



# CROSSWAY

## FOX VALLEY

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### **MEN'S MINISTRY**

### **2023-2024**

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Multiplying humble followers of Christ who strive to grow up, show up, and stand up in our world.





# CROSSWAY MEN

Humble followers of Christ who grow up, show up, and stand up in our world.

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## OUR VISION AND COMMITMENT

God has a clear design for men regardless of personality, gifting, hobbies, or cultural definition. The evil one has been attacking true created manhood from the very beginning and delights to get at it continually and fervently as he heads for his ultimate defeat. He is pleased to distort the image of God through confusion, redefinition, lies, and humanistic orientation. **By God's infinite grace, we will boldly hold the line on what GOD says a man is and what we have the privilege of doing with the life we've been given.**

As Paul started concluding his first letter to Corinth, he had some specific challenging and encouraging words for men that give a clear vision for what our lives are about. In 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 he writes, **"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."**<sup>14</sup> **Let all that you do be done in love.** Obviously, he means for all true believers to embrace these words for life but it's also clear that he intends for men to be at the front edge leading the way. He has Apollos, Stephanas, Furtunatus, Achaicus, and other brothers in mind in this immediate context and then of course, the whole church as the letter ends. Watchfulness, firm faith, strength<sup>1</sup>, and all of life expressed in agape love are undeniable marks of a true man. This is the gospel life not exclusively for men but exemplary IN them. So, what does God intend and where did it all start?

## WORKERS AND KEEPERS OF THE GARDEN

Men are at their very best when they dependently and faithfully live out their intended purpose. Paul's charge in 1 Corinthians has a ring to it that brings us all the way back to God's very familiar first intentions for man in creation. **Genesis 2:15 says, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it."** From the very beginning God's intentions for men were clear. Before he had clothes, before the animals were named, before Eve was with him, and before sin entered the world, God made him to be a "worker" and "keeper."

Just as God had worked to create all that is (Psalm 8:3 – the "work" of his fingers) so Adam was to reflect his image by tending to and serving the good of the garden. Just as God is the ultimate watchman over all he has made, so Adam was to reflect His image by protecting, guarding, and watching over all that was in his care. God's plan for men was for them to be cultivators and caregivers, protectors, and keepers in their spheres of life and influence (their "gardens").

But then, the first Adam failed. He didn't do the job he was given by design. When the serpent deceived Eve into disobeying God, Adam was there "with her" (Genesis 3:6) seemingly witnessing the

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<sup>1</sup> "Strong" - used of the young man, Jesus in Luke 1:80 – "...he became strong in spirit..." See also Ro. 4:20, Eph. 3:16, 6:10, Col. 1:11, 2 Tim. 2:1, 1 Jn 2:14, etc. This is "maturity" and perhaps even "substance" – not "strength" in a physical sense.

whole thing, the whole time. He did nothing, joined in the disobedience himself, and then laid the blame on his wife and the God who gave her to him. From that point on, the world began to long for a man who would truly embrace God's created design.

Fast forward several millennia, in the "2<sup>nd</sup> Adam," Jesus, we CAN do the job. While the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam abdicated, failed humanity, and left his bride unprotected in the garden, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam was in a different garden embracing his mission, surrendering his will to save humanity, and preparing to redeem his bride for all eternity. This is our Lord! This is the man we follow. This is the man we constantly long to be like. The world is still longing for men who will be who they were created to be. Because of the perfect "Adam," we can be those men! ***We will strive to be humble followers of Jesus who grow up, show up, and stand up in our world.***

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## **"THE MEN WE NEED" STUDIES**

### OUR IDEAL PACE AND PROCESS

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1. Gather as a larger group for our introductory session (first meeting).
2. Establish older/younger (Titus 2) smaller groups (ideally 2+2).
3. Our pace will be about ONE lesson per month. For each lesson (1-10):
  - Read and study through the listed passages and answer the questions as you go.
  - Read the related pages in "The Men We Need" along with the lesson as well.
  - Work through the lesson on your own first. Take good notes as you go and take plenty of time to dive in, think, and pray through it all (Suggestion: Take 3-5 days of own time in God's word and study the lesson).
  - Meet one time during the month (any time before the larger group men's gathering) in your small group to talk about your discoveries together. Grow relationships. Encourage. Challenge. Pray. Make commitments and hold one another accountable.
    - *Note: Be diligent but if you have a tough time getting through a lesson for any given month, be sure to gather with your group anyways.*
  - Gather together for a Crossway Men's Breakfast or other Crossway Men's Gathering for added fellowship and interactive teaching and walk through of the lesson.
    - *Note: All men are welcome at all Men's Gatherings regardless of their participation in all the above.*













