



STRONG MEN OF THE BIBLE

**A BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL LOOK AT FIVE
MEN WHO HELPED TO DEFINE MANHOOD
FOR EVERY GENERATION.**

Craig Hamlin

Sessions

Overview

Joseph: Men Who Endure

Jehosophat: Men Who Pray

Peter: Men Who Fall Up

Joseph: Men Who Protect

Barnabas: Men Who Stand Together



Overview

Strong Men of the Bible is a five-part bible study looking at men who were not perfect, and men who struggled with fears, doubts and failures. These men learned the hard way the lessons of manhood and what it takes to walk with God. They were not all physically strong and sometimes looked weaker than we are comfortable to admit, but in the end, their strength proved to be the kind God could use to impact their world for His glory.

In a day when manhood is being challenged and false images of manhood abound, it is refreshing to focus on men who truly visualize the image of God. Their lives are filled with adventure, battles, struggles emotionally and spiritually, and examples of doing the right thing even when the stakes were incredibly high.

What is biblical manhood?

As Phillip Holmes writes in an article for Desiring God:

“We learn from Jesus that true manhood isn’t simply about keeping our noses clean and our own ducks in a row. True manhood means getting beyond ourselves to love our neighbors — and our neighbor is anyone we meet that is in need. Real men freely give their time, resources, attention, energy, and emotional support to those that need it without regard to what they can give in return.”

Eric Mason, in his book, *Restoring Manhood*, writes about the model for every man:

“Jesus, as the Son of Man, is not only inspirational—He is epic. Knowing that He got up from the grave after such a savage and brutal martyrdom should make us as men pump our fists in the air in worship. Here before us is a man who was man enough to drink in death and spit out victory. He is fully God and yet truly and fully human. He is a man just like—and yet wholly unlike—us, all at the same time. So if we’re looking for an example of manhood, we need look no further than the cross and the empty tomb. Jesus, over and over again, shows us what it means to really be a man.”

As you look at these strong men of the Bible, look into your own life and ask God to challenge you toward biblical manhood. Whatever it takes to change, be willing to do it. Study these characters and scriptures privately but then find a few men who will go on this journey with you. Together, you can invest and impart truth that will truly be transformative to your life and to all those around you. Enjoy the Journey!



JOSEPH

— MEN WHO ENDURE —

GENESIS 37-48

Biographical Background:

Father - Jacob Mother - Rachel

Brother - Benjamin

Step Brothers - Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulan, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher

Childhood Facts:

(1) Dysfunctional family

- Joseph had a habit of snitching on his older brothers (37:2)
- Jacob, his father, favored and loved him more than his other sons (37:3)
- Joseph went through major sibling rivalry mostly brought on by his own bragging and his dad's obvious favoritism (37:2-4)

(2) Dreamer

- His dreams enraged the jealousy in his brothers even more because they had Joseph in charge and his brothers in submission
- His dad openly rebuked him but secretly considered them to be true (37:9-11)

(3) Deception by his brothers

- Some of the brothers plotted to kill him
- Others thought selling him would be better
- But they all agreed to tell their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (tore his coat, animal blood on the coat)

Young Adult Years:

- (1) Sold into slavery by his brothers for 20 shekels of silver to the Midianites who sold him to Potiphar in Egypt, Pharaoh's captain of the guard.
- (2) The Lord was with Joseph (39:2, 5, 21, 23)
- (3) Joseph became the overseer of Potiphar's house, very successful, obvious favor from the Lord, trustworthy with everything in his house, and handsome in form and appearance (39:2-6)
- (4) Pursued by Potiphar's wife (39:7)
- (5) Joseph refused to give in to her solicitations (39:10)
- (6) Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife who felt rejected. It cost him his freedom (39:11-41:36)

Prison Years:

- (1) Held for at least two years in the king's prison
- (2) The Lord favored Joseph and he rose to supervisor of the entire prison system (39:22-23)
- (3) The cupbearer and baker had dreams interpreted by Joseph
- (4) The cupbearer forgot about his promise to remember Joseph.
- (5) Joseph was remembered after two years and came to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Released after this.

Thirty Somethings and Beyond

- (1) Entered Pharaoh's service at 30 years old
- (2) Pharaoh recognized the Spirit of God on Joseph (41:38)
- (3) Placed in charge of all of Pharaoh's house and second in command of all of Egypt! (41:39-45)
- (4) Two sons before the famine (Manasseh and Ephraim)
- (5) Developed a strategy for Egypt to profit from the famine predicted. Egypt increased its wealth Big-Time!

- (6) Presided over the grain distribution which also put him in the presence of his brothers (42-45)
- (7) Reveals himself to his brothers, redeems his entire family and his sons are blessed by Jacob (45-48)

Joseph as a Type of Christ:

- (1) Joseph was a seed of Abraham
- (2) Joseph was a beloved son of His father
- (3) Joseph was rejected by his own people and thrown in a pit, “killed” by his own
- (4) Joseph would rule over his people
- (5) Joseph was unjustly accused and imprisoned
- (6) Joseph redeemed his people from certain death

Discussion Questions Surrounding His Life and Times:

- 1. What impact does favoritism have on our minds sometimes? Good and Bad?
- 2. How does a dysfunctional family experience change the way you view and do life?
- 3. How could Joseph have handled his dream-telling better? How would you have handled it?
- 4. How would you (or how do you) handle family-conflict?
- 5. How should a man handle success when it comes? How can success get in the way of your relationship with God?
- 6. How do men handle continual advances of a woman? What can we learn from Joseph's response?
- 7. How do you deal with false allegations? Especially, when they cost you your job?
- 8. How do you keep from getting bitter and cynical when bad things continue to happen, even after you have prayed about it?
- 9. How would deal with a family member who had wounded you if you had the chance to get revenge?
- 10. What made Joseph a strong man?
- 11. How are you like and unlike Joseph?



JEHOSOPHAT

—MEN WHO PRAY—

2 CHRONICLES 17-20

Biographical Background:

Father -Asa, King of Judah Mother - Unknown

Family Facts:

(1) King Asa

- Started well - King Asa “did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God. He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim and commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment” (2 Kings 14:2-4).
- Made significant reforms to the cities of Judah, built fortified cities in Judah during times of great peace and led to nation to build an army of nearly 600,000 men.
- When Ethiopia came against them with one million soldiers, Asa prayed: “O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let not man prevail against You” (14:11).
- Prophetically, the Spirit of God spoke through Azariah to Asa with these words, “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you” (15:2).
- That word proved to be prophetic, because in the latter part of King Asa’s life, he did not rely on the Lord to fight in the battle with the Syrians and the Lord did not give him the victory. This led to anger with Asa and eventually to his death (16:7-13).

(2) Jehosophat reigned after King Asa’s death and continued the reforms led by his father.

Reformation Years for King Jehosophat:

- (1) The Lord was with Jehosophat because “he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel” (17:3-4).
- (2) The Lord established the kingdom in his hand and the entire nation brought tribute to him. He prospered greatly.
- (3) “His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord, and furthermore, he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah” (17:6).

Wars and More Reforms:

- (1) Jehosophat allies through marriage with King Ahab of Israel.
- (2) Both of them went into battle against the Syrians. King Ahab thought to disguise himself so that the Syrians would attack King Jehosophat, but the plan backfired and King Ahab was struck with an arrow. He died from his wounds. The Lord, however, protected King Jehosophat.
- (3) Jehosophat continued to make reforms in the land of Judah, especially after he was confronted by the prophet of the Lord about his alignment with King Ahab, the evil king of Israel.
- (4) In Jehosophat’s final major conflict, when confronted by three nations on the east side of the Jordan in the land of Moab (Jordan). During this conflict, King Jehosophat proved his love and loyalty to God though his utter dependence on the Lord, calling the people to prayer and fasting as they sought God for deliverance (20:1-12).

Key Verses:

“Then Jehosophat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah” (20:3).

“For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You” (20:12).

Discussion Questions Surrounding Jehosaphat's Life and Times:

1. What lessons could Jehosaphat have learned from his father?
2. What is the significance of a father's visual and verbal influence?
3. What makes a person living in a morally evil and idolatrous culture take a stand against the cultural norms?
4. Why do you think Jehosaphat would align himself with King Ahab? What makes us step outside of what we know is right and go in a direction that aligns us with evil?
5. Explore 2 Chr. 20:1-12. What are some strong men qualities Jehosaphat exhibits? What actions did he take that may not be considered strong?
6. What stood out as the key(s) to Jehosaphat's success? What do we learn about prayer from this story?
7. What lessons do we learn about God in this story?
8. What lessons do we learn about people?
9. What would we need to apply in order to become more like God from this story?
10. What will you do as a result of this story?



PETER

—MEN WHO FALL UP—

LUKE 22:31-34, 54-62; ACTS 2:14

Biographical Background:

Father - John (Jonas) Mother - Unknown; Wife - Unknown; Mother-in-law - healed (Matthew 8:14–15, Mark 1:29–31, and Luke 4:38–41); Brother - Andrew; Hometown - Capernaum in Galilee

Family and Life Facts:

- (1) Andrew - Peter's brother was a curious and trusting man who worked alongside his brother in the same trade (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:1-10). In John's account, Andrew seems to be a disciple of John the Baptist who hears John say that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Andrew follows Jesus and then finds his brother, Simon (Peter), and introduces him to Jesus.
- (2) Peter by trade is a fisherman.
- (3) Peter's gets a name change by Jesus - John 1:42
- (4) Peter is married and has a house in Capernaum close to the synagogue (Mark 1:29-31). Peter's wife is never named.

Calling and Big Moments of Peter's Life:

- (1) Peter's call was first through an introduction by Andrew but afterwards was immediate (Matthew 4:18).
- (2) Peter was the only man to ever walk on water (Mt. 14:28-33)
- (3) Peter became the primary speaking disciple who famously referenced Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16).
- (4) Peter was one of three men who went with Jesus to the mountain where Jesus was transfigured and met with Elijah and Moses (Mt. 17:1-13).
- (5) Peter was rebuked by Jesus when he tried to hinder Jesus from going to Jerusalem (Matthew 16:21-23)
- (6) Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest, when the soldiers come to arrest Jesus (John 18:10)
- (7) Peter follows Jesus to Caiaphas' house when Jesus is arrested by the temple guard, and then denies that knows Jesus (John 18:15-27)
- (8) After Jesus' death, when Mary tells him and John that Jesus appeared to her, he ran to the tomb and went inside (John 20)
- (9) Jesus meets with Peter and the other disciples after His resurrection. Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" three times and commands him to "feed my sheep."
- (10) At Pentecost, Peter is empowered by the Holy Spirit and preaches before the people in Jerusalem. 3,000 people come to faith in Christ.
- (11) Peter goes on to minister powerfully in Jesus' name and becomes a missionary to the Jews.
- (12) Peter is instrumental in Mark's gospel and writes two epistles of his own.

"The greatest battle you wage against failure occurs on the inside, not the outside."
~ John Maxwell, Turning Mistakes into Stepping Stones for Success

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."
~ Winston Churchill

"One of the most important attributes of a leader is the ability to admit his or her mistakes. Since leaders are faced with so many problems and challenges and are in a position to make countless decisions (or avoid them) things inevitably go wrong. The sign of a superior leader is not that he avoids making mistakes, it's that when he does, he learns from them."

~ Dr. Stephen Adubato

When men fall or fail, they often do not let the sin rest upon them long enough to feel the weight that is too heavy to carry which drives them to the Savior. In our culture, we tend to ignore the sin or dismiss it rather than feel its weight. On the contrary, some men carry the weight and fall under the pressure of shame and guilt. Their identity gets wrapped up in their failure and their most damaging failure comes from a false identity.

Study Luke 22:31-33, 54-62 to see how Peter fell up rather than down.

Study Questions:

- (1) What did Jesus say to Peter that revealed the source of pressure placed on Peter? (Luke 22:31)
- (2) How would you have responded to Jesus' words in Luke 22:31?
- (3) What did Jesus say to Peter that must have encouraged him in that moment?
- (4) How has Jesus encouraged you in moments of testing?
- (5) What does Peter's reaction in Luke 22:57-58, 60 say about the weakness of man in the face of extreme pressure?
- (6) What is your reaction to Peter's response in Luke 22:62?
- (7) How did Peter bounce back from this failure? (John 21:15-19; Acts 1:15-17; 2:14-41)
- (8) Describe how you feel knowing that your failure is not the final word.
- (9) What do we learn from our moments of failure that allow us to fall up rather than fall down?



JOSEPH

—MEN WHO PROTECT—

MATTHEW 1:18-25; 2:13-15, 19-23

Biographical Background:

Father - Jacob Mother - Unnamed

Notable Ancestors - Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehosaphat, Solomon, David, Jesse, Ruth and Boaz by Rahab, Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham

Background Information:

- Joseph came from the line of Judah
- Not much is told about his early years except that Joseph was betrothed to Mary
- Betrothal (Kiddushin) was the first step in the marriage process for a Jewish couple. "The first stage of the Torah-mandated wedding process. Kiddushin is accomplished beneath the chupah (wedding canopy) when the groom giving the bride the ring. Kiddushin actually renders the bride and groom full-fledged husband and wife except that the couple may not live together as husband and wife until the second stage, the nisu'in, is completed. According to Torah law, there are three ways to betroth a woman: a) A money transaction. The man gives to the woman money or any object of value. b) A document. The man gives the woman a marriage document which states his intention to marry her. c) Sexual intercourse with the intention that it consummates the marriage. The rabbis forbade betrothing through intercourse, making it a punishable offense." - [Naftali Silberberg, chabad.org](http://NaftaliSilberberg.chabad.org)
- "In ancient times, the two stages of marriage were done on separate occasions, often separated by a full year which the groom would devote to Torah study. Both the kiddushin and the nisu'in were accompanied by celebratory feasts. By the twelfth century this practice had ended, and it became customary to do both kiddushin and nisu'in, successively, beneath the chupah. One of the reasons given for this change of custom is the poverty which prevailed in the Jewish communities. People simply couldn't afford the expense of the two celebrations." - NS
- Joseph was most likely a carpenter in Nazareth (Matthew 13:55).
- There is no record or mention of Joseph living into the adult years of Jesus or being around at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry.
- Joseph was referred to as a "righteous" man (Matthew 1:19).

Matthew 1:18-25

Discussion Questions Around the Text:

1. Since Joseph was considered married to Mary, what two problems did Joseph have when he discovered she was pregnant?
2. What emotions did Joseph not show, at least as far as we can tell from the text? How might you have handled it differently?
3. In what ways did Joseph intend to protect Mary?
4. How can men be the protectors of their families?
5. What ways have you been the protector of your wife and children?



BARNABAS

—MEN WHO STAND TOGETHER—
ACTS 9:26-31; ACTS 11 AND ACTS 14

Biographical Background:

- Barnabas was a Levite, also named Joseph
- His name meant “son of encouragement”.
- Barnabas was a native of Cyprus and apparently a wealthy, generous landowner (Acts 4:32-37)
- He was highly respected by the apostles and was commissioned as an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts

Ministry in Jerusalem and Asia Minor:

- Barnabas was an apparent disciple and apostle living in Jerusalem in the early days of the church (Acts 14:14)
- He defended Paul before the apostles (Acts 9:26-31)
- Barnabas was commissioned by the apostles to go to Antioch (Acts 11:22). “When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.” (Acts 11:23-24)
- Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul (Paul). When he found him he brought him to Antioch. Barnabas disciplined the believers in Antioch for a year with Paul. They were known as Christians first in Antioch.
- Barnabas and Paul are commissioned through the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3) and went on their first missionary journey throughout the northern and western regions of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).
- Both he and Paul preached the Gospel, defended the faith and risked their lives to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul was the primary speaker among them doing the bulk of the preaching.
- From Antioch, they traveled down through Samaria preaching the Gospel and sharing how the Gospel was impacting the Gentiles. They went up to Jerusalem to share this with the apostles and answer the question: “Do the Gentiles who come to faith in Christ need to be circumcised and live according to the law of Moses?”
- Barnabas and Paul shared the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles. They were sent back to Antioch and Syria and Cilicia to give the believers direction on how Gentiles live in relation to the law.
- Barnabas and Paul has a serious disagreement over taking John Mark on a second missionary journey to the church plants. Both of them separated in their ministries with Barnabas heading to Cyprus and Paul going north and west into Asia Minor (Acts 15:36-41).
- After this, Paul takes the forefront and Barnabas the background, only being mentioned in Galatians 2:11-14 in reference to Barnabas being taken in by the Jewish Christians hypocrisy.

Acts 9:26-31

Discussion Questions Around the Text:

1. How difficult is it to stand up for a person whom no one trusts?
2. What did Barnabas do that lived up to his name?
3. What was the impact of Barnabas standing together with Paul?
4. Why is it important for men to stand with other men especially when standing with them is risky?
5. Have you ever had to stand up for someone when no one else would?