

**MANSFIELD'S**

**BOOK**  
**OF**

**MANLY**  
**MEN**

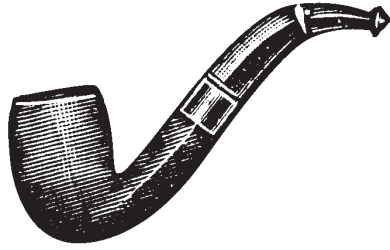


*AN UTTERLY  
INVIGORATING GUIDE  
TO BEING YOUR MOST  
MASCULINE SELF*

**STEPHEN MANSFIELD**



**A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK**



**HONOR**



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. What does your name mean? Is there any clue to your parents' hopes, or even God's intentions, in the meaning of your name in its original language?
2. What words were said about your life when you were born? Form these words of blessing and vision into prayers and destinations. Make curses and negative labels into Yabetz-like prayers.
3. What tribe do you belong to? Is there any defining language or story that comes with belonging to that tribe? Take them for yourself. Make them a matter of prayer. Live their ideals. If some of the words that swirl around your tribe are negative, do as Yabetz did: ask God to break the curse and enlarge you.
4. Take a loving, honest look at your family culture. Take the good and extend it. Identify the harsh, the bitter, and the destructive and work against it. Do this in prayer, in discipline, and by living in exactly the opposite spirit.
5. Consider keeping an "Honor Book" or some "Honor Pages" in your journal if you already use one. Record the words that nobly define your life: words of your ancestors, tribal leaders, parents, teachers, coaches, friends, and so on. Record words from Scripture, poems, books, even movies and songs that embedded themselves in you when you heard them and have become part of who you are and want to be. Rehearse them, make them yours, pray them, ask God to break the opposite of these noble words in your life, and celebrate on the page your journey into honor. Don't feel silly or unmanly about this. George Washington, George Patton, Ronald Reagan, and some of the greatest men who ever lived did this too!



# LEGACY



WINSTON CHURCHILL

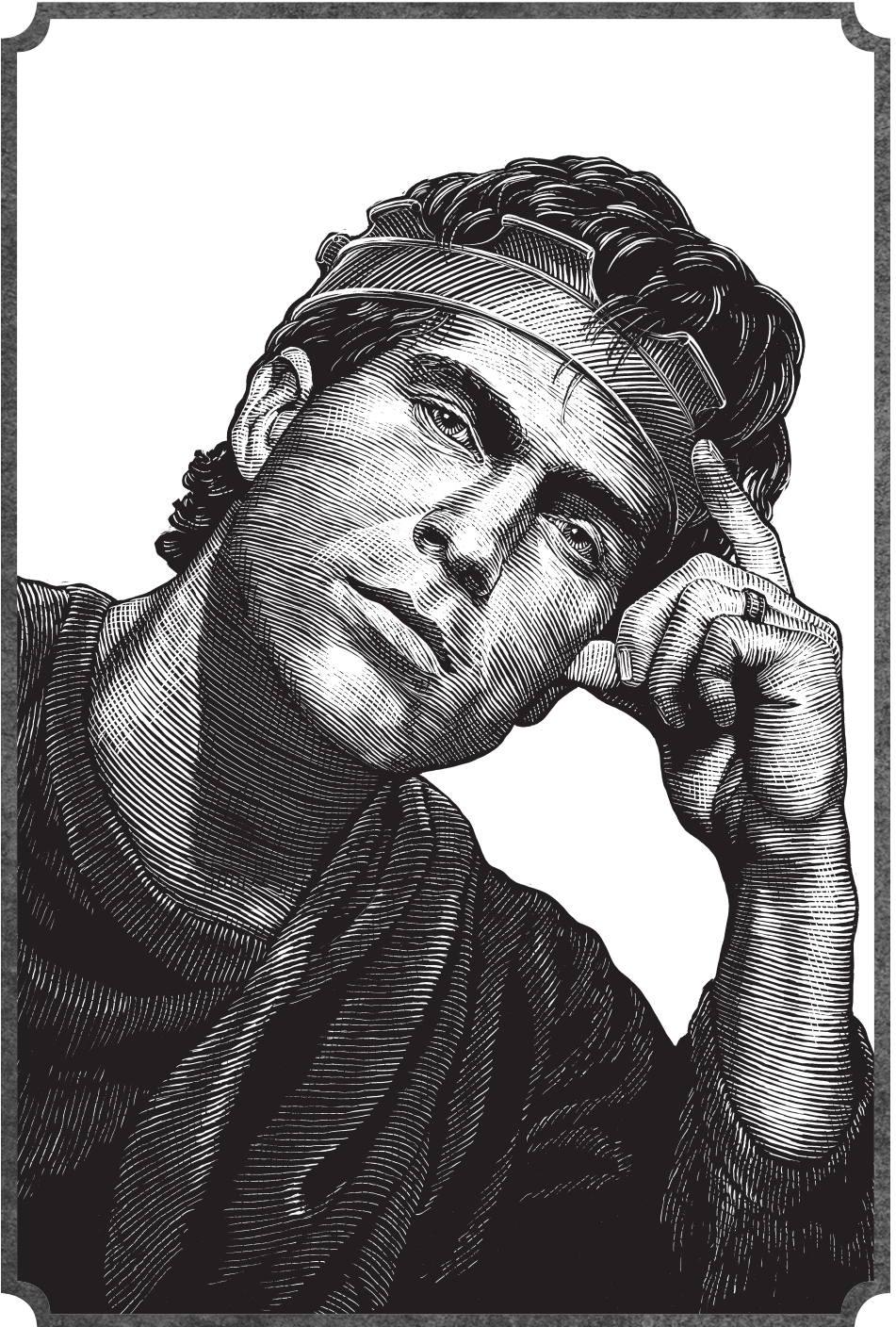


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Try to recall the most recent occasions when you have rehearsed the dark side of your past: the betrayals, the cruel words, the prophecies of doom, and the insults. Try to recall, also, the case you were making. Were you using your wounds to excuse yourself in some way? This case, supported by the evidence of your wounds, shows you the direction in which you are deforming your life through bitterness and self-pity. Look at it closely. It's your enemy.
2. Now consider your hardships and disappointments in Churchillian perspective. What did they mean for you that might be helpful? Did you hide in your room to escape a harsh parent, but then end up reading or practicing an instrument or lifting weights? Is there any good you can build upon from your otherwise painful experiences? And what good did the people who caused these pains leave for you? A coach might have humiliated you, but he may also have taught you how to work hard. A teacher may have insulted you for an entire school year, but she also may have spent ten minutes teaching something that changed your life. Search through the rubble. Find the good. Extend it.
3. Finally, act! Attempt "great actions." Stop excusing. Stop relieving yourself from duty. Do! Step out! Move forward! Achieve where you were supposed to fail. Make a difference where you were supposed to be inept. Answer the curses with a life well lived.



# FRIENDSHIP



JONATHAN



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Take stock of your friendships. Are they shallow, temporary, and unfulfilling? Do they lead you into something other than the paths of manly greatness? Or do they inspire you and make you yearn to be a great man, a manly man? Do you trust your friends, connect with them at a heart/spirit level, and rely on their wisdom and their example?
2. Is there a way to take the casual friendships you have now and deepen them so they look something like the friendship between Jonathan and David? How would the example of Jonathan give you wisdom for this?
3. What would it look like for you to make covenant with a close friend? What would it look like for you to help a friend find strength in God? In fact, take each of the meaningful moments between Jonathan and David I described in this chapter, put them in your own words, and describe how you would live them out with your friends.
4. How might covenant friendships be abused and how can you guard against it?
5. How can you guide your wife and your children into covenant friendships?
6. Jonathan is described as a man of big heart and “great spirit.” What does that mean? How would you become a man of great spirit? What would it mean for those in your life?
7. How can you help your generation of men escape the loneliness that haunts them?



# BLESSING



GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON JR.



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Make sure you are certain about the meaning of the word *blessing*. Look up the various forms of the word in the Bible and write down the verses that pertain to an older man or woman blessing a child or someone of the next generation. Scan for the concept in history, your ethnic or tribal history in particular. You might also read some of the better books that explore this concept from a biblical perspective.
2. Who is in a position to bless you? Your father, your tribal leader, the older males in your family, your spiritual mentors, or perhaps other relatives—all are possibilities. Keep in mind that mothers and other women in your life are candidates as well.
3. If a blessing is a passing on of the good in past generations, investigate the good elements of your family line, your tribe, your people. What is it you would like for a blessing to draw out of your people's past?
4. Along with other men who form your "band of brothers," craft a blessing ritual or ceremony. If your church already has a ritual of this kind, meet with your clergyman to see how it applies to your life. These rituals or ceremonies need not be highly complex, but should include a season of preparation, both extemporaneous and written declarations of blessing, witnesses, people designated to lay on hands and speak the blessing, and, finally, some type of commemorative object (a sword, a mug, grandfather's tie clasp, dad's army swagger stick, a kilt, a book, and so forth).



