

Journey Steps

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Prelude

Why Write *Man Enough to Forgive*?

Perhaps more than ever in the history of our nation, Jesus Christ's Word and wisdom are counter-cultural. Man's "reason" is ruling the day.

At every turn the world is actively pushing aside, ignoring, and with an incomprehensible arrogance trying to manipulate Almighty God's unchanging Truths.

Today, absolute Truth has no place in our broken and fallen land. Instead, Americans are largely deluded by self-reliance and distracted by the service of other masters. Both are false idols.

I was compelled to write this book from the insights gained in pursuit of healing my own heart-wrenching soul wound and the lessons learned coming alongside boys and men across the country who share this crippling burden.

Man Enough to Forgive needed to be written to specifically address the #1 societal issue of our time - the **FATHERLESSNESS** caused by divorce or the abandonment, absenteeism, neglect, or indifference of a boy's God-ordained Pastor, Provider, and Protector – his father.

This endeavor is specifically for MEN, presented in a style geared for courageous and counter-cultural MEN. Straight forward and unvarnished for the masculine spirit, this book is inspired by the bold and unerring Truth of the Creator of Men - the genesis of Truth.

Men were born for a glorious and mission-oriented purpose.

Masculinity is God's gift to the world, to women and to children. God Himself defined men's specific purpose in the family. These roles are steeped in His Truth and do not change even amongst all the brokenness around us.

As I have traveled this remarkable country of ours to lead the national ministry of *Fathers in the Field*, we charge straight into the heart of the fatherlessness battle. We march behind enemy lines into the trenches of the broken. I have witnessed firsthand how generational fatherlessness destroys families and is fundamentally weakening our nation.

Our mission is to earnestly search for and rescue the desperately hurt, the angry, the lonely, and those pleading voices of the precious fatherless who are crying for help.

I am unabashed about calling out the spiritual battle that is being waged. We at *Fathers in the Field* are laser-focused on the deep and transformational healing that is possible through Christ Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the mobilization of the local biblical church.

Men — Look around you!

We cannot escape today's reality. Witness the carnage that constant and brutal cultural attacks on Godly masculinity and the principles of biblical fatherhood have on the next generation of men - our precious boys - while eroding the masculine identity that is critical to a healthy and thriving society.

The Heavenly Father called men to action - not to indifference or surrender.

I was forged for this war through my own growth and restoration from the fatherless wounds inflicted while growing up. Today we are strengthened by these battle scars while our ministry takes direct aim at the enemy. Make no mistake, the Devil knows what he's doing and seeks the destruction of fatherhood in route to the decimation of the family.

Victories won through faithful service and obedience to the Heavenly Father provide the inspiration to share God's bold Truth that the world tries to pervert.

Through our ministry to men and boys, including this book, we have the joy of reaching and helping heal one fatherless boy (and man) at a time. MEN get to be the strong and tender hands and feet of Jesus in communities through the local Bible-honoring church. MEN get to mobilize their unique and masculine gifts in service to God's Kingdom.

Pastors universally acknowledge that their churches are being overwhelmed with the symptoms of fatherlessness both among boys and men. Into adulthood and left undealt with, the wounds and consequences of father absence is sidelining many men from their true purpose in their families and from having impact in ministry.

Even as we serve to turn the tide of broken hearts in fatherless boys, for more than a decade I've fielded an unending stream of requests from Pastors to also help come alongside and heal *adult* fatherless boys who persist in carrying deep father wounds.

This urgent charter stems from Pastors witnessing the undeniable transformation in young boys following the steps is the key to healing – what we call the **forgiveness journey**.

Praise God for this call to extend our proven process to MEN so they too can experience restoration.

In this book and the available companion workbook journal, the ministry's proven and successful multi-year forgiveness curriculum, developed from my forgiveness journey, has now been adapted and contextualized for MEN.

Direct and to the point, *Man Enough to Forgive* is presented in the language of REAL MEN, those who don't seek excuses and those who can face the hard-truths and decisions that are presented squarely front and center. You are now at a crossroad. It's time to GET BUSY!

Prelude

Will you join me in this battle for truth in pursuit of masculine righteousness through forgiveness?

Do you understand that “qualified” answers are half-hearted, rebellious, and lack commitment? **Let your Yes be Yes** so as to bring honor to God Almighty.

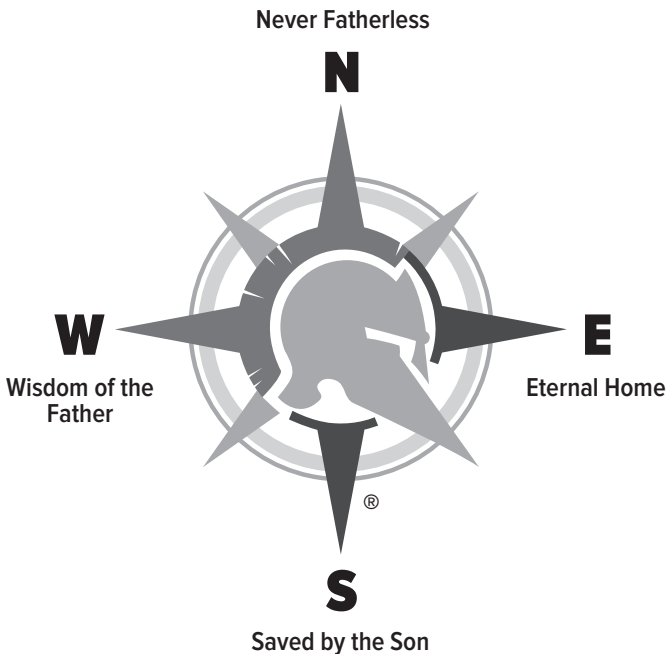
The Babylonians are at the gate. We face a cruel adversary.

Righteous MEN are needed. Forgiveness is our battle cry!

Put on the full armor of God!

Charge!

John Smithbaker
Founding Servant,
Fathers in the Field Ministry



The Father Wound

SERIES ONE

Stop the Excuses!

Taking Bold Action to Become the Man God Intended You to Be.



fortitude

[for·ti·tude] noun

Strength of mind that enables a person to encounter danger or bear pain or adversity with courage.

CHAPTER ONE

The King David in You

*“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, **“Abba! Father!”**”* Romans 8:15 (NASB)

| **Quick Start** |

Generational fatherlessness and the impact of boys carrying debilitating wounds into adulthood is a bigger problem today than ever. However, it's not a contemporary condition or one manifest solely in Western society. It's an issue as old as humanity itself.

You need not look far in the Bible to find evidence of this sin and how it not only impacts families, but whole lineages of people from the earliest tribes of Israel to today. You might be surprised by some of the non-obvious examples and how the fatherhood wound is present in even some of history's most revered Christian warrior men.

Take David for example. Yes, *that* David; King David whom the Heavenly Father calls “a man after God's own heart” - *twice*.

David wrote most of the Psalms and one in particular stands out as he cries out to his Heavenly Father to not turn from him, not to hide His face from him. Psalms 27:10 ESV.

“For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.”

Knowing as we do that David *also* had major life blunders, significant sin for which he had to repent and be forgiven before *he* could be the man God called him to be, it is clear that being a person after God’s own heart does not mean perfection. Nobody is perfect, except Jesus.

David’s father wound began early in his story. Imagine living in David’s day and the importance of men’s role as leaders in the family, in the tribe, and even ruling over kingdoms.

As Jesse considered whom among his sons had the “right stuff” and would be considered by Samuel to potentially to serve as king, he called his sons to the front line but abandoned David, leaving him behind.

David, young and diminutive, wasn’t even considered. Did not make the list. Imagine that, in perhaps a young man’s most important moment he was completely overlooked by his father. Jesse didn’t see in David what God did.

That event alone could be enough to define a young man, instilling in him a fierce bitterness that could cripple his self-worth forevermore. God had other plans though. God gave David a heart of forgiveness (David did whatever God wanted him to do. Part of God’s Will is to have us forgive. Acts 13:22), so David could recognize and address the wounds, even unforgiveness; thereby, he could overcome them. The Holy Spirit came over David and he was blessed.

In David’s story it is important to recognize that spiritual maturation and becoming the man God meant you to be isn’t a one-and-done process. While David forgave his earthly father and opened himself to the Lord’s vision for his life, he still messed up – big time.

Like each of us men, David’s first and most crucial ministry obligation was to be the Pastor, Provider, and Protector of his family. Just because the Lord bestowed kingship over Israel, victory over his enemies, and used David in and through his sins, does not mean there were not severe conse-

quences to David's unrighteous, out-of-God's-will actions. David carried his father wound and sin into his kingship, marriage, fatherhood, family, friendships, and leadership.

Have you thought critically about the devastating consequences of a father's sin and how it affects a family, a son, a community, a nation, and the next generation? By any standards, let alone the standards of God Almighty, King David was a *terrible* father, and it had a profound impact on his family, his children, and on Israel.

David was a selfish father. David was an absent father. David was an adulterer. David was a weak father. David provoked anger in his children. In many ways, David was a poor role model.

How more obvious can it be? When families tear apart and so-called modern wisdom drifts from biblical standards, it has grave effects extending far beyond our own families.

For your good and the good of this and future generations of your family, repent of your sins. Through earnest prayer ask God to open your mind and heart and receive His kingdom wisdom concerning the devastating and inevitable consequences of sin when His most holy plan for marriage and fatherhood are not followed.

David is no different than YOU. David is no different than YOUR father.

King David and those closest to David did not escape those consequences. David's son and all his children did not escape the consequences of their father's sin. God is not a liar.

There are always consequences to sin. Always.

The David in You

Just as God allows evil in the world, he allows us to be healed and restored. He helps us to be redeemed before the witness of others. Men look at outside appearances. God looks at the heart and what we do to live in His blessing and to make true His vision.

In this broken and fallen world you too can be a David. Hear the words, well done good and faithful servant. We're all capable of it. Forgiveness was fundamental to David's legacy, as it is to yours. David forgave much and was forgiven much. Same for you.

That's what *Man Enough to Forgive* is all about. It's not just about knowing how to forgive. Knowledge is earthly. But wisdom... wisdom comes from God. My greatest prayer is that you hear the Lord's heart here because you are man enough. I'm asking you to look beyond worldly knowledge so you can receive and act upon that spiritual wisdom.

| Road Map |

There are always consequences to sin. ALWAYS.

We often hear that "God can do anything." In actuality, this casually accepted premise is not accurate at all and undergirds the premise of how we and our culture view men, masculinity, the precious role of fathers, husbands, and the father wound.

One thing that God, the Heavenly Father, cannot do - is lie.

"I am *fine*." In their bravado, I hear this from men all the time. By stating this we are indirectly shouting out to the world that Jesus is not a Man of His word. We are calling God a Liar. Worse, we are minimizing the need for Jesus' painful death on the cross.

The purpose of *Man Enough to Forgive* is to boldly deal with our wounds and to forgive our earthly father.

As we consider how to do this, have you ever thought about the father wound that King David had to endure? David even cried out in anguish to the Lord that his father had forsaken him (Psalm 27:10). How it shaped him as a man? How it affected his mindset and behavior from fatherhood to marriage? How it impacted his family's generational legacy?

Let's explore David's earthly father wound for a moment since it is so rarely, if ever, highlighted in the telling of the life story of David.

Simply stated, David was overlooked, ignored, undervalued, did not measure-up, and was deemed unworthy by his father. You see, I understand the wound of being abandoned by a father. And I too had to bear all of those painful slights and put-downs as a reflection of what my father must have believed about me. Ouch!

Fortunately, I did *not* have to endure daily torment by my father's hand like David did - the countless cuts to my soul in witness of my family, brothers, and friends. How that public humiliation must have stung young David.

David was the youngest of his father, Jesse's, eight sons. So, while he was naturally trying to measure up to his older brothers, David was further demeaned by his father's shameless put-downs. No doubt, David caught the subtle and not-so-subtle jabs. It is not only the words a father uses that can wound, but also the words that are *not offered* to affirm and speak life into a young, growing boy with an impressionable soul.

Maybe it was because of David's smaller size that his dad did not think he was strong, tough, or *Man Enough*. Perhaps Jesse gave up on David because he acted differently from his brothers. Or it could be that David became weary of always falling short of the ideal shape of his father's desired mold. Possibly David's father did not value the gifts God gave him. Very likely, Jesse was more concerned with his selfish ambitions and conforming to the world's standards, instead of respecting and honoring our Heavenly Father's virtues.

All we know for sure is that David suffered the shame and sins of his father, both privately and in public. God's Word makes this abundantly clear. When the Lord's prophet, Samuel, received instructions to go to Jesse the Bethlehemite, "for I have selected a king for myself among his sons," Samuel and the town elders held a large consecration ceremony where many must have attended. Jesse invited every one of his sons to the ceremony, except David.

Not only did David's father not invite him for kingship consideration but he must not have respected his son enough to bring him along to this extraordinary, exceedingly special God instructed event.

“So Samuel did what the Lord said and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?” He said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.”

1 Samuel 16:4-5 (NASB)

Just imagine the scene. Consider the gossip and whispering about why David was not even invited to this event. Think about how Jesse's humiliation of David impacted his other sons' perception and what the community must have thought about David. Compounding his pain, the stigma on David's precious soul would have been devastating. Being abandoned at such a special time in this family's life would bring most to their end.

Furthering the insult and deepening David's father wound, Samuel looked out to evaluate each of the brothers in the order Jesse thought his sons should be considered as king. David was not among them. Upon completing his review, Samuel providentially knew that the one *God* choose was not there. He then asked David's father if there were any others? Jesse must have mentioned David in a perplexed manner. David's father discouraged Samuel, “you do not want David; he's filthy and working.”

David was simply not like his brothers, no matter how much his father tried to mold him, and David was reminded of this daily.

“When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him.’ But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel.

And he said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this one either.’ Next, Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this

one either.’ Thus, Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are these all the children?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.’ Then Samuel said to Jesse, Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.’

David Anointed

So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is he.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.” 1 Samuel 6 – 13 (NASB)

Some may not see it, but it is as clear as day to me. We have to look through the lens of a child; an impressionable young soul.

More damaging than the deeply wounding insults David had to endure, he was *left behind* by his father. **David’s father forsake/abandoned him** (Psalm 27:10). No wonder young David turned to God to fill his fatherless void. David had deep yearnings that we all have as young boys - to be valued by a father and shepherded into manhood.

Let’s think about this. Why did God Almighty call David, “a man after my own heart”?

I founded a ministry, *Fathers in the Field*, nearly two decades ago to pair wounded fatherless boys with godly Christian mentor fathers. Through the local church, Christ’s bride. I know from both personal experience and through the work of our ministry that wounded fatherless boys suffer in private. Though tough and sometimes calloused on the outside, they cry out in pain into their pillows at night. They plea for help in many ways. They wander around deeply hurt, but nobody notices. They rebel in anger to let the world know about the pain they are suffering.

Or, they become overachievers trying to prove their worthiness. David was an overachiever and would eventually put his selfish desires ahead of his personal responsibilities to his family and his children.

I believe the Heavenly Father heard the cries of David in all of his loneliness in the wilderness. God has made clear that He hears the pleas of the widow and fatherless in their distress. As expressed in more than one hundred verses in the Bible, God's heart beats for the fatherless.

Furthermore, the Lord uses people like David, like you, whom this fallen world discards as worthless. They forsake you for not meeting its early, man-made standards. God uses the broken, the sinful, the weak, so *no one* can steal God's glory.

I imagine David could not talk with his dad, and his brothers also looked down upon him, believing what their father thought about him. How isolating that must have been. David was alone and a loner in the desert, tending sheep. In the wilderness, David honed his righteous masculinity, leadership skills, and communed with God. He brought his hurt, pain, and the despair of not being valued to the feet of his Heavenly Father, who in turn showed David the kind of fatherly love and mercy he desperately needed.

David did not hide from his pain. Instead, he was open, authentic, transparent, and vulnerable with his Abba Father.

As we know from David's many Psalms, he had a contrite and repentant heart. He acknowledged his sins against a Holy God. David did not complain or blame others, but rightfully confessed his sin. He humbled himself and asked God for help. David understood that all God's people face adversity. David was *Man Enough* to ask his Heavenly Father to reveal the sin in his life and was grateful when God disciplined him because he understood that was the Lord demonstrating His love.

David must have had a forgiving heart towards his earthly father because he did not make excuses for him. Instead, he understood the broken world we all have to navigate.

This is the core message of *Man Enough to Forgive*. And this is why I firmly believe God blessed David in so many ways, recognizing David as a man after His own heart.

Regardless of the situation, hardship is always a powerful tool in the Lord's hands to draw you closer to Him when you cooperate with how He wants to use it in your life. When we try to justify or minimize the wounds to our soul as "OK" or say, "it's in the past," or, "our father did as best as possible," we are not honest with the reality of the destructive nature of sin. We are saying that we are willing to settle for this broken world's standard of 'good enough' and are denying the goodness and perfection of our Creator, our King, our Savior, and our Heavenly Father.

The hurting world needs to understand the consequences of sin and the need for a forgiving Savior just like David did.

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" 1 Samuel 16:7 (NASB)

When we pretend to be unharmed or do not acknowledge God's holy plan, our witness confuses the life-giving words of the Creator that we are trying to share with a hurting and dying world.

We do ourselves and others no favor by making excuses that minimize our pain or ignores the past in order to cope with the consequences of not having a father who fulfilled the divine, spiritual or practical roles of Pastor, Provider, and Protector. Our soul yearns to be fully led into manhood by a healthy, complete shepherd in all of the roles. Not just one, or two. We're not being courageous or manly when we excuse our wrongful actions or inactions because "we are fine." Fine is not holy. Fine is far, far from it.

Fine is the lie of the wounded.

In prideful defiance of these truths, some will say that their curse was a blessing. In defense of their damaged self-worth they may have convinced themselves that what they experienced as a result of their father's

shortcomings, absence, or abuse motivated them to prove him wrong and themselves worthy. They may even believe that without such motivation to overcome, they would not have achieved or accomplished much.

All these manmade thoughts and justifications are, in essence, calling our Holy God a liar. That His divine plan, His orderly command for sex within the covenant of marriage, His Holy structure for family, and His foundational role of righteous masculinity in boys' development to manhood are just ideals or hopeful aspirations. In fact, these are holy, perfectly ordered plans to follow.

My brother, it is pure and simple. Know that God is not a liar, ever. As I stated before, there are ALWAYS consequences to our sin and our father's sin. Our body and our mind are different than our soul. Sin ALWAYS affects the soul and produces negative consequences - even if we do not see them, feel them, or acknowledge this rebellion.

When we read the Bible and learn about King David, we typically hear about the courageous young warrior who defeated Goliath. We hear about David as mighty King for the people of Israel. These are true, of course. But we should also see a little bit of David in ourselves as we grow in our Christian faith and recognize the brokenness we all face in confronting this fallen land as sojourners.

We empathize with David when we learn about his struggle with sin.

We understand David when he admits his flaws.

We sympathize with David when we hear of his pleas for help in his distress.

We weep with David when he feels God does not hear his prayers.

We identify with David's anger as friends betray him.

We are thankful for David's redemption, since he was a murderer and God still forgave him.

We commend David's authentic transparency in writing his Psalms during his abandonment.

We are inspired that David's suffering did not defeat him.

We worship along with David as he gives glory to God Almighty.

We are in awe and honor David as we learn how God Himself referred to him as a "man after His (God's) own heart."

We are sad for David when the Lord told him he could not build God's temple because he had blood on his hands.

We are hopeful to learn God still used David to accomplish great things for His glory.

And, as we grow spiritually toward our Heavenly Father, we see David within us more and more.

There is no doubt that God Almighty used David in powerful ways for His glory and the Kingdom's advancement. Remember, God neither sins nor is the father of lies, but allows sin to ultimately bring Himself glory. Most assuredly, God does not let sin deter His Sovereign redemptive plan for His adopted children. What Satan meant for evil, God uses it for His good.

"Daniel said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. 'It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. 'It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.

"To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks, and praise, For You, have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter." Daniel 2:20-23 (NASB)

King David is among the all-time great patriarchs of the Old Testament. He accomplished incredible feats for God and Israel. He united the twelve fractured Tribes of Israel and strengthened the Jewish nation's faith with his governance as King. Young King David won many battles in God's providence. David is mentioned and referred to numerous times in God's Word. He amassed and wrote many of the Psalms and disseminated this prayer-book of Israel.

Maybe the most extraordinary and significant of David's blessings was that the Heavenly Father choose David to be in the lineage of His only Son, Jesus. David held a unique place in the larger story of the Kingdom, being connected to Jesus and Him to David. One of Christ's most well-known titles was "Son of David." Indeed, David holds an exceptional place in our Christian heritage, in God's divine plan, and was used mightily to bring God glory.

BUT, does that mean David avoided or was exempt from the consequences of his father's sins or his sins? Did those close to him - his family, his children, or even his son escape the consequences of David's sin as a husband and father? No.

Like each of us men, David's first and most crucial ministry obligation was to be the Pastor, Provider, and Protector of his family. Just because the Lord bestowed kingship over Israel, victory over his enemies, and used David in and through his sins, does not mean there were not severe consequences to David's unrighteous, out-of-God's-will actions. David carried his father wound and sin into his kingship, marriage, fatherhood, family, friendships, and leadership.

Have you thought critically about the devastating consequences of a father's sin and how it affects a family, a son, a community, a nation, and the next generation?

By any standards, let alone the standards of God Almighty, King David was a *terrible* father, and it had a profound impact on his family, his children, and on Israel.

David was a **selfish father**. Like many of today's fathers and husbands, David failed in his primary responsibilities and ministry to be the Pastor, Provider, and Protector of his family. David was more concerned about his career as king than in being an involved and present father.

David was an **absent father**. Having to juggle children from many wives compromised and divided his attention further. Children naturally become resentful, angry, and sad because of a father's inaction, lack of involvement, and for not being shepherded into adulthood and manhood. So many different family dynamics were thrust into children's lives and the royal family structure.

David was an **adulterer**. In addition to cheating with the high-profile mistress, Bethsheba, David also had more than eight wives and many sons.

Please do not buy into excuses for David's sin because he was a king or that was the cultural norm of his day. This is a shameful minimization of God's Holy Word and defies the desperate need for forgiveness through Jesus' sacrifice and death on the Cross. God Almighty made his design and rules crystal clear from the beginning with His creation of man and woman.

"For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Genesis 2:24 (NASB)

When God's order, His divine plan for marriage and family, and His direction for the shepherding of precious children is diverted, it only brings sadness, devastation, and death. David's sins not only brought destruction to his family but to Israel. There is ALWAYS a consequence when God's plan is not followed. That is why God HATES divorce.

"For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel..."

Malachi 2:16 (NASB)

Although parents may try to defend their rationale for divorce as "we are better off" or "because we're better off, the kids or better off too," this minimizes or completely disregards God's truths and God's perfect plan.

David was a **weak father**. When families are split, divided, or confused through multiple marriages, divorces, etc. many parents become weak, intentionally or unintentionally, concerning upholding discipline and other core responsibilities, largely due to their absence and guilt.

Sadly, in many broken and so-called blended families, the children and stepsiblings are shuffled off to be cared for by strangers, which contributes to the exponentially growing rate of child sexual abuse. David's family is no exception. His firstborn son and likely heir, Amnon, grew desirous of and eventually raped his half-sister, Tamar.

According to the Scriptures, David was outraged by the rape but did not act on it given his love for his firstborn son. But as we know, love without discipline is not love at all. The love of a father must stand up for righteousness. Amnon committed a grave sin and should have been held to account.

“Then Absalom, her brother, said to her, ‘Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart.’ So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom’s house. Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.” 2 Samuel 13:20-21 (NASB)

David **provoked anger** in his children. Given David's inaction, one of David's other sons, the full brother of Tamar, Absalom, was furious and outraged at the atrocity committed to his sister.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4 (NASB)

Absalom eventually schemed and killed Amnon. Now David lost two sons and had a daughter who had been raped. Absalom continued to grow bitter towards his father and organized a significant rebellion against David, wanting him dead. In the battle that ensued Absalom's rebellion was put down and David's army killed the son of his flesh.

“The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus, he said as he walked, ‘O my son Absalom, my

son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” 2 Samuel 18:33 (NASB)

David was a **poor role model**. Like father, like son. What a legacy?! Our children often learn more from watching us than from the sermons we preach to them. The sins of a father are magnified in his children. The chaos, confusion, family strife, sibling jealousy, and unfaithfulness are all byproducts of a family's brokenness. Solomon was a wise king in some regards, but he also inherited some of David's immoralities. Solomon ended up having one thousand wives, (he loved many foreign women,) and they turned his heart towards other gods. As such, he was not devoted to the one true God. He also worshiped Moloch, the detestable god of the Ammonites, and did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

How more obvious can it be? When families tear apart and so-called modern wisdom drifts from biblical standards, it has grave effects extending far beyond our own families. We clearly see the impact of this 'modern wisdom' all around us. Divorce, remarriages, single parenthood, homosexual unions, and polygamy are all on the rise. The dysfunctional consequences are polluting our churches, communities, and our nation.

Our children - *your* children - pay the price and bear the burden of this unraveling of God's plan and rampant sin. The devastating and increasing statistics do not lie. As with ancient Israel, our nation's future is in the balance. As families go, so goes the nation.

We discussed how some men pretend that their father wound does not have profound influence on them or try to protect their egos by believing "what's in the past doesn't matter."

Would you please pause for a prayerful moment to receive some important insight, a critical encouragement, and some unavoidable truth?

Please. For your good and the good of this and future generations, repent of your sins. Through earnest prayer ask God to open your mind and heart and receive His kingdom wisdom concerning the devastating and inevita-

ble consequences of sin when His most holy plan for marriage and fatherhood are not followed.

David is no different than YOU. David is no different than YOUR father.

He was flawed. He sinned. He did not live up to his role as Pastor, Provider, and Protector of his family. David hurt and sinned against those closest to him. David betrayed those he was to love the most. David's sin created generational hurt, pain, a legacy of dysfunction, and family destruction.

King David and those closest to David did not escape those consequences. David's son and all his children did not escape the consequences of their father's sin. God is not a liar.

There are ALWAYS consequences to sin.

Yes, the Heavenly Father used David in mighty ways. Yes, Jesus is from the lineage of David. And, yes, God called David a man after his own heart. Scripture clearly attests to God's love for David.

So what are the key lessons here? David had a heart for God and the Lord knew that full well. Most importantly, David acknowledged he was a wretched sinner, and apart from God he had no hope. David had a repentant heart and recognition of the need for forgiveness. And, David honored the call to forgive others and be humbled at the feet and throne of God. In the end, David had a reverential fear for God, rooted in love.

As with all of God's anointed, they are to help point us to Jesus Christ, our perfect example. We as men and husbands, are to Love our bride, as Christ Jesus perfectly loves His bride and be quick to ask forgiveness when we do not.

Like David, you've sinned. Like David, you can forgive and be forgiven. Like David, you can be used in mighty ways by your loving Heavenly Father.

No matter the struggles, the heartbreak, the setbacks, the regrets and the brokenness, you don't have to be defeated by any of it. Be *Man Enough*

to view life and eternity from God's perspective and you will emerge victorious through the Abba Father-and-son relationship through the re-birth, being born-again.

Repent and forgive. You can be the man God intended you to be.

I believe in you!

| Chapter 1: Study |

NEXT STEPS: Working through the chapter

- a. How can you relate to King David's story?
- b. Have you grieved the wound(s) your father gave you?
- c. Was God wrong in choosing David, who he knew would sin greatly *even after* he was anointed? Was GOD wrong in knowing that David would become forevermore a model of faithfulness, of godly masculinity, of repentance, and of what it looks like to be a man after God's heart?
- d. What "truths" about *you* were formed by your earthly father's opinion of you?
- e. What are some of your non-obvious David-like traits that are beneath the surface and can be unburdened by your obedience and forgiveness of your father?
- f. What can you do now to both respond to God's calling in your life and to avoid the sin that keeps you trapped in the shadows of the past?

GET ROLLING with the Companion Guide: Preparation to write a *Forgiveness Letter*:

- Utilize the *Man Enough to Forgive* Personal Study Journal workbook

| Scripture References |

1. Samuel gathers candidates to be the next king. 1 Samuel 16:4-5 (NASB)
2. Samuel selects David as the following king of Israel.
1 Samuel 6 – 13 (NASB)
3. The Lord sees not a man's appearance, but his heart.
1 Samuel 16:7 (NASB)
4. God's design for man and woman. Genesis 2:24 (NASB)
5. The Lord hates divorce. Malachi 2:16 (NASB)
6. David does not discipline his son Amnon for the shameful rape of his half-sister. 2 Samuel 13:20-21 (NASB)
7. Discipline children and do not provoke them to anger.
Ephesians 6:4 (NASB)
8. David mourns after his army kills his son Amnon.
2 Samuel 18:33 (NASB)