4. Think through the following statements in light of who Jesus is and our call to follow him. Do they ring true to you? Why or why not?
- True masculinity is about taking responsibility and moving toward the need.
  - Male passivity is harmful to those near to us and to our culture overall.
  - Women (and children) will be drawn to men who actively and joyfully “show up”
  - God has placed a unique call on men to be exemplary in strength, maturity, and sacrificial love.
  - The scariest thing should be that you might never become the man you were intended to be.<sup>3</sup>
5. GOD is able. In Jesus and the power of his Spirit in us, we can now cast off the ultimate abdication and passivity of Adam in our lives! What could it look like practically if you *actively* sought to become less passive in your given circles of influence (your “garden”)? How would it impact those around you? Home? Work? Neighborhood? Church? What will it look like if you DON’T?

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.

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<sup>3</sup> Portions taken from “The Men We Need,” p. 241-245. Reprinted with publisher permission.

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# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 3

## The Swindling Power of Lust

[Decision #1: Forsake the fake and relish the real]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Job 31:1-2, Psalm 101:2-4 (see Psalm 119:36-37 also), Proverbs 4:23, Proverbs 5, Proverbs 20:17, Matthew 5:28-30 (see Luke 11:34-36 also), Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, 1 Peter 2:11.

**READ:** “The Men We Need,” Pages 53-67

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1. “Lust is the craving for salt of a man who is dying of thirst (p. 60).” Explain this statement. How does it relate to you? What’s dangerous about “supernormal stimuli (p. 57-58)”?<sup>4</sup>
  
2. How is the struggle against lust/sexual sin described in these key passages? Take some time to make as many observations as you can. What are the pictures used? How is the intensity of the fight expressed? What are the results of giving in? What are the paths to victory? Etc.?
  
3. The author claims that we need a bigger vision for our lives than the pursuit of the false pleasures. In what ways does this “swindling power” work against you being the man you’re called to be? How does your identity in Christ empower you to “forsake the fake” and to be that man?

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<sup>4</sup> Portions taken from “The Men We Need,” p. 241-245. Reprinted with publisher permission.

4. Look up Psalm 34:8, 37:3-7, and John 10:10. With these and the other verses above in mind, consider the phrase, “Enjoy superior satisfaction in God.” How does the pursuit of joy and delight in God overpower the lust for fake satisfaction and fleeting pleasure?
  
5. Walking in integrity (be honest & transparent)! If you are currently caught in the “swindling power of lust,” how are you fighting it or how will you commit to fight it?<sup>5</sup> If you are walking in purity and victory (by God’s grace), how do you keep at it and how will you help others?

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.

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<sup>5</sup> Go to <https://www.covenanteyes.com/e-books/> for a growing wealth of incredible free resources on temptation and addiction related to porn. Need a place to start? This is IT!

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# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 4

Too busy with Fake Heroics?

[Decision #1, Continued: Forsake the fake and relish the real]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Matthew 26:57-28:75, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Ephesians 2:10, 3:7-12, 5:15-17, Titus 2:11-14 (see Titus 3:8 also).

**READ:** “The Men We Need,” Pages 68-75

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1. Beyond lust and sexual sin, there are other fake pursuits and sources of counterfeit joys/pleasures. What are some of them in our culture? Which ones are most distracting to you personally?
  
2. What is your response to this statement? “Please don’t waste your God-given desire for adventure and accomplishment by being a fake hero fighting fake injustices in fake worlds.”<sup>6</sup>
  
3. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Continue to reflect on his character and actions following the garden in Matthew 26:57 through 28:75 (the end of Matthew’s gospel). In what specific ways is Jesus “heroic” throughout all of it? Take your time and list as many observations as you can:

How do his character, actions, and instructions define AND empower who you are and what you’re all about in this life?

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<sup>6</sup> Portions of some questions taken from “The Men We Need,” p. 241-245. Reprinted with publisher permission.

4. How does your identity in Jesus inform your focus and purpose in life? What might be some specific ways in your own life in which you want to get more intentional?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Take time to read and think on the larger context around Ephesians 5:15-17 (let's say at least 5:1-21). What are the commands you see? What are the things that are true about you? What are we called away from? What are we called toward? Etc.

A lot of this passage is focused on sexual immorality but consider the bigger picture. How would you communicate from this passage and the surrounding context - what our lives are to be about (and not just what we're to *avoid*)?

6. If you were to write a mission statement for the man you want to be, what are all the possible things that could be in it? Just think on it and make a list for now (continued in later lessons).

<p><b>HEART &amp; ACTION:</b> Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.</p>
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4. In what ways do you see our culture as “dangerous?” In what sense would you say that godly, faithful, Jesus-like men are “the last line of defense?”
  
5. Focus on the Romans and Ephesians passages (as well as others you might note): Vulnerability, danger, fear – all have the potential to stop us in our tracks, paralyze us, and keep us from being the men we’re called to be. What are the resources we have that will empower us to step up, step out, and lead others in our garden in a life of faith and victory?
  
6. In “The Men We Need’ on page 94, Brant makes the claim that our culture “lacks grown men” and “...if you make the decision to be a keeper of the garden and a creator of order, peace, and security, you will stand out like a man among boys.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
  
7. How is Jesus and the gospel helping you further define true manhood? There are plenty of illegitimate connections people have tried to make. What are the genuine ones?
  
8. Back in Lesson 4, you listed some of the things that might be on a mission statement for the man you want to be. Is there anything to add that list based on this specific lesson (more to come on this “exercise” in later lessons)?

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.





# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 6

Keepers of the Garden, Seekers of the Kingdom  
[Decision #3: Be ambitious about the right things.]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Matthew 6:19-34, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 8:34-38 (also see Matthew 10:38-39), Colossians 3:23, 24. 2 Timothy 2:1-7 (Review Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

**READ:** “The Men We Need,” Pages 111-132

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1. From the book<sup>7</sup>: If you are ambitious about the wrong things, you will be hit by reality eventually. Name two or three regrets, things you wish you could go back and change because you were ambitious about the wrong things. How have those regrets ended up affecting your life and those around you?
  
2. Praise God, Jesus is able to redeem all things! Study through the gospel passages in the list. What are the things (the “right things”) that he wants us to be ambitious about? What kind of real-life ambitions fit with his mission and his kingdom?
  
3. In your own words, summarize what Paul is saying in Colossians 3:23, 24. In what ways will “working heartily as for the Lord and not for men” show up in your specific job? What are some of the obstacles to this for you?
  
4. Think about your day-to-day work and the idea of serving other image bearers that God loves. What kind of opportunities do you have to serve people in your job? How might your relationships at work (and elsewhere) open doors for Jesus’ “kingdom ambition?”

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<sup>7</sup> Portions of some questions taken from “The Men We Need,” p. 241-245. Reprinted with publisher permission.

5. What observations can you make about the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer in 2 Timothy 2:1-7? What's the significance of v. 2 in this context? How might you envision God using you in this pattern of influence and investment in others (see 1 Corinthians 11:1 also)?
  
6. What are some examples of those who have served you and invested in *your* life or are currently doing so (mentors, disciplers, etc.)?
  
7. How can you personally grow as one who invests in and influences others? What are some practical steps you can begin to take today?
  
8. Continuing to form a life-mission focus, consider the elements you have already written down from previous lessons. ***What specific kingdom and mission focused ambitions might you need to add?*** Again, just list a few bullets. You'll continue to build this toward writing and actual mission statement of life purpose in the last couple of lessons.

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love and "kingdom ambition" in action.



# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 7

Contentment and Commitment

[Decision #3, Continued: Be ambitious about the right things.]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Exodus 20:17, Psalm 23, 37:3-4, Luke 9:57-62, John 4:13-15, 6:35, 7:37-39, Philippians 4:11-13 (See 2 Corinthians 12:9-10), 1 Timothy 6:6-10 (also see Hebrews 13:5), James 5:12.

