time when you stop being a child and start being a man. The question is: what does it mean to “start being a man”?

It’s quite difficult to work that out. The society we live in has lots of suggestions. Your parents and your friends have ideas about what a real man thinks and does. Your school will tell you what it means to be mature.

But there’s one person we often forget to listen to—and He’s the one who made everything. Who made you. Who knows you inside out. Who wants what’s best for you. Who made you to be a real man, and tells you how.

In the Bible, God has a lot to say about what a man is. He Himself lived on earth as a real man, Jesus. And the men who followed Jesus found out what it meant to be real men by getting to know Him. It’s exactly the same today.

Are you ready to find out what it takes?

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Living the adventure

One of Jesus' first followers was a guy called Paul. His life as a follower of Jesus in the first century saw him standing up to the might of the Roman Empire, travelling thousands of miles, causing riots, being imprisoned and making daring escapes. His life was full of adventures! But each one was part of a bigger adventure—the adventure of living as a Christian, wherever Jesus takes you, whatever He asks you to do.

Christian-hater to Christian leader

Paul wasn't brought up a Christian. In fact, he became a fierce enemy of Christianity, and after Jesus had risen and gone back to heaven, Paul tried to imprison and execute Jesus' friends. Until, that is, he was walking along a road and Jesus appeared to him in a blinding light (you can read about it in Acts 9 v 1-19).

Unsurprisingly, he changed his mind about Jesus after that and spent the rest of his life talking about Him, rather than torturing His people.

Wherever Paul went, he told people about Jesus. Most places he went, the majority dismissed his message—but some became Christians. And so by the time Paul left, there was a church in that city.

Paul and Ephesus

One of these churches was in a city called Ephesus, which is in what we now call Turkey. Paul spent a couple of years leading that church, before moving on.

Later, he wrote a letter to them, reminding them what followers of Jesus know to be true about God and themselves, and explaining to them how to follow Jesus in their everyday lives; how to be real men (and women, and children). Just like the rest of the Bible, these words were written by a man, but inspired by God. They're Paul's words—but they're also God's words.

And it's this letter, which is called "Ephesians", which you're going to be digging in to over the next couple of months...

How this booklet works

In here you'll find 14 sessions, each looking at a bit of Ephesians.

Seven sessions (the odd-numbered ones) are JOINT, for you to do with an older Christian guy—just the two of you (or you and a friend and him). The other seven (the even-numbered ones) are SOLO, for you to do on your own in your own time. So it'll take you seven weeks to do the whole booklet if you meet up weekly, 14 if you meet up every two weeks. When you get together, it'll probably take you 45 minutes to do the session. On your own, the sessions should take around half an hour at the most.

Lots of people find it helpful to write down answers to some, or all, of the questions—it helps you focus on the question, and remember what you found in the Bible. So there are spaces left to scribble something down. But if the thought of having to write stuff down makes you want to close this book, then don't feel you have to!

You may well have been given this booklet by an older man at your church who leads your youth group, or by your dad; they'll be hoping you can both learn together more about how to be a real man. Maybe you've found this booklet yourself... if you have, you'll get most out of it if you do it with an older guy who's been a Christian for at least a few years. So try to find one at a church or Christian youth group near you.

It doesn't matter whether you're a follower of Jesus, or someone who wants to find out about Him and what He says. And because this is a booklet for men, it doesn't pull punches or tiptoe round the issues we might find difficult. That's not how real men deal with things.

The Bible quotes in this booklet are from the NIV 1984 (New International Version). If you have, or can get your hands on, that translation, then do—but the sessions will work with Bible versions like the ESV, the NASB, and the NIRV (and probably lots of others!) too.

If you're an older man, wanting to use this booklet with a teenager, you'll find a helpful online guide at www.thegoodbook.co.uk/Realmenguide, which is well worth looking at before you start.

Today's Bible section: Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1-14

A TO START OFF

- 1 Describe who you are in three sentences.

B LETT-ERS BEGIN

Read Ephesians 1 v 1-2

These days, you start a letter by saying who it's to, and finish it with who it's from. In Paul's day, they started by saying who it was from and who it was to, and then got on with it.

- 2 Who is this letter from, and who is it to (v 1)?



Jargon Buster

Apostle = the men God chose to write the New Testament and to set up His church.

Saints = "distinctive people". It's a word Paul often used to describe Christians, because they live differently to others.

C GOD'S PLAN

Read verses 3-14

- 3 Paul repeats one phrase loads of times here—it's the last two words of verse 3. Write down the phrase.. Then each time you find that phrase, read out that sentence and its verse number.

Just to be awkward, sometimes the phrase finishes with "him" instead of "Christ". You should spot it eight times!

This phrase is a wonderful way to describe what a "Christian" actually is. It's someone who is united to Jesus—who knows Him as a friend. If we are "in Christ", He shares everything He has with us. Wow!

4 When did God make His plan to choose people to be “in him” (v 4)? Why is this amazing?

5 When Paul says “through his blood” in verse 7, he’s thinking of when Jesus died on the cross. Use the jargon buster to work out what God did by sending Jesus to die on the cross.



Jargon Buster Redemption = to pay a price so that you can buy something back.

6 Look at verse 13. What does God give people when they believe the good news about Jesus (the “gospel”)?



Jargon Buster

Holy Spirit = God. God is one God, in three persons, each different but fully God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (which is what people mean when they talk about the Trinity).

A deposit is something you give which guarantees that you’ll give something even better later. For a school trip, you might pay a 10% deposit as a way of showing you’ll definitely pay the other 90% six months later.

7 So what is Paul telling us about the Holy Spirit (v 14)?

8 In verse 10, “when the times will have reached their fulfilment” means the day that God reaches the end of His plan. Who is going to be recognised as ruler of absolutely everything?

- 9 At the bottom of this page is a “timeline”. Can you fill in the parts of God’s plan that you’ve been looking at?
- 10 But why did God bother with this massive eternal plan?! Why did He choose to make people part of His plan?! Find the almost identical phrase that crops up in v 6, v 12 and v 14. That’s the reason! What do you think it means?

D THINK ABOUT IT

- 11 At the beginning you had to describe yourself in three sentences. Using the timeline to help you, how would Paul describe a Christian man in three sentences?
A Christian man is someone who...
- 12 Imagine you were one of the people Paul wrote this to. How would Paul’s words make you feel as a Christian?
- 13 Have these verses changed the way you think about the Christian life? If yes, how?



PRAYER TIME

Come up with a one-sentence prayer thanking God for something (or lots of things!) you've learned from this section:

MEMORY VERSE

“He chose us IN HIM before the creation of the world.”
Ephesians 1 v 4