# QUEST



JEDEDIAH SMITH

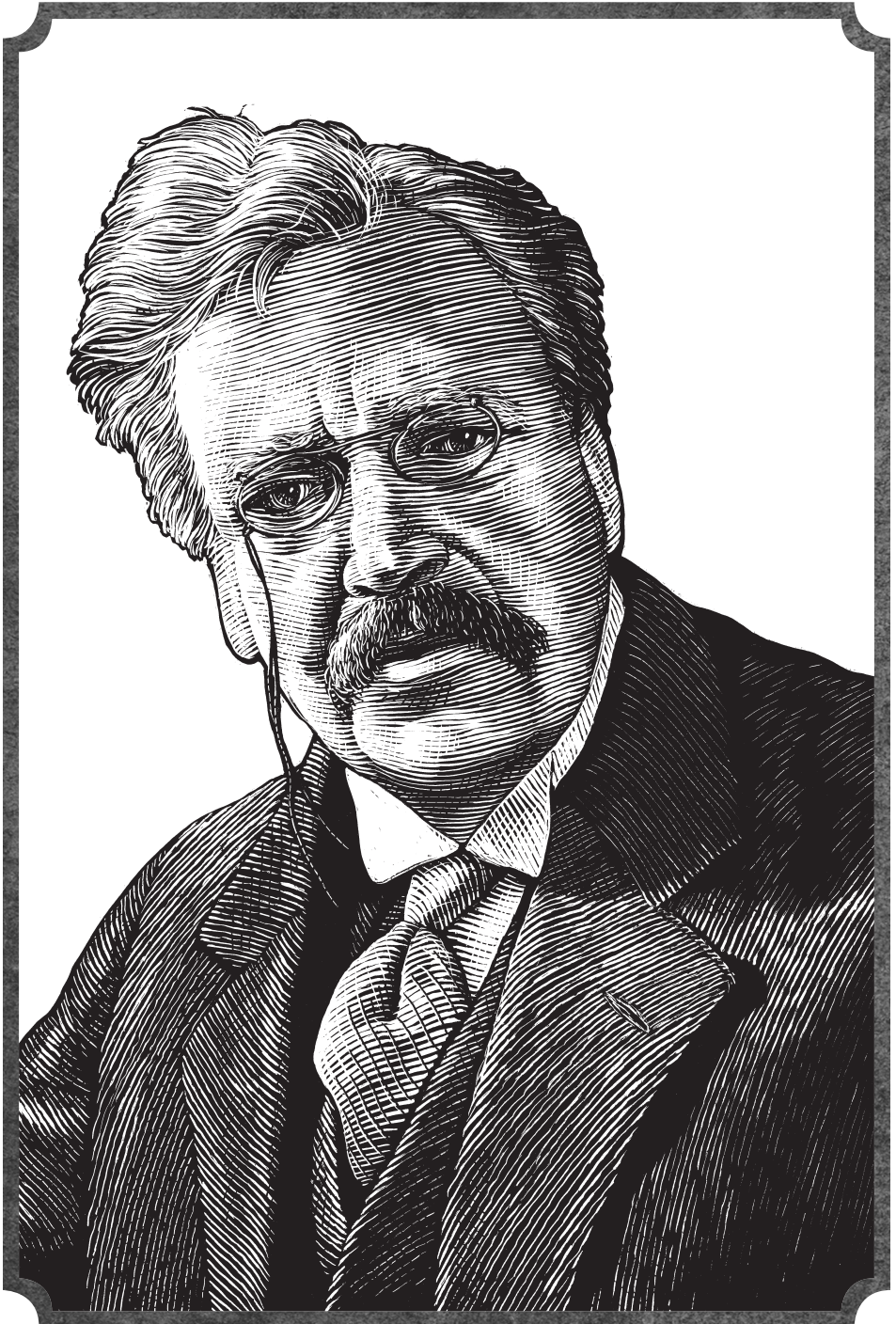


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Get and read John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*. It's the best book on this subject.
2. Remember the last time your heart raced, you sweated like a pig, you thought you might die, you conquered something, and you bored your band of brothers to death by describing it over and over again? Go do something like it again. Just don't get arrested.
3. Then train for something bigger.
4. Finally, find me and make sure I'm doing the same.



# HUMOR



G.K. CHESTERTON



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

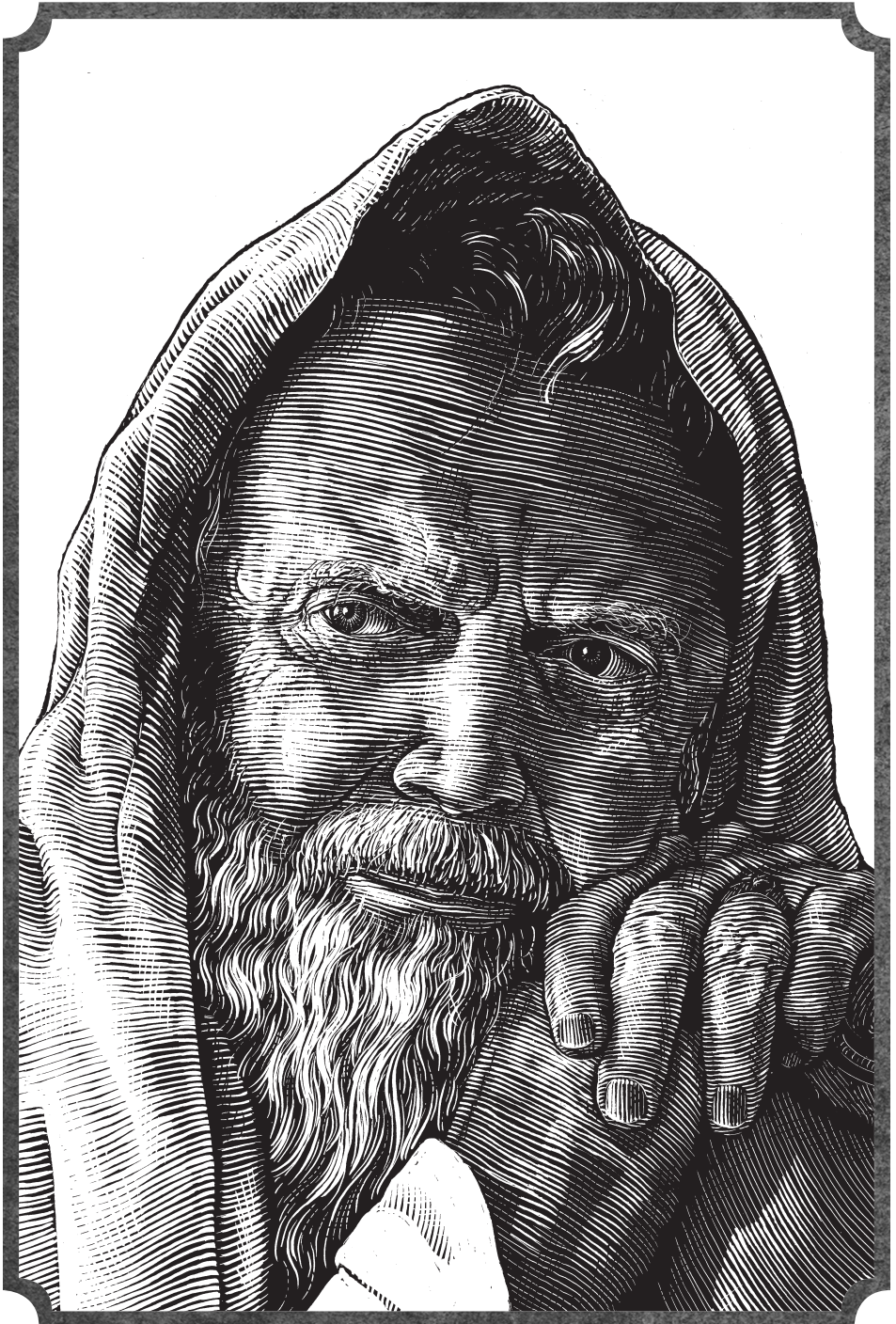
1. Take stock of your own sense of humor for a moment. Have you put this valuable gift in the service of anger, bitterness, and hate? Do you use humor only to wound and control? If so, clean it up. Repent before God, apologize to those you've damaged, and begin putting your gift for humor in the service of nobler ends.
2. Practice good humor. Yes. That's exactly what I mean. Even the dullest man can learn a few jokes and tell them to wring a laugh when needed. If you've told dirty jokes and stories all your life, start learning new ones. Get a book. Go on a clean joke website. Watch a clean comedian. Also, if you have a hard time telling a joke with any sense of timing, get some help. Find someone who can work with you a bit. Here is the heart of the matter: If humor is as powerful a tool as I've said it is in this chapter, then it is worth practicing to get right. It is also worth falling flat for a while. Anything worth doing is worth doing badly until you do it well.
3. Start using humor at moments when it will help. The dinner conversation turns sour. Your daughter is discouraged. Your son didn't make the team or get the girl. The staff needs to lighten up after a slow season of sales. Obviously, I don't mean to make light of suffering, but having offered the usual comfort, lighten the mood. The man I know who does this best is the worst joke teller in the world. His kids moan as soon as he starts. He knows how bad he is. In truth, his joke is

that he's trying to tell a joke. I've noticed, though, that when he starts up and his kids moan and tell him to stop, they are already laughing. The victory is already his. He's loving his children in the language of humor. He's healing their wounds and telling them life is full of disappointments but it is still sweet and good. Mission accomplished.

4. Finally, learn a lesson from Joel Osteen, whether he's your kind of minister or not. Joel can't tell a joke to save his life. People obviously collect jokes for him. Yet at the beginning of every sermon he says, "I always like to start out with something funny" and then he tells a joke. It is one joke, announced flatly and often told badly. Yet it works. Why? Because making humor a priority, even if less than skillfully accomplished, is a victory of its own. People love Joel for trying, though they would never repeat some of his truly horrible jokes. Joel isn't trying to be a comedian, though. He's trying to draw people in and make a connection with them. It works. Now, when the pastor's joke gets crowded out of a service, people write to Joel to tell him how they missed it, how it somehow made their week a bit less than usual. Remember, this is one joke, announced flatly, and often told badly. That's the power of humor.



# RESTORATION



MARK THE APOSTLE

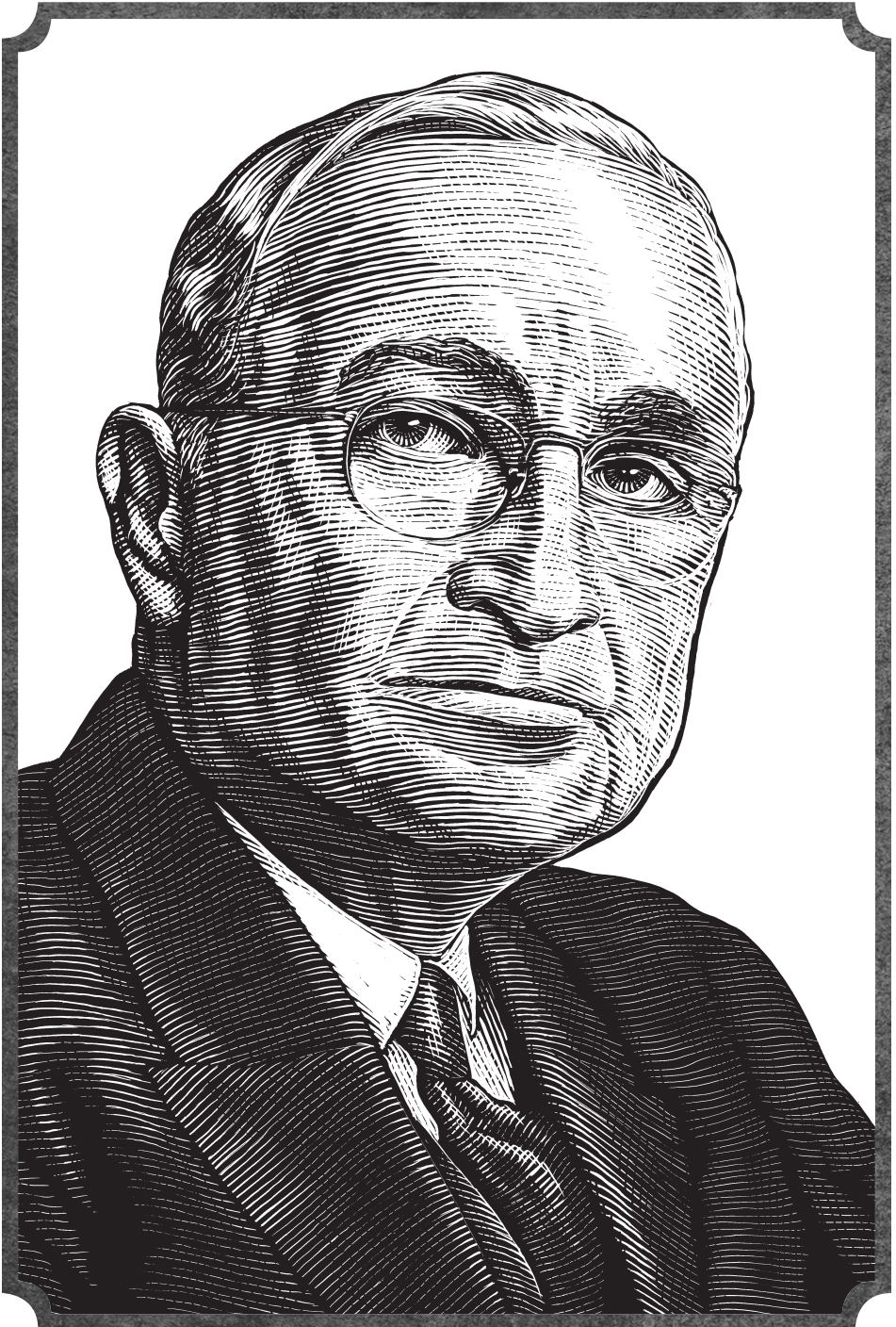


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Think carefully over your life and list the failures that have been significant to you. Can you see patterns to these failures? Are there character flaws common among them? What do they tell you about yourself and about your weaknesses?
2. Is there anyone you should reconcile with because of your failures? Is there anything you should confess? Is there anything you have taken that you should restore?
3. If you do not think you have completely overcome after your failures, find some wise older men and submit the matter to them. Ask for their help not only in rebuilding your outer life and reputation life, but also in helping you build the character of a genuine man.
4. With the help of your mentors, define what rebuilding or overcoming after your failure would look like. How can you live out a positive history on the very ground where you once failed? Turn this to prayer and remain open to opportunities for victory on the very site of your defeat.
5. Finally, consider how you will respond differently should another season of failure or devastation befall you. In other words, how does a manly man, a genuine man, face loss and devastation?



## SELF-EDUCATION



HARRY TRUMAN



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Look back upon your own educational life. What has been positive? Where have you learned the most and enjoyed it? Then, what has been negative in your educational career? Have you been turned off to reading? Did you fail in some way or sustain a wound that left you believing you could not learn the knowledge you need in this life? Confront these issues in prayer, with friends and leaders, and with your spouse. Determine not to let any painful experience of the past keep you from “tending your field.”
2. Take inventory of your life and determine areas of knowledge in which you are weak. Identify teachers, websites, books, video series—anything that will help you learn. Don’t be too proud to use books like *American Government for Dummies* or *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Accounting*. Series like these are wonderfully helpful and, frankly, I’ve met with leading lawyers who had *Constitutional Law for Dummies* hidden in their briefcases. Get the knowledge you need. Don’t be ashamed.
3. Work to change the intellectual culture in your home. Turn off the television and make sure there are books in abundance. Studies show that the mere presence of books in a home raises the intellectual activity of those who live there. Help protect your wife’s time so she can read at leisure. Schedule reading nights for your family, even reading contests. And don’t be beyond bribing your children to read.

Wouldn't ten dollars a book be a fantastic investment in a child's future? Always be aware of your example. Nothing will inspire your children to read and learn like seeing you doing it first.

4. Be systematic. Have a long-term plan. Collect recommended reading lists in various fields and make sure to include some of the classics in your lifetime reading plan. Subscribe to podcasts in your field and any field in which you need an upgrade. Set goals of a certain number of books a month or a year, and urge friends to hold you accountable.
5. Remember not to panic. This is the work of a lifetime. Just beginning is already a form of success.



# WILDNESS



THEODORE ROOSEVELT



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Discuss Theodore Roosevelt's story with friends. What portions seem similar to experiences you've had? How did the "strenuous life" answer Roosevelt's inner needs in the areas you identify with?
2. Evaluate your current physical life. Do you have arenas of controlled combat? Do you have "combat" and "struggle" in your life, even if it is twice a week at the gym? Do you have space, territory, wilds that you enter at least occasionally?
3. John Eldredge has said in his masterful *Wild at Heart* that Adam was made in the wilderness, and Eve was made in a garden. This, he suggests, contributes to some of the differences between men and women and also some of their different needs. Look up the stories of Adam and Eve. Do you think Eldredge is right? If so, what does it mean for you?
4. How are the young men in your life exhibiting their need for wildness, for frontier or adventure? Let me ask this question through a brief story. When my son was about ten years old, he got caught lying in the middle of a street late one night. He later explained that he was trying to see how close he would let the cars get to him before jumping up and running to the curb. Fortunately, the policeman who "arrested" Jonathan was a friend of mine and brought him to me to inform me that Jonathan was going to prison. Of course, my muscular SWAT commander friend was winking behind Jonathan's back. Jonathan was terrified. My fierce-looking buddy was tossing

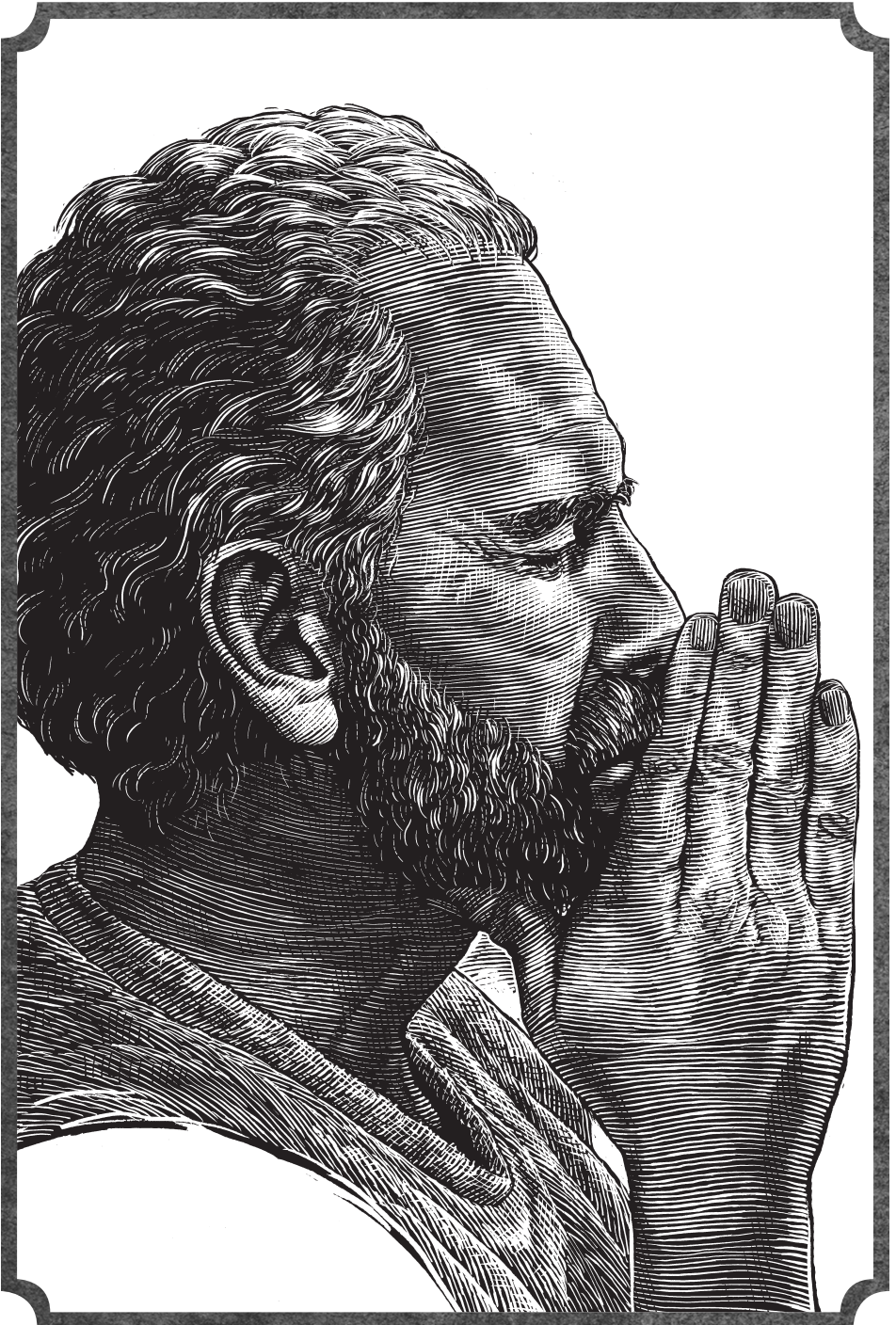
hand cuffs in the air with one hand while fingering his holstered gun with his other hand. I took my son into “custody,” assuring Officer Apollo Creed that I would deal with the boy. I have to say, though, that I knew what my son was doing. He was testing himself. He wanted to know if he was any kind of man. I had to laugh, but only after I descended on him like the wrath of God.

Is anything of this kind happening in your home? Is some controlled wildness called for?

5. Finally, Eleanor Roosevelt advised us to “Do something everyday that scares you.” Don’t just respond to this chapter by getting a membership to the gym or buying a big, ugly piece of home exercise equipment. And *do not* think you are a wild man because you have a hunting lease that lets you sit in an air-conditioned blind fitted out with recliner, fridge, and satellite TV. *No!* Do a tandem jump out of an airplane. Hang glide. Train to hike to the summit of a mountain. Scuba dive. Go work a friend’s ranch. Don’t be stupid, but do press the boundaries. And get your buddies to hold you accountable so you don’t wimp out. We all have that potential.



# INTEGRITY



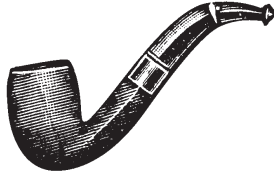
JOB



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Think carefully about your seasons of suffering. What do you see surfacing in your life at that time? Faith? Self-pity? Anger? Take note of it all. It is part of you. Turn it to prayer and ask God to make you a righteous man. Push back against your lesser self.
2. Hold your life against the seven lessons Job has taught us and see how you compare to this standard. Don't wait for some horrible, Joblike season of suffering to perfect these qualities. Put them into practice now. Ask those closest to you to tell you what they see when they hold you up against Job's Big Seven. Learn from them. Act.
3. Put yourself in intentional, short-term experiences of hardship. Train for something difficult, perhaps, or engage in spiritual disciplines like fasting and prolonged silence. Take note of what negative forces rise in your soul. Deal with them. Take note also of how you endure suffering, of what helps you get through it. Prayer? Scripture? A friend enduring at your side? The examples of great men of old? All of it is valid; strength comes differently for each of us. Know how it comes best for you.
4. Understand this principle well: if your theology—your view of the world based on God—doesn't include a biblical understanding of suffering, the hard things in life will surprise you and perhaps blow away your unprepared faith. Study your Bible on this topic. Talk to your band of brothers. Read good

books. Interview your spiritual mentors. Listen to the great men of old. Get biblical on the problem of evil and suffering in the world. Don't have such a lightweight religion that anything hard that befalls you knocks you from your foundation of faith. True men face hard things knowing who rules the world and knowing the good that hard things can produce. This is only true, though, if a man's theological worldview is big enough to include hard things in the first place.



# FORGIVENESS



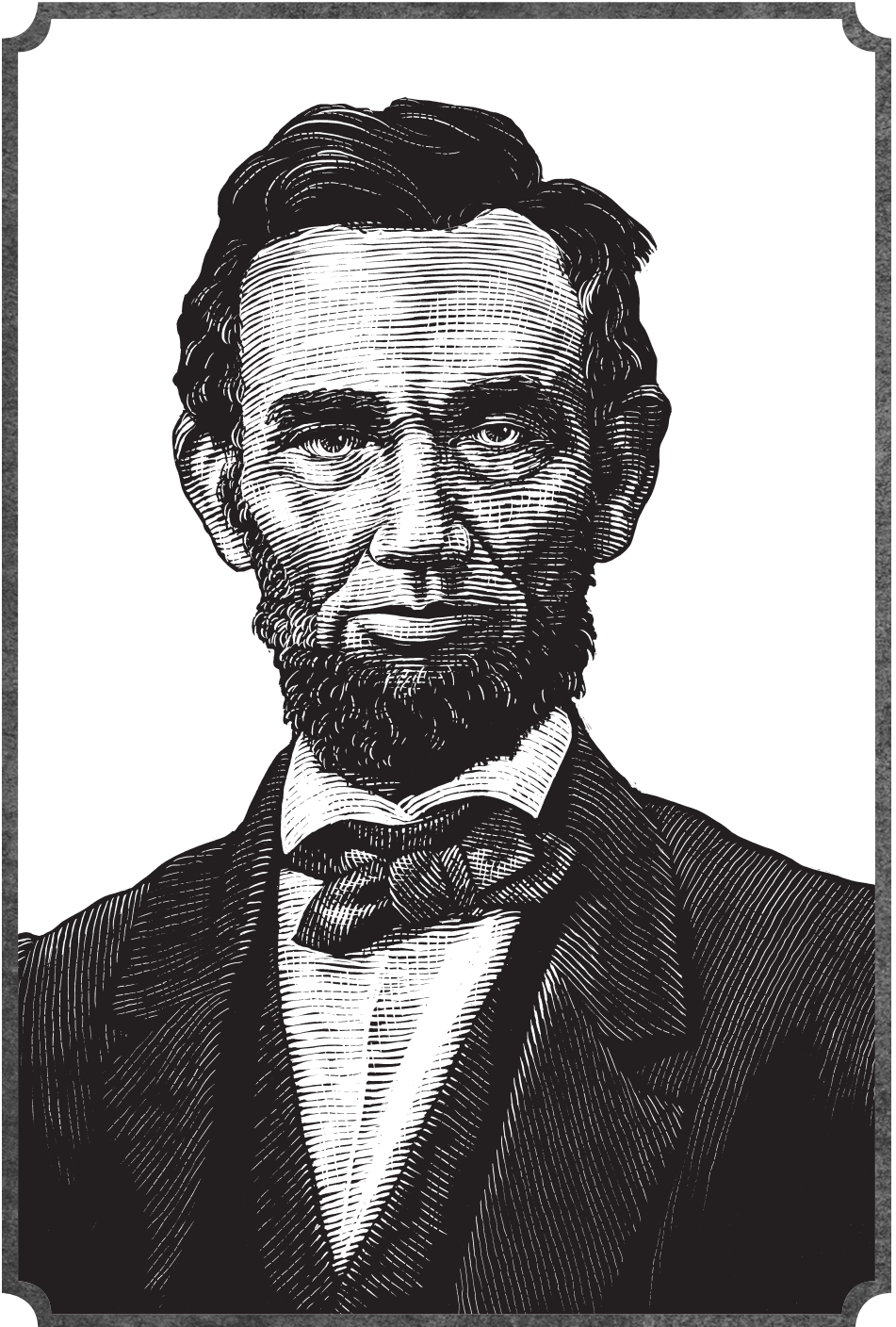
## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Take a moment to evaluate your bitterness level. Don't trust yourself. Ask your wife, your older children, and your friends. Do they hear you rehearsing the wrongs you have suffered? Do they see you excusing yourself from God's will or from achievement with past wounds? Do they feel tainted by bitterness you spew?
2. Make a list of those you have not forgiven. Are you waiting for anyone to come to you and apologize? Then you haven't forgiven him. Have you chewed someone out—even when you're driving alone in your car!—for something he did to you? Then you haven't forgiven him. Do you feel pain when you think of your father, your mother, a coach, or a friend but then you say, inwardly or aloud, "I'm not going to go there"? If so, there is a failure to forgive. Be brutally honest. Ask those close enough to you to know. This is no time to spare yourself.
3. Get busy. Forgiveness is not a process of managing emotions. It is an act. You forgive. You tell people you forgive. You declare it done. You pray. You give the whole matter to God. You fight in prayer and rely on Scripture to strengthen you to stand free and clean. You ask people to forgive you. You do what you can to make amends. You get your life as free of bitter grudges and angry ways as possible. Finally, you ask the Holy Spirit to wash in afresh and to restore what has been lost during your poisoned season.

4. Remember your goal is not just an individual episode made clean. Your goal is to get the Velcro off of your soul and to replace it with righteous Teflon that won't let anything evil stick. So, you push in this direction. You ask God to work. You memorize scriptures that empower you in love. You realize offense is a cancer, and you deal with it as soon as it occurs. You fight. You declare war on your lesser nature. You get help from friends. You read books. You even watch movies that remind you of the damage bitterness does. There is no magic here. There is just a man fighting for his soul, using whatever he needs to be clean before God. In short, you act. It is what a man does.



# SUFFERING



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

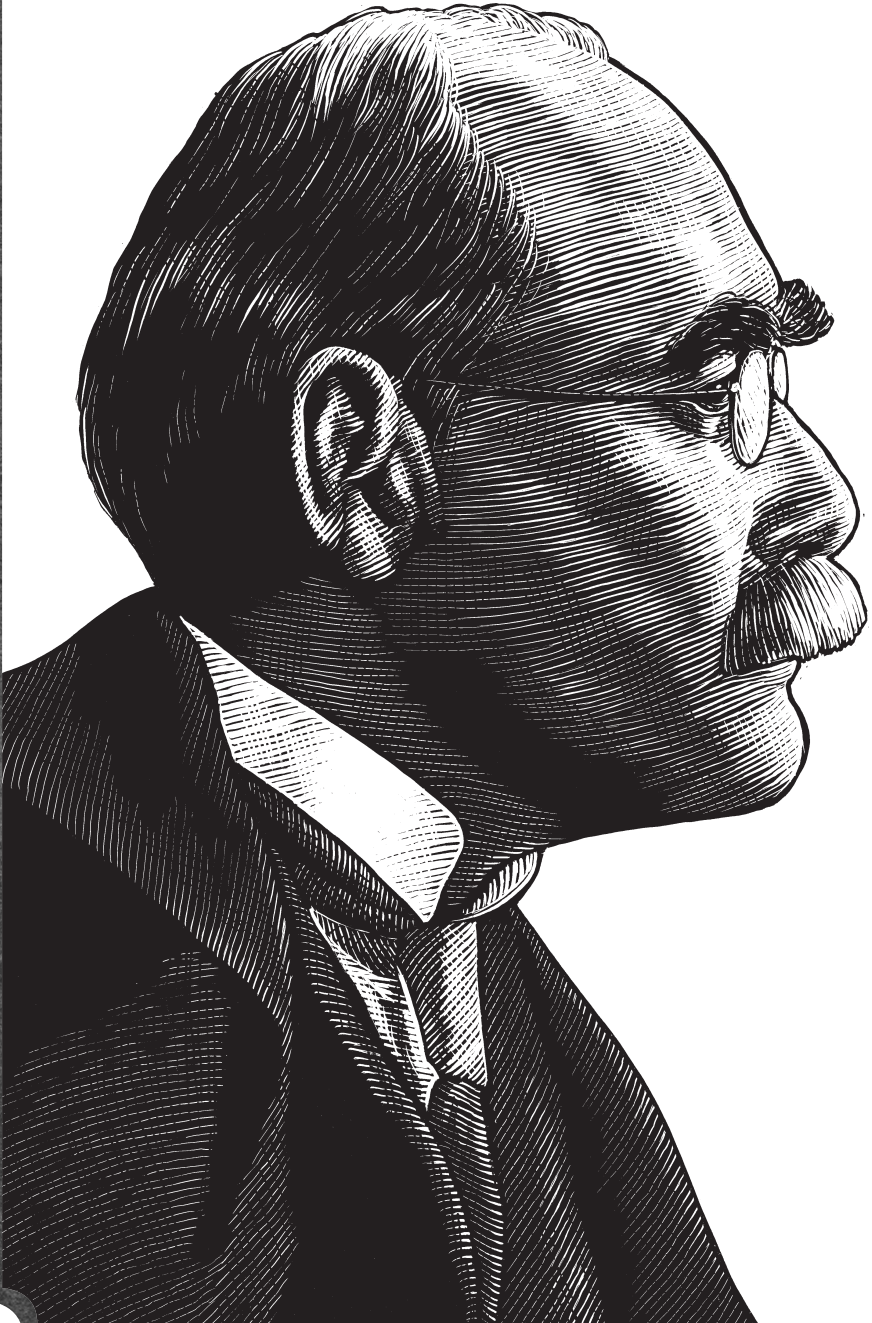


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Take inventory of the unique flaws and deformities in your life. Have the courage to ask those closest to you what they think these defects might be.
2. Go to the root of these issues. What has caused them? Wounds? Conditioning? Wrong beliefs? Flawed religion?
3. In counsel with friends and pastors, make an action plan. Declare war on your weaknesses and the imperfections in your life. Most of us have too many defects to attack all at one time, but by identifying the ones that most undermine your progress toward being a genuine man, you will have established the target of your battle plan.
4. Warning: We can become preoccupied with ourselves through a process like this. In a noble effort to improve with God's help, we can spend far too much time thinking about ourselves and end up building a bigger and more disqualifying stronghold of self than we started with. Stay focused. Identify the enemies of your soul. Develop a strategy against them. Understand you have begun a lifelong process. Get on with living, aware of your flaws. This is a means of mastering yourself, not a process by which to become even more self-focused. Enough said.
5. Finally, remember wounds and deformities draw us inward. Overcoming them frees us to focus on others and love them as God intends. The measure of your progress is the increase of your investment in the lives entrusted to you. As Lincoln overcame his depression, he became a bigger soul, a grander visionary, a man more in love with his nation, and, ultimately, a more effective servant to his people. This is exactly why a man's battle to overcome himself is often the same thing as his battle to fulfill his destiny.



# VISION



RUDYARD KIPLING



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Make sure you have not mistaken physical bravado and an animal type of aggression for manhood. While genuine manhood is about action, it is not merely about a man's physical life. Make sure you are clear about the difference and are not imbalanced.
2. Take Kipling's poem "If—" and work through it slowly with friends. Apply each principle to your life. Where are you satisfied with how you are living out the words of this poem? Where do its words convict you? Don't be afraid to use it as a checklist of manly ethics.
3. How are you ensuring that your version of manliness is not merely an act but that it grows from a rugged soul, a principled vision, and an inner devotion to the manly virtues? How are you staying inspired to live as a manly man? What are you reading, watching, memorizing, and applying that will make you an exceptional man? If you find yourself lacking in this area, use some of the resources at the back of this book to fashion an "upgrade program" for yourself and, as always, enlist the encouragement and mentoring of friends.



# HUMILITY



**BOOKER T. WASHINGTON**

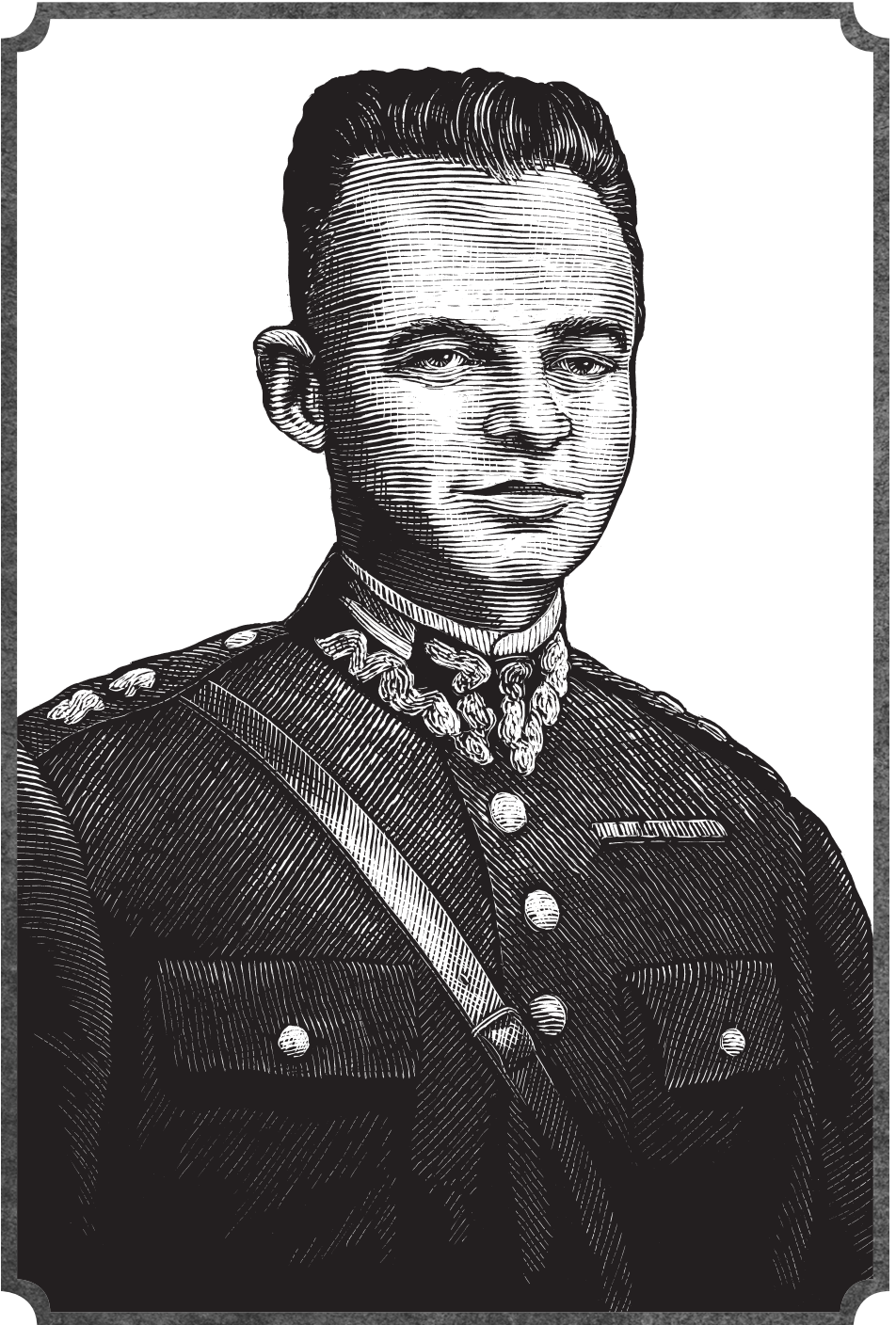


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Take note of the areas of your life in which you've been trying to perfect virtue by managing your emotions rather than by acting, by doing something that needs to be done. How has this hindered you? What actions can you take to begin *doing* humility that you hadn't thought of before?
2. List practical ways in which you can humble yourself and have friends hold you accountable for actually doing them. At the same time, memorize the scriptures that promise the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit of humility in your life. True humility will come from your offering of obedience and the Holy Spirit's faithfulness to work in you. Hold to this confidence, pray for it often, and *act*.
3. Is there any area of your life where you have done damage through haughtiness and pride? Of course, we all do damage through pride through the years, but is there an ongoing area like this in your life now? Go after it. Address it. Apologize. Repent. Confess. Call your band of brothers in to help.
4. Finally, don't ignore healthy emotions. I urge action over emotion in this book, but I also urge that emotions are important in their right priority. Don't ignore the importance of a healthy soul and healthy emotions. I suggest you pray Psalm 23:3 every day. *Lord, please be my good shepherd and restore my soul.* If you do this, you will be enlisting God's help in healing any emotional damage you have sustained and in restoring you to what you are made to be.



# SACRIFICE



WITOLD PILECKI

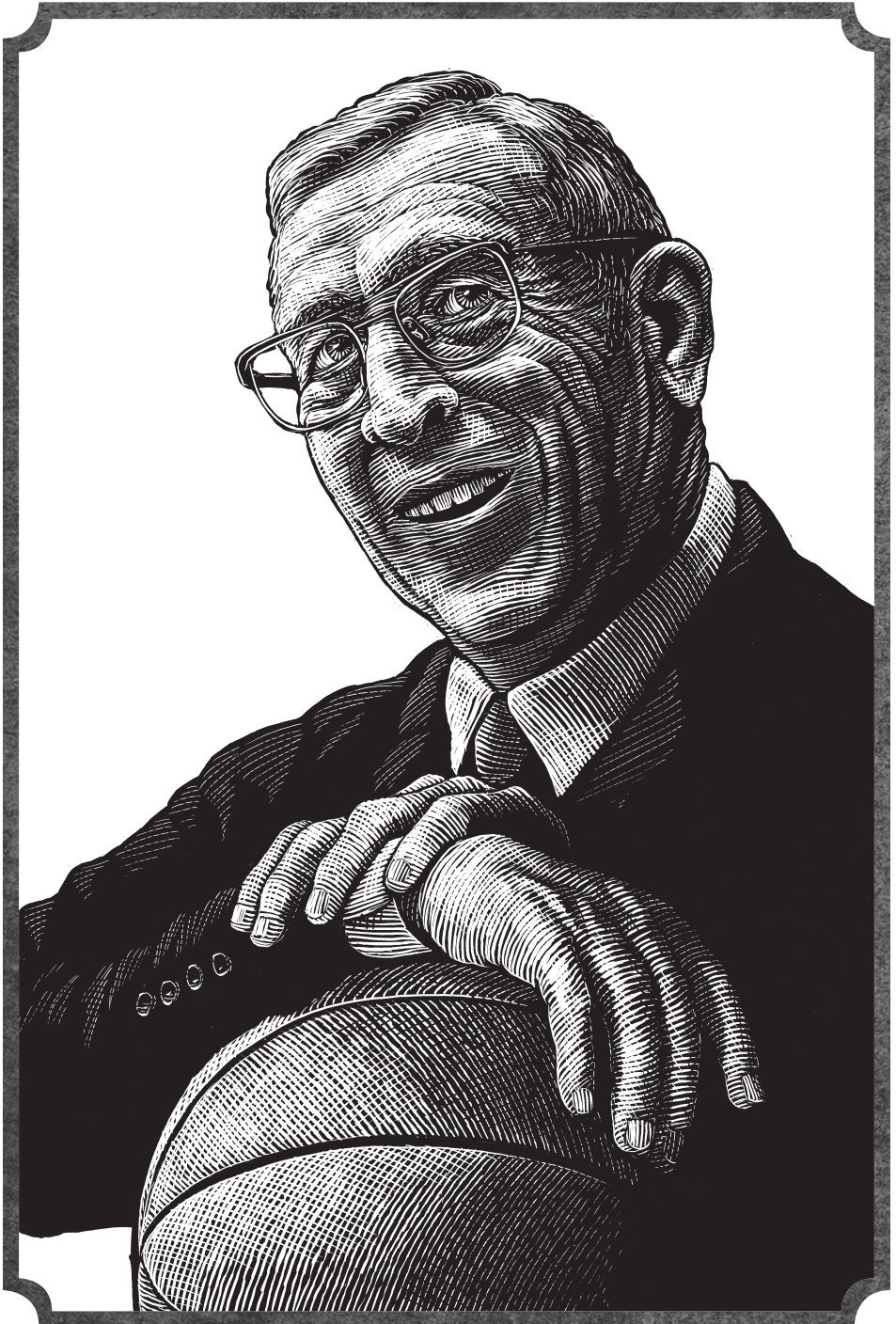


## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. Make sure you are clear on what giving yourself up or laying down your life means. Discuss this with friends, ponder the Scriptures on this point, and think of examples you have known.
2. When has someone surrendered privilege or preference for you in a life-altering way? What did this require? What empowered him or her to do it?
3. Take inventory of your life and the lives in the field assigned to you. Evaluate how you have and how you ought to lay down your life for them. What would this mean? Who are good examples for you? What should this produce in the lives you are responsible for?
4. Drill more deeply into the example of Jesus and his surrender of his life, not just through his death but also in his surrender of privilege and rank. What examples are there for you in this? How can this example empower you to the sacrifices you are called to make?



# PRESENCE



COACH JOHN WOODEN



## WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO? HOW WILL YOU SHOW YOURSELF A MAN?

1. True masculine authority does not come from having a penis or a position. It comes from prayer. It comes from a history of investing. It comes from manning the ramparts of your field. How do you stack up against this definition? Get with some friends and explore these matters carefully in one another's lives. Then, you know what to do. Get busy. Repent. Rebuild. Reengage. Repair. And, in the appropriate ways, reassert.
2. Without saying much to anyone outside the band of brothers I've mentioned, walk the invisible walls of your field, your home and family first. Are there holes? Is someone tormented? In decline? Under attack? Swept away by some unclean force? You know what I'm asking. Then again, you know what to do. Patch the walls in prayer first, then in whatever is required of a loving, gentle, secure, powerful man.
3. Keep this in mind. Being replaces excessive doing. You know how important doing is, if for no other reason than what has been said in these pages. But in the same way you can mess up a golf swing by overswinging, and you can damage your car by overservicing, you can overdo in manly duties. Being replaces excessive doing. Not normal doing. Excessive doing. But first, act wisely. Don't try to compensate for insecurity by doing. It won't work, and it won't bear righteous fruit.



# FIFTY QUOTES FOR MANLY MEN

**“Every moment and every event  
of every man’s life on earth plants  
something in his soul.”**

*—Thomas Merton, from New Seeds of Contemplation (1961)*

**“I learned that courage was not the absence  
of fear, but the triumph over it. . . . The  
brave man is not he who does not feel  
afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”**

*—Nelson Mandela, from Long Walk to Freedom (1995)*

**“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”**

—*Martin Luther King Jr., recorded in The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., by Coretta Scott King (1983)*

**“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”**

—*Martin Luther King Jr., from Strength to Love (1963)*

**“We live in a feminist and effeminate culture. Because of this, at best, as a people we are uneasy with masculinity, and with increasing regularity, whenever it manages to appear somehow, we call for someone to do something about it.”**

—*Douglas Wilson, from Future Men (2001)*

**“The central problem of every society is to define appropriate roles for the men.”**

—*Margaret Mead, from Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World (1968)*

**“You can fake virtue for an audience.  
You can’t fake it in your own eyes.”**

*—Ayn Rand, from The Fountainhead (1943)*

**“Happiness does not consist in amusement.  
In fact, it would be strange if our end were  
amusement, and if we were to labor and  
suffer hardships all our life long merely  
to amuse ourselves. . . . The happy life  
is regarded as a life in conformity with  
virtue. It is a life which involves effort  
and is not spent in amusement.”**

*—Aristotle, from The Nicomachean Ethics*

**“These virtues are formed in man by  
his doing the actions . . . The good of  
man is a working of the soul in the way  
of excellence in a complete life.”**

*—Aristotle, from The Nicomachean Ethics*

**“What virtue is there in a man who  
demonstrates goodness because he has  
been bred to it? It is his habit from youth.  
But a man who has known unkindness and  
want, for him to be kind and charitable  
to those who have been the cause of his  
misfortunes, that is a virtuous man.”**

*—Deanna Raybourn, from Silent on the Moor (2009)*

**“The difference between the old and the new education will be an important one. Where the old initiated, the new merely ‘conditions.’ The old dealt with its pupils as grown birds deal with young birds when they teach them to fly; the new deals with them more as the poultry-keeper deals with young birds—making them thus or thus for purposes of which the birds know nothing. In a word, the old was a kind of propagation—men transmitting manhood to men; the new is merely propaganda.”**

—*C. S. Lewis, from The Abolition of Man (1943)*

**“Virtue is a state of war, and to live in it we have always to combat with ourselves.”**

—*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from Julie, or the New Heloise, trans. from Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse (1761)*

**“There is nothing so baleful to the small man as the shade of a great one.”**

—*Washington Irving, from “The Author’s Account of Himself,” first installment of The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (1819–1820)*

**“What the superior man seeks is in himself. What the small man seeks is in others.”**

—*Confucius, from The Ethics of Confucius, Analects, bk. xv (1915)*

**“How many a man has dated a new era  
in his life from the reading of a book.”**

*—Henry David Thoreau, from Walden;  
or, Life in the Woods (1854)*

**“You can discover what your enemy  
fears most by observing the means  
he uses to frighten you.”**

*—Eric Hoffer, from The Passionate State of Mind (1955)*

**“Worry is rushing into the future and  
viewing it apart from the grace of God.”**

*—Rice Brocks, on Twitter, 2012*

**“The small man gossips. The average man lets  
him. The great man stays silent and allows  
what is said of him to make him greater still.”**

*—Stephen Mansfield*

**“Society everywhere is in conspiracy against  
the manhood of every one of its members. The  
virtue most requested is conformity. Self-  
reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities  
and creators, but names and customs.”**

*—Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance”  
(essay), from Essays: First Series (1841)*

**“Adversity toughens manhood, and the characteristic of the good or the great man is not that he has been exempt from the evils of life, but that he has surmounted them.”**

*—Patrick Henry, from “The Southern Literary Messenger,” quoted in Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence, and Speeches (1891)*

**“Fathers are to sons what blacksmiths are to swords. It is the job of the blacksmith not only to make a sword but also to maintain its edge of sharpness. It is the job of the father to keep his son sharp and save him from the dullness of foolishness. He gives his son that sharp edge through discipline.”**

*—Steve Farrar, from King Me: What Every Son Wants and Needs from His Father (2006)*

**“That’s what fathering is all about. It’s mentoring and equipping your son to become a man who will assume the family leadership for the next generation. You have no higher calling in life. It is your God-given assignment.”**

*—Steve Farrar, King Me*

**“Be the man you wish your father was,  
and you don’t have to keep saying,  
‘But my father wasn’t around.’”**

*—Anonymous*

**“If a man hasn’t discovered something  
he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”**

*—Martin Luther King Jr., from his speech in  
Detroit, Michigan (June 23, 1963)*

**“Men, in a word, must necessarily be  
controlled either by a power within them  
or by a power without them; either by the  
Word of God or by the strong arm of man;  
either by the Bible or by the bayonet.”**

*—Robert Winthrop, from a speech to the Massachusetts  
Bible Society, quoted in Robert Winthrop, Addresses  
and Speeches on Various Occasions (1852)*

**“That which thy fathers bequeathed thee;  
Earn it anew if thou would’st possess it.”**

*—Ancient Celtic maxim*

**“The things a man has to have are hope and confidence in himself against odds, and sometimes he needs somebody, his pal or his mother or his wife or God, to give him that confidence. He’s got to have some inner standards worth fighting for or there won’t be any way to bring him into conflict. And he must be ready to choose death before dishonor without making too much song and dance about it. That’s all there is to it.”**

*—Clark Gable, quoted in The Honeycomb  
by Adela Rogers St. Johns (1969)*

**“How beautiful maleness is, if it finds its right expression.”**

*—D. H. Lawrence, from Sea and Sardinia (1921)*

**“Because there is very little honor left in American life, there is a certain built-in tendency to destroy masculinity in American men.”**

*—Norman Mailer, from Cannibals and Christians,  
“Petty Notes on Some Sex in America” (1966;  
first published in Playboy 1962–1963)*

“It is not the critic that counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the Arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but he who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great devotion; who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls, who know neither victory nor defeat.”

—Theodore Roosevelt, from his *“Citizenship in a Republic”* speech on April 23, 1910, at the Sorbonne, Paris, France

“All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that all was vanity; but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, and make it possible.”

—T. E. Lawrence, from *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922)

“I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.”

—Theodore Roosevelt, from his “*The Strenuous Life*”  
speech in Chicago, Illinois, on April 10, 1899

“We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and then bid the geldings be fruitful.”

—C. S. Lewis, from *The Abolition of Man* (1943)

“Years ago manhood was an opportunity for achievement, and now it is a problem to overcome.”

—Garrison Keillor, from *The Book of Guys: Stories* (1994)

“A man is at his youngest when he thinks he is a man, not yet realizing that his actions must show it.”

—Mary Renault, from *The King Must Die* (1988)

“This story shall the good man teach his son;  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,  
From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remember’d;  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition:  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accursed  
they were not here,  
And hold their manhoods  
cheap whiles any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.”

—*William Shakespeare, from Henry V, act 4, scene 3*

“In this life-long fight, to be waged by every one of us singlehanded against a host of foes, the last requisite for a good fight, the last proof and test of our courage and manfulness, must be loyalty to truth—the most rare and difficult of all human qualities. For such loyalty, as it grows in perfection, asks ever more and more of us, and sets before us a standard of manliness always rising higher and higher.”

—*Thomas Hughes, from The Manliness of Christ (1880)*

**“I long to have the children feel that there is nothing in this world more attractive, more earnestly to be desired than manhood in Jesus Christ.”**

*—Henry Ward Beecher, reported by Josiah Hotchkiss Gilbert in Dictionary of Burning Words of Brilliant Writers (1895)*

**“The man, whom I call deserving the name, is one whose thoughts and exertions are for others rather than himself.”**

*—Walter Scott, quoted by Charles D. Cleveland in English Literature of the Nineteenth Century (1857)*

**“Man seeks, in his manhood, not orders, not laws and peremptory dogmas, but counsel from one who is earnest in goodness and faithful in friendship, making man free.”**

*—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, from “The Friend” (1952)*

**“It is very sad for a man to make himself servant to a single thing; his manhood all taken out of him by the hydraulic pressure of excessive business.”**

*—Theodore Parker, quoted by Tryon Edwards in A Dictionary of Thoughts: Being a Cyclopaedia of Laconic Quotations from the Best Authors, Both Ancient and Modern (1891)*

**“This is the test of your manhood: How much is there left in you after you have lost everything outside of yourself?”**

*—Orison Swett Marden, from “After Failure,—What?”  
published in Success Magazine, January 1905*

**“Some men feel their masculinity can only be proven if they play out in their own life all the locker-room stories, smugly confident that what a wife doesn’t know won’t hurt her. The truth is, somehow, way down inside, without her ever finding lipstick on the collar or catching a man in the flimsy excuse of where he was till three A.M., a wife does know, and with that knowing, some of the magic of this relationship disappears. There are more men griping about marriage who kicked the whole thing away themselves than there can ever be wives deserving of blame.”**

*—Ronald Reagan, from a letter to his son, Michael  
Reagan, June 1971, just before his wedding*

**“There is an old law of physics that you can only get out of a thing as much as you put in it. The man who puts into the marriage only half of what he owns will get that out.”**

*—Ronald Reagan, letter to his son, Michael Reagan*

“Any man can find a twerp here and there who will go along with cheating, and it doesn’t take all that much manhood. It does take quite a man to remain attractive and to be loved by a woman who has heard him snore, seen him unshaven, tended him while he was sick and washed his dirty underwear. Do that and keep her still feeling a warm glow and you will know some very beautiful music.”

—Ronald Reagan, letter to his son, Michael Reagan

“All daring and courage, all iron endurance of misfortune make for a finer and nobler type of manhood.”

—Theodore Roosevelt, from his “Address to Naval War College,” June 2, 1897

“History is strewn with the wrecks of nations which have gained a little progressiveness at the cost of a great deal of hard manliness and have thus prepared themselves for destruction as soon as the movements of the world gave a chance for it.”

—Walter Bagehot, from “The Use of Conflict,” in *Physics and Politics* (1872)

**“There is no more contemptible type of human character than that of the nerveless sentimentalist and dreamer who spends his life in a weltering sea of sensibility and emotion, but who never does a manly concrete deed.”**

*—William James, from The Principles of Psychology,  
Volume 1, originally published in 1890*

**“Life is too short to be little. Man is never so manly as when he feels deeply, acts boldly and expresses himself with frankness and with fervor.”**

*—Benjamin Disraeli, from Coningsby;  
or The New Generation (1844)*

**“In times past there were rituals of passage that conducted a boy into manhood, where other men passed along the wisdom and responsibilities that needed to be shared. But today we have no rituals. We are not conducted into manhood; we simply find ourselves there.”**

*—Kent Nerburn, from Letters to My Son: A Father’s  
Wisdom on Manhood, Life, and Love (1994)*



# THE TEN ESSENTIAL BOOKS FOR MANLY MEN

## ***Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul, John Eldredge***

This book gave Christian men, and perhaps men of faith generally, the tools for understanding and living out the essential passions of manhood. It also gave them permission to take seriously the “wildness” in their souls. This is a very important book. My favorite sentiment is one Eldredge expresses in a variety of ways: “You ask me, ‘Where are the men?’ I say, ‘You have made them women.’”

## ***The Book of Man: Readings on the Path to Manhood, William Bennett***

Former secretary of education William Bennett has given men a great gift in this book. It is filled with the reflections, speeches, biographies, and seminal writings of some of the most esteemed men in history. From Shakespeare’s rousing St. Crispin’s Day speech in *Henry V* to an essay on fencing, from the description of a critical moment in Lincoln’s youth to the thoroughly relevant thoughts of Seneca, this

magnificent volume allows a man to steep his soul in the thoughts and dreams of our fathers.

***Halftime: Moving from Success to Significance, Bob Buford***

There is no better book than Buford's on the transition a man must make in midlife in order to fulfill his purpose and finish his life well. Read it in youth to know what is coming. Read it in midlife so you have a plan. Read it in old age to understand what you have done and can lead others in the same path.

***Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time, Steve Arterburn***

Arterburn does what righteous fathers and brothers ought to have done for us had they existed in our lives: teach us how to stand down sexual temptation in order to live rich, exciting sex lives as God intended. There isn't a man who should be without this book.

***Future Men, Douglas Wilson***

Calling young boys "thunder puppies," Wilson teaches parents how to respect the emerging manhood in their sons while providing the safe, consistent discipline that allows manhood to thrive, strong and secure.

***The Art of Manliness: Classic Skills and Manners for the Modern Man, Brett and Kate McKay***

I love the Art of Manliness empire in all its manifestations. The absolutely essential website. The books. The podcasts. You simply don't want to be without the McKays' help in your pursuit of vital manhood. You will learn how to carve a turkey one day, how to maintain manly friendships the next, and on the third you will be moved by a discussion of the manly virtues in the Middle Ages. Wonderful.

***The Compleat Gentlemen: The Modern Man's Guide to Chivalry, Brad Miner***

This book is both a history and a fiery call to arms, a framing of manhood in achievable terms and the altar call after the sermon. Men, says Miner, must learn to become warriors, lovers, and monks. He's right.

***The Code of Man: Love, Courage, Pride, Family, Country, Walter Newell***

In these pages we find a searing analysis of our generation's masculine crisis, a moving assurance of the truth that men still yearn to be men and the compass by which to navigate our way home to transforming manhood.

***Raising a Modern Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood, Robert Lewis***

The title tells us what we need to know of this book. Lewis defines manhood in knightly terms and teaches us to make exceptional, chivalrous men of our sons. My son is an exceptional man, but I wish this book had existed when I began my life as a father.

***Healing the Masculine Soul: God's Restoration of Men to Real Manhood, Gordon Dalby***

I know, I know. I dismissed approaches of this kind at the beginning of this book, but only from these pages, not from the list of matters of pressing concern to modern men. This is a classic. I know few men who do not need it.



# THE TEN ESSENTIAL MOVIES FOR MANLY MEN

## ***Seabiscuit***

In the 1930s, the oddly shaped, undersized racehorse Seabiscuit was the subject of more newspaper column inches than either Adolph Hitler or Franklin Roosevelt. The lessons for manly men arise from the lives of three men who must overcome failure and dysfunction to redeem themselves and win with their magnificent little horse.

## ***Chariots of Fire***

In the years just after World War I, two runners compete for glory: one for his God, the other to answer the stinging anti-Semitism of his age with Olympic victory. Lessons of character arise from both these men's lives through the tests of faith and disappointment they face.

## ***The Pursuit of Happy-ness***

In this true story, a man falls on hard times but determines to take responsibility for his son and the repositioning of his life. Our hero—played by Will Smith—must endure heartbreak, bigotry, crime, and a

spiteful wife during his ascent to a new life and a new legacy for his son. Spoiler alert: the man depicted in the film makes a cameo appearance at the end.

### ***It's a Wonderful Life***

This sentimental classic is not only a marvelous period piece, but it also teaches the essential lesson that our dreams sometimes go unfulfilled because a greater dream intervenes. In addition, the film's portrayal of one man's impact upon his community challenges us to live more meaningfully ourselves. A scene depicting the devastation of the Great Depression upon a small town is alone worth the viewing.

### ***Dead Poets Society***

This movie is a Transcendentalist morality play, with Walt Whitman's photograph hovering and Henry David Thoreau's stirring phrases woven throughout. The central theme, though, is the power of literature to inspire and the clash of generations that often results. Lessons of life and manhood fall freely from the script. One example: "Sports is an opportunity for us to have other human beings push us to excel." This is the film that wrote the Latin phrase *carpe diem*—"seize the day"—into our cultural lexicon.

### ***Apollo 13***

A "successful failure." That's what NASA called the Apollo 13 mission, which was aborted shortly after its launch in 1970 due to massive technical failure en route to the moon. This film is not only a Ron Howard masterpiece starring Tom Hanks, it is also a reminder that sometimes bringing a failed venture to a satisfying conclusion is a victory. Most men will have opportunity to effect "successful failures" in their lives. Many of the skills of accomplishing this feat are depicted in

this visually stunning film. One principle that leaps from the screen: “Failure is not an option!”

### ***The King’s Speech***

The touching, inspiring tale of England’s King George VI striving to overcome his stuttering—just as he replaced his brother on the throne and Europe descended into the horrors of World War II—is both a valuable history lesson and a depiction of how much one man’s character can mean to the world. The friendship between a king and a commoner is also a fascinating study of manly bonds overcoming the hindrances of class and power.

### ***Men of Honor***

How does a black man in post–World War II America achieve his dream of being a Master Diver in the United States Navy? This was the challenge of Master Chief Petty Officer Carl Brashear, whose genuine struggles inspired this film. Starring Robert De Niro and Cuba Gooding Jr., this film is a study of the manly virtues lived in the face of crushing racism and the arduous battle to master one of the world’s most dangerous and difficult professions.

### ***Hoosiers***

F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, “There are no second acts in American lives.” He was wrong, and *Hoosiers*, another true story stirringly told, proves it. A coach with a past tries to redeem himself in a small Indiana town where basketball is holy liturgy and heartland values clash with the passions of the court. The depiction of rural Indiana in the 1950s is achingly beautiful. In the end, history is made and love prevails. The manly lessons learned along the way are invaluable.

## ***The Last Samurai***

The warrior code is an essential feature of manly culture. This film is a meditation on this truth as exemplified in Shintoism's bushido code. Written and directed by Edward Zwick and starring Tom Cruise, there are few more powerful depictions of a period, of a culture, and of the bonds of men at arms.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**STEPHEN MANSFIELD**

STEPHEN MANSFIELD IS A *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING author of books about history and contemporary culture. His works include *The Faith of George W. Bush*, *The Search for God and Guinness*, *Never Give In: the Extraordinary Character of Winston Churchill*, *The Faith of Barack Obama*, and *Lincoln's Battle with God*. He is a popular speaker who also coaches leaders worldwide. Mansfield lives in Nashville and Washington D.C. with his wife, Beverly, who is an award-winning songwriter and producer.

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