**READ:** “The Men We Need,” Pages 133-144

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1. In Lesson 6, you pondered some past decisions that have hindered your “ambition about the right things.” This time, list some sacrifices you’ve made to stay focused on and fulfill your most important roles. How have those sacrifices helped you and those closest to you?
  
2. God’s law (the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment) commands us not to covet. What temptations do you face in this area? How have you learned to fight through them?
  
3. Review what Jesus says about himself in the gospel of John passages. How does he become the perfect “antidote” to human dissatisfaction? Are you finding yourself joyfully satisfied in him? How so? What are the tensions in the battle?
  
4. Psalm 23:1 says, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing (or ‘I shall not want’).” How is it possible that we can actually “lack nothing? How might genuinely believing that make life as a man better for you and for those “in your garden?”

5. Philippians 4:13 is one of the most often misquoted bible verses. What is it specifically that Paul needs the strength of Christ for in this context? Why do we need so much help with this? Where in your life specifically are you wrestling with this and what help do you need from the Lord?
  
6. Write down a simple life-principle that sums up 1 Timothy 6:6-10. What are the challenges Paul describes here and how do you work through them in your own heart and life?
  
7. How would you explain the clear directives that come from Luke 9:57-62 and James 5:12 in the area of making commitments? How does your perspective on this impact the way you live even the Christian life itself?
  
8. List several things that come to mind when you think of a “man of commitment.” i.e., “When he says yes to something, he always follows through.” Discuss how challenges you personally.
  
9. Collect up the things you have written down in relation to a life purpose or mission statement. Start to narrow it down. ***Of the things you have listed over several lessons, which of them should you (will you) commit to?*** Maybe you have 3-5 items that could make up your actual purpose statement for all of life. Write down a first draft based on those items.

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.



# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 8

How DO you Treat them, REALLY?

[Decision #4: Make women and children feel safe, not threatened.]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Matthew 18:13-14, Mark 5:25-34, Mark 9:35-37, Luke 7:11-15, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 8:1-3, John 4:7-29, John 8:3-11, Ephesians 5:25-32, Ephesians 6:4, James 3:3-12.

**READ:** “The Men We Need,” Pages 147-173

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1. We think this is some of the best and most biblical writing in the book overall. Be sure to read the pages thoughtfully, carefully, and maybe more than once. What things stand out the most to you?
  
2. As you read through all the gospel passages listed above, list as many observations as you can about how Jesus interacts with and treats women and children.<sup>8</sup>
  
3. Based on what you are seeing, write down at least 3 principles for how you are called to treat women and children (wife and kids, etc.) if you are going to truly follow Christ.
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4. STOP! Don't rush. Think, pray, and be honest and vulnerable. What might you need to confess (Laziness, passivity, anger, harshness, impatience, indifference, other)? What practical steps can you begin to take right now to authentically reflect Jesus to the women and children in your life?

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<sup>8</sup> Bonus Question: Remember Adam? Review how Jesus' actions stand in stark contrast to Adam's behavior in the garden.

5. "I came to realize that the man I needed to kill in order to protect my wife (and kids) is *myself as a sinner*." What is your response to this statement? Can you relate to the damage you can cause with your anger and harsh words in your own home? In what way?<sup>9</sup>
  
6. Would others around you describe you as "encouraging?" (See James 3:3-12) Write down some encouraging things you need to say to the ones closest to you—maybe something that you have never said or don't say enough—and say those things to them as soon as possible.
  
7. Each of us probably longs to be a "life-giving" man in the lives of others. We don't want those closest to us simply to be "surviving" or not too adversely impacted by us. We want to bring joy and help people *flourish*. In what specific ways would you say God wants to mold you more into that kind of man ("the man we need")?
  
8. You have been working on a life purpose/mission statement. At the end of the last lesson, you wrote down a first draft based on all your previous notes. Spend some time refining it if needed.

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.

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<sup>9</sup> Portions of some questions taken from "The Men We Need," p. 241-245. Reprinted with publisher permission.



# THE MEN WE NEED – LESSON 9

We No Longer Live for Ourselves

[Decision #5: Decide today who you will be tomorrow.]

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**KEY PASSAGES FOR STUDY:** Mark 8:34-37, Romans 8:35-39, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:5-8, Colossians 3:1-17 (see 2 Corinthians 10:5 also), and 2 Peter 1:3-11.

**READ:** "The Men We Need," Pages 177-199

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1. We've been at this "men we need" thing for 8 lessons now. What "put off" → "put on" transformation have you seen in your life ("old self" to "new self" change)? Give a couple of examples.
2. **SET YOUR MIND:** Think about decision #5 in our reading, "Decide today who you will be tomorrow." Hansen says, "Who you become is a direct result of what you pay attention to (p. 177)." What does God tell us in both 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Colossians 3:1-4 about our minds and how our attention impacts who we become?
3. **DENY YOURSELF:** In light of Jesus' call on our lives in Mark 8, what does it really mean to deny self and follow him? Where do we *actually* find the most fulfilling version of "self?" How does this go against popular opinion? (Prayer: Are you committed to grow up, show up, and stand up in our world?)

4. **EMBRACE YOUR TRUE IDENTITY:** Men are looking for significance in so many places that offer false promises. What are some of them? What do Romans 8:35-39,<sup>10</sup> and 2 Peter 1:3-11 tell you about your true identity and how God empowers you to be who he wants?
  
5. **BECOME LIFE-GIVING TO OTHERS:**<sup>11</sup> If you are setting your mind on the things above, denying self, embracing the attitude of Christ, and it really IS no longer you who live but Christ IN you – Make a list of the kinds of things people around you will see growing in you as you do life:
  
6. **LOOK BACK:** What real life opportunities have you had this last week to live some of this out? What happened? **LOOK FORWARD:** What opportunities do you see ahead to die to self (that is “become the man people around you need.”)? What’s at least one practical step you’re leaving this lesson with?

**HEART & ACTION:** Summarize the biggest thing(s) God is doing in your heart and the main action step(s) you believe he wants you to take. Discuss one of each with the group. Get accountable, pray together, stay dependent, and make a commitment to sacrificial love in action.

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<sup>10</sup>More to think and pray on from the reading. Romans 8 tells us we truly have nothing to fear. If God is for us, who can be against us? What words stick out the most and why? How do you feel after reading this passage? Can you rally be a man with “no fear?”

<sup>11</sup> “Do you know who you are? The Creator of the universe loves you so much, he wants to change you. He wants you to become the rare, remarkable man who is life-giving to others.” The Men We Need, p. 192





4. As the author says, we are not “feelings driven” as believers but along with number 3 above, what place do your *affections* play in a relationship with God? How might that familiar Matthew 22 passage (the great commandment) inform you on this? What does affectionate faithfulness to God look like practically from day to day?
  
5. Consider the above passages (and others that come to mind) carefully again. Where does your faithfulness come from? How is it fueled? What are the implications of this truth?
  
6. Remember, God still claims us. He still wants us. He can help us change and HE IS FAITHFUL! That’s the strongest place to be. You are an adopted “son of God” if you’ve put your faith in Christ. Discuss some of the ways you can grow in your spiritual life as you live out this powerful identity in him.
  
7. Spend some time thinking about the man you want to be (talk in your group about it). Describe your vision for who you want to become, how you will treat people (bring “healing, peace, and life”), and how you can be a keeper of the garden around you.

# WORKERS AND KEEPERS OF THE GARDEN

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

Genesis 2:15

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Over the duration of the 9 previous studies, you have had different opportunities to consider different elements of an intentional life purpose and direction. Write down a final life purpose/mission statement that reflects the kind of man you want to be... the “MAN WE NEED.” Share your statement with those closest to you (those “in your garden.”)

## **MY VISION AND PURPOSE - TO BE THE “MAN OTHERS NEED”**

**How will you seek to grow and commit to live this out as we move into the next season of life and ministry together?**



**CROSSWAY**

FOX VALLEY

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**MEN'S MINISTRY**

STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH  
**BE WATCHFUL**  
**ACT LIKE MEN**  
1 CORINTHIANS 16:13-14  
**BE STRONG**  
LET ALL YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE