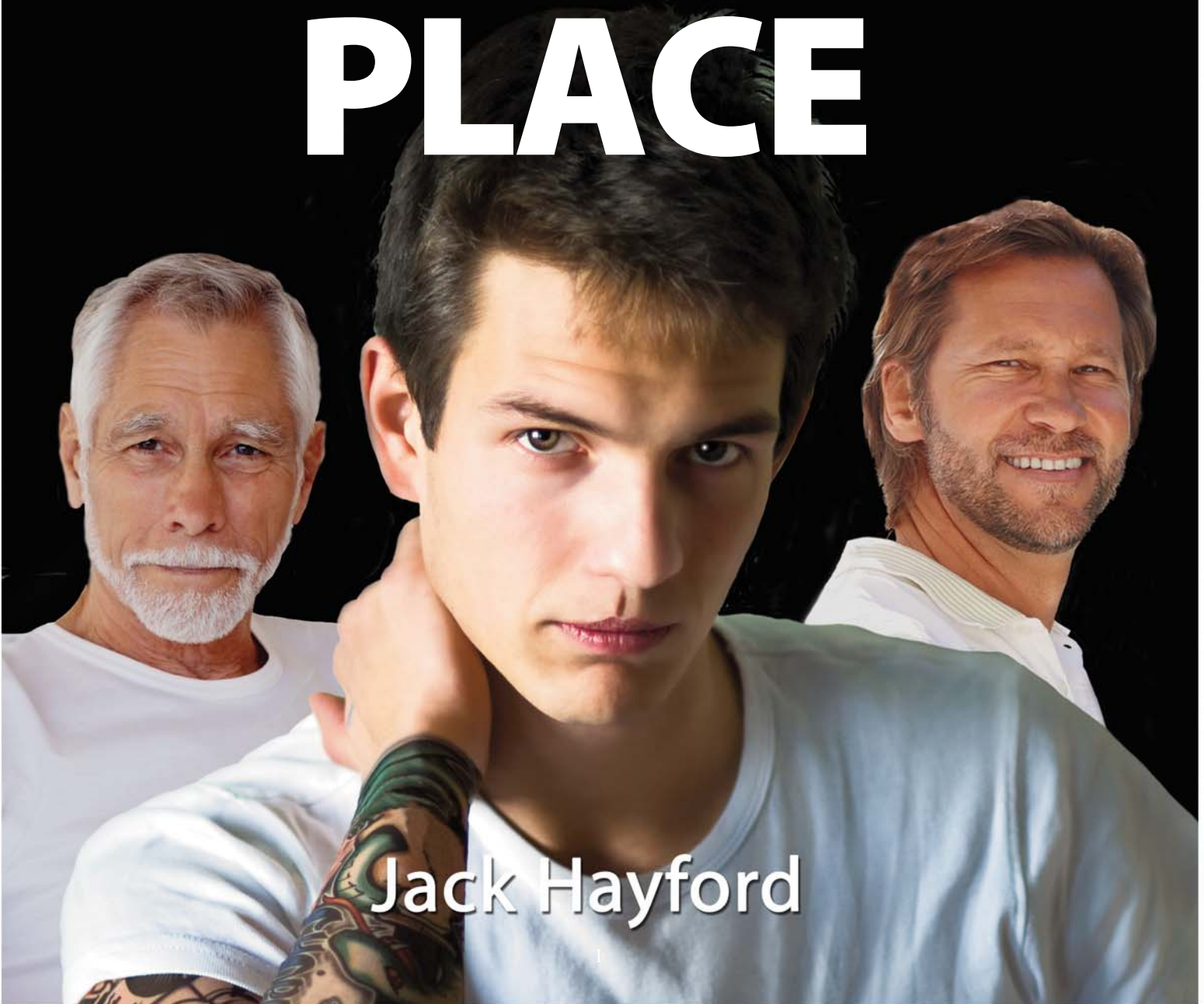


The
Power To Become
Men's Bible Study Series • Study Guide

A MAN'S STARTING PLACE



Jack Hayford

The
Power To Become
Men's Bible Study Series

A MAN'S STARTING PLACE
by Jack W. Hayford

This Study Guide parallels the three-part Spirit Formed video teaching series available as a DVD album. There is also a companion book.

Part 1

Then God said, "Let Us make man in our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." – Genesis 1:26

The Book of Genesis is where everything starts...

Genesis depicts God's intent and order through the "start of humankind." The inherent concept in this passage of Scripture is the role of man. That does not, in any way, negate the importance and significance of woman. On the contrary, God delineates her purpose as clearly as He defines that of the man.

*Women are every bit as important as men. They are pivotal in so many ways. But in the divine order of things, God first created the man. That doesn't give men unusual privileges, but **it does give men an unusual responsibility.***

Now is the time for men to come to a new "starting place." That isn't limited to men who have just begun their life in Christ, nor is it restricted to any particular age group.

The Lord wants all of us to experience watershed moments that compel us to begin anew; to change our thinking; and to reprioritize our daily lives, our relationships, and most importantly, our walk with God.

The starting place with God means getting in alignment with His way.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. *Are you currently where you want or planned to be in your walk with God? How do you get there?*

2. We've looked at the implications of the first man, his starting place and how that applies to us as men in terms of "living-it-out".

How does understanding Mankind's origin and purpose affect your thinking in the daily "living-it-out?"

Where do you believe your work, family, relationships and day-to-day activities can be more aligned with God's will for your life?

What do you believe is the purpose for which you were created?

Write out a brief personal mission statement that you feel defines your calling.

3. We can never have the God-intended fulfillment with a spouse that we desire until we change our perspective on women, their role and our responsibility in regards to them.

How has your perspective on women affected your relationships and (if appropriate) your marriage?

How has that affected your treatment of women in the workplace?

Where do you see the need for change?

4. As we discussed, according to Genesis, man was created first, which does not give men unusual privileges, but it does give men an unusual responsibility.

In what areas does this understanding effect change in your thinking about your identity as a man of God?

We all have, at some point, allowed our identity to be defined by our past experiences and failures. In what ways is this true for you?

Be encouraged that today can be the starting place of re-claiming what the enemy has robbed from you.

5. God formed the first man, Adam. He planted a garden and put man in it. Man was given this place to tend as his initial place of assignment.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. – Genesis 2:7

You and I have each been given a “garden” to tend. It may not be much more than a small plot, but it is mine. The size of my neighbor’s garden is of no importance to me because I have been given authority over the stewardship of my “little plot,” and I will be accountable before God for its care.

List the ways in which you have been both productive and neglectful of your “garden assignment.”

6. God made each man as an individual, unique in personality, unique in gifts and unique in purpose.

How have you allowed comparison with your neighbor's "garden" or other men's circumstances to discourage or distract you?

In what ways might you have hindered God's unique purpose for your life, and how can you get back on track?

7. In our study, we've looked at how a man's starting place is in coming to know both the responsibility and the capabilities with which God has endowed us.

There is a spiritual dynamic and power that comes from being connected with Him. Our starting place is to let that connection be formed, first by coming to the Savior and then, by saying, "Lord, I open to Your will for my life in You."

What area of your life has been difficult to completely surrender to the Lord? In what new ways are you ready to open to Him?

What do you think is your starting place today?

Part 2

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

As men of God, at various points in our lives we will earnestly seek the Lord for vision, direction, even for His ultimate purpose for our lives. While this is a right and worthy pursuit, our quest will generally only reflect the need for insight for the immediate circumstances. However, it is the Lord's intention and desire to reveal so much more to us. Our humbly coming before Him, and genuinely surrendering "all" that we are and hope to be to His will, will broadly expand our search to discovering *the purpose of our being*.

The beauty of diligently seeking God and His thoughts for our lives is that as we discern His strategies, we also come to know and trust *Him*—His heart and immeasurable love for us. There is nothing more valuable and pleasing to God than a man who walks in the understanding of who he was created to be. When self doubt and the uncertainty of God's course for your life arises, be assured that this is the Father's desire and intention for *every* man. "*Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" – Luke 12:32

The starting place with God means getting in alignment with His way

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Christ promises His creation that ALL will become new. That means our perspective, our priorities, our actions.

How has your salvation impacted your perspective of yourself and your interaction with others?

How has your relationship with Jesus affected the priorities of your growth as a disciple?

How has life in Christ impacted your actions and behavior in your day-to-day life?

2. When we talk about a “starting place,” it all begins with “knowing Him” more than learning information about Him. The Bible is essentially our “blueprint for living.”

How much time do you set aside just to be with Jesus – beginning with a daily study of the Bible?

*How often in times of decision do you ask the simple question or a variation on this theme:
What would Jesus do?*

3. God imagined our being before we existed in our mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). God created and intended us for purpose – to have dominion, the realm of rule. This principle is often distorted by the confusing of **domination with authority** and **controlling with being in control**.

In what areas is this true for you? Review the following and prudently address each one where it applies.

Relationships and Marriage (if appropriate)

The Workplace

Ministry

Friendships

General interactions with others

4. In the pursuit of God's will it's often our tendency to reclaim the "reins" of the course that God is charting. What that amounts to is my mistaken belief that if it's going to get done right and in a timely manner, then I have to do it!

Name an area in your life where you consistently find yourself "reclaiming the reins." What can you do to bring about change?

What are the most personal and intimate things of your life that you know must be completely and unconditionally surrendered to God?

(God is never going to shortchange us. It's a matter of the "currency of your being!")

5. *The greatness and grandeur of almighty God is that none of His created beings are unloved by Him. God is love! Yet in the midst of our daily lives we focus more on our deficiencies rather than trusting in His all sufficiency.*

In what areas of your life have you disqualified yourself because of a deep sense of inadequacy and/or unworthiness?

Name them and ask the Lord how you can overcome this way of life and begin seeing yourself as He sees you rather than how you see yourself.

6. The concept of *God is love* and our internal and external response towards Him and others is fundamental to our walk with the Lord because God's glory is most reflected through our love. However, for many, simply the word "love" invokes nothing more than painful memories.

How have past experiences hindered your intimacy with the Lord and interaction with others?

How has your past hindered your trusting God with “everything?”

What is the first step toward looking forward in faith, instead of to the past, and embracing a new concept of love (agape) as God ordained it?

7. The concept of dominion and authority is not a man-made ego-booster designed to gain the upper hand on life. It is simply and profoundly a gift from God. “...*Let them have dominion...*” - *Genesis 1:26*. It begins with dominion and authority over our individual lives.

In what areas have you lost control of your life?

How can you get back on track?

You can begin today regaining authority over your life by first surrendering all of your fears and concerns to the One who has created you to walk in freedom, self-control, and dominion in your sphere of influence.

POINT OF ACTION: Get with a brother or a small group of brothers to hold each other up and be accountable. We walk stronger together! *As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.* - Proverbs 27:17

Nothing is more “manly” than a life of transparency and open-yieldedness to God—completely surrendered to HIM! This where A Man’s Starting Place begins!

Part 3

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

— Genesis 2:21-23

The fundamental centerpiece of all life ultimately is relationships—relationship with God and relationship with people. One of the many reasons that God created woman was to show Adam that life was not going to be all about him. The first man and woman were created for relationship—and so are we.

We are living in unprecedented times in terms of this subject. Since the advent of the Internet, the concept and methods of interacting with people have inaugurated more confusion and isolation than any other time in history. One only need look around to see that nothing more literally defines “identity theft” than the current state of affairs in our world today.

The foundation of an effective starting place for men lies in knowing and accepting the role that the Creator has created us for. *Let them have dominion...over the earth – Genesis 1:26.* This is not a command to dominate; it is a *commission of responsibility and accountability.* To walk confidently and faithfully in the task set before us, and in humility knowing that it is not ours alone to accomplish. We rely on the Lord and we need others.

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. When we look at the book of Genesis, we are reminded of God’s intention for humanity from the beginning, that the Creator of the universe loves and has purpose for His creation. Our response is in learning how to relate to creation, how to relate to the Creator and how to relate to ourselves in relationship to the Creator as creatures and in partnership with Him. That’s the point of being the children of the most High—people growing in His ways.

In what areas do you feel that you have grown since you began your walk with Him?
(Name 3)

What is the area (areas) that you would say no matter how hard I try I just can't seem to move forward?

Have you felt defeated and like giving up as a result?

There is a song in which the author cries out to the Lord: "Oh conquering King, conquer my heart." Before we continue, take a few moments and ask the Lord to do that. Say, "Lord, conquer that area (areas) that I have been unable or unwilling to surrender to You." HE WILL DO IT!

2. *Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman...*

This passage of Scripture is one of the most loving and tender expressions of relationship in the Bible and demonstrates the intentionality and value that God places on relationships. However, it has more often been interpreted throughout history as a justification for domination and ridicule.

Ask yourself, how have you interpreted this passage of Scripture in terms of your relationship with your spouse (if appropriate) and women in general?

Have you regarded this act of God as an expression of deep and beautiful intimacy or as a source of entitlement? Why?

Does the role of “man” make you feel superior to woman? If so, how has this mindset affected your behavior and/or marriage?

Knowing it is unbiblical, how can you change this mindset?

Much of this mindset is inherited. However, we are new creatures in Christ and are no longer defined and in bondage to the past. It can change as long as our priority is to do the will of the Lord and love in the manner that He loves.

3. If we can grasp how, from the beginning, God intended men and women to relate, our approach to life would be vastly different; because nothing will throw us off course more than a distorted perception of women, our treatment of them and our expectations of them.

What is your general perception of women?

Do you view them as partners or as subservient creatures?

How has your treatment of women reflected your perception of them?

If you have experienced failure in a relationship, where has the blame fallen? And is it because someone failed to fulfill your expectations?

Nothing is more destructive to relationships than self-centered expectations of people, especially the ones closest to you. In varying degrees, we have all failed in this regard.

4. The issue is not how God made woman. The issue is that something from the man had to be given. God in His sovereignty knew that in creating man first then woman, He was demonstrating to Adam that there needed to be more than just Him.

The “give and take” dynamic in the context of a marital relationship is very subjective, although it should not be. It’s not about the amount of “stuff” that one does; it’s about the attitude of serving that both have. *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her... - Ephesians 5:25.*

*Would you consider yourself someone who serves? In what ways?
(If you are married, specifically refer to your wife and list the ways in which you serve her on a daily, weekly, monthly basis.)*

Do you have to be asked? If so, why?

Is it unconditional or do you expect something in return?

The call of God to men to take authority is not a license to “boss” but an authority to govern in a way that serves.

5. The institution of marriage is not the joining together of two incomplete people now becoming complete, or one capable person marrying an incapable one. They are two separate, capable, complete entities joining together in the bonds of marriage, forming a third entity. *The two shall become one flesh. – Mark 10:8*

In your dealings with women (your wife, if appropriate), do you consider and treat her as less capable than you, other than where it pertains to physical strength? Why?

When the need to make decisions arises, do you consider her a partner or one who only follows your lead? Is she considered before you make a decision, or is her opinion an after-thought? Why?

Where in your relationship have you allowed a double standard to exist? Where your demands of her are unequal to hers of you?

God's intention for husbands and wives as mutual partners in life does not negate or eliminate the role of "protectors" that men are given. This is a primary part of our responsibility. However, it is not limited to keeping them solely from "harm's way" physically. It also includes caring for their person, body, mind and emotions.

6. *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church...* – *Ephesians 5:25*. This is not some sort of unattainable, hyper-spiritual concept. The question we ask is, How did He love the church? The answer is, He gave Himself. *We love Him because He first loved us*. It's about looking out for my wife's well-being and for what will enable her to do and be her best. When a man takes this seriously, his wife feels valued and loved by the most important person in her life, which brings out her desire to do the same and more for her husband.

In what areas do you put her first and seek her well-being and best interest?

In what ways have you pursued your own self-serving interests rather than a life-begetting relationship with your spouse?

In what areas (i.e., job, housework, cooking, sex) do you or have you made your wife feel obligated to "perform" in your relationship?

7. In what ways can you grow in your attitude and perspective of your wife and marriage?

Make a list

God intended true partnership between Adam and Eve's decedents (that's you and me). When we as men understand the difference between what it means to motivate rather than dictate, to govern rather than boss, we will experience a relationship of mutual love, respect, value and partnership beyond anything we could ever imagine.

Our wives are on loan to us from God. And we are called to facilitate their becoming everything that HE created them to be, not what we expect them to be.

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."
– Ephesians 5:25*

Whether you have never been married or are divorced, this is also for you! Most of us wish we had known these truths before we were married. If you are yet to be married and you get hold of this, you now have a great advantage. For those who have suffered through the tragedy of divorce, THERE IS HOPE! You are not defined by your failure but by the Spirit of God that lives in you, and the new thing that God is doing in you.

Appendix

Related Resources

The following resources may be ordered from the Store at JackHayford.org or by calling (800) 776-8180. Outside the U.S. please call (818) 785-8503.

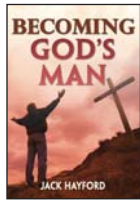


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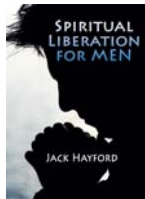
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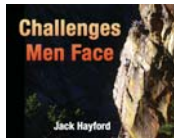
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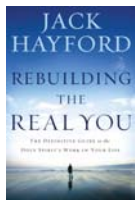
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