THE PATH TO BLESSING

RMPP EVENT 42

SCHEDULE

Welcome and Zoom Etiquette

Opening Prayer

Speaker Introduction

Message: *The Path to Blessing*

Q&A and Discussion

Breakout Rooms

Closing Prayer

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THE PATH TO BLESSING

SYNOPSIS

The phrase "God blesses," or "blessed is the man..." is found throughout Scripture. While many today may think of blessings as material blessings, there is much more to learn about what it means to be blessed. Are you ready to learn?

| *Event Messages and Devotional Booklets*

You can find RMPP messages and devotional booklets from events past and present on our website at: themstproject.com/real-men-pursuing-purity

| *Scripture Reflection*

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. - *2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV)*

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them. - *Romans 4:8 (NIV)*

EVENT 42

| *Personal Reflection*

1. Share the experience you have with feeling/knowing that you are blessed.

2. In what areas of life would you want to be blessed more? What does it take to get there?

| *Personal Application*

1. Write down in your journal how you have been blessed or how you wish to be blessed. Thank God for the experience.

2. What does it take in your private life to be blessed more. What steps do you need to apply?

| *Recommended Reading*

The Beatitudes, Developing Spiritual Character: *John Stott*

NOTES

A WORD FROM...

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The phrase "God blesses," or "blessed is the man..." is found throughout Scripture. While many today may think of blessings as material blessings, there is much more to learn about what it means to be blessed. Are you ready to learn?

We are beginning a new series of devotionals with a very positive spin: God blesses...

We are talking about our God who has been very merciful to His people, the descendants of Adam. When creation was completed, God saw that it was good. I don't know how long that period of 'good' lasted. We know that Adam and Eve were quickly deceived, learning about the possibility to become like God. This was a lie that was quickly uncovered. From then on life changed and many things became burdensome. Work was toiling and tedious, delivering children became painful and sinfulness had entered the world. Life was hard and people became doers of evil. Jealousy, hatred, temptation and revenge became common behaviors.

God had mercy on His people and gave them hundreds of opportunities to do better and turn back to Him. A Son was promised to take away the sins of the world. That happened about 2000 years ago. Redemption had been given.

God's message has been and still is giving us chances to do better, by promising us blessedness, happiness, fulfilment. If only we would turn from our wicked ways and listen to His commandments. Still have we been stubborn in disobedience. But God does not tell us that we are cursed, He is offering a positive direction. Turn away from evil, listen to Me, obey Me more …and you will be blessed.

How often have you and me taken the wrong bend in the road, instead of following His directions? Our personal GPS has often misled us. Thanks to brothers within RMPP and/or in our churches we have been pointed in the right way. We have been forgiven, not rejected. We have been blessed by their attitudes. We have known by experience how good it is to dwell among brethren.

Let us follow each other on the Path to Blessings. A crown is waiting for us at the end of the road!

Rex DeKoning

JAMES 1:12

DEVOTIONAL 1

"God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." - New Living Translation

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'God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.' (James 1:12 NLT)

'Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial. For once he has been approved (by God), he will receive the crown of life which the LORD has promised to those who love Him.' (James 1:12 NASB)

Key Words: Patience, Endurance, Perseverance

Patience: the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.

Endurance: continuing on in an unpleasant or difficult situation without giving up.

Perseverance: persistence in doing something, despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. (Courtesy of Oxford Languages Dictionary)

What does God's Word say about perseverance?

Perseverance produces character, and character produces hope (Romans 5:3-4). Why do you think this is so?

If we do not lose heart or grow weary in doing good, if we do not give up, then in due time we will reap a harvest of blessing (Galatians 6:9). What do you think "due time" means?

I am confident that He (God) who began a good work in you, will perfect or complete it…(Philippians 1:6). How does this encourage you to persevere?

You need endurance, so that when you've done God's will, you may receive what He has promised! (Hebrews 10:36). Does this mean that without endurance, you will not receive God's promise?

Let us (together) run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith… (Hebrews 12:1-2). What does 'the race that is set before you' mean to you? How do you 'fix your eyes on Jesus' when having

to face a difficulty or trial in your life?

Make every effort to supplement your faith with diligence, virtue, knowledge, self-control, and perseverance…(2 Peter 1:5-7). How will these character traits supplement your faith? How do these character traits assist you in persevering?

God knows your work, your toil, and your patient endurance. . . (Revelation 2:2). How does this encourage you?

In all of God's Word, however, Jesus, is our best example of someone dealing with trials and practicing perseverance…

It was fitting for God…to perfect (complete) the Author of our salvation through suffering (Hebrews 2:10). How do you think suffering perfected or completed Jesus? How might suffering or difficulties perfect you?

Jesus went on a little further and bowed with His face to the ground. "My Father, if it's possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. But not as I will - may Your will be done! (Matthew 26:39, Luke 22:42)." As much as Jesus could have known in advance, He knew the tremendous pain and suffering He would be facing. And, if possible, He would have liked to avoid it. But what was more important to Him (what

was a higher priority) than His personal desires? Do you pray like this?

Let us run with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despised the shame, and accomplished His mission (Hebrews 12:1-2). How was Jesus able to persevere and endure this personal pain and suffering to the end? In your situation, what might be the 'joy set before you'?

Living God's Word

By its very nature, perseverance isn't easy. Yet God gives or allows each of us opportunities to be perfected through perseverance. Here are just a few examples from my own life:

- Working at a job you don't entirely enjoy (i.e., driving in to work on a Monday morning, knowing your ship is getting underway and won't be returning to port until Friday afternoon).

- Being in a difficult situation where you can't see your way out (i.e., breaking your arm and having it in a sling for eight weeks, after you've just arrived in a new location with no permanent place to live, no car, unable to drive, and being responsible for a wife who doesn't have a driver's license).

- Caring for a loved one with chronic sickness, illness, or disease.

Without Jesus in my life, I cannot imagine how I would have endured these situations, much less overcome these difficulties. In all these situations, as well as others which you've experienced or are currently facing, God can give you the patience, strength, and perseverance to endure until the 'due time' of His purposes.

According to God's perfect plan, you are being perfected for His purposes, you will bring Him glory, and others will be drawn to Him and encouraged by your perseverance. Ultimately, when it comes to perseverance, you must follow Jesus! If you desire to follow Him as a disciple, you must follow Him with perseverance, trusting that He knows where He is going and where He is leading you. He will enable you to do this! And if you truly fix your eyes on Him, He will be the joy set before you.

After a wide-ranging career, Roger with his wife Sini are now retired and living in Bangkok, Thailand. Roger continues to leam more and more about walking and abiding in Jesus…

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the difficulties you are currently facing which challenge your perseverance?
2. In your situation, how might you better 'fix your eyes on Jesus'?
3. In your situation, what might be the 'joy set before you'?

| *Read*

James 5:11

| *Reflect on This*

"What saves a man is to take a step. Then another step." - *C.S. Lewis.*

JEREMIAH 17:7

DEVOTIONAL 2

"But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence." - New Living Translation

The word "blessing" brings to mind a Himalayan amount of information, direction, imagery, discussion and controversary. From the first blessing in Genesis 1:22: 'And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth"', to the last-mentioned blessing in Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

The goal today is to explore and spark desire to investigate, implement, research and study 'blessing' and all its wonderful implications. We will look briefly at Israel's interaction, imagery of being blessed in terms of correction, materialism, and social acknowledgement.

Leviticus 26:3–13: Obedience and Blessing

It would be a mistake to think that the blessings and curses in this chapter were 'equal and opposite' matters of reward or punishment (as the headings suggest). It is not the case that blessing would be 'earned' as a reward for good behaviour, in the same way that the disasters would be deserved as judgment. God's blessing did not have to be earned by Israel. It was already there, promised and intrinsic to the covenant relationship—in Israel's title deeds, so to speak—since God's covenant with Abraham. But that blessing could be experienced in its fullness only as Israel lived in accordance with the covenant. Otherwise, it would be withdrawn, and the withholding of God's blessing would expose Israel to the hazards of a cursed earth and human wickedness.

As the title suggests, 'the path to blessings' requires us to travel, navigate intentionally and remain curious while experiencing the blessings of God. We navigate with a compass, the Bible and a guide, the 'Holy Spirit.' The interpretation of the history of Israel was intended to encourage the post-exilic community to be faithful to God and therefore know his blessing. In Leviticus 23:3, blessings are pictured in concrete terms: corn, wine and oil - the basic symbols of bounty.

These were in contrast to the 'blessings' which would follow faithful obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1–14). As I was writing this devotional. I was experiencing / feeling blessed in so many ways. I am blessed to:

- Be part of a group that shares and encourages each other. 'Iron sharpens iron.'
- Have the capacity to experience the blessing.
- Have brothers and sisters to share in the blessing.
- Write on a computer.
- Write with a full belly.
- Travel and write it in several safe locations.
- Have so many more blessings as I go about daily life.

Jeremiah 17:7- 8: Directions

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." According to Matthew Henry, minister and author of the famous Commentary on the Whole Bible, when we are rooted in God, we will receive the blessing of that commitment and trust: '(2.) They shall be fixed in an inward peace and satisfaction: They shall not be careful in a year of drought, when there is want of rain; for, as the tree has seed in itself, so it has its

moisture. Those who make God their hope have enough in him to make up the want of all creature-comforts. (3.) They shall be fruitful in holiness, and in all good works. Those who trust in God, and by faith derive strength and grace from him, shall not cease from yielding fruit; they shall still be enabled to do that which will redound to the glory of God, the benefit of others, and their own account.' Reflect on this.

In conclusion, understanding the connection between blessings and responsibilities helps believers grasp the holistic nature of God's plan for their lives. It reminds them that blessings are not merely for personal benefit, but to be shared with others and used to bring glory to God. By embracing the responsibilities that come with God's blessings, believers can experience a deeper sense of purpose and fulfill their role as ambassadors of His grace in the world. Before answering the discussion questions, I want you to enter into prayer, to pause to be still, to breathe slowly and reset your scattered senses upon the presence of God.

James Klassen is the founder and Director of Next Steps Psychotherapy in Ontario Canada. After struggling with addiction for over three decades, but who has now achieved sobriety for over a decade by God's grace, James became a psychotherapist out of a desire to help others in a biblical and professional way.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What is a blessing?
2. Where can we find direction on receiving blessings?
3. What does it mean to be blessed? How do we share our blessing?

| *Read*

Matthew 5:2-10

| *Reflect on This*

"Nothing feels blessed about being broken. In fact, certain circumstances in life hurt so intensely that we think we will never heal. But blessing can come in the wake of our being broken." - *Charles Stanley*

PSALM 119:1-2

DEVOTIONAL 3

"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. - New International Version

"Are there really blessings to be found in denying ourselves?" is a question many men have asked me over the years. On the surface, the sentence seems contradictory. After all, blessing through denial - how is that even possible? First off, we need to look at the question through the lens of who we are. We are men of God. Second, we need to look at the question through the lens of reality that not everything that feels good or looks good is good for us - think of Adam and Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden. And thirdly, we need to look at the question through the most common temptation that many men face today: the selfish temptation to engage in some form of sexual impurity. You name it. There are a lot of opportunities for impurity, i.e., pornography, fornication, adultery, and the list

goes on and on.

Other questions often asked include: Why should I deny the pleasures of pornography use when "it doesn't hurt anyone"? Why should I deny the pleasures of fornication with my girlfriend/boyfriend when "we love each other"? Why should I deny the pleasures of adultery when "it involves two consenting adults"? And inevitably, after a man asks that first question listed at the beginning of this devotional, he will ask me this second question, "Why do I need to deny myself? Just give me one good reason why!" And my response is typically something along these lines: my opinion is not the most important thing here. What matters the most is what God says about this, so let's see what He says about denying ourselves these sinful pleasures and opportunities. And as we obey His instructions for us, we will experience the fullness of His true and lasting joy and blessings.

Here are some Bible verses on this topic:

Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. - Colossians 3:10

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. - Hebrews 4:16

I said, 'Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.' - Hosea 10:12

We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. - 1 John 5:18

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. - Jude 1:24

Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. - Psalm 15:1-2

The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand. - Psalm 37:23-24

Light shines on the godly, and joy on those whose hearts are right. - Psalm 97:11

But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by

the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. - 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life. - 1 Timothy 6:3

If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work. - 2 Timothy 2:21

Whoever pursues righteousness and unfailing love will find life, righteousness, and honor. - Proverbs 21:21

As you can see from these verses, there are so many blessings found in the will and ways of our Holy God. So why do we deny sinful pleasures and opportunities? Because nothing compares to what our loving Heavenly Father promises to lavish on us as His children when we obey. Absolutely nothing!

Christian Lenty is the founder and director of The MST Project, a ministry that seeks to mentor men into a pursuit of sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity. Christian has lived in Thailand for over 21 years and resides in Bangkok with his wife.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Are there any areas of your life that you see the need for greater submission to God's Word?
2. How does submission to God's Word lead to blessings from God?
3. List 3-5 blessings from God that are a result of obedience and submission.

| *Read*

Psalm 40:8

| *Reflect on This*

"When obedience to God contradicts what I think will give me pleasure, let me ask myself if I love Him." - *Elisabeth Elliot*

PSALM 112:1

DEVOTIONAL 4

"Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands." - New International Version

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Depending on where you come from, it might sound a little bit crazy to say, "Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands." Who wants to be afraid of anything? Aren't there other places in Scripture where we are told not to be afraid? Is God a God of love, a gracious father, or is He easily angered, just waiting to punish? And for those who may have had challenging experiences with authority (either in your family, community, or national culture), the word "commands" can provoke really strong negative feelings. So, what might be going on here? What does the fear of the Lord, and delighting in his commands have to do with blessing?

Every command I know of has one purpose: to lead us towards a life of being more like Him -- offering love in fullness, and being able to receive love also in fullness. We were made to be

with the one who loves us best. When we ignore what He has told us to do, we miss Him. We become workers rather than friends.

Some years ago, I thought that if I could figure out how to do what Jesus wanted, then ministry would go well, God would bless it and I'd feel better about me. I read the gospels looking for every time Jesus commanded someone to do something and sought to apply the principle behind it to my situation. Do you think that worked? Some, for sure, but not really! I just got really tired, trying really hard to figure out what the right thing to do was and then doing it. I kind of missed some key parts of this invitation: "Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in His commands." I had missed the praise, and the great delight.

As a dad, when my kids were very young, my commands may not have made much sense, i.e., why would my two-year-old want to wash hands or share with a brother or sister? Now, as my children are getting older, the things I ask and tell them to do almost always have a good purpose. I do my best to only ask them to do things that are good for them or those around them. Consequently, they still might not want to wash the dishes, but the whole family is a much nicer place to be when kids do what dad says: to act in considerate love.

As grownups we also don't always believe the things God asks us to do are actually for our good. Either the direct written commands (forgive your brother, don't lust) or the internal nudges He offers by the Spirit (take a risk to share about Jesus now, offer a word of kindness to a stranger). Once, I had a very strong feeling that God was nudging me to go back to our apartment in the midst of some errands. I didn't want to go home - I wanted to finish my list - but I listened and then when I got home my neighbor, in a flurry, said that her daughter was having a baby across the street at the tea shop. I hurried in and told my wife, who then hurried outside to help. She ended up delivering our neighbor's baby on the side of the road right before the ambulance arrived. Listening to the voice created an opportunity to participate in a very significant moment in the life of neighbors we were seeking to love in the way of Jesus.

And what about "fearing the Lord", what is meant by that? I have come to believe that this fear is more about noticing at all times, just as you would a very powerful person who is in the same room as you. If the head of your nation (king, president, prime minister, etc.) were in the room with you, you would most likely be aware of them, their authority, and their character. You might pay attention to what they said, and recognize their capacity to command. It would be unwise to ignore them or pretend that what they said didn't matter to you. To fear the Lord is to be aware - and to trust that what He

says about the good life is truer than anything else. To trust that in every situation He loves you and is for you, much as a good father is for each and every one of his children.

Iven and his family lived in Bangkok, Thailand for many years, working especially with those on the margins of society. These days they are living in Washington state, called to be friends of Jesus and seeking to support others on the journey of belovedness.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What are some "commands of the Lord" that come to mind? Write a few down, and pray asking God to either show you why these lead to blessing, or to increase your delight in His commands.
2. How do you think the Fear of the Lord can lead to blessing? What might it protect you from? How does living unafraid open you up to give and receive love? You might want to read Psalm 32, Psalm 34 and Psalm 112 asking these questions.
3. How can you pay more attention to the God who is present to you, looking on you with love and offering you guidance for every part of your life? What could happen if you gave Him your yes before you even knew what He was asking? Would you be willing to pray that out right now? Try it!

| *Read*

Psalm 34:8-14

| *Reflect on This*

"Blessed is that man who has done with chance, who never speaks of luck, but believes that from the least even to the greatest, all things are ordained of the Lord." - *Charles Spurgeon*

ROMANS 4:8

DEVOTIONAL 5

"Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." - New International Version

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This coming October 2024, I will turn 58 years old! During my life I have tried to live the best I can. When I look back to see where I've come from - all I can say to God is "Thank you, Lord!" I am not materially wealthy - but I am married to a wonderful woman whom I love and who loves me. We will be celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary later this year. Together, we have two talented sons. My parents were married for over 60 years. I have two older sisters, nephews and nieces.

My wife's parents were also married for over 60 years. She has a brother and a sister, nephews and a niece. Currently, we live in Thailand to teach and mentor children of missionaries who live and work in the Asian region. We have so much to be thankful for. God has provided what we need to serve Him here. We are blessed.

Along with these blessings, however, are the poor choices that I've made in my life. Yes, my life is blessed - but there's been deep sorrow, grief, and shame also. I think most men have a combination of both blessings and curses that we've had to work through. Because of my choice to sin, I have developed addictive behavior and dealt with anger management issues. I've been lazy and selfish. These are choices I'm not proud of. I have also sometimes been adversely affected by the world I live in.

I recognize that when we are born, we are born into a family, a local community (village), culture, country and religious affiliation. Each of these worldview categories have deep influences on us and make us who we are as men. It is where our characters and values are developed. Some of these influences serve us positively and some of them negatively. But we only have ourselves to blame for the choices that cause negative consequences.

But gentlemen, always remember that we also have a powerful spiritual antidote for our sin. We don't have to stay in our sin. We are not defined by the poor choices we make. God has made the way for us to live our lives successfully on this planet. He has provided the way for us to be with Him in heaven forever! This is why we are blessed because the Lord will never count

our sin against us. How is this possible?

We have Jesus to thank for taking the sin of the world away from us. He was the perfect substitute for us when He died on the cross. The lifeblood He shed atoned for every person's sin: past, present and future. It is hard to understand how it all happened. But if you read from the Book of Hebrews in the New Testament of the Bible in chapters 7:23 - 10:18, you will find a wonderful explanation of how God provided a new covenant with His people through Jesus. You may remember that in the Old Testament God used Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. During their desert wanderings God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle where the sins of the people could be taken away through the shedding of blood by sacrificing animals. When Jesus came to earth and lived here as one of us, He changed everything. He was sacrificed on the cross and through His blood, death and resurrection, He conquered sin and death once and for all for all people.

And yet, we still sin. Sin is a subject that is emphasized and written about throughout the New Testament. Jesus knew while He was on this earth that men needed a remedy for sin. Because if men remained in their sin or continued to sin, it would lead to death (hell). Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). Through His Holy Spirit, we are being sanctified daily as we trust and submit to Him. We

are saved by the work of Christ on the cross and we are being saved by the on-going work of God's Spirit to make us more like His Son.

I choose to see my life as a blessing because of all God has done for me! The person that I am today is not identified by my sin. Yes, the sin and the consequences of my sin are a part of my journey. But Hallelujah - I find my identity in the person of Jesus who forgave my sins and has made the way possible to be in heaven with Him for eternity. I am truly blessed!

Mike and his wife have lived in Thailand for 20 years teaching English and serving at an international school. His passion is to disciple and mentor youth.

Contributing Notes from The Life Application Bible NIV
Hebrews 10:17 p. 2,234

The writer of Hebrews concludes his argument with this powerful statement that God will remember our sins no more. Christ forgives completely, so there is no need to confess our past sins repeatedly. As believers, we can be confident that the sins we confess and renounce are forgiven and forgotten.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead - you will be saved…Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (Romans 10:9, 11) Do you believe this? Why or why not?
2. If your "sin will never be counted against you" - how does this change the way you live today?
3. How would you define the word 'blessing'? Based on that definition can you give an example or two to share with the group of how God has blessed you?

| *Read*

Hebrews 10:17

| *Reflect on This*

"Gratitude lifts our eyes off the things we lack so we might see the blessings we possess." – *Max Lucado*

LUKE 11:28

DEVOTIONAL 6

Jesus replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." - New Living Translation

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We are living in the Information Age. There is no shortage of information available to us these days. We can learn about anything we choose, including God. The gospel of Jesus Christ is more available now than it has ever been. The fact that you are reading this devotional now is evidence of that. We can choose to listen to the word of God and read the word of God, but next comes an even more important choice. Will we choose to put into practice what we have heard or read? It is like reading a book or website about good nutrition, or sleep patterns, or exercise. If we don't do what those sources say and change our eating, sleeping, or exercise habits based on what we learn, then we will not reap the benefits of the knowledge. John Maxwell says, "Most Christians are educated beyond the level of their obedience." We have so much knowledge about the word of God at our fingertips, but we often do not obey it and put it into practice. It can be easy to go through the motions of

reading the Bible or attending church, but what good is all of that knowledge if it just stays in our head? It is possible to be both the most disciplined Christian in the world and the most disobedient at the same time. And it is a shame, because when we do not put God's word into practice, we are missing out on blessings that he wants us to have.

Matthew 7:24-27 states, 'Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.' (NIV)

It is currently rainy season here in Thailand. It is my first time to experience the intense rains and flooding that can occur in my new neighborhood. In fact, as I am writing this, we are getting our first big flooding. My family's shoes were carried away by the water from our front door down toward the street, my plumbing is backed up, and I am not sure how high the water will get. So far, it has not entered the house. I can tell

you first hand that I am glad to have a firm foundation on this house. Luckily, I have a second floor to go up to in case the water does get higher, but it doesn't matter how high I go, if the foundation of the house is not strong, the whole thing will collapse. When you put God's word into practice you can have assurance like this in your life. But not just for material things. When you build your marriage on God's word it can withstand betrayal. When you build your views on finances on God's word, you can withstand the temptations when money comes and the despair when it goes. When you build your parenting on God's word, it can withstand the fear of sending your children into a world that wants to take them away from God. