



GM6: Got My Six!

A Kindle Short and PDF Read including The GM6 Launch Guide *plus* Bonus Material-The Rants!

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September 2013

Dedication

Special thanks to:

Dr. Terry Samplaski, Don Munton, Eric Reed, and Pastor Gregg Matte.

Mom and Dad who passed the blessing on to me. You taught me what hard work means.

My 300! Allen O'Neal, Ken Tekell, and Mark Miranda. I know you have my back. Thanks for years of friendship and accountability.

Kevin Bowser and Leadershipvoices-Thank you for allowing me to partner with you in this amazing endeavor.

The IHOP Breakfast Crew! Thanks to all the men who molded me over the years. The coffee is still bad.

My wife Eleanor who loves me unconditionally. Thanks for jumping on the coaster with me.

My two boys, David and Jack. I love being your Dad! Team Rivera! Heck Yeah!

Lastly, to the ultimate male, Jesus Christ. Thank you for saving me.



Egos and Evaluations

You never know when the routine will become dangerous. But as a Police Officer, you have to always be prepared and have the mind-set that everyone wants to kill you.

One Saturday morning, my partner and I were responding to a call. I was being evaluated as a Police Officer. The goal to join the Houston Police Department, the fifth largest police department in the country at the age of 42. Several officers considered me their "most seasoned rookie." On this particular night, I was the passenger in the patrol car. My partner was evaluating me but he decided to drive because he hadn't driven in awhile. I thought maybe I was driving too much like a civilian for him but I would later learn that God's timing was divine. We were waiting on the light at the Beechnut/Dairy Ashford intersection when we observed a car heading South on Dairy Ashford at a high-rate of speed run the red light and almost t-bone another car that had the green.

My partner hit the strobes and siren, u-turned, and pursued the car. I double-checked my seatbelt as I called out what we on-viewed. Soon we were behind the vehicle and telling dispatch where we were headed. We were not able to read the paper plates but we could see the car was occupied by one person. The driver

refused to stop...recklessly blowing through red lights and stop signs. The car continued dangerously into the tight residential areas. We called out our location at every intersection and gut-wrenching turn.

My Evaluator, an eight-year veteran of HPD, fought to control our car on the tight turns and high speeds on the small streets that were narrower with cars parked on both sides. Fortunately, at two in the morning, there was no traffic and no pedestrians as we entered the residential areas. If there had been, we would have called off the chase. No need to take a chance on hurting someone. No need to put ourselves at risk.

The vehicle turned north into a cul-de-sac. The car stopped. Got him. Tactically, we had him trapped. A quick glance between the two of us and I un-clicked my seatbelt. It zipped off across my chest

"Rivera, get out of the car. He's gonna bolt."

I opened my door and the vehicle did the unexpected. It turned to face us and accelerated towards our car as I was stepping out of the vehicle. My right hand went to my sidearm. His vehicle smashed into my open door. The force of the collision forced my door closed and into the right side of my body. With no seatbelt securing me, my body was thrown against the center console. My right hand, arm, and holstered hip took the brunt of the blow.

"He hit our car. He hit our car." My partner calmly reported over the radio to Dispatch.

I cursed as pain ran up and down my arm. My legs! I looked down. At the last moment, I had pulled my right leg back into the car. A second later, my short career would have ended in that cul-de-sac. My foot would have been crushed or severed by the car door and that would have been 'all she wrote.' Or worse. I could have been further out the door. Game over.

My partner whipped the car around and the chase continued. Now I could hear wind whistling from my damaged door. My partner heard it too.

"Your door is closed? Right, Rivera?"

Through the whistling in my ears, I responded, "Yup. But it's screwed up. No hard lefts, please." Somehow we both laughed at that moment. I began tugging on my seatbelt. But it was jammed between the crushed door. So I just held on. I briefly thought about the department policy of always wearing your seatbelt. Oh well. If the door didn't hold I would be thrown from the vehicle. Then my partner took a hard left and I felt my body lean on the door. Metal began to groan. Tuck and roll was all I thought. Screeching tires caught the pavement and we righted ourselves on the street. The door held and I exhaled.

Our car was no longer humming as we followed the fleeing car. The pursuit had changed. We now knew we were chasing someone who intentionally used his car in an attempt to harm us. Me in particular. I was pissed. And everyone who heard our simple chase over the radio knew the game had changed. Someone had used a deadly weapon to harm a brother in the line of duty. It raised the stakes to another level. My partner and I were determined to stop this pursuit and catch him. I could only imagine other officers listening and wondering where the hell we were. All driving, listening, and searching to assist us.

We continued to call out our location. Dispatch repeated our location. We were making so many turns it was easy to get dizzy. I blinked hard to clear my head and broaden my vision. Tunnel vision was creeping in these tense moments and with so many intersections and traffic it was deadly. Then everything slowed down. My partners' movements became fluid. I turned and saw a bicyclist riding on the sidewalk and I clearly saw the spokes of his tires turning. As we approached a major intersection I saw the flicker of a cigarette lighter of a patron sitting at a bus stop.

We approached a red light. "Clear?" My partner asked as he slowed our Crown Victoria. I looked right. Things sped up. Cars in the intersection came to abrupt stops allowing us to cross the intersection. "Clear! Clear! We're clear, Man. Go!" I yelled. Our patrol car protested as my partner lowered the gas pedal. The Crown Vic shot us through the intersection.

The fleeing car began coughing white smoke as it continued North onto Dairy Ashford. We followed. Then I realized we were almost back to Beechnut. The start of the chase. In the distance we could see the overheads of other police officers heading our way. Suddenly, the smoking car veered right over the curb and into a patch of trees. It, then, flew over an unoccupied pedestrian sidewalk. I waited for the car hit a tree but miraculously it darted through the obstacles and swerved back in front of us onto the road.

Then its red taillights filled our windshield. The back of the car rose up and the smell of burning rubber filled my nostrils. The car had stopped. So did we. I kicked my damaged door open and it groaned as the damaged metal fought against me. Gun drawn, I was on my feet behind my car door.

In front of us, the driver threw open his door and stepped out facing our car. Blinded by our lights, he threw his hands up. He dove to the ground prone before we could bark orders at him.

Cautiously my partner approached him and handcuffed him as I covered the vehicle always keeping an eye on him. It was not unusual to have a suspect go to the ground. It was just procedurally unsafe to approach him so close to his unsecure vehicle. The Houston Police Department has techniques and procedures to ensure officer and civilian safety. At the moment we were making due with what we had. Like I said, I kept an eye on the smoking car and my partner. There could be someone hiding in the passenger seat or backseat. It was at this point; I realized I couldn't feel my hand holding my gun.

Quickly, we moved the driver from the street, searched him, and placed him in our car. Everything else transpired without incident. Other officers arrived within seconds and secured the smoking, wrecked car. The car was empty and music was blaring a song about hating the police and getting some just rewards for killing them. A female officer walked up to the car and turned off the stereo, "Let's turn that [crap] off."

She turned and gave me a fist bump, and a congratulatory "Welcome to Night shift, Rookie." That was my reward. Well...except for the pending paperwork.

I looked in the back of my vehicle and saw the young man who tried to take my life. He stared blankly at me.

A fellow friendly Police officer walked up to me.

"You okay, Rivera?" I nodded an affirmative as pain shot through my hip and hand.

"Uh...I think you passed week one of Evaluations."

We both laughed.

"Yeah, I think so, too."

Evaluations. Who would have thought I would be evaluating to become an HPD Police Officer?

Two years earlier I was volunteering at Houston's First Baptist Church as an Assistant to the Men's Ministry under the direction of Eric Reed. I still had my day job at the Hewlett-Packard Company as a Global Sales Representative. Houston's First Baptist is a relevant Biblical community and I was emboldened by the passion displayed by the Men's Ministry and its vision to transform men into leaders at home, work, and church through prayer, Biblical application, and peer-to-peer accountability.

I knew God wanted me there. After prayerful consideration, I decided to leave a highly successful corporate career and join the staff at First. The leadership had created a position for me. After looking at the salary, it's no wonder preachers live by faith and believe in miracles. I was going to martyr myself on the altar of ministry to assist the church in building a foundation for Men's Small Groups. Classic testimony, eh?

Corporate executive gives up six-figure income, unlimited expense account, company car, home-office, global travel to sacrifice it ALL on the altar for the sake of ministry.

Proudly, I was going to bestow the Men's Ministry with my corporate wisdom, experience, and knowledge to turn this baby around and reach men for the kingdom. Blah blah blah...or so I thought.

In a whirlwind of events, a bruised ego, and with the full support of the Men's Ministry, Senior Leadership, and my beautiful spouse and family, God changed my direction. I found myself applying and being accepted to the Houston Police Academy at the age of 42. I was going to be a Cop. What just happened? My accountability group prayed for me. Pastor Gregg Matte visited with me and prayed over me. No one doubted that God was going to use my Warrior spirit to benefit His kingdom but (man) what had just happened? My ministry and passion for men to live transformed lives for Jesus hadn't changed ...just my geography. Now I was in the trenches.

Soon after my first rookie year as a Police Officer, my good friend Kevin asked me to join him in a bold endeavor called Leadershipvoices.com. Interestingly enough, Kevin was the first person outside my family to pull me aside and tell me to go into the ministry. *At the time, he told me what I needed to hear not what I wanted to hear.* Kevin would not have been able to do this without me allowing him to enter my life and hold me accountable as a man and Christian. Kevin had earned that role in my life. He had no idea that God would make me a Peace Officer to patrol the gang-infested Alief area of Houston known as Westside. But he knew I needed to follow God's prompting and leave corporate America. So now, Kevin asked that I bring my testimony, passion, and methodology to his experiment. Confidently, I joined and added my two-cents to the blog.

Currently, I blog on Manday Mondays. The following is a collection of posts published on Leadershipvoices.com concerning Accountability. I also added a few Rants at the end of this Kindle Short Read and pdf. I am an avid member of Houston's First Baptist Church and in still in leadership. Professionally, I patrol the streets of Houston as an Officer with the Houston Police Department.



Like-Minded vs. Life Minded

As humans, we have a tendency to gravitate toward like-minded individuals and passions. Our society dictates this model through political correctness, polling, media, rugged individualism, and Climate Change. (Okay...not so much Climate Change but you catch my drift.) The danger is we subscribe to it like sheep in relationships and because we are like-minded we are easily deceived and we believe that everything is okay in our little like-minded world. So we scratch our heads wondering when the wheels fell off the wagon. But why do we subscribe to it? Why do we dismiss a need for true meaningful accountability?

The first reason-It is comfortable.

As you meet with friends, you will find that you look the same. You have the same likes, desires, and dislikes. You worship the same. You agree on the same political platforms. You may even like the same football teams. You may even hate the same football teams. You may even subscribe to society's idea of success-The big house in the gated community, 3.2 kids, the latest cell phone, newest car, and financial portfolio. While there is nothing wrong with these things. The danger is when men view their affluence as a form of holiness. So we look at the cover of the book and judge everything is cool.

After all, you and your buddy didn't vote for that guy. Things will turn out. We will just keep listening to talk radio and complain all the time. Yes. It's a shame his wife resents him for not being employed and hanging out with you. But things will work out when the economy turns. There is comfort in being like-minded.

The second reason-It is easy.

Like-mindedness can be void of challenge. The conversations are easy and shallow. They are just on the surface. The prayer requests are simple. The dirt really never hits the fan and when topics get heavy you can reel in that hook before you get too deep and get a bite. Lord forbid you actually talk about anything with real substance. You wouldn't want to challenge your buddy's weekly golf appointment because he appears to have it all while his family crumbles.

After all, your buddy is like you. Self-made man and any issues that arise, you can handle. You don't need this accountability stuff. You show up to church on Sundays and give. Your kids are fine and you definitely don't want to challenge your wife's secret daily Starbucks habit as long as you keep your habits a secret. At least that's what the new cute secretary tells you. You have a good job. God must be blessing you.

So we bumble through life thinking everything is okay and we maintain shallow relationships. It is dangerous.

As I continue to strive and seek accountability in my relationships, I have noticed a need for discomfort and difficulty when engaging certain groups. Tension is good. I need to be told what I need to hear not what I want to hear. **I don't need relationships where men will justify my mistakes, rationalize my failures, and encourage my proclivities.** I need men in my life committed to life transformation through Christ who will tell me unapologetically that I am not the man God wants me to be. I need friends who will call me out and cry "bull" and tell me to shape-up, clean-up, and Man-Up.

