

Rites of Passage

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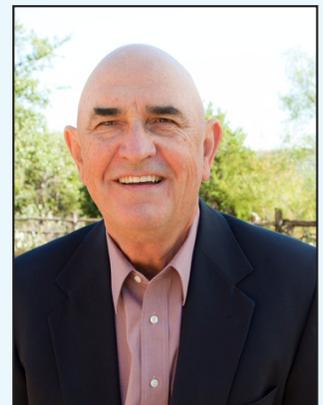
GoStrategic (Formerly Strategic Christian Services)

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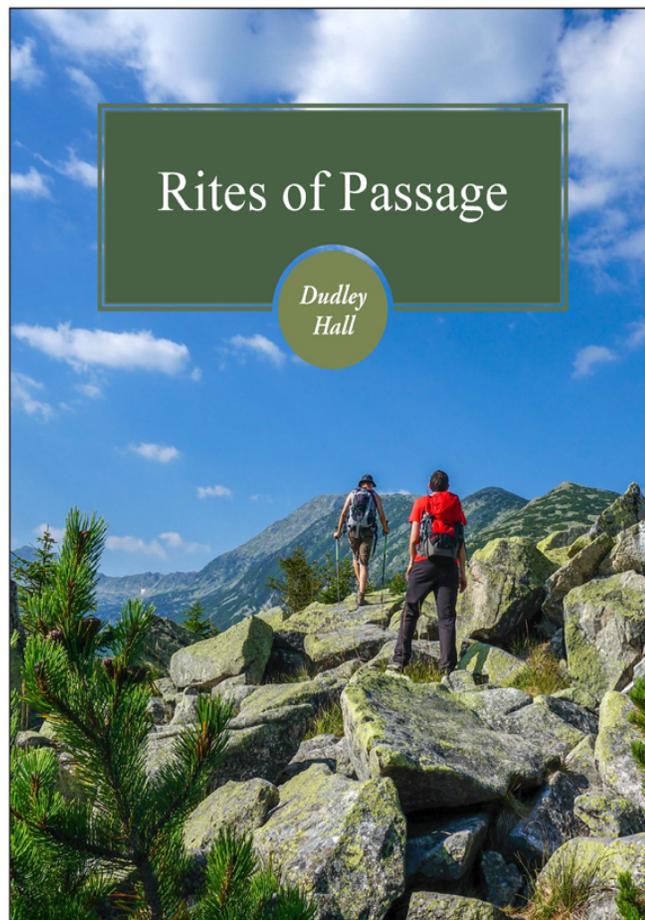
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Audio Session Outlines



Session One

This study will focus on two main questions:

- ***Why is the emphasis on father and son so important?***
- ***What can be done about fixing the problem of a fatherless generation?***

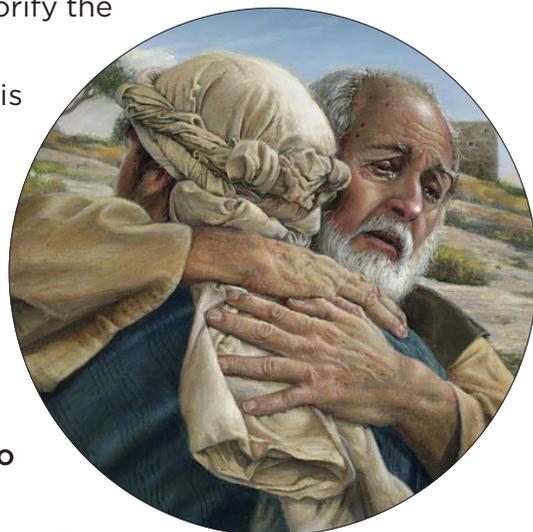
I. God's greatest revelation to earth is the relationship of Father and Son.

A. Eternity is about God the Father being pleased with God the Son and wanting to create a people who could enjoy the Son as much as the Father.

B. Christ's stated purpose was to reveal and glorify the Father.

C. The New Testament gospels are about this relationship between a Father and a Son.

1. We see this theme throughout the Epistles.
2. When there was a problem on earth, God sent His Son. Similarly, when there was a problem in a particular church, Paul sent a son as the solution to the problem.



II. The greatest invitation mankind is given is to become a Son of God.

A. The great invitation of salvation is not just to get a ticket to go to heaven, rather it is an invitation to become a son of God and in that relationship find ultimate fulfillment in the design of man.

B. The call to salvation is a call to relate as a son to the Father.

III. Society's greatest need is men who are secure in their masculinity.

A. Prisons are full of unfathered boys.

B. Businesses are full of unfathered boys.

1. In the marketplace, we have an ethic that is in contrast to the Scriptures—an ethic of competition and winning versus an ethic of completion and fulfillment.
2. Men often look for their masculinity in the money they make, the women they conquer, in the car they drive, and in their golf scores.
3. Homes are led by unfathered boys.

C. When does a man know he is a man? This happens when another man or community of men declare that he is a man.

D. In our focus on the war against femininity, we have overlooked the reality that there is a war raging against the masculinity.

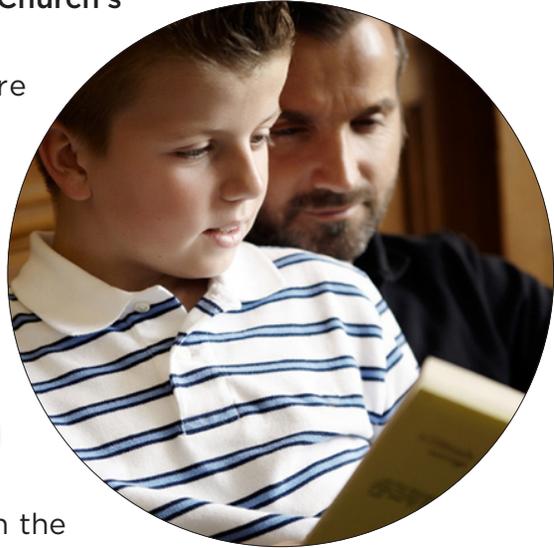
1. Boys are four times as prone to commit suicide than girls.
2. Boys are killed by their own parents twice as much as girls.
3. As many as one in six boys has been sexually abused.

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4. There are four times as many mentally-disturbed boys as girls.
5. Six out of ten boys will go to sleep in a fatherless home.

IV. Addressing the role of fathers is one of the Church's greatest challenges.

- A. When fathering is neglected, children are dysfunctional (Psalm 131).
- B. The mother's emphasis is on nurturing while the father's emphasis is on destiny.
- C. When nurture is valued more than destiny, comfort is sought more than transformation (I Thessalonians 2:7-12).
- D. The disquieted soul is focused on self.
 1. Men who have not been fathered tend to have a proud heart.
 2. Humility is being conscious of being in the presence of someone greater than yourself.
 3. The Church has focused on the gift of the pastor because it is the most nurturing. "Fathering gifts" have, to a large extent, been ignored.

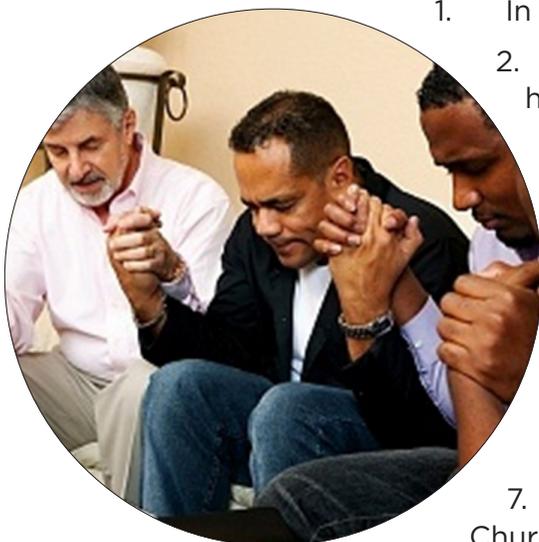


V. God is focussing on the Father's call.

- A. The call of the father is to embrace the risk of destiny and to accept interdependence as a lifestyle.

VI. What can be done?

- A. The Church must accept the role of fathering as well as mothering.
- B. We must regain the value of community. The myth of individualism has drained the power of community.
- C. God has always been a community.



1. In the Godhead there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. God created Adam and Eve with the purpose of having a family.
3. God called Abraham in order to make him into a "people."
4. When Jesus came to earth, He called around Him a community of twelve.
5. God designed the Church with different gifts to ensure mutual submission (interdependence).
6. The Church is the community that God desires to use to bless the world.
7. The community that needs to be developed in the Church is the community of fathers and sons.

- D. God's community is distinctive by the presence of God and the guidance of God.
- E. Today the people of God remain distinctive.
 - 1. We have the presence of God in His Spirit and the law of God written on our hearts.
- F. Being filled with the Spirit is a corporate reality (Ephesians 4:12).
- G. Spirit-filled fathers will "circumcise" their sons rather than "castrate" them.
 - 1. He wants the son to become greater than he is, to stand on his shoulders.
 - 2. A rite of passage without a community is shallow.



Session Two

I. What is a healthy Father-Son relationship?

- A. The Son is to honor the Father. Jesus' concluding prayer before leaving earth was His assessment of what He has done (John 17:6).
- B. How does a son honor an earthly father who is imperfect?
 1. Honor the virtues!
 2. Redeem the flaws! (Generational curses stop with faith)
 3. Usually flaws are strengths that have been perverted and irresponsibility is flexibility perverted. Sometimes independence is strong courage that has been perverted.



II. The son's authority starts with submission to his father (John 12:42-50).

- A. Jesus is saying that His role is to reflect and glorify the Father.
- B. A son is to listen to parents more than peers (Proverbs 1:8-19).
- C. The fear of the Lord, the starting point of wisdom, comes from honoring your father (Proverbs 2:1-5).
- D. Honoring parents leads to the discernment needed to avoid major pitfalls (Proverbs 6:20-29).

III. The glory of a son is a father (Proverbs 17:6).

- A. Due to the fathering of Elijah, Elisha received a double portion anointing that allowed him to do twice as many miracles as Elijah.
- B. A lack of fathering is illustrated in the example of David and Solomon. There was a breakdown in the transfer.
- C. Look at Jesus' relationship with the Father.



1. At the temple: Jesus' first statement in the Gospel had to do with His relationship with His Father.
2. At the baptism: Public affirmation. This affirmation from the Father comes before Jesus did anything in ministry.
3. At the transfiguration: Transfer of authority. Jesus is aligning Himself with eternal truth by meeting with a representative of the law and the prophets.
4. At the garden: "Abba" submission. The word *Abba* (daddy/father) is the intimate word that represents and reflects absolute trust.
5. At the cross: Trust.

IV. Every earthly father should have as his goal to get his son to hear from the heavenly Father, “well done good and faithful servant.”

A. Question for meditation: How can an earthly father/son relationship emulate the kind of relationship that Jesus modeled for us with the Father?



Session Three

I. What are the makings of true manhood?

A. Integrity: What you believe is what you say is what you do; it means that you are thorough all the way through—unadulterated.

1. A man has integrity when he is flowing all together. Nobody enjoys living in contradiction.
2. We need to have our heart purified, our mind aligned with our heart, our mouth lined up with our mind, and our hands and feet lined up with our mouth.
3. A man who could marry my daughter is one who does what he says, uses what he has, and follows Jesus with his whole heart.

B. Responsibility (“Response-Ability”): Having the power to do what I have been assigned to do.

1. We live in a victimized world where it is easy to make excuses.
2. Responsibility recognizes that God doesn’t give you an assignment that He hasn’t given you the ability to fulfill the assignment.
3. With the speaking of the word, there is the granting of the ability to fulfill it.
4. All of Jesus’ commands are promises in disguise. You have the power to love your enemies, forgive those who offend you, control your appetites, etc.



- a. Whatever is in my hand is the key to my destiny; if I am not faithful to what God has given me now, I am forfeiting my destiny.
- b. Your destiny does not depend on your natural talents as much as what you do with what is in your hand.

C. Accountability: “I will ultimately be judged by an all-knowing God. I cannot fulfill my destiny alone, therefore, I now submit to those who can help me get ready.”

1. Choices have consequences and I want to make the right choices.
2. God has given us the ability to make choices that affect our destiny.
3. Adam’s choice affected the entire world. However, there was a “last Adam” (Jesus) whose choice also affected the entire world.
4. A real man wants to make his choices right and good and is, therefore, willing to be accountable and submit to someone outside of himself.

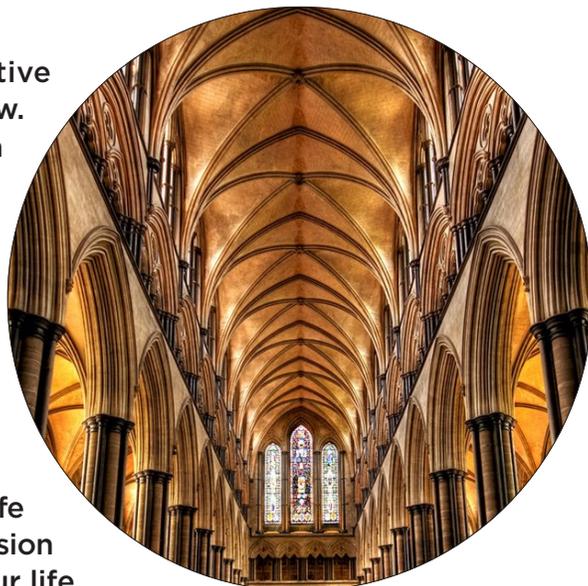
Session Four

I. What are you actively doing today to try and “lose” your life? (Matthew 16:25)

- A. If you are not trying to “lose” your life, you will never find it.
- B. You can only find your life by “losing” it for Christ’s sake. You exist for the sole purpose of bringing glory to God.
- C. You were created by God for the enjoyment of God, for the purpose of bringing glory to God.
- D. We want to give our lives away in a manner that brings glory to God (Colossians 1:15; 1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:31)

II. “Cathedral building” is having a perspective that is bigger than what you are doing right now. It transcends the immediate and gives you a vision that provides direction and purpose.

- A. According to Bill Shore, “The builders of this cathedral did not consider inspiration and faith as by-products or fringe benefits of their work. Rather, it was the core purpose, the essential, uncompromisable ingredient of the entire architecture and design.”



III. A transcendent cause is the one thing in our life that motivates everything else that we do. It is a vision so big that it encompasses everything else in our life.

- A. Our transcendent cause is to display the glory of God. It is why we were created. It is not a by-product or a fringe benefit.
- B. The glory of God should motivate everything we do in the same way that celebration of faith motivated the original cathedral builders.
- C. God is calling us to build a cathedral as well:
 - 1. This excerpt from *The Message* translation of Ephesians 2:19-22 reads, “God is building a home. He’s using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what He is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he’s using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.”

IV. How do we join God in building a cathedral in which He is “quite at home?” Here are five principles of cathedral building that will help us build God’s cathedral:

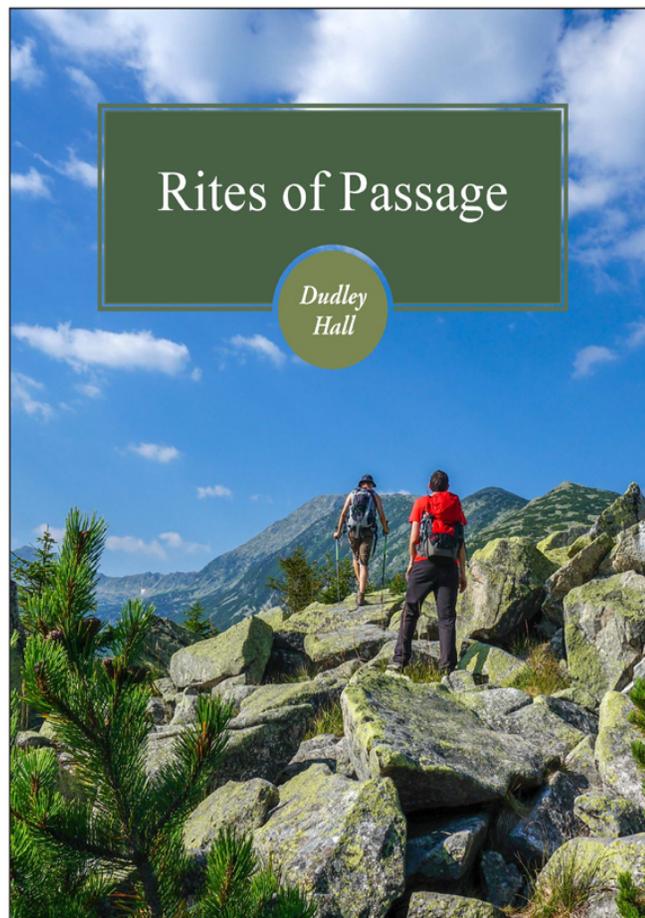
- A. You need to know that you didn’t start it!
 - 1. According to Bill Shore, “Great cathedrals are built, literally, upon the foundations of earlier efforts. The effort to incorporate the work that came before is conscious and deliberate and the cathedrals are stronger, more solid, and better built for it.”

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2. It is absolutely a lie of our culture that the only way to be fulfilled is to be original. Jesus said I am here to show you the Father, I am not here to show you Me.
 3. Throughout the Bible, God tells His people to remember their history; to remember what He did on their behalf; to remember who they are. Our identity is connected with our history. Part of the way we show God's glory is by being a people of history—a people of redemptive history.
 4. The greatest curse on our generation is that we are solely focused on here and now. We refuse to acknowledge the past.
- B. You need to know you're not going to finish it!
1. Bill Shore comments, "Devoting your life to a cause you will never see completed need not diminish your craftsmanship and dedication. In fact, it should enhance it."
 2. God is calling us to look backward to see who we are and to look forward to see where we are going.
 3. Psalm 102:18 says, "Let this be recorded for a generation to come so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord."
- C. You can't do it alone!
1. God does not call lone rangers.
 2. Building a cathedral requires the combining of skills. No one builds a cathedral all by himself.
 3. We can't grasp the love of Christ alone and we can't build God's cathedral alone
 4. In Ephesians 3:16-18, Paul prays, "that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ."
- D. Cathedral building will require more resources than you have.
1. God has specifically designed His cathedral in such a way that you can only acquire what you need to complete your part by working with other builders.
 2. God has designed it to take more than you have so that you will have to walk by faith. God provides on an "as needed" basis.
- E. Every step of the way, it's going to tell the story of the glory of God.
1. The reason we're building this cathedral is to display God's glory. That is our transcendent cause: to see God magnified!
 2. Bill Shore writes, "Cathedrals, through their stained-glass panels, statues, and paintings, were intentionally designed to convey stories and values to a people who were otherwise illiterate. In this way, they taught important history, passed along best practices, and perpetuated a philosophy and culture that reflected their values."
 3. The whole process displays the glory of God. It tells the story! The story of your little part in working on the great Cathedral for Christ's sake is intentionally designed to point the way for someone else. There are no unimportant jobs!

rites of passage meeting plans

Selected Questions for a Nine-Week Study



Lesson One

The greatest event ever is the revelation that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. What do you think the Father thought of the Son before the Son became a man?
2. Try a dialogue that you can imagine between the Father and the Son. Each take a role and let your imagination flow.
3. Why do you think fathers and sons have conflict in our world?
4. List some lies that sons believe about their fathers.
5. What makes fathers fearful of talking with their sons?
6. Fathers, share one event in your life that helped you know you were a man.
7. Study Psalm 131 together.
8. What is a “disquieted” soul?
9. How does one get a “quieted” soul?
10. Define “humility” in your own words.
11. How does a proud heart become humble?

Lesson Two

Fathers tend to focus on destiny while mothers tend to focus on nurture.

Study I Thessalonians 2:7-12 together.

1. What is the difference between nurture and destiny?
2. How can a father help his son discover his destiny?
3. If you could design and create the perfect father, what would he be like?
4. If you could design and create the perfect son, what would he be like?
5. What part does risk play in discovering one's destiny?
6. Compare risk and faith. How are these two concepts alike and how are they different?
7. What does "living interdependently" mean? Read and discuss: Ephesians 4:1-11

Lesson Three

God is a community and works through community.

1. How has obsession with individuality affected our society both negatively and positively?
2. Name the communities through which God has worked in biblical history.
3. What made the community of Israelites different from other religious communities?
4. How is the Church of Jesus Christ today different from other religious communities?

Study Ephesians 5:18-21 together.

5. What does being filled with Spirit mean in a community context?
6. Discuss this statement: "Spirit-filled fathers will circumcise their sons for reproduction rather than castrate them for selfish control."

Lesson Four

The glory of the son is his father. (Proverbs 17:6)

Study John 17:1-8 together.

1. How did Jesus honor His Father?

2. How can we honor an imperfect father?

3. What are the benefits of listening to your father? (Proverbs 1:8-19, 2:1-5, 6:20-29)

4. Discuss the relationship between Elijah and Elisha.

5. In the gospel of Luke, these are five occasions of significant events in the relationship of Jesus and His Father. What is the point in each?
 - Temple at age 12:

 - Baptism:

 - Transfiguration:

 - Garden of Gethsemane:

 - The Cross:

Lesson Five

Integrity is aligning your heart with your head and your mouth with your actions.

1. What are your biggest obstacles to integrity?
2. How do you discover what is in your heart?
3. Study Ephesians 4:17-25 together.
4. What are the steps to thinking like Jesus? (Clues are in the passage)
5. List as many men of integrity as you can. Why did you pick each one?
6. What will it mean for you to choose integrity as a core value for your life?

Lesson Six

“Response-ability” means I have been given the power to do what I have been assigned to do.

1. What was Adam’s excuse for his failure?
2. What is yours?
3. List some times you have played the victim rather than the victor.

Jesus said we could fulfill the whole requirements of the law by loving God with our whole being and our neighbor as ourselves.

1. What is your biggest obstacle in doing that?
2. What is the hardest commandment to obey?
3. Study Romans 6:1-12 together.
4. What can you learn from these verses that can make you a victor and not a victim?

Lesson Seven

Choices have consequences!

Study Galatians 6:1-10 together.

1. What does it mean to “sow to the flesh?”
2. How have you done that?
3. What does “sow to the spirit” mean?
4. What will the judgement of Christians be like?
5. Whom do you have to help you in developing good decision-making skills?
6. How do you plan to live in accountability?
7. What consequence did Adam’s choice have on others? (Romans 5:1-10)
8. What consequences did Jesus’ choice have on others?
9. Who is affected by your choices?
10. What choices could you make now that would bless you grandchildren?

Lesson Eight

It takes a community to rear a son.

1. What can you do to help establish a community of healthy men and boys?

Study I Corinthians 12 together.

2. Why do you think God gave different gifts to each of his people?
3. What is the purpose of your gift?
4. Are you now ready to be a man of integrity, responsibility, and accountability? What will that mean as it relates to:
 - Sexual attitudes and activities:
 - Handling of your money:
 - Use of your time:
 - Involvement in the church community:
 - Development of gifts:
 - Vocation:
 - Marriage:
 - Rearing your children:
5. What did you learn from the discussion on Cathedral building?

Lesson Nine

You can gain your life by losing it.

1. What does the concept of Cathedral building have to do with losing your life?
2. What is the significance of the phrase “for Christ’s sake” in Matthew 16:25?

Study I Corinthians 10:31 together.

3. What does this mean to you in the following activities:
 - Clothing:
 - Dating/Marriage:
 - Working:
 - School Work/ Vocation:
 - Time Management:
 - Spending Money:
4. What can you learn from your grandfather that you plan to transfer to your grandchildren?