

GROWBEYOND.HOW

Sons First

A 6-week guide for men who are tired of performing

“Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.”

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A 6-week GrowBeyond guide for men who are tired of performing

GrowBeyond.How

Leader pages and participant recaps in one file.

The line behind the whole guide

Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.

How to use this

Do one week. Then talk it through with one other man, or with a small group.

This is not a church program. You do not need a classroom, a curriculum license, or a staff person to run it. You need a table, an open Bible, and enough honesty to stop performing for ninety minutes.

If you are walking this with one other man

Read “The idea” before you meet. Bring the recap page. Ask the five questions. Name one practice you will actually do. Text each other once before next week.

If you are leading a group

You are not the expert in the room. You are the man who went first. Read the idea out loud or have men read it silently. Do not lecture over it. Use the session flow. Leave silence alone when a question lands. End on time.

Pace

Six weeks. One week at a time. Do not binge this. The cost is in the days between meetings, not in the meeting.

What you will need

- This guide
- A Bible (NIV quotations are printed here; any readable translation is fine)
- One honest sentence about your life this week
- One other man who will not let you hide

Who this is for

Men who are tired of performing.

Men who have been told they are first a provider, a protector, a leader — and who are quietly exhausted from trying to become those things so God will finally be pleased.

Men who know the language of faith and still feel like they are scratching in the dirt.

Men who would rather handle it alone than be known.

You do not have to be a husband or a father to belong here. You only have to be a son. That is the whole point.

If you are leading sons, discipling younger men, or sitting across from a brother who is stuck — this will work at a kitchen table, in a garage, on a lunch hour, or in a living room with six guys and bad coffee.

What this is not

This is not a manhood seminar.

This is not a church-growth track.

This is not a behavior plan you complete so you can feel like a better Christian.

The world is not starving for more men who can quote a framework. It is starving for men who look like Jesus.

Identity first. Then behavior. Son first. Then everything else.

The six weeks at a glance

Week	Title	One-liner
1	Sons First	You are a son before you are a provider.
2	Identity Before Behavior	Who God says you are shapes how you live — not the other way around.
3	Chicken or Eagle	Stop scratching in the dirt. You were made to soar.
4	Grit on the Road to the Cross	Set your face. Then keep walking.
5	You Have an Advocate	Lone Ranger Christianity doesn't work.
6	It Will Cost You Something	Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.

The weeks build. Week 1 tells you who you are. Week 2 tells you that identity is not a prize for good behavior. Week 3 names the settling. Week 4 puts grit on the road Jesus actually walked. Week 5 refuses isolation. Week 6 tells the truth about cost.

If you skip Week 1 and jump to grit, you will try to white-knuckle your way into a life God already gave you. Start as a son.

How a session works

60–75 minutes

1. **Open (5 min).** Sit down. Phones away. Read the one-liner out loud.
2. **Check-in (10 min).** One sentence each: *Where did last week's practice actually land?* First week: *Where are you tired of performing?*
3. **The idea (15–20 min).** Read it. Do not improve it. Let the lines do the work.
4. **Scripture (10 min).** Read the main passage out loud. One man. Slow.
5. **Questions (20–25 min).** You will not finish all five well if you rush. Better three honest answers than five shallow ones.
6. **Practices (5 min).** Each man names one of the three he will do this week. Write it down. Say it out loud.
7. **Close (5 min).** Pray short. No speeches. Remind them: you are a son before you produce anything.

Leader watch-outs

- Do not rescue a man from his own silence.
- Do not turn the group into a complaint circle or an advice booth.
- If a man confesses sin, thank him for telling the truth. Do not pile on. Do not make him the lesson.
- Sparks fly when iron sharpens iron. That is not failure. That is the point.
- You go first on honesty. The room will not go where the leader will not go.

A word before you start

I have led men for a long time.

I have watched good men try to behave their way into a Father's love.

I have done it myself.

Provider. Protector. Leader. Those are real callings. They are not the first word over your life.

The first word is *son*.

Received. Not achieved.

And then — because salvation is free, and everything after that will cost you something — you pick up a cross and you follow. Not to become a son. Because you already are one.

If that sounds like relief and like work at the same time, you are in the right guide.

Let's go.

Week 1

Sons First

One-liner: You are a son before you are a provider.

For the leader

This week resets the order. Do not skip the adoption text. Men will try to turn “son” into another performance (“I need to act more like a son”). Slow them down. The Father spoke identity before the son produced anything.

If someone is not a husband or father, keep the language wide: the women and children in his orbit, the brothers in his life, the assignment in front of him.

The idea

You are not first and foremost a provider.

You are not first a protector.

You are not first a leader.

You are a son who is fiercely loved before you ever do anything.

That sentence will either feel like water or like a threat. If it feels like a threat, it is because you have been paying for love with output for a long time. Work. Strength. Reliability. The meeting you showed up for. The bill you covered. The image you held together.

None of that is evil. The inversion is.

Quiet resentment lives in a lot of men, and it is usually this: we inverted the order. We tried to achieve what can only be received. Then we got tired. Then we got hard. Then we called the hardness “being a man.”

In the Roman world, adoption was not a soft story. The moment a child was adopted, every legal tie to the old family was cut. He received the full rights of a natural-born son in the new house. He became a co-heir of the entire estate, as if he had always belonged there. No probation period. No “prove you can provide and then we’ll put your name on the will.”

Paul reaches for that picture on purpose.

“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Romans 8:15)

Slaves live in fear. Sons cry *Abba*.

Before Jesus, people were trapped under a system that said, *Keep it perfectly and maybe you will be accepted*. That is not a Father. That is a foreman. We were slaves to that. Then the Son came, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so we might receive adoption to sonship. You are no longer a slave. You are a child. And if a child, then an heir. (Galatians 4:4–7)

Your identity is received, not achieved.

Everything else in this guide flows from that. Grit. Purity. Brotherhood. Cost. If you skip sonship and go straight to the cost, you will treat God like a boss you are trying not to disappoint. That is not the gospel. That is religion with better vocabulary.

The world is not impressed by your manhood seminars. It is starving for men who look like Jesus.

Micromanaging someone else's submission is not masculinity. Washing feet is. Carrying a cross is. Forgiving a betrayer is. Blessing the person who cursed you is. The culture will never platform that. Your people will be marked by it.

And you are going to stand before Christ.

Not to see whether you did enough to stay a son. That is settled, if you are in Him. You will give an account for how you treated the women and children God put in your orbit. For whether you loved your brothers enough to wound them with the truth when a kiss would have been easier. For whether you finished the assignment without quitting.

Provider, protector, leader — those can be fruit.

They make a terrible root.

Start as a son. Cry *Abba*. Then go do the hard things from rest, not for it.

Scripture

Romans 8:15–17 (NIV)

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 4:4–7 (NIV)

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So

you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Also read this week: Luke 9:23; Mark 11:25; Proverbs 27:6; Matthew 25:40; Ephesians 5:25–29; 2 Timothy 4:7–8.

Three practices

1. **Start the day as a son, not a producer.** Before you check a screen, say this out loud: *I am a son. I am fiercely loved before I do anything.* Then open Romans 8:15–17 and read it slowly once.
2. **Put the phone in another room when you are with real humans.** The average man touches his phone thousands of times a day and the people in front of him far less. That is not a productivity problem. It is a worship problem. Your phone is a mission field and a private temple. Love God and love people first. Then use the tool.
3. **Wound one brother with truth — or let one wound you.** A trusted wound. Not a drive-by. Ask, or tell, one hard true thing this week. “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” (Proverbs 27:6)

Five discussion questions

1. Where have you been living as a provider, protector, or leader *first* — and what has that cost you?
2. When you hear “you are a son who is fiercely loved before you ever do anything,” does that feel like water or like a threat? Why?
3. What quiet resentment have you been carrying because you inverted received and achieved?
4. Who in your life needs a man that looks like Jesus more than they need a man who can talk about manhood?
5. If you stood before Christ this year, how would you talk about the women and children in your orbit, the brothers you would not confront, and the assignment you have been tempted to quit?

Participant recap — Week 1

Carry this line: You are a son before you are a provider.

You are not first a role. You are a son. In Roman adoption, the new son received the full estate as if he had always belonged. No proving period. Paul says that is what the Spirit does in you. Slaves live in fear. Sons cry *Abba*.

Identity is received, not achieved. The resentment a lot of men carry comes from flipping that order and then getting tired.

The world does not need another seminar. It needs men who wash feet, carry crosses, forgive betrayers, and bless the ones who curse them.

You will give an account: how you treated the people God put near you, whether you loved brothers enough to tell them the truth, whether you finished without quitting.

This week I will:

- [] Speak the sonship line before I touch a screen
- [] Phone in another room around real humans
- [] One trusted wound given or received

One sentence for next week: *Where did I still try to earn what was already given?*

Pray: Father, I am Your son. I receive what I cannot achieve. Teach me to cry *Abba* instead of performing. Amen.

Week 2

Identity Before Behavior

One-liner: Who God says you are shapes how you live — not the other way around.

For the leader

Men will hear “identity before behavior” and think you are going soft on sin. You are not. You are putting the engine in front of the caboose. If behavior is how they *get* identity, they will hide. If identity is how they *live*, they can tell the truth about behavior.

Watch for Lot’s-wife nostalgia: “I’ll just bring God into my old world.” Name it.

The idea

Your new identity in Christ comes before your behavior. Not after.

Who God says you are shapes how you live. Not the other way around.

Most of us were trained the opposite way. Behave, then belong. Clean up, then come in. Produce, then receive the name. That is how teams work. That is how jobs work. That is how a lot of families work. It is not how the gospel works.

From the first moment you are saved, you are a new creation. “The old has gone, the new is here.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) Your past sins do not get to keep the title on your life. God does not wait to see if the week goes well before He decides what to call you.

That does not mean the old life is quiet.

Everyone has layers. Labels. Habits. Failures. Old rhythms that still know your name. The past will try to shape you after God has already renamed you. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1) — and the old voice will still talk like a judge.

Jesus said, “Remember Lot’s wife.” (Luke 17:32) She was being delivered and she looked back. The pull of what is familiar is strong even when what is familiar is on fire. Wrong thinking sounds almost spiritual: *I’ll just bring God into my old world*. Right thinking is harder: *I step into a new life — and not everything and not everyone can go with me*.

Some of what you call loyalty is just Lot’s wife with a prayer language.

So what does God actually declare?

You are forgiven. He made you alive with Christ and forgave all your sins. (Colossians 2:13)

You are priceless. The Father lavished love on you and called you a child of God — and that is what you are, not what you are trying to become. (1 John 3:1)

You are redeemed. In Jesus you have righteousness, holiness, and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

You are freed. If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. (John 8:36)

You are restored. He can repay years the locusts ate. (Joel 2:25)

You are loved. His love has been poured out into your hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5)

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession. (1 Peter 2:9)

Read that list again. Slowly. Notice what is missing: a clause that says “once your behavior catches up.”

Your identity is not defined by your actions. Knowing who you are in Christ is what leads to real change. Even if your actions do not fully match your identity yet, that gap does not rewrite the name. The name rewrites the gap — over time, by the Spirit, with brothers in the room.

Paul knew this. Pharisee. Zealous. A man who had hurt the church. He refused to let that be the last word. “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on...” (Philippians 3:13–14) Forgetting here is not amnesia. It is refusing to take orders from a dead résumé.

Then purpose.

Because of your new identity, you are equipped for God's purpose. God has always used flawed people. His power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9) The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10) You do not get a purpose so you can finally feel like a son. You get a purpose because you already are one.

Do not behave your way into a new identity.

Receive the one God already gave you. Then live like it is true — especially on the days it does not feel true.

Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Philippians 3:12–14 (NIV)

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining

toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Also read: Romans 8:1; Luke 17:32; Genesis 19:15–26; Isaiah 1:18; 1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 3:1; John 8:36; Joel 2:25–27; Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Luke 19:10.

Three practices

1. **Name the old layer.** Write one label, habit, or failure that still tries to define you. Under it write the identity God declares instead (forgiven, freed, loved, son). Put it where you will see it for seven days.
2. **Stop looking back on purpose.** When nostalgia for the old world shows up — the old coping, the old crowd, the old scoreboard — say: *That cannot go with me.* Then take one step into the new life (a text, a confession, a closed door, an opened Bible).
3. **Ask one man which identity-word you actually live.** Not which word you like. Which one he can see. Listen without defending.

Five discussion questions

1. What old layer still tries to name you — a label, a habit, a failure, a family script?
2. Where have you been trying to “bring God into your old world” instead of stepping into a new life?
3. Which of these lands heaviest right now: forgiven, priceless, redeemed, freed, restored, loved? Why that one?
4. What is the difference, in your actual week, between behaving your way into identity and receiving identity and then living it?
5. Paul forgot what was behind so he could strain toward what was ahead. What do you need to stop taking orders from?

Participant recap — Week 2

Carry this line: Who God says you are shapes how you live — not the other way around.

You are a new creation from the first moment you are in Christ. The old layers will still talk. They do not get to title you.

Lot's wife looked back while she was being delivered. The lie sounds like this: *I'll just bring God into my old world.* The truth is: not everything and not everyone can go with you.

God's words over you: forgiven, priceless, redeemed, freed, restored, loved. Chosen. No clause that says "once you catch up."

Identity is not defined by your actions. The gap between who you are and how you acted this week does not undo the name. The name is how the gap starts to close.

Purpose comes after identity. God uses flawed people. You do not earn a calling so you can feel like a son. You walk in a calling because you already are one.

This week I will:

- [] Write the old layer and the true name
- [] Refuse one look-back
- [] Ask one man what he actually sees

One sentence for next week: *What old name did I almost answer to?*

Pray: Father, the old has gone. The new is here. Teach me to live from what You call me, not toward it. Amen.

Week 3

Chicken or Eagle

One-liner: Stop scratching in the dirt. You were made to soar.

For the leader

Tell the eagle story slowly. Do not wink at it like a kids' fable. Men will see themselves in the yard. The diagnostic this week is *margins*: what filled the center when God got nudged aside.

The sin chart is not a personality test. It is a mirror. Have men pick one pair (overarching / underlying) and stay there. Do not let them collect all eight as a way to feel thorough and stay vague.

The idea

A farmer found an eagle's egg and slid it under a hen.

The eaglet hatched with the chicks. He grew up in the yard. He scratched for bugs and seeds. He clucked with the flock. When he tried his wings he lifted a few feet and dropped. He was bigger. He looked different. He never noticed. He figured he was a chicken, same as the rest.

One afternoon he looked up and saw an eagle riding the thermals. Something old and wild woke up in him — a longing to climb. The pull of what he had always known was stronger. He shook it off. Turned back to the dirt. Lived out his days convinced he was nothing more than a chicken.

That is not a story about birds.

That is a story about men who have been around the people of God long enough to know the language and still settle for a diminished life. Scratching. Surviving. Calling it humility. Calling it "just being realistic."

When God is pushed to the margins, sin does not kick the door in. It simmers. It takes root. Something or someone fills the center that belongs to Him. The dethroning of a heart almost never happens overnight. You nudge. You fill the space. You get used to the yard.

Paul describes the end of that road: darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God, hardness of heart. (Ephesians 4:18) That is the unbelieving life. The tragedy is when a believing man starts living like he is still in that yard.

Here is the gospel under the story: the grip sin had on you died with Him. Your old self was crucified. You are not forced to obey it. "For one who has died has been set free from sin." (Romans 6:7) Then the command: do not let sin reign. (Romans 6:12)

You will still feel temptation. You will still mess up. Before Christ you were a slave with no real choice. Now you can say no. Now you can soar.

You do not instantly think perfect thoughts the day you are saved. Change happens as His Spirit works. If you cannot see a year of growth, that is not shame. That is a diagnosis.

I first heard this at 38: *How much momentum would you gain from defeating sin in your life?*

Men are quick to say we will never fully defeat sin this side of eternity. True — and a paradox. Free from sin's rule. Still in a mortal body. Victory. Then the yoke again.

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

I call the cycle *spiritual myopia*. Nearsighted faith. The urge in front of you gets sharp. The cross gets blurry. Peter said a man can go blind to having been cleansed from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:9) Lose sight of freedom and the yoke feels normal. Momentum stalls. You scratch.

It will only work if it is God's work. If it is not God's work, it will not work.

Grace is not passive. “The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:11–12) Grace trains. Grace says no. Grace does not shrug.

When a scope has been hauled around all day, the groups open up. Time to recalibrate before the hunt. The rifle may still shoot. The point of aim does not match the point of impact. Bumps. Heat. Heavy use. That is a lot of men. Still “working.” No longer accurate.

Recalibration is the reset. God back in the center. One priority put back on zero.

Under the obvious sins there is almost always a displaced God:

- Pride — someone else is the highest authority
- Gluttony — satisfaction apart from God
- Greed — discontent with His generosity
- Hoarding — security not found in Him
- Lust — gratification apart from Him
- Envy — contentment not found in Him
- Cowardice — fear of man more than God
- Laziness — refusing the wisdom He already gave

The root is not the behavior. The root is that something or someone took His place. Self-pleasing and people-pleasing are cheap substitutes for God.

David did not manage his image. He prayed, “Search me, God, and know my heart... see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23–24)

You were not made for the yard.

Stop scratching. Look up. Stay looking up long enough to fly.

Scripture

Romans 6:11–14 (NIV)

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life... For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Also read: Ephesians 4:18; Romans 6:7; Titus 2:11–12; Psalm 139:23–24; 2 Peter 1:9; John 15:5–11.

Three practices

1. **Name the yard.** Write one place you have been living smaller than you are: a habit, a hidden life, a job-only faith, a marriage on autopilot. Say it to God. Then say it to one man.
2. **Recalibrate one priority.** Pick one. Not seven. Put God back in that center this week — time, money, a screen, a relationship, a yes you should have made a no. Check it every day like a zero on a scope.
3. **Pray David's prayer out loud for seven mornings.** "Search me... lead me." Do not edit it. Let Him name the offensive way.

Five discussion questions

1. Where have you been living like the chicken — settling because of what was modeled around you?
2. If the eagle had someone point out his true identity, would he have listened? Who does that for you — or who could?
3. Name one area where God got pushed to the margins. What filled the center?
4. Which underlying displacement do you wrestle with more than the rest: pride, appetite, greed, security, lust, envy, fear of man, or laziness?
5. What would recalibration look like this week — not in theory, in a calendar and a choice?

Participant recap — Week 3

Carry this line: Stop scratching in the dirt. You were made to soar.

An eagle raised with chickens will die convinced he is a chicken, even after he sees the sky. Settling is not humility. It is amnesia.

When God is nudged to the margins, sin simmers. The old self was crucified. You are not a slave. You can say no. You will still struggle. Freedom is standing firm when the yoke looks familiar.

Spiritual myopia is nearsighted faith: the urge in front of you gets sharp, the cross gets blurry, momentum dies.

It will only work if it is God's work. Grace trains you to say no. Recalibrate. The rifle can still fire and be off. Put one priority back on zero.

Under the obvious sin is a God who got replaced. Ask Him to search you.

This week I will:

- ☐ Name the yard to God and one man
- ☐ Recalibrate one priority
- ☐ Pray Psalm 139:23–24 each morning

One sentence for next week: *Where did I choose the sky instead of the dirt?*

Pray: Father, I am not a chicken. Break the yoke I keep putting back on. Recalibrate me. Amen.

Week 4

Grit on the Road to the Cross

One-liner: Set your face. Then keep walking.

For the leader

Grit without sonship becomes stoicism. Keep tying this week back to Week 1: the Lord disciplines *sons*. Hardship is not proof you are illegitimate. Quitting to protect your image is.

Help men name a personal “Jerusalem” — one costly path, not twelve. Marriage. A child. A hidden sin. A calling. A season that will not hurry.

Do not let the West Point illustration become a TED Talk. It exists to say: talent will not carry you. Then get back to Jesus.

The idea

A lot of men feel weary.

Tempted to quit.

Short on perseverance.

Not because they never cared. Because they have been sprinting a marathon.

“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” (Luke 9:51)

He set His face.

He knew what was in that city. Persecution. Suffering. Death. He went anyway. Isaiah had already given the picture of the Servant: back given to those who strike, face not hidden from disgrace and spitting. Flint toward the cross. (Isaiah 50:6–7)

That is grit. Not hype. Not a personality type. A face set toward the thing God assigned, undeterred by what waits on the road.

I mean grit the way men actually have to live it:

Passion plus direction plus perseverance — for a long time.

Consistency. Day in. Day out. Years, not a weekend.

A marathon, not a sprint.

Showing up when it matters most, especially when it does not feel like it.

Studies of cadets have made the same blunt point for years. The most talented ones still quit. The ones who stayed were not always the most impressive on paper. Grit predicted staying better than the score that got them in. Same pattern shows up in other long races: the people who endure are often the people who simply practiced more days, not the people who looked like prodigies.

Talent will not get you through your Jerusalem.

Past success will not get you through it.

A good week of motivation will not get you through it.

What will: passion for God's calling, and daily perseverance rooted in Christ's strength.

Look at Jesus.

"For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:2-3)

His passion: perfect love for the Father, and redeeming people like you.

His perseverance: betrayal, exhaustion, opposition, and the greatest suffering in history — not only the nails, but the just wrath of God as He took the sin of the world.

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. (Hebrews 12:4) That is not a taunt. It is perspective. Consider Him so you do not go faint.

Christian grit is not "try harder in your own will." It is human effort rooted in dependence on Christ's strength. You still set your face. You still take the next step. You do it looking at Jesus, not at your grit score.

You have a Jerusalem.

A marriage that needs a man who will not check out.

A child who needs a father more than a mood.

A ministry assignment that will not applaud you.

A battle with sin that will not be won by a single apology.

A difficult season that will last longer than your patience.

Gethsemane sits on that road. "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42) Grit under extreme emotional pressure is still obedience. Feelings can scream. The face stays set.

And some of what you call "the enemy" is actually a Father.

Have you forgotten the word that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (Hebrews 12:5–6)

Discipline is not God backing out of the adoption papers. Discipline is proof you belong. For the moment it is painful. Later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:11)

Resentment is one way to fail a hard season. Quitting is another. Grit looks at the Father, not just the pain, and stays in the training.

Fix your eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith. He finished the race. That is how you press on when you want to be done.

The road to the cross was marked by grit.

It ended in resurrection joy.

Your road will too — if you set your face and keep walking.

Scripture

Hebrews 12:1–6 (NIV)

...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

Also read: Luke 9:51; Isaiah 50:6–7; Luke 22:42; Hebrews 12:11.

Three practices

1. **Name your Jerusalem in one sentence.** Write it. Tell one man. “This is the road I will not quit this month.” Not twelve roads. One.
2. **A daily Gethsemane line.** Each morning, before the noise: *Not my will, but Yours*. Then do the next small faithful thing on that road — the conversation, the repentance, the showing up, the closed door.
3. **Practice when you do not feel it.** Pick one ordinary act of grit for seven days: prayer at a set time, faithfulness in a hard relationship, a body that gets up, a Bible that gets opened. Marathon. Not mood.

Five discussion questions

1. On a scale of 1–10, how is your grit right now — and what is making it that number?
2. Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem knowing what waited. What does that do to the way you face your own hard road?
3. What is your personal Jerusalem this season?
4. Have you walked through a painful season that later produced fruit? What did you learn — and what are you tempted to resent instead of receive?
5. Where do you need Christian grit (effort rooted in Christ's strength) rather than talent, past success, or another burst of motivation?

Participant recap — Week 4

Carry this line: Set your face. Then keep walking.

Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He knew. He went.

Grit is passion plus direction plus perseverance, over a long time. Marathon, not sprint. Talent and old wins will not carry you. Cadets with the best scores still quit. The ones who stay keep showing up.

For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross. Consider Him so you do not grow weary.

You have a Jerusalem. Name it. Gethsemane is on the way: not my will, but Yours.

The Lord disciplines sons. Pain is not proof you are illegitimate. It is training. Later it yields fruit — if you stay in it.

Christian grit is not stoicism. It is human effort that depends on Christ's strength. Fix your eyes. Keep walking. Resurrection is at the end of this road, not around it.

This week I will:

- ☐ Name my Jerusalem to one man
- ☐ Pray “not my will” each morning
- ☐ Show up seven days on one ordinary practice

One sentence for next week: *Where did I set my face when I wanted to turn around?*

Pray: Jesus, You set Your face. I set mine. Strength for the next step, not the whole map. Amen.

Week 5

You Have an Advocate

One-liner: Lone Ranger Christianity doesn't work.

For the leader

Isolation will dress itself up as strength. "I should be able to handle this." Name that as a lie, not a personality. This week connects Jesus's present work (Advocate) to the brother's present work (showing up). Do not let men talk only about Jesus in heaven and never about a text to a brother.

If someone doubts God is hearing him, do not argue him into certainty. Have the group pray for that exact situation. Practice the doctrine.

The idea

Have you wondered if your prayers are hitting the ceiling?

Have you wondered if anyone is actually fighting for you?

Men carry weight. Provide. Protect. Lead. When the thing does not change on our timeline — work, marriage, kids, money, a private war with lust or anger — doubt and guilt move in. The next move is almost always the same: handle it yourself. Do not bother anyone. Do not look weak. Get quieter.

That is not maturity.

That is how you get picked off.

Satan's goal is to isolate so he can eventually dominate. Lone Ranger Christianity does not work. Iron is never sharpened without sparks. People who know you the most are the ones who can love you the best — if you let them.

You were never meant to follow Jesus alone.

After the resurrection, Jesus did not disappear into a fog of inspiration. He ascended. Bodily. Visibly. To begin a ministry you cannot see and desperately need.

He is at the Father's right hand. Right now. Not as a memory. As an Advocate.

"If anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." (1 John 2:1)

"He always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

“Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” (Romans 8:34)

You have a Great High Priest who passed through the heavens. So you draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14–16)

He is not a distant Savior who did a job and left.

He was made like His brothers in every respect. He suffered when He was tempted. He is able to help the tempted. (Hebrews 2:17–18) Anger. Lust. The pressure to provide. Fear of failure. The feeling that your prayers are bouncing. He knows the real weather of a man’s life. He never sinned in it. He never stopped pleading your case in it.

There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

So take one situation. A stalled prayer. A repeated failure. A heavy responsibility. A doubt you have not said out loud. Imagine — not as fantasy, as doctrine — Jesus at the Father’s right hand, saying your name in that exact thing.

Pray it until your body believes it: *Jesus, You are interceding for me in this. I trust You as my Advocate.*

That is how a man moves from striving alone to resting in a Priest who does not get tired of him.

And because He is your Advocate, you can stop being everyone else’s only advocate — and you can stop refusing to need one.

We have this as an anchor of the soul. Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf. (Hebrews 6:19–20) So encourage one another and build each other up. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

When a brother is discouraged, doubting, or defeated, you do not need a speech. You need a practice: a text, a call, a walk, a prayer on the phone, a hard question, a refusal to let him vanish.

The life you live brings legitimacy to the words you speak. If you talk community and live isolated, your brothers already know.

You are not fighting without backup.

Heaven is not silent.

And the man across from you was put there on purpose.

Reject the lone-wolf lie. Fight together.

Scripture

Hebrews 4:14–16 (NIV)

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

1 John 2:1 (NIV)

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Also read: Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9–11; Hebrews 7:24–25; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:17–18; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 6:19–20; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9–12.

Three practices

1. **Pray the Advocate line every time doubt hits.** Out loud if you can. *Jesus, You are interceding for me in _____*. Fill in the blank with one real situation. Do this at least once a day.
2. **Name your people.** Write two or three believers who actually know you. If you cannot name them, that is the assignment: ask one man for time this week. Isolation is not a personality. It is a strategy of the enemy.
3. **Reach one brother before he asks.** Text, call, or stand in a driveway. Remind him he has an Advocate — and a brother. Do not wait until you have a polished word.

Five discussion questions

1. Where are you currently doubting that God is hearing you — or wondering if you should stop praying?
2. Where do you feel like you are battling without backup? How does that isolation or guilt show up?
3. Jesus was tempted in every way as we are. Which pressure feels most real right now: anger, lust, provision, fear of failure, something else? What changes if He is actually pleading that case?
4. What keeps you isolated — pride, old hurt, or busyness?
5. When a brother is sinking, what will you actually do this week — not theoretically, on a calendar?

Participant recap — Week 5

Carry this line: Lone Ranger Christianity doesn't work.

Satan isolates to dominate. Handling it yourself is not strength. It is how you get picked off.

Jesus did not vanish after Easter. He ascended to intercede. You have an Advocate with the Father. He always lives to plead your case. He was tempted like you. He did not sin. He is not tired of your name.

Draw near with confidence. Mercy and grace in time of need — not after you get impressive.

Then reject the lone-wolf lie on the ground. Iron sharpens. Sparks fly. People who know you most can love you best. Encourage one another. Build one another up. The life you live is what makes your words worth hearing.

You are not without backup. Heaven is not silent. The man across from you is not an accident.

This week I will:

- [] Pray “Jesus, You are interceding for me in _____” daily
- [] Write 2–3 names, or ask one man for time
- [] Reach one brother before he asks

One sentence for next week: *Who did I let in — and who did I go find?*

Pray: Jesus, my Advocate, I will not fight this alone. Intercede. Send me to my brothers. Amen.

Week 6

It Will Cost You Something

One-liner: Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.

For the leader

This is the close, not a new religion. Keep the order: son (Week 1), then cost (Week 6). If men walk out trying to pay for what Jesus already bought, you missed it.

Consecration here is not an Old Testament lecture. It is a fence with a direction: *from* what undoes you, *unto* the Father. Blend that with self-control as Spirit-fruit, not a self-help flex.

Have each man name one cost he will actually pay in the next 30 days. Write it. Witness it. Check back.

The idea

Salvation is free.

Everything after that will cost you something.

If you only hear the first sentence, you will treat Jesus like a product. If you only hear the second, you will treat Jesus like a foreman. You need both. Grace got you in the house. A cross is how sons learn to walk.

To be consecrated is to be set apart. Fenced off. Marked off by a boundary with a purpose. Not isolation for its own sake. Direction.

There is a *from* and an *unto*.

From everything that contradicts, opposes, and defies the Father.

Unto Him.

A lot of men only hear the *from*. They become grim. Careful. Weirdly proud of what they don't do. That is not consecration. That is a diet.

The *unto* is the point. You are set apart for a Father who said, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters." (2 Corinthians 6:18) Separation without sonship is just loneliness with a Bible.

You are the temple of the living God. Light does not partner with darkness as if they were the same thing. That does not mean you hide from people who do not believe. Jesus ate with sinners. It does mean you stop yoking your soul to anything that requires you to pretend He is not Lord — a secret life, a crooked deal, a relationship that only works if you go quiet about Him, a habit that has the run of the house.

Christian freedom is not the right to keep the old master on a leash.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” Freedom is the power to belong to Him. Freedom is not permission to stay the same.

Which is why self-control is not a side virtue for impressive men. It is fruit. The Spirit produces it when He lives in you. (Galatians 5:22–23) You cannot manufacture it as a brand. You can yield to it as a son.

Paul said the quiet part: I do not do what I want. I do what I hate. (Romans 7:15) If he had a war inside him, you can put down the act. It can feel like a civil war. Most men fight it in the shadows and call it privacy — because truth creates labels, because it hurts not to be received, because Satan says *you will never be good enough; give up; this doesn't really hurt anyone*.

A man without self-control is a city with broken walls. (Proverbs 25:28) Anything can walk in. When we let raw appetite run the house, we are a bank vault with a screen door. Failure here is not a personality quirk. It is an open invitation for the thief.

The flesh is not your friend with bad timing. It is a godless mindset that lives by instinct, facing away from God. It knows sin the way your body knows a bicycle. The world keeps offering a ride. Everything that tempted you before you knew Jesus can still defeat you if you make it a comfortable houseguest.

Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16) That is not poetry. That is how the war is won — not by you becoming the dictator of yourself, but by refusing to let the flesh be one. The old word for self-control, *enkrateia*, comes from strength. The Spirit steps in with might you do not have on your best Monday.

Jesus said it without decoration: if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23) Daily. Not once at a conference. Paul said athletes exercise self-control in all things for a wreath that dies. We do it for one that doesn't. He disciplined his body so that after preaching to others he would not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24–27)

Grace already appeared. It teaches us to say no. (Titus 2:11–12)

So say no.

A three-second pause is sometimes the whole battle. Will I be glad I did this in an hour? In a year? Before the Father? The Spirit is not mute. He can say *Stop. Don't go there. Don't say that. Think of the consequences*. Your job is to listen before the bicycle is already moving.

Strong relationship with the Lord requires putting Him first. Loving Him looks like keeping His words — not as a slave earning a room, as a son who wants the Father's heart.

You will not want to follow everywhere this costs you.

Good.

The only person who needs this kind of cost is the person who wants a life of significance, not just a saved story he never lives.

Salvation is free.

Pick up the cross anyway.

That is how sons grow.

Scripture

Luke 9:23 (NIV)

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Galatians 5:16, 22–25 (NIV)

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Also read: 2 Corinthians 6:14–18; Romans 7:14–18; Proverbs 25:28; Galatians 5:17–21; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Titus 2:11–12; John 15:5–8.

Three practices

1. **Name the cost.** One sentence: *Following Jesus will cost me _____ this month.* Make it concrete. A screen. A relationship pattern. A silence. A secret. An appetite. Tell your brother. Ask him to inspect what he expects.
2. **The three-second pause.** For seven days, when the urge hits — to speak, to click, to buy, to hide, to rage — wait three seconds and ask, *Will I be glad I did this before the Father?* Then obey the first right word.
3. **Fence one thing from and one thing unto.** From: close one door that contradicts Him. Unto: open one practice that puts Him first (Word, prayer, a brother, a confession, a table with your people). Freedom has a direction.

Five discussion questions

1. Where have you been treating “salvation is free” as if “everything after that is optional”?
2. What do you need to be set apart *from* — and what would being set apart *unto Him* look like in the same area?

3. Where is your civil war actually happening: temper, appetite, sex, honesty, thought life, pride, laziness, the need to look mastered?
4. Who knows you are in that war? If the answer is “no one,” what is the real reason?
5. What cost will you pay in the next 30 days — specific enough that a brother could ask you about it next month?

Participant recap — Week 6

Carry this line: Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.

You are a son. You do not pay to get in the house. You do pick up a cross to follow the Son.

Consecrated means set apart: *from* what defies Him, *unto* the Father. A diet of “don’t” without “unto” is just grim religion. You are His temple. Stop yoking your soul to a life that only works if Jesus is quiet.

Freedom is not a leash for the old master. Self-control is Spirit-fruit, not a brand you perform. Paul fought a civil war inside a saved man. Most of us fight ours in the dark.

A man without self-control is a city with broken walls. The flesh still knows the bicycle. Walk by the Spirit. Take up the cross daily. Pause three seconds. Listen when He says *stop*.

Significance costs. Saved-and-stuck is available for free and it will hollow you out.

This week I will:

- [] Name one 30-day cost to a brother
- [] Practice the three-second pause
- [] Close one door (*from*) and open one practice (*unto*)

One sentence to keep: *I am a son. This will cost me. I will not do it alone.*

Pray: Father, thank You that the door was free. I pick up the cross. Set me apart unto You. Keep me in step with the Spirit. Amen.

After the six weeks

You are still a son.

You will still get tired of performing. That is why this was never a certificate. It is a way of walking.

If you did this with one other man, do not drift just because the pages ran out. Stay on the calendar. Keep asking. Inspect what you expect. Responsibility without accountability will fail.

If you led a group, do not make a seventh week out of leftover advice. Send them back into their actual lives with a brother and a line.

Questions for a last cup of coffee

1. Where did performing lose its grip — and where is it still running you?
2. Which week do you need to live again, not just remember?
3. Who is your brother for the next season?
4. What cost is still unpaid?
5. What would it look like to stay a son when nobody is watching?

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The line behind all of it:

Salvation is free. Everything after that will cost you something.

Come back when you need the next line.

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About this guide

GrowBeyond.How exists to help people get unstuck and grow. These six weeks were rewritten from original men's teaching — sonship, identity, settling, grit, advocacy, and the cost of following — for men who will do the work with one other man or a small group.

This is not a church program. It is a table, a Bible, and the truth that you are a son before you are a provider.

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