

ARE *You*
THE MAN?

201 LESSONS I WISH
MY DAD WOULD HAVE TAUGHT ME

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ARE YOU THE MAN?

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my son Kendall Jerod Martin.

I must confess that when you were born it was one of the greatest, as well as most frightening, moments of my life. Because when I held you in my arms for the first time, I felt both the blessing and the burden of being a father; and the feeling was overwhelming.

Not having a father present in the household (during my formative years), I had no idea how to teach you to become a man; I was still learning myself (and still am). Until one day, God spoke to my heart and revealed that I didn't have to be the "*perfect father*" to you, but I was indeed the perfect father he had chosen for you – with all my mistakes, faults, and flaws.

I soon learned that a real man isn't one who doesn't make mistakes, but rather one who is willing to admit them, learn from them, and not repeat them.

May God richly bless you as you learn from my successes as well as my failures. And always know that I love you and I'm proud of you.

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Are You the Man?



Yes, I look at my bank account,
and man, I can't stop countin',
it's fat, and it's sittin' on swoll;
but all the money in the world
can't save me from myself,
when it comes to the price of my soul;

Man, have you seen my ride,
the rims, the interior, the sound
and the stares I get when I roll by?
Man, I feel good, cause others wish they could,
but yet, something's still missing inside.

Yes man, my pad is plush,
the biggest on the block,
I get more guest requests than Embassy Suites;
my sheets are satin, pillows packed liked clouds,
but the problem is
I still can't get any sleep.

Man, I got honeys and shorties sweatin' me,
and craving me like a backstage pass
at a sold out concert;
but when the nights get long,
and all the girls are gone,
I'm ashamed, and the pain still hurts.

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Man, I got it going on, that's what they say,
'cause when I dress to impress
I'm the kind of guy others wanna be;
but when I stare into the glare of my mirror,
I have to convince myself
I still love the man others "think" they see.

See, when I step on the scene,
people respect me because they fear me,
and when I speak they know they have to listen;
but when all my boys disappear,
and I'm alone fightin' tears,
deep inside, I still feel like something's missin'.

Yes, I have more degrees than a thermometer,
more credit than Visa,
and even more credentials than Prudential;
I've exceeded expectations,
but can't deny what's in my own eyes,
knowin' I'm not living up to my true potential.

Man, I've paid the cost, now I'm the boss,
and my lifestyle has even made others envy me;
but what I wouldn't give, for the life I've lived,
to be the kind of man, God would say,
"This is my child with whom I'm well pleased."

Are you that Man?

— Joe A. Martin Jr

Introduction



What you have in your hands is a book that was never really meant to be (a book). Initially, it was as a collection of my poems and notes I compiled for my son (to pass on to him) – my legacy.

After losing my grandfather at the age of 11, and never really having a positive male role model in my life as an adolescent, I was fearful that if something ever happened to me before my son reached adulthood, he would suffer the same fate. I would never be able to teach him all the things I wished I had learned as a young man.

So I started saving poems and compiling notes, quotes, advice, and revelations I received during my journey through manhood, husband-hood, and fatherhood. Although I'm in my late thirties as I write this, I often tell my friends that I'm only a six-year old "man." This is because it's been during the past six years I've grown the most as a man – spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. I thought "*I was the man*," based on my successes, accomplishments, and achievements, but I soon realized that I had no idea what a "real man" was – until now.

Prior to the last six years, I've been living by trial and error, and my ex-wife, my son, my family, and my friends have all had to endure the consequences of my experiential learning curve.

Although the lessons (and poems) in this book were originally meant for my son to teach, guide, and give him a better understanding of his father's beliefs, values, emotions, and spiritual growth, I realize now that there are many young (and adult) men out there who've never had anyone teach them the true lessons and "confessions" of manhood.

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So in essence, this book is not only for my son, but for all of the “sons” - like me – who’ve had to navigate the path through manhood somewhat alone - without a compass, without a guide, and without a male role model as a map. The lessons and poems I share, not only come from my successes in life, but many of them come from my painful failures, humbling hurts, doubts, fears, insecurities, uncertainties, and personal sufferings.

We all have a story, and a true story doesn’t only include the good parts – but rather all the parts that shape us and mold us as human beings (as men). My life has been anything but “normal,” as I’ve had to overcome some of life’s most challenging (and self revealing) obstacles, including:

- Being the son of a teenage mother
 - Growing up in a tough inner city ghetto
 - Living in and surviving abject poverty
 - Experiencing the death of my grandfather (my hero)
 - Facing the loneliness and emptiness of an absentee father
 - Being sexually abused by a relative as a pre-teen
 - Watching many of my teenage friends die to drugs, violence, and sickness
 - Witness family members and friends get sentenced to prison
 - Dealing with low self esteem issues and physical insecurities
 - Being in debt
 - Losing a relative to A.I.D.S.
 - Contemplating suicide
 - Enduring the death of my first child (a son)
 - Recovering from partial paralysis
 - Overcoming an addiction
 - Surviving a divorce
- (and I'm sure there's even more)*

But in spite of these challenges, I consider myself truly blessed (because I serve a BIG God). Through God’s loving grace and my

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“*imperfect*” faith in Him, I’ve also been blessed to experience the following:

- Become the first person in my family to attend college
- Graduate from college at the top of my class
- Start my first business at the age of 22
- Purchase my first home before I graduated from college
- Become a professor at the age of 24
- Worked for the Governor of my state (Florida)
- Restore a relationship with my biological father
- Start my own on-line university for college students
- Voted “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers”
- Voted “College Speaker of the Year” nationally
- Won numerous honors and awards in my profession
- Wrote and/or co-authored more than a half dozen books
- Hosted my own television talk show
- Hosted my own radio talk show
- Become a hero and spiritual role model to my son
- Gave my life to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

I’m a living testimony of the 201 lessons and the numerous poems I’ve compiled in this book. And I’m living proof *it doesn’t matter where you start in life, what counts is where you decide to finish*. These lessons and poems are MY opinions, MY beliefs, and MY emotional reflections, based on MY personal journey. They reflect life from MY point of view, so I don’t expect you to agree with everything I share.

Along this journey, you will learn about love, hate, joy, pain, confidence, insecurity, spiritual enlightenment, spiritual darkness, success, failure, life’s lessons, life’s uncertainties, hope, cries for help, love, loneliness, and much more. In other words, everything I’ve included in this book is purpose-filled and purpose-driven. Each lesson and poem relates to my life’s volatile journey through manhood. The true power of each lesson and reflection is based

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on your own interpretation of its meaning and how it relates to your life and speaks to your heart. This collection is my emotional biography.

As you (or someone you love) embark on this journey called “manhood,” just take from this book what you need for the trip and leave the rest. My prayer is that at least one of these lessons or poems will bless your life as much as they’ve all blessed mine. May God bless you, and may you forever stay in His grip!

Living Purposefully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Paul', written in a cursive style.

40 LESSONS
My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Life



*“Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven,
and ALL things will be added onto you.”*
(Matt. 6:33)

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Significance is always more important than success.

Your life was meant to be “spent,” not saved.

*Your decisions (even the momentary ones)
will determine your (eternal) destiny.*

As long as you speak the truth, you’ll never have to hide from it.

*We were all put here on earth to serve others and to serve God
(but not in that order).*

You should question everything, except your faith;
believe in something, but your doubts;
listen to someone, but not everyone;
and fear nothing, except God’s judgment.

*Unless you can first see yourself as you “could be,”
you’ll never be what you “should be.”*

Life’s choices are simple, either get up, give up, or shut up.

*Nothing in your life is ever going to change until you do; so if you can’t
change it, then change your attitude about it.*

Fear and faith are sworn enemies and they cannot live in the same place at the same time (whether in your home, in your heart, or in your head).

Your Worst Enemy

*He's terror beyond your wildest dreams,
he's trouble piercing in your heart,
he's uncertainty in your conscious mind,
he can rip your world apart.*

*He takes help just beyond your reach,
he controls your ultimate fate,
he stares at you with no remorse,
he makes it impossible for you to concentrate.*

*He smothers every tear you cry,
he's the weakness in your knees,
he's a cold sweat in your sleeping hours,
he's why you can't be at peace.*

*He's nervousness beyond all self-control,
he conquers you from within,
he's the stuttering in your crackling voice,
he doesn't even pretend to be your friend.*

*He's an intruder given the right to steal,
and his presence is very clear,
there's no enemy quite as self-defeating,
as the one we all know as "Fear."*

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**True happiness in life is contentment (peace)
and gratitude (joy) - nothing more, nothing less.**

Thank Him

*Thank him as you rise each morning,
to face another day;
thank him for granting you another chance
to worship him as you pray;*

*Thank him for giving you the strength
that allows you to take another step;
thank him for his caring Spirit
that guarded you as you slept;*

*Thank him for all your responsibilities,
as you begin your daily tasks;
thank him for always being there,
without you ever having to ask;*

*Thank him for all the little things,
you often tend to forget;
thank him for those heart-felt miracles
you never quite seem to expect;*

*Thank him for all your precious gifts,
that become priceless when you're gone;
thank him for allowing you to realize
you can't make it in this world alone;*

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*Thank him for the faith you have,
that never quite seems to die;
thank him for NOT answering all your prayers
and for giving you the will to try;*

*Thank him when you close your eyes,
at the fall of each passing day;
thank him for the many blessings
that he continues to bring your way;*

*Thank him even when times are bad,
sincerely and with no regrets;
it doesn't matter what the reason is
just thank him every chance you get.*

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**Worrying is a waste of emotion;
it's the misuse of your imagination.**

Why Worry?

*A friend's betrayal,
no end in sight,
time is no longer on your side;
Your health is slipping,
your children rebel,
money pressures make it harder to survive.*

*A selfish mate,
or no mate at all,
loneliness becomes your only friend;
Even the things
that once made you laugh,
won't even get you to crack a grin.*

*Night after night,
you torture yourself,
praying for a better way;
Your dreams start to flicker,
like a candle in the wind,
so what more could you do or say?*

*You wonder why,
but there are no answers,
so the pain you continue to bury;
But when you exercise faith,
that unconditional kind,
God's truth will ask... Why Worry?*

The purpose of life is to use your God-given gifts and talents to achieve God-given goals (*and to help others do the same*).

The Gift

What is your gift?

*It's that indescribable thing God gave you,
but was never yours to keep;
It's that secret desire that keeps tugging at your heart
that won't allow you to sleep.
It's that little thing you do,
that when you do it, everyone knows it had to be you;
It's that thing you give most naturally,
that defines everything you do.*

What is your gift, you ask...?

*It's that miracle that makes your heart sing;
It's that thing that you describe as basically nothing,
but to the world, it means everything.
It's that little thing that makes you unique
and sets you apart from every other living thing;
It's that thing you do most naturally,
that gives your life hope and meaning.*

What is your gift, you ask...?

*It's the way you express yourself
when you bring joy to people's hearts;
It's that simple dream that you long to live,
but you don't quite know where to start.
It's that thing you do that causes people
to feel good about themselves;
It's that thing you give most naturally,
because it's impossible to keep it for yourself.*

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*What is your gift, you ask...?
It's that thing that can't be seen or held
but you know you must give away;
It's that secret about yourself
you long to share with others each and every day.
It's not a job, a position, a title, or a goal
that can ever be achieved;
It's who you are, it's why you're here,
it's the thing you give naturally...every time you breathe.*

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**You can avoid most of life's obstacles if you choose to be
WHO YOU ARE instead of WHAT YOU FEEL.**

Who You Are!

Who are you? Well, it all depends on WHO you ask.
But don't ask others, and definitely don't ask me;
and don't even ask yourself;
instead, ask the One who made you so perfectly.

Because the Creator always
begins His masterpiece mindful of the end;
and what you see right now is always more
than what He truly intends.

See, the original blueprints for your unique design
was somehow lost and misplaced;
but I somehow managed to find a copy,
so I hope this reminder brings a smile to your face.

See, your Creator said...
you're bigger than your body,
more than you can give;
you're less important than your image,
but you're more important than how you live.

You're more powerful than your past,
more significant than your stress;
you're stronger than your weaknesses,
and you're much smarter than any test.

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You're wider than your limitations,
more determined than your doubts;
you're braver than your fears,
and you're more than what "you think" you can't live without.

You're richer than your bank account,
worth more than money can buy;
you're more beautiful than your reflection,
and you're truer than your lies.

You're more loving than your wounded heart,
more wonderful than your worries;
you're much bigger than your dreams,
and more inspiring than your story.

You're more focused than your feelings,
much greater than your thoughts;
you're more confident than your critics,
and you're more than you've been taught.

So who are you?
I told you, don't ask others, not even me;
instead, ask the Creator of your masterpiece,
and you'll discover, you're a lot more than you actually see.

**If you want to succeed faster, then you just have to listen,
learn, and take action sooner.**

Stuck on Stupid

*I don't know why,
and I don't know when;
I started ignoring the answers
that God would send.*

*I call it stubbornness,
but God calls it pride;
and the shackles I wear,
I can no longer hide.*

*Try and try as I may
to go the other way;
I keep running into defeat
and out of words to say.*

*Everything I do
that seems to be right;
ends up making me tired
as I face another sleepless night.*

*Just call it "stuck on stupid,"
harsh words I must admit;
but how else would you describe someone
who voluntarily dives into his own pit?*

It's "stuck on stupid," I tell you.

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*Is that hard to swallow? Yes, I agree;
but what I choose to do to myself
is far worse than what others can do to me.*

*I hate being “stuck on stupid,”
but I do nothing to change;
so I continue to strut in my rut,
and my fate remains the same.*

*So Lord, please help me move
from “stupid” to “un-stuck”;
so I can finally receive your blessings
before I eventually give up.*

Chico's Story

*There once was a boy name Chico,
who was very, very poor,
whatever he had just wasn't good enough,
'cause other children always had more;
there were holes in his shorts, shirts, and shoes,
I tell you this boy was quite a mess,
and all his friends made fun of him,
but they didn't know better, I guess.*

*Everyday after school, Chico would go home crying,
because he just couldn't understand,
"Why do they make fun of me Mama
just 'cause I have no money in my hands?"
"They all have fathers to play ball with
and help them with their homework at night,
but all I have is you and Sis,
and Dad's nowhere in sight."*

*"They all say they eat three meals a day,
but all I get is one, ... or maybe two,"
"And I want to have fun and play with them,
but I can't afford to do the same things they do;"
So Chico starts to cry once again,
and his Mother says, "Listen son..."
"I may be your Mama, but you're also a child of God,
so don't hold your head down to anyone,"*

*"You may not have a fancy home,
clothes, things, and such;
but you do have a family who cares for you,
and loves you very much."*

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*“And as for your friends, if they laugh at you,
they were never your true friends anyway;
and if you put God first, and do what’s right,
I promise your life will change one day.”*

*So Chico dried his swollen eyes
and decided to give school another try,
He studied hard and said his prayers,
and no longer felt he wanted to cry;
Chico listened carefully to his mother’s words,
and followed them down to the letter;
because by doing this, he knew, one day,
his life would soon get better.*

*He respected his teachers, did all of his chores,
and whatever his mother asked him to do;
and as his life began to quickly change,
even his “friends” stopped laughing too.
Although it was never easy, Chico worked hard
to stick to his plan;
And before you know it, guess what?
That little boy became a man.*

*His family was very proud of him, but so was he,
because what his mother told him came true;
his life had changed in no time at all,
because he did what his Mom asked him to do.
Now, Chico’s story is a very special one,
it’s an example for each and everyone to see;
because it’s true down to the very last word,
except, that little boy named Chico was me.*

**Rejection can't kill you, but regrets will. Never walk away
wishing you had – always be glad you did.**

Regretfully Yours

Success...

*wish I,
could have,
should have,
but I didn't.*

Dreams...

*hoped for,
waited on,
settled for,
not what I intended.*

Love...

*had it,
lost it,
left it,
took it for granted.*

Money...

*craved it,
earned it,
burned it,
left standing empty handed.*

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Friendship...

*respect it,
but neglected it,
and forgot to protect it.*

Health...

*abused it,
misused it,
just about to lose it.*

Family...

*ignored it,
no time for it,
watched as others adored it.*

Life...

*wish I could forget it,
just pray I live long enough
not to regret it.*

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The best thing you can leave behind when you die...
is a good impression.

*The largest room in your house
should always be your room for improvement.*

When it comes to life, you can either pay now and play later, or
you can play now and pay later; but either way,
you're going to pay.

*There are two ways to learn in life:
1.) You can either buy the experience (on your own) or
2.) You can borrow it (from others).*

We were all born on this earth to be “used”;
because, if we're not “use-ful”,
then we are “use-less.”

*We all have an appointment with disappointment,
so don't try to avoid it, just get ready to respond to it in a positive way
(i.e., get up and keep going).*

It's okay to have emotions, just don't be lead by them
(i.e., don't let your emotions own you).

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If you want to be successful at anything, just watch what most people would do in a given situation, then do the total opposite.

Not Like Most

*While most have decided to become part of the problem,
we have chosen to be part of the solution;*

*While most have questioned “Why?”,
we have dared to ask “Why Not?”;*

*While most have accepted defeat,
we have accepted the challenge to compete;*

*While most have focused on the obstacles,
we have remained focused on the openings;*

*While most have been overwhelmed by difficulties,
we have transformed them into opportunities;*

*While most have given up,
we have certainly not given in;*

*While most have resolved to talk,
we have resolved to take action;*

*While most have lost all hope,
we have remained hopeful;*

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*While most have forgotten from whence they came,
we haven't forgotten WHO brought us this far;*

*And while most wish they were like us,
we're just thankful we're NOT like most.*

**Emotionally, you're only as sick as your secrets
and as healthy as your habits.**

I Cry Alone

*I cry alone when I awake,
I cry alone as I sleep,
my pain is entrenched so deep within,
the hurt won't allow me to speak;*

*Only God knows what I've endured,
but he seems to have forsaken me,
time and time again I try to suppress this pain,
but it just won't let me be;*

*I cry alone because what I feel is real,
even if it's not real to you,
people have tried to hold me together,
but I have nothing left to hold onto;*

*Time after time I ask many questions,
but the answers do nothing to relieve my pain,
even when I find myself smiling at times,
I just end up crying again;*

*So I cry alone, and I hurt alone,
and I wouldn't have it any other way,
because no one should have to bear or share,
the roots of my dismay;*

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*I've received love that I didn't deserve,
and I've caused pain for those who cared,
if only I had the strength to reach out to you,
maybe your pain could have been spared;*

*I cry alone when I awake,
I cry alone as I sleep,
I've made the choice to escape my pain,
so don't you cry for me...I Cry Alone.*

Before you decide to bury anything, just make sure it's dead.

Restless Soul

*Here I lie, in a place
where time seems to stand still;
when seconds seem like centuries,
and every heartbeat you can feel.
Running away from my dreams,
but hoping at least one puts my mind at ease;
having a conscience that spins like a tornado,
with a soul unable to breathe.*

*So, here I lie, searching for a place
where I can feel nice and warm,
but every thought that I'm able to capture,
brings me closer to pain and harm.
Like a thousands hands pulling me simultaneously,
I can't seem to relax and let my mind be free,
as I run from my past lives to past lies,
my soul won't let me be.*

*So here I lie, ready to scream,
but I know no one will hear;
alone in a place that most consider safe,
but for me, the pain is loud and clear.
I long for a moment my mind can stop and rest,
I crave to be free for just one night,
when my soul isn't under arrest.*

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*So here I lie, leaving behind,
another night I wish to forget;
hoping that as my body rises from its slumber,
yesterday will die in my regrets.*

*As another night fades,
I feel I'm losing time,
hoping to reclaim a peace of mind,
that was once mine
...once a upon a time.*

**There's no mistake you can make in life that Christ didn't die
for – so don't be too hard on yourself.**

Done Undoing

*Trying to undo what's already been done,
is like trying to "un-say" what's already been said;
or not thinking what's already been thought,
or renegeing on a debt that's already been paid.*

*God's forgiveness offers me comfort,
but my failures bring unbearable shame;
it's like being given a shelter of sunshine,
but choosing to stand in a torrential rain.*

*As I reflect on a life
that seems filled with mistakes,
I agonize over choices
I never thought I would make.*

*So I sit here mentally exhausted
trying to undo what's already been done;
but it's like trying to reclaim a life spent
or starting a race that's already been run.*

*Within the confines of my mind
the enemy is worse than the devil himself;
because what God won't permit him to do to me,
I've already done to myself.*

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*As I attempt to relive a life
void of all of my past mistakes,
God's Holy Spirit reveals the current steps
I must be willing to take.*

*Hoping that I'll eventually stop trying to undo
what's already been done;
so I can stop fighting a battle
He's already won (for me).*

*I must always remember the debt
that Jesus so unselfishly paid;
because God already knew,
I'd ask Him to help me, selfishly,
to undo all the mistakes I've made.*

Any life worth living is a life worth recording (what about yours?) – always leave a trail for others to follow.

So I Write

*When there's nowhere to run, and nowhere to hide,
I turn to the place that doesn't choose a side,
...so I write.*

*When there are no more tears left,
and no more spoken words,
I choose the voice that can't be heard,
...so I write.*

*When there's no place to go, nowhere to turn,
I trust in the thing with no concern,
...so I write.*

*I write...
'cause there's nothing but me and it,
no judge, no jury, nothing I'm afraid to admit,
I write...
because the pen and paper never lie,
my spirit never quits, and my thoughts never die.
...so I write*

*When there's nothing else to gain,
and nothing left to lose,
I choose the thing that can't be abused,
...so I write.*

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*When there's no place for peace, no room for rest,
I turn to the one thing I do best,
...so I write.*

*And when there's no reason to live, but nowhere to die,
I run to the place where it's okay to cry,
...so I write.*

See...

I write...for you

I write...for me

I write...for them

I write...for we

*I write...because I just might
express myself just right...tonight.*

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**No one ever moves farther away from death (only closer),
so do your best to make every step count (for something).**

Live Like It

*When you look at something...
look at it as if you're seeing it for the very first time;*
*When you kiss someone...
kiss them as if you're doing it for the very last time.*
*When you speak...
speak as if others are hanging onto your every word;*
*When you listen to others...
listen to them as if no other voice can be heard.*
*When you walk...
walk as if there's always enough time;*
*When you laugh...
laugh out loud like you're losing your mind;*
*When you stand up for something...
stand up like you've never fallen before;*
*When you run after something...
run after it like you're pushing the pedal through the floor.*
*When you hug someone...
hug them as if it will increase their life line;*
*When you sing a song...
sing as if you knew the words to every line.*
*When you dance...
dance like nobody's watching you;*
*When you love someone...
love them as if no one has ever hurt you.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

When you forgive others...

forgive them like you've never been offended;

When you pray...

pray like your heart and soul are in it.

When you give to others...

give as if you know the day you'll have to borrow;

And when you live your life...

live it as if you knew there was no tomorrow.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

If you replace every “no” you receive in life with a “next,” then you’ll never experience defeat, rejection, or failure.

*You can handle anything in life if you’re willing to take it
beat by beat, breath by breath,
moment by moment, step by step.*

In whatever you pursue, always ask yourself,
“How bad do I want this?” And if you find it isn’t worth dying
for, then it’s probably not worth living for.

*Don’t just do what feels good TO you,
do what you know is good FOR you.*

Everyday, always strive to be yourself...
but better.

*“All things work together for good for those who love God and are
called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

**If you want to be successful, choose to be U.G.L.Y.
(understanding God's loves you) – with nothing to lose,
instead of being C.U.T.E. (catering unconsciously to everyone)
– afraid to lose, fall, or fail at anything.**

Proud to be Ugly

*Yes, I'm ugly, and I'm proud of it,
so go ahead and call me what you want;
because if you knew where I've been,
and what I've survived,
you'd find it useless to tease me and taunt.
I once cared what people thought of me,
until I finally discovered the truth;
that it's better to be disliked and misunderstood,
than to go through life acting cute.*

*See, I've noticed some things from my past,
that's made me see myself in a whole different light,
like when it comes down to cute and ugly people,
just ask yourself, "Who would YOU rather fight?"
See, ugly people have nothing to lose,
so they never have to hold anything back,
but cute people can't afford to lose anything,
so that makes them vulnerable to anyone's attack.*

*See, cute people focus more on how they look,
while ugly people focus on how they feel;
and while cute people like to appear to be "successful,"
ugly people would rather hold onto what is real.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*See, cute people constantly underestimate others,
because they judge people by the cover on the book;
but ugly people relate well to the underdog,
because they know how it feels to be overlooked.*

*Yes, I'm ugly, and I'm proud of it,
so go ahead and laugh while I pass you by;
while you're too cute to break a sweat and give your all,
I can't afford to sit around and not even try.
But I actually thank God for cute people,
'cause without them, it would be impossible to succeed;
because the competition would be too tough
if everyone was as ugly as I try to be.*

*So you keep on worrying about your image,
keep being afraid to ask for help;
keep complaining about what you don't have,
and keep whining about every step.
Keep giving up when the going gets rough,
keep making fun of others who don't act like you,
keep following the crowd just to get attention,
because in the end, no one's ever going to follow you;
'cause you're...just...too...cute,
but as for me... I'm content with being ugly to the root!*

There are three levels of emotional pain in a man's life:

- 1.) when he won't talk about IT = he's hurting (and hiding);
- 2.) when he gets emotional about IT = he's healing; and
- 3.) when he's able to help others through IT = he's healed.

Life Behind Bars

*As I stare between the steel bars of life
that separate me from the reality I've always dreamed,
I'm constantly reminded that I can choose to be free
anytime I wish to leave.*

*I was sentenced to eternal freedom, by a merciful judge,
but I choose life behind bars instead.
The bars promise me nothing,
but yet I return to my cell for unspoken reasons
that I can't seem to comprehend or explain.*

*Everything that I am or ever wished to be,
these bars keep stealing from me,
but my life I give freely, without the bars ever
having to whisper a threat to my soul.*

*Pardoned more times than I care to remember,
I've reneged on my conscience,
only to return to the sleepless rest
of my self-manufactured cage.*

*My bars have no answers, instead, they
give birth to more questions,
making promises I know they can't keep,
except for the promises they're
guaranteed to keep me from realizing.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*Sometimes, I wish my bars were walls,
then maybe I couldn't see what might
have been, what could be, or the victims and visitors
I've scorned or torn because of my repeat offenses.*

*Instead of being called bars,
maybe my bars should be called knives,
because they've cut me off from everything
I was ever meant to be or be remembered for.
Yet these knives remain in my own hands
awaiting my instructions.*

*So here I stand in appeal once again,
before an almighty judge,
reminding me that I've been set free, my debt cancelled,
but yet I still await my punishment, soul bounded,
so I can return once again to the life I hate
...behind those bars.*

26 LESSONS
My Dad Never Taught Me...

about God



*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own
understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will direct your path.”
(Proverbs 3:5,6)*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Your relationship with God can always be measured by the amount of TIME you spend with Him.

You should be more concerned about what God thinks of you, and His approval, than what the world thinks of you - and its approval.

As Christians, we're God's ambassadors –
God's personal representation to the world;
so don't be an impostor.

Being a Christian is only as tough as your willingness to submit to God's way and to die to having yours.

There's a HUGE difference between “knowing about” God and “knowing” Him – one is about religion (believing) and the other is about relationship (obeying).
Remember, even the devil “believes” in God.

*God doesn't require perfection,
but He does require obedience.*

In your relationship with God,
always focus on obedience, not the outcome.

*God will never break a promise,
but he'll certainly delay a few.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

**God will never give you (or allow you to keep or hold onto)
anything that will replace Him in your life.**

Name Your God

Name your god ...

Is it Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, or Jesus?

*But these aren't the ones who we usually call for help
when the world can't seem to please us.*

*I'm talking about those god-like idols
we often choose to put first in our lives;
you know the ones I'm referring to,
the things that separate us from what we know is right.*

*Name your god... I dare you,
because if you don't, then maybe I just might;
no, I'm not trying to be your judge and jury,
because I just killed one of my gods last night.
And if another one tries to rear its ugly head,
I would surely commit the crime again;
because no one deserves to hold a position in our lives,
that was never theirs to begin.*

*Name your god... it's okay to confess,
and I promise, you'll be given another chance;
then go ahead and bury that god six feet deep,
and don't give it a second thought or a quick glance.
Let's show the world that we're really serious,
about being a holy example to the rest of them;
because God knows that a "false god" can be anything
we consider more important in our lives than Him.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

God won't remove all of your obstacles;
but He'll always give you the strength to overcome them.

God is concerned more about building our character than he is about making us comfortable. Because when we're comfortable, we think we're in control, but when we're uncomfortable, we know He is.

Everything belongs to God; so He only gives you whatever He knows He can trust you with. And the more He can trust you, the more He will give you.

Trust that the Bible is the Word of God until someone can show you a more powerful, life-changing, self-cleansing book.

God will only heal what you refuse to hide;
because healing always starts with revealing.

*You can't seek God's face while saving your own
(i.e. protecting your ego).*

God tests us to see how much He can trust us.
We fail His test every time we doubt or disobey His word.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

“Anything” you refuse to surrender and yield (give) to God will always frustrate you.

*If you ever want to hear from God right away, just ask Him,
“Who do you want me to bless next?”*

To build a close relationship with God, all you have to do is

- 1.) Surrender – admit “I can’t do it by myself, I need you;”
- 2.) Submit – ask, “So what would you have me to do?”
- 3.) Pray – “Give me the strength to do it;”
and 4.) Obey – “Okay, I’ll do it.”

Faith is spelled “R-I-S-K.”

When it comes to responding to God, you can choose to trust in the information (of the world) you’re given or the revelation (of His word) you receive.

*The “fear of” God is the beginning of wisdom, but your
“love for” God is the means to attaining more (wisdom).*

God loves you more than anyone can ever hate you (even you).

Saved by Grace

*I sit, I think, I search my life,
and your face suddenly appears;
I can't describe the feeling, but it overwhelms me,
because I soon realize
your grace has brought me here.*

*I hurt, I suffer, I cry out to you,
"Why do I continue to disobey?"
"Why do I disregard your many blessings,
by continually turning away?"*

*If I were you, would I forgive me
for all the wrong I've done?
Would I show the same mercy
that you've shown to me,
would you still have sacrificed your Son?*

*Forgive me? I wouldn't, I couldn't...
That's the reason I feel so much shame;
the trust I've broken time and time again
makes me wish you'd forget my name.*

*I sit, I think, I search my life,
and how difficult I can make it at times;
testing your mercy, going my own way,
always walking too close to the line.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*I hurt, I suffer, I cry out to you,
“God, please give me another chance;”
placing my burdens at your feet,
knowing my own are on sinking sand.*

*If I were you, would I forgive me
and let me start a new?
Would I ignore all the pain I've caused
by the hurtful things I do?*

*Forgive me? I wouldn't, I couldn't...
I can clearly discern right from wrong;
but there you are, always present,
ready to turn my suffering into a song.*

*I sit, I think, I search my life,
for something, for anything
to explain the power of your grace;
but everything I do, leads me right back to you,
so I'll be satisfied just to see your face.*

**God never turns his back on us; if we don't see him, it's
because we've turned our back on him.**

An Unfair God

*Everyday I wake up in the morning,
I'm thankful I serve an unfair God,
because if he was fair,
I'm sure life would be too hard;
my mountains would be too high,
and my valleys would be too low,
the journey would be too far,
and my feet would be too slow.*

*I'm afraid that everything I did,
would have a fair consequence,
and instead of expecting miracles,
I'd be stuck in endless suspense;
instead of counting my blessings,
I'd carefully count the steps of my past,
instead of praying for you,
I'd pray each day was my last.*

*But everyday I awake,
I'm thankful I serve an unfair God,
because if he was fair,
I'm sure my life would be scarred;
I'd fear what I truly deserve
was only a step behind,
I'd be weakened with worry
that each hill would be tougher to climb.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*I couldn't listen to you,
and try to ease some of your pain,
because the guilt of my past
would keep me shackled in shame;
instead of sharing what I have
with the thoughts of giving more,
I'd be too busy hiding from God,
if he truly kept score.*

*But everyday I awake,
I'm thankful I serve an unfair God,
but I often think, if he was fair,
maybe my heart wouldn't be so hard;
but because of his grace,
I have reason to live,
and because of his mercy,
I still have life to give.*

*I can walk in confidence,
not because of who I am, but who He is,
my life is a living testimony,
and in my heart He lives;
and although I don't always get
everything I want, even when I serve,
I'm just thankful he loves me enough,
to spare me from what I truly deserve.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Always respond to life's trials and tribulations by saying to God, "Nevertheless, regardless, and in spite of, I will trust you."

If You Trust Me

*If you trust me...
then you'd let go and grab hold of me
and all of the promises I've made to you;
you'd seek my face and not worry about saving yours
whenever you felt unsure of what to do.*

*If you trust me...
then you'd walk behind instead of run ahead of me
whenever I try to lead;
your wants would become unnecessary,
because you know I'll supply all your needs.*

*If you trust me...
you'd accept my Spirit and die to your flesh,
because you know my way is the only way;
you'd ask that My will be done in your brokenness
each and every time you pray.*

*If you trust me...
you'd hold me to my Word,
because you know, unlike man, I'd never lie;
you'd walk by faith, believing the impossible,
and on me you'd always rely.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*If you trust me...
you wouldn't struggle to hear my voice,
because I could whisper and never have to scream;
you would seek me above all things in your life:
your family, your friends, and even your dreams.*

*If you trust me...
you couldn't help but live your life for me,
because you know my Son died for you;
you'd seek my approval above man's acceptance,
because you'd find peace and joy in my truth.*

*If you trust me...
you'd accept who you are, and what you're not,
and everything that I am, you'd long to be;
you would begin to understand my love for you,
so the last thing you'd ever do is question me.
...but only if you trusted me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

God makes some of us small (in stature) so he can show others
how big (in purpose) He is through us.

One Day God

God, why was I born?

"...one day my son, you'll soon see."

But God, my mother is too young...

"...but one day, she'll live to see her prayers answered."

But God, where's my father?

"...one day, you'll be one, and you won't have to ask."

But God, most look down on me because of my stature...

"...but one day, those same people will be looking up to you."

But God, we're so poor...

"...yes my son, but one day your soul will be rich."

But God, I'm living in the ghetto...

"...and one day you'll be lifting others out of it."

But God, they won't let me speak...

"...but one day my son, they'll have to listen."

But God, I'm too weak...

"...but one day, you'll see it's your faith that makes you strong."

But God, my problems are so big...

"...but one day you'll see that I'm much bigger than they are."

But, God, I still have more questions...

"... and one day my son, you'll realize I AM always the answer."

23 LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Marriage

(and women)



*“Men, love your wife as Christ loved the church
and gave His life for it.”
(Ephesians 5:25)*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

As the spiritual “head” of the house, God has called you to “lead” not “control” your wife. A man’s desire to control comes from a life that’s out of control; but his desire to lead comes from a life ready to love (and serve).

A marriage is like a garden, you have to constantly nurture the soil, plant good seeds, remove the weeds, provide what it needs in order to grow, and pray for sunshine (and even rain) when you need it the most.

All a marriage really is...two people who are willing to (and can) live with each other’s faults, flaws, and mistakes for 50+ years (and vice versa) – and still love each other in spite of them.

Only seek a relationship with a woman who loves the Lord just as much, if not more, than you do; yes, a “good woman” is great, but a “Godly woman” is even better.

You’re only ready to get married when you’re ready and willing to love your wife the way God loves you (unconditionally, forgivingly, and sacrificially).

ARE YOU THE MAN?

The only reason to get married is if the woman you seek will
elevate and strengthen you spiritually and emotionally;
never marry “down.”

Can You Take Me Higher?

*There's really nothing you can give me that God
hadn't already intended for me to have;
and to believe that anything I desire can be
found in anyone else only has to make Him laugh.*

*But God said that he never intended man to be alone,
so I know that others serve a purpose in my life;
and I also know it takes more than nice lips, hips, and fingertips
to qualify to be anyone's wife.*

*The question isn't how deep is your love for me,
the real question is how high can your love take me?
It's not about how much you can make me feel like a man,
it's more about the kind of man you can help me to be.*

*See, God's intentions for me is to go higher in Him
as I fall more in love with you;
and if you're not helping me walk closer with Him,
then why in God's wisdom should I follow you?*

*I need you to take me higher
than I could ever climb striving all by myself;
I want you to take me to a place where I no longer
desire to be that old sinful man I left.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*It's not a question of how much
you're willing to give or do for me;
the more important question is...
if I receive you, what kind of man could I expect to be?*

*See, I know you can't possibly complete me,
you can only be willing to meet me,
halfway at a place where God desires us both to be;
but we can't get there from here - whether now or in the future
if we're not growing together at His feet.*

*So the question is, "Can you take me higher,"
emotionally and spiritually to a place I've never seen?
Are you willing to die to your desires and expectations
as we seek His will and His face, in pursuit of our dreams?*

*That's not just what I want in a wife,
it's exactly what I need;
yes, I confess, I only see you as a re-source,
but unless He becomes OUR source,
there's no possible way you and I can ever succeed.*

**In a marriage, the little things don't mean a lot,
the little things mean everything.**

If I Was Bigger

*If I was bigger...
then there would be more for you to love,
enough wouldn't be too much,
and there would be more for you to touch;*

*If I was bigger...
then I'd give you more of what you deserve,
over indulgence wouldn't be so bad,
I'd give you more of what you already had;*

*If I was bigger...
then there would be more of my heart to give,
I'd provide a greater love for you to hold,
I would travel deeper into your soul;*

*If I was bigger...
then I would appear larger in your dreams,
be stronger when you needed me the most,
extend longer arms to bring you close;*

*If I was bigger...
then my embrace would mean even more,
I'd hold you tighter than I have in the past,
there would be a larger hand for you to grasp;*

*If I was bigger...
then I could love you more each day,
but what I am, is all I have to give,
so I'll give you all of me,
because I'm big enough today.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

You must be successfully single,
before you can be successfully married.

*Serving your wife is not a request, it's a requirement;
it's not an option, it's an obligation.*

A successful relationship with your wife should never replace a
successful relationship with the Lord.

*When all is said and done, God is going to ask you,
"What did you do with the wife I gave you?"
So be ready to give him a good answer.*

Being a parent IS NOT the hardest job in the world;
being married IS (ask any "happy" couple).

*If we REALLY knew what God (not women) required from a
marriage, most men would never get married.*

In any argument or conflict, it's always better to act righteously (handling it God's way) than to be right (having it yours).

Forgiveness Possibilities

*How far could we go,
if we could let go of our past;
What peace could we find,
if we didn't allow bitterness
to lay in our path?*

*Where would God take us,
if we forgave each other
like he's forgiven us;
Where would God place us,
if in Him, we would place our trust?*

*What could we become,
if we didn't allow the past
to rear it's ugly head;
What blessings would we receive,
if we only did what Jesus said?*

*How much love could we share,
if anger didn't consume our days;
How much joy could we experience,
if we turned our pain into praise?*

*How far could we go,
if we didn't allow the past
to make life so hard,
How much time would we save,
if we surrendered our will to God's?*

Just like God, women want to be pursued, to be wanted, desired, and to be all you'll ever need to be satisfied; so see women as a reflection of God's heart.

The Eve of God

*Yes, I know she (God) wants me,
but she (He) wants me to want her (Him) even more;
yes, I know she (He) desires me,
but her (His) advances I continue to ignore.
Yes, I know she (He) deserves better,
but for some reason, she (He) chooses me;
and even though she (He) invites me to love her (Him),
I won't commit; so instead, I choose to flee.*

*She (God) longs to spend time with me; this I know,
but time, I find hard to spare;
and even when I'm in her (His) presence,
emotionally, it's like I'm not even there.
Her (His) desire is to comfort me,
and to be a priority in my life;
and although I gave my life to her (Him),
I've never really appreciated her (Him) as a wife...until now!*

*Now I can see her (His) jealousy as a gift,
because she's (He's) only jealous of my time;
she (He) longs to be the object of my affection,
and the first and last thing on my mind.
She (He) just wants to be desired and pursued,
admired for a beauty human eyes can't see;
she (He) wants to give me everything she (He) has to offer,
but she (He) wants my love unconditionally.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*Now I know she (He) wants to be enjoyed and romanced
and to cry with me whenever I feel pain;
I know she (He) wants to share quiet moments with me,
just to hear me whisper her (His) name.
She (He) deeply wants me to have all of her (Him),
and in return, she (He) wants and desires all of me;
I know now that she'll (He'll) never leave my side,
because she (He) gives me her (His) Word to believe.*

*But nevertheless, I've taken her (God's) love for granted,
by criticizing everything she (He) requires of me;
because I've never understood the mystery of her (His) heart,
I guess I was too blind to see.*

*But all I can do is ask for her (His) forgiveness,
as I admit what I'm no longer afraid to face;
that when I reject the love and desires of a woman,
I'm really rejecting God (Him), and the essence of His beauty and
grace.*

When it comes to love, if you both give your hearts to God (completely), then you'll never have to worry or be afraid of the other person ever breaking it.

Prayer for the Needy

*What I need, I don't need from you,
and what I want, you can't possibly do.*

*See, I don't need joy for me to smile,
I don't need rest to go the extra mile;
I don't need peace for me to be content,
I don't need to be seen to represent.*

*I don't need money to live like a king,
I don't need a tune in order to sing;
I don't need cheers in order to feel proud,
I don't need to shout in order to speak loud.*

*Because what I need, I don't need from you,
and what I want, you can't possibly do.*

*See, I don't need comfort just to feel secure,
I don't need a miracle to believe in a cure;
I don't need to be needed just to feel love,
I don't need a lift in order to rise above.*

*I don't need to touch in order to feel,
I don't need a witness to know God is real;
I don't need to hear music for me to dance,
I don't need to trust you to take a chance.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*Because what I need, I don't need from you,
and what I want, you can't possibly do.*

*So whatever you give me,
I'll graciously accept;
but I don't need permission
to take another step.
Everything I ever needed
God gave me once before;
so that's who I'll ask
when I'm need of something more.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

It's not just enough to be willing to "die for" your wife, you have to be willing to "die to" yourself (i.e., your ego) for your wife.

Have You Ever?

*Have you ever...
given your all to someone
until there was nothing left?
wanted to live forever,
but was willing to sacrifice your final breath?*

*Have you ever...
risked everything you've owned
including that which you did not have?
given your heart unselfishly
while others joked and laughed?*

*Have you ever...
lost yourself in someone
losing all sense of reality?
been touched and kissed by an angel
for all the world to see?*

*Have you ever...
been really listened to
by a heart that knew your pain?
been wrapped in understanding
that protected you from the pouring rain?*

*Have you ever...
shared your life with someone
you knew was a gift sent from above?
well if you haven't,
now you know,
what it actually feels like to be in LOVE.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

The words “whatever it takes” should be added
to all marriage vows.

Til Death Do We Part

*Til death do we part,
til never will we end,
til the sun forgets to rise,
I will be your very best friend;*

*Til death do we part,
til darkness never falls,
til we reach eternity's end,
I will continue to give you my all;*

*Til death do we part,
til tears no longer flow,
till forever becomes too definite,
I will allow our love to grow;*

*Til death de we part,
til flowers refuse to bloom,
til no words are ever spoken,
you'll be my bride, and I your groom;*

*Til death do we part,
Til raindrops cease to pour,
Til prayers are no longer heard,
I will share life with you forever more;*

*Til death do we part,
Til we breathe our final breath,
Til we meet again in heaven,
we will love each other til death.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Find two friends (a man AND a woman) your wife respects –
who will hold you accountable to your marriage
– and talk to them regularly.

You don't really KNOW your wife (or your friends) until you know their secrets (regrets and mistakes), their struggles (doubts, fears, and insecurities), and their scars (how they've been hurt and victimized by others).

Having children won't strengthen your marriage;
having children will test how strong your marriage really is.

You'll never have to worry about pleasing (serving) your wife if you focus on pleasing (obeying) God first.

10 LESSONS
My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Sex



*“Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill
the lust and desires of the flesh.”
(Galatians 5:16).*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Sex was created for the purpose of consummation and procreation, not recreation and experimentation.

Sex with one woman you love (your wife) is far more satisfying and rewarding than sex with many women you lust after.

A man who measures his manhood by how many women he can have sex with will never measure up to his true potential as a man.

*How do you know if you're ready for sex?
When you're emotionally, spiritually, and financially able to handle the worst-case scenario (consequences) of the act itself.*

If sex is driving you, always ask yourself,
“Where is it taking me?
And, is that really where I want to go?”

We give a piece of our soul to every person we decide to have sex with. The question is, how much is your soul really worth, and how much of it are you willing to give away?

If the person you'd like to become (in the future) would regret having sex with the woman you meet today, then you need to just say no and walk away.

Sex with the “right person” never requires an explanation, but sex with the “wrong person” always requires an excuse.

When it comes to sex, if it wouldn't make God smile, then you probably should wait awhile (until it does).

A Family Affair

*I should've known that something was wrong
when she didn't even ask my age;
my innocent heart she began to contaminate
while revealing herself
whenever I was center stage.
Some call her Glory, but I call her Pride,
both, God despises in His sight;
but she's stalked me for what seems like an eternity,
seducing my ego with all of her might.*

*Right beside her stands her oldest son,
who's almost deadlier than she;
his primary tool is deception,
and he seeks to distort our reality.
But he doesn't choose to pursue us,
instead, we choose to pursue him
ready to work, steal, lie, or even kill;
his name is Money, his hook is real,
and we've given him control of our will.*

*But he also has a little brother,
who tries to imitate his every move;
his bait is almost just as enticing,
and he definitely has something to prove.
So he convinces us he's worth the price,
and as soon as we pay it, he waits to devour;
he comes disguised as Status and Position,
but to his victims, he's better known as Power.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*Then there's his first cousin who offers us
the promise of both joy and pain;
her lure is so irresistible,
that she even dares to dress up in guilt and shame.
If she hasn't been on your block, don't you worry,
she's probably waiting around the next;
but beware, her grip is mighty tight,
her nickname Casual, but her birth name is Sex.*

*If she doesn't seduce you, her children might,
they're quite innocent, or at least they say;
they don't push or shove, or intend to offend,
but they always seem to eventually get their way.
Even God adores them...
in fact, they were gifts He sent from above;
but He only gets offended
when Ms. Right replaces Him as your first love.*

*Yes, their family is quite large,
but that's no excuse to fall victim to their schemes;
whether you call them your job, church, or children,
they were never supposed to occupy the space
where God was meant to be.
So as you choose your friends, you choose your fate,
and be careful and take heed to every word;
because on that day, when we all have to pay,
what will you say, when God asks, "Whom did YOU serve?"*

24 LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Fatherhood



*“Train up a child in the way he should go,
and he will not soon depart from it.”*

(Proverbs 22:6)

ARE YOU THE MAN?

When given the choice, children will choose minutes with their father over money from their father (almost) every time.

You must reflect Christ to your child until he or she is able to meet Christ for him/herself.

Your child will not find a father in God until he sees something of God in his father (you).

When it comes to being a parent, the only thing a child will remember is, "Were you there when I needed you the most?"

As a father, you must show your child how to use his/her God-given gifts and talents to achieve God-given goals.

Give your children every opportunity to succeed, but don't remove all of their obstacles to success – just teach them how to overcome them.

Always let your children know you love them unconditionally, and tell them, "No, you won't (and can't) get your way."

Whenever you speak to a child, remember, he or she is always wondering, "Should I believe you?" So, mean what you say.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

**BE the kind of person you want your child to become
(in ALL areas of your life).**

A Better Man

*When I look into your trusting eyes,
it reminds me of what I used to be;
young, innocent, full of life,
now, only a shell of a faded memory.*

*Mirrors do lie, but the heart truly knows
what lies beneath the surface of a grin;
failing to walk in what I know is truth,
visions of lost dreams that might have been.*

*Regrets become internal scars
that even time can no longer heal;
broken promises, shattered hearts,
too painful for the soul to feel.*

*When I look into your tearful eyes,
it reminds me of what could have been;
if only I'd trusted in what I knew was real,
there would be no desire to start over again.*

*Honesty, loyalty, and integrity,
are as distant as childhood memories;
never forgotten, but hard to retrieve,
reminding me of how it is used to be.*

*God's grace and mercy are my only hope,
for this my heart will forever grieve;
but for you one day, I can only pray,
that you would become a better man than me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

The best thing you can ever do for a child is to love and respect his/her mother.

*Why Do I Love Thee?
Let Me Count the Ways . . .*

*You make me want to become a better man.
You make me feel like a warrior even when I'm afraid to stand.
You fill in the spaces I miss when it comes to loving our son.
You always turn the smallest moments into memorable ones.
You make our humble house feel like a happy home.
You go the extra mile, even when you have to do it alone.*

*You make me a stronger man whenever I'm with you.
You always put a little extra into everything you do.
You're the heart of our family, and you allow me to be the head.
You don't lose respect for me even when you know I'm afraid.
You reflect what a virtuous woman is to our child each and every day.
Your smile is like a ray of sunshine on the cloudiest of days.*

*You love me for who I am and what I can be, not for what I'm not or used to be.
You're much better at fixing things, even when it comes to fixing me.
You love the Lord just as much as I do.
You love me even at times when I'm unlovable towards you.
You appreciate the things that most women overlook.
You make me face the man in the mirror even when I'm too embarrassed to look.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*You treat me like a man, even when I act like a child.
You shower me with affection even when I only offer you a sprinkle
once in a while.*

*You're always willing to give me another chance.
You're my toughest critic, but also my biggest fan.
You're hands down the most honest person I know.
You treat others like they're the most important person you know.*

*You make me feel 10 feet tall when I'm in any crowd.
You keep my feet on the ground even when my head's in the clouds.
You teach me to live for the moment and not a minute later.
You always find a way to love me even when the risks seem greater.
You believe in me even when I doubt myself.
You know how to find me whenever I try to hide from myself.*

*You constantly go out of your way to make other people's day.
You won't accept less than you deserve, regardless of what others
think, do, or say.
You nurture my fragile ego, and unselfishly do it with ease.
You're everything in CHRIST that I'm not,
but someday hope to be.*

**You can learn a lot more from children the first seven years of
THEIR life than you can ever teach them in a lifetime.**

Little Lessons

I'm convinced, the most important things we need to learn in
life, we can find it right in the heart of a child;
although most seem to overlook the answers,
nevertheless, the truth remains there all the while.
See, you may doubt my conclusion,
but just give me a minute to explain;
and you too will be blessed by the wisdom
my son has given me the privilege to attain.

Jesus said, "...unless you become like little children,
you will never see the kingdom of heaven;"
but little did I know the lessons God reveals in children
usually ends around the age of seven.
By then, child-like becomes child-ish,
and then they begin to get too much of US in them;
and God gets a little concerned,
because more us usually means less of Him.

The first thing I discovered in the heart of MY child,
was the power of child-like faith;
never doubting my word, never asking for evidence,
no fear of me ever making a mistake.
Then it's their total dependency on us,
that only our father in heaven could understand;
seeking our guidance and approval, not because they have to,
but because they know their life is in our hands.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Then there's that unshakable trust,
that even surprises me at times;
not worrying if I'll be there when he needs me,
just knowing my love won't allow him to get left behind.

Still not convinced that everything we need to learn in life,
we can find it in the heart of a little child?
Well, allow me to share even more with you
in order to make this worth your while.
See, children demonstrate something
that's still difficult for most of us to grasp;
inside their heart lives a forgiving spirit,
that would make the average person just sit back and laugh.
No time to, "Let me think about it,"
No, *"I'll forgive you, but I'll never forget"*;
all they want you to do is love them, right NOW,
and they'll even offer you a hug to help you cancel the debt.

Then there's that special gift they possess,
that we usually search for our entire life;
it's their priceless offer of unconditional love,
given unselfishly, without us ever asking twice.
But don't forget that rare trait of humility,
whenever they find themselves in need of help;
you don't even have to offer it to them,
they'll ask you without embarrassment, all by themselves.
Then there's that pure heart of theirs
that allows them to see IN us what others can't see;
looking beyond our judgmental labels,
and seeing who we are, not what others want us to be.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Say you want more proof that life's lessons
can be found in the heart of a little child?
Well, there's still even more I can offer you
that'll make you just shake your head and smile.
How about true contentment?
Just watch what brings a smile to a little child's face;
they'll choose time with you over anything else
you can offer them, sealed with a kiss and small embrace.

Then there's that joyful praise they give us
that makes us a little uncomfortable at times;
Saying, "*You're the best, you're my hero, you're so beautiful,*"
makes you wonder if they're actually blind.

Yes indeed, they ARE blind — we should all be so lucky,
because they see us through God's loving eyes;
if only we could see the world from their perspective,
we would literally change the way we live our lives.
There's so much more we can and should learn from children,
and I'll admit it's taken me a while;
but don't let those precious seven years flash before your eyes
without looking deep inside the heart and soul of YOUR child.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Never do anything today you'd be afraid or ashamed to admit to your child tomorrow.

At the minimum, always tell your children you love them, and you're proud of them.

Before you speak, act or respond to your child, always ask yourself, "What is this teaching him/her about life?"

Don't just leave an inheritance to your children, leave a legacy.

Live your life in such a way so your children can't wait to personally meet and know the God you serve.

Never lie to your children, even if the truth hurts; because 1.) children are more forgiving than adults, and 2.) the lie will last a lot longer than the hurt.

Always try to treat (and pray) for your children as if they're already the kind of person God wants them to become.

Let your child see that a "real man" is one who surrenders, submits, prays, and obeys God.

Never be shocked by what your child tells you – children (especially teens) will listen to anyone who listens to them; prove to your child you're a listener, not a responder.

Don't try to hide your faults, flaws, fears, and tears from children; instead, let them see how a "real man" responds to each of them.

The Victorious Loser!

*I lost... because I thought I couldn't fall to it,
and the only one I was fooling was myself;
But I won... because I refused to crawl to it,
and now I'm ready to offer help to someone else.*

*I lost... because I looked, I touched, and took a taste,
with no fear of ever losing self control;
But I won... because I wasn't afraid to stand and face
the very thing that tried to steal my soul.*

*I lost... because I deceived myself,
thinking I could stop at any time;
But I won... because I put it back on the shelf,
leaving it miles and memories behind.*

*I lost... because I used to judge
the same people who I now share in their regret;
But I won... because I refused to budge
when others wouldn't allow me to forget.*

*I lost... because of the secrets I tried to hide
and wouldn't give God room enough to heal;
But I won... because I swallowed my pride
and trusted God to prove that His Word is real.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*I lost...because I let guilt and shame
play around in the corners of my mind;
But I won... because I received grace and mercy in His name
and refused to look behind.*

*I lost...because I wasn't humble enough to admit,
I was fighting a battle, alone, I couldn't win;
But I won...because I didn't forget
the One who died and freed me from my sins.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

**Children are mirrors – when they're young,
they're a reflection of what you're not (but should be).
When they're older, they become a reflection of what you are
(whether you like it or not).**

Innocent Eyes

*When I look into your eyes, I see innocence,
no harsh stares, no ill-will deeds,
free from worry, no unmet needs,
no distrustful heart, no feelings to hide,
nothing to prove, no foolish pride.*

*When I look into your eyes, I see promise,
to live for what's right, and fight against wrong,
showing you're weak, but proving you're strong,
carrying the promise of those before you,
accepting it graciously, without having a clue.*

*When I look into your eyes, I see purity,
no broken promises, no debts to be paid,
free from guilt, no mistakes yet made,
no false friends, no chosen ax to grind,
no selfish motives, no prejudice mind.*

*When I look into your eyes, I see love,
given to you by the one who loved you more,
prepared to receive the grace that He has in store;
living His word, to be the best you can be,
so when I look into your eyes, I pray to see me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Being a father will become less frustrating when you realize you'll never be the "perfect father," but you are indeed the "perfect father" God chose for your child – and all you have to do is parent His way, not yours.

Somebody's Hero

*Somebody's hero...I am, but I'm not,
an undeserved crown that I've been forced to wear;
but heroes don't choose, instead they're chosen,
a restless role for an uneasy soul,
but no one seems to care.*

*Somebody's hero...I am, but I'm not,
my faults are hidden like a solar eclipse;
eyes wide open, but most refuse to see
the greatness within the reach of their own fingertips.*

*Somebody's hero...I am, but I'm not,
in debt for a price I never asked to pay;
given everything, but still feeling empty,
set up to disappoint others along the way.*

*Somebody's hero...I am, but I'm not,
refusing to accept the praise or the cheers;
making me cry, but for all the wrong reasons,
my faith smothered by the echoes of my fears.*

*Somebody's hero...I am, but I'm not,
or at least I'd rather not be;
expected to win, but destined to fail,
hoping someday you'd choose a hero
just as long as that hero's not me.*

30 LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about People



“Love your neighbor as you do yourself.”
(James 2:8)

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Even your enemies will have to respect you
if you're great at what you do.

*People can only lead you as far as they've traveled themselves; so check
their journey before you follow their directions.*

DO unto others as you will have them do unto you, but TREAT
and SPEAK to people the way GOD wants them to be treated
and spoken to.

Always listen without judgment before you cast your verdict.

You can always get what you want if you help enough people get
what they want.

When you talk to people, be "interested," not just "interesting."

There are people who have something important to say, but never
speak up; and there are people who have nothing important to say,
but never shut up. Know when to speak (and when not to).

*You're responsible TO people, not FOR them; they have to "want it"
in order to "have it" – you can't push a rope.*

Your friends will determine YOUR future – so be careful in the selection process.

Plastic Smiles

Plastic smiles, you see them often,
trying to conceal another lie;
shallow laughs trimmed with deceit,
makes the innocent wonder why?
A masquerade of unknown truth,
too difficult to unmask;
and while they grin, you often wonder,
how long will it really last?

Those plastic smiles, it's all a mirage,
of what they want you to believe;
fooling you, but cowards to themselves,
because all they do is deceive;
Relentless devils, though they don't appear,
but listen closely to their sounds;
a grin that was once so sincere,
frowns when you're not around.

Plastic smiles, and plastic hearts
never cease to amaze,
their shifting eyes and discrete whispers,
colors the truth in haze;
To lie to you, is to lie to me,
what's unreal will always be;
two faces disguised as one
hides their true identity.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Those plastic smiles, beware of them,
we're all potential victims to their game;
so face that liar, and expose the truth,
and maybe he'll tell you his real name.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

If you really want to deepen your relationship with people, remember two things: 1.) Never make people earn your trust; make them EARN your dis-trust. And 2.) It's not really about trusting people, but about you trusting the God "IN" people.

Trustworthy?

*How do you trust,
or who do you trust?
whatever it is,
I just hope it isn't me;
Because trust is just
something we feel we must
do to give us a false
sense of security;*

*See, what you see
isn't what will always be,
so trust shouldn't be
taken too seriously;
Especially,
if the one you trust
you think you must,
be given to someone like me;*

*See, they say if you don't
have trust, then you just,
have to wait for someone
worthy to believe;
But if the ones we trust
eventually turn on us,
then maybe trust should
be abandoned completely;*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*But in reality,
the trust we lust for,
was never really meant to be
for anyone we can touch or see;
Our trust was meant to
be deposited by each of us
only into the One who
asks us to believe;*

*So excuse me if
I've broken our trust,
betraying us,
with the intent to deceive;
Because I can love everyone,
but I can trust in no one,
unless it's given to me — for you,
by the One who's never betrayed me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

**The hardest person in life to forgive is yourself,
so always start there.**

The Man I Loved to Hate

*Like a wounded mountain climber
facing a threatening avalanche
I stand frightened in your path;
I ran from you, even before I knew you,
not knowing I'd still be a victim of your aftermath.*

*You turned away, so I did the same,
vowing to make you regret that day;
but as I confront my reflection,
while seeking God's protection,
there are no words left for me to say.*

*So, what do you do,
when you've become the one
you can never seem to forgive?
What do you do,
when you look into your future,
more afraid of the time you still have left to live?*

*What do you do,
when the one you've feared, you are,
and there's no means of escape?
What do you do,
when you look in the mirror,
and now you've become the man you used to hate?*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*Like hoping I'd die before I was born,
I'd swear this day would never come;
trying to do everything to deny myself
a past that has left me abused and numb;*

*Through your eyes, my today looks great,
my tomorrow even better,
but deep inside, the truth I can't hide;
the thing I promised to never become
has finally come to claim me as its bride.*

*So, what do you do,
when you've become the one
you can never seem to forgive?
What do you do,
when you look into your future,
more afraid of the time you still have left to live?*

*What do you do,
when the one you've feared, you are,
and there's no means of escape?
What do you do,
when you look in the mirror,
and now you've become the man you used to hate?*

*I can do what I can,
but what I once feared, I am,
and now there's no means of escape;
I can do what I can,
to become a better man,
but first I have to STOP
being that man I used to love to hate.*

If you're on fire, people will either come to get a light, try to
extinguish the flame, or come to watch you burn –
so just keep on burning.

The Last Laugh

*It starts out as a little thing,
and no one seems to give it much thought,
a funny stare, a peculiar glare,
a life lesson you were never taught;*

*You look at yourself, and start to compare,
and then the uneasiness starts to set in,
you begin to feel the looks piercing your flesh,
and wonder will it ever end;*

*A lucky few may have never endured such pain
of being taunted and ridiculed as a child,
but like most of us who couldn't escape it,
the walk home always seemed like miles;*

*Why does it happen, is it a natural thing,
inevitable like the dawn of day?
Why do innocent children pick on others,
and hurt them with the cruel things they say?*

*They say words can hurt, but I think they can kill,
just ask any victim of its aim,
the wounds may not be seen by the naked eye,
but the pain is felt all the same;*

Bullies, teasers, pranksters,

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*you can call them what you want,
but even after years when they're long gone,
their words and deeds will continue to haunt;*

*So if you consider yourself a prisoner of war
who stills suffers from the pain of the past,
understand that many others share your hurt,
and are proof that the pain won't always last;*

*Remember that the real joy you seek
can be found, if you search within your soul,
inside you will find the real meaning of beauty,
that's worth more than silver or gold;*

*So let your light shine, in the darkest of hours
when others like you need a friend,
for them be strong, cause it won't be long,
when God allows YOU to laugh loudest in the end.*

It's easier to love people if you learn to see them through God's eyes, not your own – and just pray they'll do the same for you.

To See or Not to See

*When people look at you,
do they fail to see your trials
because of your triumphs;
do they fail to see the victim
because of your victories?*

*When people look at you,
do they fail to see your effort
because of your excellence;
do they fail to see your faults
because of your faith?*

*When people look at you,
do they fail to see your problems
because of your possibilities;
do they fail to see your concerns
because of your commitment?*

*When people look at you,
do they fail to see your sacrifices
because of your successes;
do they fail to see your burdens
because of your blessings?*

*When people look at you,
do they fail to see the God in themselves
because they're too busy*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

admiring the God in you?

*So excuse others when they stare at your success;
they're only hoping to get a glimpse
of the source of your success within themselves.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

When it comes to questionable friendships in your life, always ask yourself, “Is what I’m holding onto really worth keeping?”

*Other people’s opinion of you is none of YOUR business –
so stop worrying about what other people think.*

When it comes to correcting or criticizing others, if you get any pleasure out of it, then you need to keep it (criticism) to yourself.

There are three reasons why God wants us to pray for (bless) our enemies: 1.) because He still loves them even if we don’t; 2.) so the devil can no longer use them as a weapon against us, and 3.) so the devil can no longer use them to hurt others.

When in doubt about how to respond to other people’s actions, just respond to them the same way God would respond to you if you did the same thing (with grace and mercy).

*When it comes to communicating with people,
either “keep it real” or just keep it (to yourself)!*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

It's not what you know or even who you know, but rather who knows you (and what they know about your character).

*People are more impressed by what you do than what you say,
so don't just say it, be it.*

You can't raise your standards (and others) by lowering your expectations of yourself (and others).

*It's not your job to "save" anybody;
it's your job to "serve" everybody,
it's God's job to "save" those "you serve."*

Be careful who you associate with; because if you lock a sinner and a saint in a room together, someone is coming out converted; either you're going to influence them or they're going to infect you.

The only friends worth having today are the ones who you would trust raising your children tomorrow.

Don't associate with any man your wife wouldn't consider marrying; only associate with men who's character you want to imitate and duplicate - not avoid.

The best way to get rid of all of your enemies is to forgive them.

You can't motivate anyone; you can only try to determine what does (and use it against them).

Only share your pain, problems, mistakes, and struggles with people who are not ashamed and afraid to admit their own.

What's Your Story?

*Every life and every heart reveals a story,
if we only take time to listen;
almost every smile hides a tear,
but somehow, the clues we keep on missing.
When you look into someone's eyes,
try not to be fooled by what you see;
instead, search for that seed in their soul,
that uncovers the root of their journey.*

*See, what you may be surprised to find
is that their hurt may heal your wounds;
their suffering may soften your pain,
and their tragedy may even open your tomb.
Just when you thought no one could understand,
here they stand traveling a similar path;
just when you felt too embarrassed to breathe again,
you found someone who could hold you and laugh.*

*Life was never meant to be easy,
but whoever said it was meant to be endured alone;
if we could only master the art of storytelling,
we'd never have to search too long for a home.
Because humble hearts would be our sanctuary,
empathetic ears would be our refuge;
other people's tears would become our medicine,
and our fears wouldn't appear so huge.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*So go ahead, ask me, "What's my story?"
and I promise I'll tell you no lie;
in fact, I can't wait to tell you the whole truth (and nothing but),
because my soul is slowly starting to die.
And after I soothe my spirit by telling you my story,
I promise I'll listen to yours;
and maybe we can comfort each other,
so neither one of us will have to suffer alone any more.*

People may say what they'll "never do," but understand that people are always capable of anything; so never be surprised.

Never Say Never!

*I once thought I was immune to it,
but the only one I was fooling was myself;
I said it wouldn't and couldn't happen to me,
it's only a problem for someone else.*

*I looked, I touched, I even took a taste,
with no fear of ever losing control;
I joked, I mocked, and judged those who were hooked,
until the same hook dug itself into my soul.*

*You see...most certainly,
this could never happen to me.*

*"I'm not afraid," or at least I thought I wasn't,
I felt I could stop at any time;
until anytime moved farther and farther away,
leaving me miles and months behind.*

*Those I used to pity, I now share in their shame
of what I never really understood until now;
now I find myself picking up the shattered pieces,
trying to repair my past, but not knowing how.*

*You see...most certainly,
this could never happen to me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*But I was as sick as the secrets I kept,
and God promised to heal me if I refused to hide;
but humility was the medicine I couldn't swallow,
instead I chose to overdose on my foolish pride.*

*Grace has now replaced my guilt,
but the consequences of my actions still remain;
the tears of my wasted years have secured my future,
because I trusted God to ease the pain.*

*Now I see...most certainly,
this could happen to anyone, including me.*

*The secret I once denied and lied about
has now been tossed into God's forgiving sea;
that sin that once had my soul in bondage,
God's mercy has set me free.*

22 LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Work



*“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for men.”
(Colossians 3:23)*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

If you don't use your God-given gifts and talents, you will spend the rest of your life "paying" to watch others use theirs.

Always speak to colleagues and customers as if God was eavesdropping on your conversation (because He is).

Focus on putting your heart into your work,
not just your head.

*When you "work" on a job, you're building someone else's dream,
but when you "work" on yourself,
you're always building yours.*

Be an example of success, not an excuse for failure.

*Try to brighten up a room when you enter it,
not when you leave it.*

When you're at work, you can either be a solution or a problem,
but you can't be both at the same time.

Success at work will never compensate for failure at home.

What Good...

What good is wealth. . .

*if you don't know how to create it, share it,
or spend it;*

What good is friendship. . .

*if you don't know how to build it, keep it,
or mend it.*

What good is a goal. . .

*if you don't know how set it, pursue it,
or attain it;*

What good is a home. . .

*if you don't know how to love it, protect it,
or maintain it.*

What good is a body. . .

*if you don't know how to use it, respect it,
or feed it;*

What good is success. . .

*if you don't know how to claim it, teach it,
or keep it.*

What good is a dream. . .

*if you don't know how to build it, live it,
or believe it;*

What good is love. . .

*if you don't know how to feel it, give it,
or receive it.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Don't ever settle for trading five days a week (of work) for a two-day weekend; it's the equivalent of giving someone five dollars for two (it's always a bad deal).

*Focus on the purpose of your work,
not just the payoff.*

Make your attitude an incentive for others,
not a deterrent.

*Wherever you work, always leave giant footprints
whether you quit, retire, or get fired.*

Always work purposefully, passionately, persistently,
and prayerfully.

**If you do what you love,
you'll never have to work a day in your life.**

Life On Purpose

*Do you have a purpose?
Of course you do, me too.
A destiny that was sent from up above,
to do what we love;*

*So don't run, don't hide,
just take it all in stride.
And live life with passion,
one day at a time;*

*God knows that you can,
so you must take a stand.
And if life is really a game,
then be a player, instead of a fan;*

*You only live once,
but one life is all you need.
Because if you live life on purpose,
you're guaranteed to succeed;*

*So, do you have a purpose?
Of course you do, me too.
But even if you haven't found it,
don't worry, if you just stop running,
it'll find you!*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

You only get tired of doing something when you choose to do it in your own strength instead of God's strength.

Remember, when you're working, you're really a servant of God masquerading in your profession.

You're always the C-E-O of Y-O-U, Inc., whether you're employed or unemployed.

If you spend more time working on a job than you do working on yourself, then you're "mentally" unemployed (and trust me, you can't afford the layoff).

II LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Time



*Your life is like a vapor that appears for a little while,
and then it disappears.
(James 4:14)*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Whether you want to or not, you will always become good at whatever you spend most of your time doing; so be careful on how you choose to spend your time.

Focus on managing your priorities, not your time.

When it comes to time, the only advantage a young person has over an older person isn't the amount of time (he has left), but rather the opportunity to start sooner.

If you want to destroy something, all you have to do is distract it; so spend your time pursuing your life's purpose, not life's pain killers (i.e., distractions).

Time will always promote you or expose you, depending on how you spend it.

You can't kill time without injuring yourself and the ones you love.

We pay for things with time, not money. Always ask yourself, "How much TIME will it cost me to pay for that, and is it worth it?"

When it comes to your life and your relationships, you can choose to use your time in either one of two ways: "preparing" or "re-pairing."

If you abuse time, you will never run out of excuses, but you will eventually run out of time.

The most important time in your life is always “right now.”

More Time

*I need more time,
a second, a minute, an hour, a year
maybe even another lifetime;
Or maybe all I really need
is just another chance...*

*To make things right,
put things back where I found them;
Rebuild what I've torn down,
and give more of what I've withheld.*

*More time to retrieve what was said,
say what I meant to say,
not what I thought I said,
or what you thought you heard.*

*I need more time,
a second, a minute, an hour, a year,
maybe even another lifetime;
Or maybe all I really need
is just another chance...*

*To live life, not survive it,
to forget about my past;
Repair what was broken,
and take more risks and fail more often.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*More time to love like poetry,
live like I speak
give more unconditionally,
laugh and cry with reckless abandon.*

*I need more time,
a second, a minute, an hour, a year,
maybe even another lifetime;
Or maybe all I really need
is just another chance...*

*To forgive and forget,
pay back all my debts;
Share my gift with more people
pray for those I don't know
and for those who prayed for me.*

*More time to love you and judge less,
sing without words,
feel without touching,
or maybe all I really need
is more time to be thankful
...for the time I still have left.*

15 LESSONS

My Dad Never Taught Me...

about Money



“What is a man to profit, if he should gain the whole world only to lose his soul; for what will a man exchange for his soul?”

(Matt. 16:26)

ARE YOU THE MAN?

The best way to get rich (financially and spiritually) is to ask yourself constantly, “How can I serve more people doing what I love?” Then start serving.

If you really want to be rich, focus on decreasing your “wants” instead of increasing your wealth.

Always be content with what you have, but always expect more.

Always give to God and others according to the level of your faith.

When it comes to earning a living, there are two types of mindsets:

- 1.) the W-2 mentality – getting a paycheck, and*
- 2.) the W-9 mentality – writing your own paycheck.*

When it comes to money, it's simple...
he who serves more, earns more.

*If you want a bigger paycheck,
just seek to solve a bigger problem.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Money doesn't corrupt people; the love of it does.

*Don't just spend money on what goes "ON" you,
make sure to spend money on what goes "IN" you.*

Never allow money to be your goal, because if you do,
you'll always be driven by your desire for it.

*No one will care how much money you made unless
you're leaving it to them, or worse, you owe them.*

*The love of money can either be the root of evil or
the root of opportunity - based on your values and motives.*

A formal education will make you a living,
but a self-education will make you a fortune.

**Money isn't always the answer;
because it only solves money problems.**

If Money Could Talk...

*Why do you treat me so bad,
leaving me alone, depressed, and sad?
And you have the nerve to say,
I'm all you wish you ever had?*

*You abuse me, misuse me,
but you say you still want me back.
But wait, I'm confused,
because you say your life is great,
but I'm the only thing you lack.*

*You say you love me,
but you do things to me
that are quite hard for me to understand;
like fighting over me, stealing for me,
lying and cheating to get me,
and you still wonder why I slip through your hands?*

*Yet, you blame me for almost everything
that goes wrong in your life,
like why a good woman is so hard to find,
or why you can't keep a wife.*

*You lie to me, and you lie to get me,
and for some reason, you think I'm your security;
but there's no cure for your disease,
because you feel insecure even when you're with me.*

ARE YOU THE MAN?

*So stop treating me like I'm a God,
because we both know, I'm not,
and stop calling me evil behind my back,
when you're not even taking care of what you've got.*

*See, if you just treat me right,
maybe, just maybe, I'll return,
so you can see how blessed you could be
when I'm no longer your only concern.*

Message to You



Stay Strong

My son, these words are for you,
they may be meaningless now, but I hope they reach you;
What you are, is what I've been,
and what you've seen, I've seen time again;
The road you've chosen may still bring doubt,
because your "friends" have chosen a different route;
But don't you worry, you're not alone,
you're in my prayers, so my son, Stay Strong.

My son, hold your head up high,
the others may doubt you, but no, not I;
I cried for you, as you will too for someone else,
and you know I believe in you, but do you believe in yourself?
As society points the finger, and tries to discourage you,
through it all stand tall, and to yourself and God be true;
And when hope begins to fade, and the road seems too long,
don't forget those who paved the way for you,
...for them, you have to Stay Strong.

My son, my heart goes out to you,
I wish you didn't have to endure what I've been through;
But I can assure you, it'll make you a stronger man,
and if anyone can do it, God knows that you can;

ARE YOU THE MAN?

Say what they will, you're stronger than they'll ever know,
because your destiny was determined a long time ago,
So when you give love to those who doubted you all along,
remember, stay humble, but be proud, but most of all...
Stay Strong!

The Martin Mantras



When my son was only five years old, I started teaching him something we called the “*Martin Mantras*.” They were little sayings I wanted my son to remember and to use whenever he needed them the most. Sort of like a “*break and use in case of an emergency*” life tool.

I know, from personal experience, that growing up as a boy can be very traumatic if 1.) you don’t have a strong male role model in your life, and 2.) you’re not considered “normal” by other children’s standards.

If you were unfortunate enough to be too small, too tall, too skinny, too fat, too proper, too country, too smart, too dumb, too religious, too ugly, too dark, too pale, too developed, too clumsy, too poor, too rich, or even if your name sounded too funny, you could find your inner Spirit constantly under attack by other children. So you must be bigger than their words.

Therefore, I decided to prepare my son for the inevitable teasing, taunting, worry, and self-doubt he would experience – by equipping him with these mantras (and at the same time, building a solid foundation for his character).

No lesson on manhood would be complete if I didn’t share these mantras with you. Please use them often, internalize them, memorize them, and teach them to other young men in your life. Trust me, not only will you bless them with wisdom, you’ll be preparing them for greatness. Be blessed.

ARE YOU THE MAN?

1 | IF I BELIEVE I CAN DO IT,
GOD WILL SEE TO IT.

2 | IF I DO MY BEST,
GOD WILL HANDLE THE REST.

3 | EVEN IF I FALL,
GOD CONTROLS IT ALL.

4 | IF I LIE, GOD
WILL ALWAYS DENY.

5 | NO MATTER WHAT PEOPLE SAY,
GOD LOVES ME ANYWAY.

6 | I KNOW I HAVE FAVOR,
BECAUSE JESUS IS MY SAVIOR.

7 | WHENEVER GOD TELLS ME HOW,
I MUST OBEY NOW.