In my accountability relationships, I have the license to ask the tough questions to seek answers to the dark off-limits of manhood. And I allow those tough questions to be posed towards me. **Because, ultimately the goal is not just be a good man today...but to be a great man everyday for years to come.** It is long process. It is a life long process.

In a recent group discussion, I challenged over thirty like-minded men that their lives depend on life-minded accountability. Let me repeat that. **Your life depends on accountability.** (I'm not a gambling man...but I bet there were 30 different reactions to that statement.) If you continue to maintain surface like-minded relationships you will survive but you won't live. You will fake it at work, at church, at home and you will achieve an emptiness that our society calls success.

Conversely, if you seek life-minded relationships, you strike at the core issues of life and you will begin to live. My challenge to you. Every man needs accountability. Your life depends on it. Seek men who are life-minded and committed to life-transformation through Christ.

Today.



Accountability: Who Needs It?

Every man needs accountability. Not the “Gotcha! Now I’m gonna beat you up!” variety that we so fondly remember. This variety leads to legalism and checklist spirituality. Eric Reed, Minister to Men at Houston’s First Baptist Church stated it best, “Men need an accountability that is voluntarily entered into and focused on unleashing each man into the vision that God is calling him.”

The result is not being beat down, but being built up. The Bible calls this edification.

This accountability can be elusive. Many men find accountability so frustrating because we have a tendency to cling to those individuals who flatter and rationalize our actions. **They tell us what we want to hear not what we need to hear.**

Conversely, we find the accountability that is mired in gossip and guilt. Lack of confidentiality within this circle of accountability turns to regret and distrust.

Because of this rationalization and regret, men live unchallenged lives because we fail to have the intestinal fortitude to welcome someone into our lives and hold us accountable. So we fumble through life with a false sense of morality and warped manhood when in reality we are lying to ourselves and impotent.

Unfortunately, we live in a very passive aggressive society that would rather turn a blind eye to the wrongs of society and allow things to play out instead of getting involved. We cowardly avoid life-on-life connection and harvest shallow relationships. **Biblically, historically, and traditionally, men have gotten into trouble, deadly trouble, when they find themselves alone.** The result. Failed marriages. Secret addictions from the internet. Licking lips at the desires and lusts that walk by. Weak manhood. Wrecked women. Fatherless children. Aborted souls. Regret. Unforgiveness.

I have been accountable to a group of three men for over 12 years. I call them my 300. These men have my back and I have theirs. I would take a bullet for these men. They have walked with me. Talked with me. Prayed with me. Rejoiced with me. Lifted me. Stood by me. And even slapped me silly through the years. Because of them, I am a better man than I was 12 years ago. And as part of this group, I have joyously returned the favor.

So who am I accountable to? God. Your Creator. First and foremost, you are accountable to the ultimate power in the universe. The Creator of the universe.

Second, if you are married, you **are accountable to your spouse.** If you are single, you are accountable to your future spouse.

Third, you are accountable to a group of men. A group of men who come together to pursue life transformation through prayer, Bible study, accountability, and transparent connection. Don't have a group.

Find one.

In the pages to come, we will break down this accountability 'thing' further.



Accountability: Two Men on a Roof

Don Munton is the Singles Minister at Houston's First Baptist Church. He is a mentor-pastor-friend of mine. Don shares an amazing story with the young single men under his leadership about accountability. He would always preface the story by telling them that a man alone is a man in the danger zone. (Insert images of Maverick and Goose slicing through the skies in an F14.)

Don would tell the story of two men on a roof from two opposite sides of the Bible. In 2 Samuel, we are told the first man was a king. He should have been taking care of kingly duties, like waging a war from the front lines, but instead he was on his roof overlooking his kingdom. Lo and behold, he spots a beautiful woman bathing on her rooftop and he can't control himself. (In today's terms, he was browsing the web and stumbled onto a site he could not resist.) He orders the woman to his bed and takes her. (He takes an ad out on Craig's List and she responds.) **Because of this man's lack of accountability and pride, a husband is murdered, a child dies, a scandal ensues, and a kingdom is almost forfeit.**

Fast forward to Mark Chapter 2, we see a paralyzed man being carried by four men to Jesus to be healed. Unfortunately, the crowds around Jesus don't allow the men to get to the front door. So they carry their paralyzed friend to the roof of the house and begin tearing open the roof to lower their friend to Jesus. (Imagine being in the house and bits and pieces of the ceiling begin falling on you and then a man is lowered on a cot down towards your honored guest. You look up and think-Someone is paying for that.) Jesus heals the man. Now that man could not have gotten to Jesus without the help of his four friends. He could not have gotten on the roof without their aid.

Now look at the two men. One man was alone...a king...an island onto himself...somewhere he should not have been. And he failed. A momentary lapse in judgment. Where was his support group? Where were the men that would tell him that he needed to be at war and not at home alone on a rooftop?

The paralyzed man is helpless. He was not alone. No delusions of self-sufficiency. The man couldn't care for himself without the help of others. He gets healed. But let's look at the faith of his friends. The four men had to carry their buddy through the crowd. They probably had to carry him several blocks out of the way to get to Jesus, climb to a roof, traverse several rooftops, and then tear away a roof knowing Jesus would heal their friend. At any point, the crippled man may have said: "Stop! It's too much trouble. I'm fine." I have carried a grown man on a cot over three miles. It is not an easy task. But the men persevered; they may have even encouraged each other. What an amazing story of friendship and accountability.

Now I don't have to tell you all the ways men can get into trouble today. We have enough talking heads telling us how bad we men are. So I won't laundry list you into submission and guilt. You know the list and the proclivities we as men are inclined towards. So that is why it is so important to have life-minded men in your life to keep you accountable and tell you what you need to hear when you stray and encourage you when you stay true.

Do you have any friend who would carry you toward the Savior when you need Him the most?

Do you have a group of men who struggle and endure with you in your good and bad times?

Or would they allow you to be alone and handle it on your own? Could you be a friend like that to someone?

Find those men. Your life depends on it.



I've Got Your Back, Bro!

I have had the amazing opportunity to hang out with Operators. Operators. Navy Seals. Rangers. Those amazing men who have gone to sandy places, slept in foxholes, and returned to tell amazing stories of battle. Every chance they get they share stories of camaraderie and close calls.

In those stories, I would hear a recurring theme. Trust. How each operator had each other's back. They were constantly checking each others "six". SIX-An old aviation term to look behind you ("your 6 o'clock" referring to the relative location of a threat with 12 o'clock being directly in front of you).

In my current profession, I have to constantly keep looking over my shoulder. Fortunately, when I'm in the field, I have a partner that helps me and has my six. And in return, I cover my partner.

In our daily lives, as we bumble through life, it is good to surround yourself with trustworthy men that will have your back. Men you can trust to guard you from the many pitfalls of life and help you get to your next objective.

As you strive to be a leader to your spouse, family, friends, and co-workers yield yourself to the cover of others and in return cover their six.

In the pages to come, I want to propose/share a new way of retooling men's small groups with you. Not a curriculum, not a program, but a methodology. (GREAT! A new men's small group technique. HOLD ON, Mr. Skeptical.) A methodology to achieve life transformation...to be a better man/leader than you were yesterday.

Don't worry. It may hurt a little. But the rewards are awesome. And I got your back, Bro!



GM6: A New Methodology

I mentioned the importance of having someone's back when it came to accountability. I wanted to propose a new methodology when thinking of men's small groups of accountability.

What if a group of three to six men were committed to come together regularly to pursue life transformation through prayer, Bible Study, transparent connection, and life-minded accountability? Could lives be changed? How about current and future marriages? Could family trees be forever changed? Could Fathers become Daddies? Could leaders be transformed?

Duh, yes.

What if we called this methodology something like **GM6**? GM6 equals Got My Six. But who cares about the name. We just didn't want to call it Men's Macramé Class. We could call it **Fight Club** for all I care. (In reality, you are fighting for your lives and families.)

So let's complicate this thing for the sake of conversation and because we are men. GM6 could be applied to whatever curriculum, content, or life-event chosen. It is specific in that all its parts must be present to be

GM6 but not all present at the same time. It is a process to achieve life transformation...to be a better person in Christ than you were six days ago.

So the essential elements of GM6 would be the following-

1. **Prayer:** Prayer is the air we breathe as men who follow Christ. It is vital for true transformation to happen.
2. **Study:** The word of God is one of His chosen tools to chisel and form our character into His likeness.
3. **Life-minded Accountability:** Every man needs accountability...not the "Gotcha! Now I'm gonna beat you up!" variety that leads to legalism and a checklist spirituality, but an accountability that is voluntarily entered into and focused on unleashing each man into the vision that God is calling him to. The result is not being beat down, but being built up. The Bible calls this edification.
4. **Life-on-Life Connection:** There is great danger in doing life alone. GM6 thrive in allowing men to cultivate deeper relationships through sports, camp outs, road trips, mission projects, or just hanging out. Each group should look for avenues outside of "group" time to connect and live.

Of course to make a GM6 work...there have to be rules. (The NFL can make silly rules...so why not our little project, eh?) I'm not wearing pink.

Non-Negotiable GM6 guidelines...

1. **Commitment:** For life transformation to occur and the relationships to deepen, the men of the GM6 must be honored and valued regularly. Through committing to be present and fully engaged in your GM6, you actively prioritize the men involved and establish the context for growth to occur.
2. **Confidentiality:** For authenticity and transparency to grow, men must be able to trust that the issues and topics discussed within the GM6 will not be shared outside of the group. Simply stated, what is said in a GM6 should stay in the GM6 with the exception of personal safety.
3. **Transparency:** The atmosphere of a GM6 is to be authentic and real. Each man must seek to be open and honest about his journey. Knowing that some men struggle in this area, each group should expect for the men to grow more comfortable with transparency as they spend more time together. This progressive transparency is a healthy process that should naturally occur. Without transparency, your GM6 will never achieve a transforming impact on your life that it could.

I made this commitment years ago. But the more important commitment I made was to follow Jesus Christ at a very young age. He has been the transforming change in my life. Jesus is the spine in my life. He is the central nervous system to my manhood. The methodology I just shared with you is the rib cage. The center of it all is Jesus.

Now wait a minute...why all the preaching? Well, ultimately I follow the Creator of the Universe. Jesus will ultimately lead me and you as King. There are no primaries. We have no say. He is the MAN. As a man, He was the perfect example to you and me to emulate. Life transformation cannot occur unless you know this leader intimately.

My prayer as a leader is that my words and life will ultimately lead you to the Jesus I know on a first name basis. And I can assure you the Creator of the Universe knows me on a first name basis. Can you say the same?

Bonus Material: The Rants



RANT: This Rant is Offensive

I am intrigued at how easily we can get offended these days.

Have you noticed the care you have to take when choosing your words? I am not referring to the subject of Political Correctness. I just talking about being offended.

Ann Coulter stated- "*He who is offended **first** wins.*"

And she is right. It seems someone or somebody can be offended by any little thing. And because they are offended...they win. They are justified. Their position, cause, lifestyle is justified. They have been wronged and need to be compensated in the court of public opinion. And the offender is labeled intolerant or worse, a HATER.

Ricky Gervais, a professed Atheist and equal opportunity offender, lashed out- "Just because you're offended, doesn't mean you're right!" His blatant honesty rings true. Are we so sensitive that we can't take criticism or

"blunt force trauma" honesty? Do we mean to be so annoyed and then personally put off by every little thing?

The newest wave of being offended is being offended for someone else. This one really chaps my hide.(I guess you could say it offends me.)

"I am offended for them."

"You know what? I didn't appreciate what so-and-so said about so-and-so. I am so offended." **What? Are you serious?**

You mean to tell me you are offended for that person, cause, institution, or right even though you are **NOT** that person, joined that cause, visited that institution, or denied that right? Really? First of all, it is not your place to be offended for them. Also it is not your burden to be offended for them. They may be a bigger person than you and may not be offended by the words or stereotypes portrayed upon them.

I remember Steve Martin screaming "Well excuusssse me." My challenge to you as leaders...Lighten up.

If some of you are wondering...I DO feel better now.



RANT: The Weiner Warning

Anthony Weiner. His name says it all. Let me be very clear. Anthony is not a man. And he is a poor excuse for a leader. How he got elected much less married puzzles me? But men (and women) can be deceptive and present themselves better than they really are.

Anthony Weiner is a brat. He is a digital flasher. If the internet didn't exist, he would be wearing a raincoat in a public place opening it up to any unsuspecting victim. He is a decadent pervert. This poor excuse of a man is so intoxicated with himself and so proud of his genitals he must present them in digital format to women who are not his wife. *Was that too harsh?* Well maybe we as men and leaders need to call deviant behavior what it is: shameful, decadent, and dangerous.

We use soft words to describe pretty sordid behavior because it's socially acceptable and palatable on the tongue. We call what he did sexting. And it is socially acceptable.

For example, if I say someone was robbed at gunpoint. You would think-"Wow! That is horrible." You might get mad.

But if I said a woman was robbed with a gun pointed to her head and someone yelling-"Give me your cell phone or I will kill you in front of your kids." Would that get your attention?

If I were to tell you that woman was so frightened that her cell phone fell to the ground because her hands were shaking so much. Then she felt a dull thud to her temple and the taste of blood in her mouth because the robber pistol whipped her. Would you be angered?

Then the woman/victim felt her knees give and then a sharp pain to her shoulder because she hit the hard pavement. Then as her blurred vision cleared, the victim sees and feels the robber standing over her. She grabs a glimpse of her scared children. And if I were to say the robber then placed the gun to the bloody temple of the victim and nonchalantly pulled the trigger. Would you text "SMH"?

But all the victim hears is the click of an empty chamber instead of the explosion of bullet piercing bone and brain tissue. The victim realizes she is still alive over the evil laughter of the robber and the screams of her children. Would you be mad?

The victim begins to sob deep heaving sobs as the robber leaves with her purse. Then the woman feels sticky blood on her cheek and warm urine running down her thighs as her children scream and cry for her, their injured mother. Then she realizes she may have defecated herself.

If I shared that with you...Robbery is more sinister.

So when you hear about a married man sexting, do you just shake your head? Or do we just accept it as the norm?

If I were to say a married man takes a cell phone camera out of his pocket before he drops his pants and examines himself proudly in a mirror. Then the married man realizes he is too soft. Then once he has aroused himself to attention...takes a photo of himself. Would you get mad or disgusted? If I were to say, the married man downloads the photo to his twitter account and then sends it to a woman who is not his wife. And then waits expectantly for her to be aroused and send a naked photo of herself to keep his "spirits" up. How would you view this man? Could you shake this man's hand? Would you present your wife or girlfriend to this man? How about your children? Could you elect this man as a leader? What if the man in the mirror is you?

I would like to take credit for this train of thought. But Steve Farrar in his book *Point Man* takes a moment to call deviant behavior what it is. Deviant. Farrar pulls no punches when he describes what adultery really is. Intentional and Destructive.

I think we need more of this. So I didn't pull punches either when I described aggravated robbery or sexting. I will spare you the description of what an addiction to @nline P@rn@graphy entails. Men, if you knew how

many of your male co-workers were addicted to internet p@rn, you would not shake their hands. Women, if you knew...I would advise you to run. I think you get the point.

So what am I saying? As leaders we need to share truth and not accept shameful behavior in ourselves and others. We need to honor our marriages and, if single, our future marriage. As men in leadership in households, work, and play, we need not waste our energy on the opposite sex. As a Nation, we have seen the downfall of prominent leaders in our recent past. We must not assume or accept this as normal. We can do better with our elected officials. **As flawed citizens, we are not asking for perfect people. But we need the intestinal fortitude to disqualify individuals whose morale fiber is shriveled and scarred beyond repair and shame.** What Anthony Weiner has done, and probably still doing, is shameful. Don't pity him or his enabling spouse. What he did was intentional, selfish, and childish. He is a fool.

Anthony Weiner is a warning to us as leaders. And men.

About the Author



René Rivera jokes about having a “girl’s” name and being called to challenge men to Biblical Manhood and Leadership.

Self-described as a “man(no apologies), husband, father, jerk(apologies), infidel, strongman in a storm, peace officer, and best friend that happens to be saved by God's amazing grace.”

René resides in Houston, Texas with his beautiful wife, two boys and three dogs.

APPENDIX: The GM6 Launch Guide

NOTE: GM6 was created by the amazing Men's Ministry at [Houston's First Baptist Church-Band of Brothers](#). I assisted Eric Reed, the Men's Minister of HFBC in authoring, compiling, naming, and promoting this amazing curriculum. All rights reserved by the Men's Ministry of Houston's First Baptist Church.

I have included the GM6 Launch Guide in this Kindle Short Read and PDF.

The GM6 Launch Guide



*Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.
But you will not leave in haste. Go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.*

Isaiah 52:11-12

BAND OF
BROTHERS

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17

GM6: GOT MY SIX!

GM6 (a name taken from the military phrase “Got My 6” meaning “watch my back”) is a group of 2-6 men who intentionally come together regularly to pursue life transformation through prayer, Bible study, vision-centric accountability, and transparent connection in both social and service settings with one another. GM6 is not a curriculum; rather it is a way of relating to other men that is biblical, balanced, and beneficial.

For a GM6 to be most effective-there are some minimum ground rules and commitments that must be made and honored. Should you decide to be part of this GM6, we are asking you to make the following commitments:

- 1) To honor one another through maintaining the “Nonnegotiables of GM6”:
 - a. **Progressive Transparency**: The atmosphere of a GM6 is to be authentic and real. Each man must seek to be open and honest about his journey. Knowing that some men struggle in this area, each group should expect for the men to grow more comfortable with transparency as they spend more time together. This progressive transparency is a healthy process that should naturally occur. Without transparency, your GM6 will never achieve the transformational impact upon your life that it could.
 - b. **Confidentiality**: For authenticity and transparency to grow, men must be able to trust that the issues and topics discussed within the GM6 will not be shared outside of the group. Simply stated, what is said in a GM6 should stay in the GM6 with the exception of personal safety issues or the safety of others.
 - c. **Commitment**: For life transformation to occur and the relationships to deepen, the men of the GM6 must be honored and valued regularly. Through committing to be present and fully engaged in your GM6, you actively prioritize the men involved and establish the context for growth to occur.
- 2) To honor one another and God through intentionally investing in the “Essential Elements of GM6”:
 - a. **Prayer**: Prayer is the air we breathe as men who follow Christ. It is vital for true transformation to happen.
 - b. **Study**: The word of God is one of His chosen tools to chisel and form our character into His likeness.
 - c. **Vision-Centric Accountability**: Every man needs accountability...not the guilt-driven variety that leads to legalism and checklist spirituality, but an accountability that is voluntarily entered into and focused on unleashing each man into the vision that God is calling him. The result is not being beat down, but being built up. The Bible calls this edification.
 - d. **Life-on-Life Connection**: There is great danger in doing life alone. GM6s thrive in allowing men to cultivate deeper relationships through sports, camp outs, road trips, mission projects, or just hanging out. Each group should look for avenues outside of “group” time to connect and have some fun.

“A man alone is a man in the danger zone.”

THE GM6 COVENANT

Agreeing that life is a battlefield of eternal significance and that God never intended men to live life alone, we the undersigned vow to commit ourselves to Christ, His Kingdom, and each other as outlined above.

1. We will meet together on _____ (day of week).
2. Our commitment to our GM6 will last from _____ (begin date) to _____ (end date).
3. Our meetings will begin promptly at _____ (begin time) and close no later than _____ (end time).
4. We agree to be faithful in attendance and actively engage with each other to pursue transformation in Christ with the exception of truly extenuating circumstances (e.g., health emergency, work travel, vacation, and/or hurricane).

Signature Box

May Christ alone receive the glory from all that is done in and through our GM6.

We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Colossians 1:28-29 NASB

GM6 FOUNDATION WEEKS

"Only the man who follows the command of Jesus single-mindedly and unresistingly lets his yoke rest upon him, finds his burden easy, and under its gentle pressure receives the power to persevere in the right way."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Your GM6 is formed. Time and place have been agreed upon. What now? It would be important to know who is in the same foxhole with you. It is vital to know who has your six.

One nonnegotiable of GM6 is transparency. Below are some suggestions that can help you achieve that goal in the beginning weeks of your GM6 meetings.

FOCUS on one GM6 Member per week. Prior to embarking on the Biblical weeks ahead, take one week per member to acquaint you and group members with each other. The benefit of this exercise is getting to know each other and yourself better. In the weeks to come, this foundational exercise will position for maximum, long-term impact.

EXPLORE with questions. Here are a few suggestions to get your GM6 started.

- What is your greatest childhood memory?
- How would you describe your home growing up?
- How did you get in your current job? Are you doing what you are passionate about?
- Single or Married? Share any areas of past or current relationships that are significant to you today. For example-strengths, challenges, hurts, and victories of those relationships.
- How and when did you come to Christ? What relationships were significant in your faith journey?
- How would you rate your walk with Christ? Good, bad, fair...or a disaster waiting to happen?

REMEMBER the nonnegotiables of GM6:

- **Progressive Transparency**
 - No ridiculing, criticizing, or judging.
 - Matthew 7:1-2 In short: However I judge another, so I will be judged.
- **Confidentiality**
 - What is said at GM6...stays at GM6.
 - Whatever is shared within your GM6 is confidential.
- **Commitment**
 - James 5:12 Simply-Keep your word.
 - Timothy 3:16-17 We need to keep God's Word first in mind whenever we give advice, and refer to any time a question is raised.

INTERCEDE for that one GM6 Member.

GM6 WEEK 1 THE GOSPEL: What is Real?

"Nothing was ever more demanding for our holy God. Creation—the forming of the universe, the earth, and the laws that govern them—was easy for God compared to what it cost him to save you and me."

Will Davis, Jr.

For the rest of this journey, GM6 is intended to strengthen and encourage fellow believers in Christ. As you start this journey...it's time to ask yourself the most important question of all: *Do you have a One-to-one relationship with Jesus?* Simply put...each of us needs a relationship with Jesus Christ that is tangible and real. Here are some scriptures and questions that can help us have that relationship.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

How much does God love you and me? What does it mean to have eternal life?

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*According to scripture, who has fallen short of the glory of God?
What is the penalty for our sins? Who can give us eternal life?*

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit...

Do you agree that salvation is made possible by Christ's death and resurrection?

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...

Romans 10:13 ...for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

The Bible says God loved the world and wishes no one to die without knowing his Son and having eternal life. Romans 10:13 states that everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. Have you made that calling right now? If so...pray the following prayer below:

Dear Jesus, I am a sinner. But, I believe that You died and rose from the grave so that I might have eternal life. Come into my heart, Jesus, take control of my life, forgive my sins, and save me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation, and I accept Your gift of eternal life. In Your name, Jesus. Amen.

If you've just prayed that prayer, welcome to the Family of God. You are saved. Let your GM6 know the decision you just made. In order to grow as a Christian you need to surround yourself with other believers. The purpose of GM6 is to strengthen your faith and help you grow as a disciple of Christ. Get involved in your church. Get plugged into a Sunday Bible Study. Take time to listen, to pray, to study Scripture, and ask God to lead you and mold you into the man of God he wants you to be.

GM6 WEEK 2 ACCOUNTABILITY: Who Needs It?

"The next best thing to being wise oneself is to live in a circle of those who are."

C.S. Lewis

Throughout the New Testament, Christ met with his disciples to teach them and to sharpen them to God's truth. Later, Paul encourages the church not to get bogged down by the world, but to keep meeting, and even more, to confess sin to one another.

In the days leading up to your GM6 meeting, read the passages below. You could read all in one a day, or all everyday - however you absorb Scripture best.

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 3:12-13 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Galatians 6:1-2 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

James 5:16, 19-20 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective . . . My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

During your GM6, discuss the passages provided. How do the scriptures apply to us today?

Consider the following questions to enhance the discussion.

- *Proverbs 15:22 states: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Is it prudent to have a "plan" for succeeding as a man following God? Why or why not?*
- *In the "counsel" of your group, what are ways you pursue the Lord that are best practices to encourage one another? What has worked for you and what has not? How can we be most purposeful seeking after Him every day?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 3 ACCOUNTABILITY: Keeping Your Commitment

"An unaccountable man is an accident waiting to happen."

Kevin Butcher

Jesus is our example of Biblical manhood. Jesus had his circle of influence. He had His GM6-Peter, James, and John. When His time had come, Jesus called on His three to pray with Him in the Garden. When it got explosive, Peter even took out his sword to defend him. Christ's example should spur us on. He revealed his true nature on the mountain. *Transparency.* Jesus asked the disciples keep his identity quiet until His time came. *Confidentiality.* And of course, He chose to endure the cross for us. *Commitment.*

Prior to your GM6, take some time to read the passages below.

Isaiah 52:12 But you will not leave in haste. Go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Ephesians 5:11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

1 John 1:3; 6-7 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

When your GM6 meets, discuss the scriptures and challenge each other with the following questions.

- *How do you feel knowing that God is faithful and has your 'six'?*
- *What are some best practices for encouraging each other in your GM6?*
- *How important is fellowship with a body of believers for your walk with Jesus?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 4 MONEY: Where's the Love?

*"I call this the great misunderstanding-the idea that we give because churches need our money."
Dave Ramsey*

Scripture is filled with teaching on money and how we are to treat it. In the coming weeks we will uncover different aspects of money. Your GM6 will unpack how we can honor the Lord most with what we He has given us.

Prior to your GM6, take some time to read the passages below.

Proverbs 30:8-9 ...Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

1 Timothy 6:3-10, 17-19 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grieves . . . Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

When your GM6 meets, unpack the passages and what you thought of them.

Consider the following questions to add to your discussion.

- *How do you even define the "love of money"? How do you keep yourself free from the love of money?*
- *Read Matthew 19:16-24. Can we be rich and still honor God?*
- *How do you ensure you don't fall into the traps Paul warns Timothy about?*
- *Do you ask God to give you poverty, or riches, or neither - as the psalmist prays? Why or why not?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 5 MONEY: Someone's Gotta Give

"Tithing isn't the ceiling of giving; it's the floor. It's not the finish line of giving; it's just the starting blocks. Tithes can be the training wheels to launch us into the mind-set, skills, and habits of grace giving."
Randy Alcorn

This week in our ongoing exploration of Scripture's insight on money, we discuss stewardship and giving.

Prior to your GM6 meeting, take some time to read the below passages. You could do one a day or all everyday - however you meditate on Scripture best. When you read these in your Bible, try to read before and after the passage, so as to grasp the author's meaning.

Proverbs 3:9, 10 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Proverbs 11:24, 25 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Malachi 3:8, 10 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me." But you ask, "How do we rob you?" "In tithes and offerings... Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. When your Team meets, talk about the passages and what you think about them. Below is another set of questions that may add to your discussion of stewardship and tithing.

- *How do we interpret the word "tithe" in our day and age?*
- *If Christ came to abolish the Law, do we still need to tithe as was stipulated in the Old Testament? Why or why not - and if not, why do we still talk about tithing?*
- *If we do "tithe" as it is written in Malachi, what might the "blessing" that is poured out be? Does God care to make us materially rich?*
- *Furthermore, if Christ came to rid us of the Old Law and in its place establish a new law to follow his example, as outlined in Matthew 7, what might His standard imply for our giving?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 6 MONEY: Worship Through It

"Our walk counts far more than our talk, always!"

George Mueller

Over the past couple of weeks, we have looked at some verses on money. The Biblical references have covered issues from idolization, stewardship, and tithing. Implicit in these discussions have been how to use money in a God-honoring way. Let's revisit that conversation as to how we worship God through finances.

Below are some additional verses and thoughts that you can meditate on prior to your GM6. When applicable, read scripture before and after the verses to gain their context and understand why they were written and to whom:

1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

- *What can we take from these verses about giving to the Church from our income, and saving in general?*
- *How does a verse like this make us think about debt?*

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

How do we ensure that we boast in the Lord and not in what we do and what we have?

If you showed your checkbook to your group today, would it be clear that you "boast in the Lord"?

How can we make that even more so?

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.

What does this brief verse tell us about debt versus savings?

Proverbs 22:7 The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

What does this verse say about the power of debt in our lives?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

- *What do you do to ensure you are seeking God's kingdom first with your money?*
- *How do you think God thinks about financial debt and the kingdom?*
- *Are loans okay? Why or why not?*
- *What have you been wrestling with recently in terms of your finances and honoring the Lord?*
- *Is it God's will that you would be financially stable? Why or why not?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 7 LEADERSHIP: Spiritually Leading

In First Corinthians, Paul states the Christian life is like running a race. While it may matter how we began the race, it most definitely matters how we finish it. In the spirit of wanting to run the race well every day-with the aim to finish well-we turn to the area of spiritual leadership of our families.

In Point Man, author Steve Farrar warns- "Satan has two goals pertaining to our families: 1) To effectively alienate and sever a husband's relationship with his wife, and 2) to effectively alienate and sever a husband's relationship with his children." There is the possibility for challenge every day on one or both of these fronts. It is important to understand what the Bible instructs about leadership.

Below are some passages and points that pertain to the subject of Biblical leadership. Review the passages in their context and be prepared to discuss and consider how we can lead in a Bible-centered way.

What does it mean to be a leader in our society? What are the most apt examples?

Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 13:12-17 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

What does it mean to be a Christ-like leader, per the passages above? How can we apply Jesus' example with our spouses and families?

Proverbs 3:34 (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5) He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

How does humility factor into being a true spiritual leader?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- *In the idea of leadership and reading the Word - do you share with your family what God has taught you in your daily walk?*
- *Do you think your time spent in the Word is directly relational to your ability to be a lead spiritually?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 8 PURITY: Lust...and the eyes have it

This week we enter the general topic of sexual purity, and in doing so we confront an area that is relevant for every man. From youth to our present age, most of us have been bombarded in some way with a sexualized culture through advertisements, peers, movies, postmodern education, and the list goes on. Whether watching TV, waiting in the checkout aisle at the supermarket, surfing the internet - whether we realize it or not, we are in a battle for our purity and Godliness, especially with our eyes. And the casualties are the relationships that God has given us.

Review the following verses prior to your GM6.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

What is the definition of lust? Have you ever made this covenant with your eyes, as Job did?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

What is the definition of sexual immorality? How might God "punish men for all such sins"?

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

What does it mean to offer our bodies to God as holy, living sacrifices, as Paul writes? Can we accomplish this?

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Ephesians 5:3-5 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

What does a "hint of sexual immorality" mean in our culture, and how do I avoid even a hint of it in my life?

Matthew 5:27-29 You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

- *As we consider Christ's radical call above, how can we radically confront sin today, as we struggle with lust in this media rich world? Do we stop using the internet all together or stop turning on the TV if that is my struggle? Are these practical steps? What is my purity before the Lord worth?*

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 9 PURITY: Maintaining It

We continue the topic of sexual purity. All of us have had to deal with these temptations in some capacity - whether weak or victorious - we all have something to say on this topic.

For the many of us who feel weakness towards these sins - bring them into the light by sharing with your GM6. Your group can build you up, support you, and pray for you - for "He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but he who confesses them and renounces them finds mercy." (Prov. 28:13) For those who have experienced victory in the fight against sexual temptation, share how you practically achieve this, and encourage others on that same path. We're in this together, and God wants us to have freedom from these temptations - so let's utilize the men around us to help us get there. Below are some verses and thoughts for meditation prior to your GM6.

Proverbs 7:25-26 (read entire Chapter 7) Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.

While "the prostitute" is the focus of Proverbs 7, the chapter encapsulates any perverse path we take in regard to sexual temptation. Today that readily includes the temptations of lust as Christ defines in the New Testament, as well as internet pornography and masturbation.

How have you dealt with overcoming temptations of lust and pornography?

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Paul writes of sexual sin as more damaging than other sins - to confront these sins in our lives. Do you think that more radical action needs to be taken as a result, compared to action against other sins?

If so, what radical action might that be?

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

We are paving the road that our children will walk, and many of our kids are exposed to the same, if not more intense temptations than we were - what steps can we take now, as leaders of our households, to help them persevere past some of the temptations that we may have fell into growing up?

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

As the verse states, our temptations are common amongst all of us, but God is able to provide a way out if we choose it. Within your GM6, what ways you can support one another in confronting sexual sins in a new way?

When tempted-one "way out" may be a phone call in the middle of the night. Are you willing to be called at any hour, by another guy if he is tempted by something? Are you willing to swallow some pride and call another guy at any hour to tell him you are tempted by something? Talk about ways you can support one another going forward.

Regarding sexual temptations and our perseverance towards Christ, what can your GM6 be consistently asking you about, or praying for you on this topic?

GM6 WEEK 10 PURITY: Worshiping God through Sex

In all aspects of life it is relevant to talk about how we can worship God. Whether through our speech, our music, our work, our money, our free time - God wants our worship in everything. The same goes for my relationship with my wife and sex in my marriage. Over the past weeks we have brought up what God wants sex NOT to be, this week let's focus on what it SHOULD and CAN be.

Some prominent Christian thinkers have written on this subject below:

John Piper writes: "God created us in his image, male and female, with personhood and sexual passions so that when he comes to us in this world there would be these powerful words and images to describe the promises and the pleasures of our covenant relationship with him through Christ...God made us powerfully sexual so that he would be more deeply knowable. We were given the power to know each other sexually so that we might have some hint of what it will be like to know Christ supremely." (John Piper, message on Sex and the Supremacy of Christ, 2004 Desiring God National Conference)

C. J. Mahaney writes: "...we're reminded that sex in marriage is intended by God to be a pure and good thing. Even though it's intensely physical, it is not the least bit unspiritual. When a married couple is in the midst of enjoying sexual relations, they may not be experiencing holiness in the same way they experience it when praying or worshiping God, but make no mistake-that is a very holy moment. It is God's desire that every Christian couple, including you and your wife, regularly enjoy the best, most intimate, most satisfying sexual relations of which humans are capable. We're talking really, really good sex. Marital intimacy is God's gift to those who enter his holy covenant of marriage."

- *How might sex in marriage be another form of armor "against the devil's schemes"?*
- *Is this verse a reflection of how you treat your wife? What might the above level of self-sacrifice and honoring of my wife do for our sex life?*
-

Review the verses below. Bring up any additional verses that will enhance your next GM6 .

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

How can I treat my wife to reflect what written in this verse?

Song of Songs 4:9-10; 12-13, 15 You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice! You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.

Considering the busyness of our lives, and the short conversations we often have with our wives, if we speak to our wives in the above manner (in modern terms perhaps), how might our wives respond, and specifically, how might that affect our sex lives?

Read Ephesians 6:10-12. How might sex in marriage be another form of armor "against the devil's schemes"?

Notes:

GM6 WEEK 11 EVANGELISM: Sharing God's Truth

*"All of life comes down to just one thing and that's to know you,
Oh Jesus...and make you known." Charlie Hall.*

At work or at home, God wants to be glorified and made known. This week we discuss sharing our faith with those around us in whatever context we find ourselves. Review the following verses prior to your GM6 meeting and discuss when you meet.

Mark 16: 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation..."

Romans 10: 13 ...for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Does the verse to disciples on "preaching" apply to us? Who can we be sharing our faith?

Romans 1:16-17 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Luke 21: 12-19 everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith".

Do you live in a way at work where others could identify a "righteousness" of faith? Does it matter to be different? How do you ensure that you are not ashamed of the Gospel?

2 Timothy 3:12 (Matthew 10:22, Acts 14:22, Philippians 1:29, 1 Peter 4:12)

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...

Luke 21:12-19 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will perish. By standing firm you will gain life."

1 Peter 3:13-17 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

- *Should we expect to be persecuted for our faith in this day and age? Are you being / have you been persecuted?*
- *What does it mean if we are not suffering / being persecuted? Are we not living out His commands?*
- *Has God put a name or names of people on your heart to share your faith?*

GM6 Sharing God's Truth Log

*Has God put a name or names of people on your heart to share your faith?
Tell your group so they can ask you how it is going / pray for you and that person.
Log their name below.*

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

GM6 Contact Information

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

GM6 Prayer Request Log

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16*

Date_____

Request
Answer

Date_____

Request
Answer

Date_____

Request
Answer

Date_____

Request
Answer

GM6 Prayer Request Log

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'
Jeremiah 33:3

Date _____

Request
Answer

Date _____

Request
Answer

Date _____

Request
Answer

Date _____

Request
Answer

Additional Notes

*Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.
But you will not leave in haste. Go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.*

Isaiah 52:11-12

BAND OF BROTHERS

The GM6 Launch Guide

Based on *The Big Time Guys Teams* study written by Drew Steffen

Compiled and edited for GM6 by René Rivera

Weeks 2, 4-11 written by Drew Steffen

Weeks 1 and 3 written by René Rivera

GM6 Covenant written by Eric Reed and René Rivera

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version Bible.

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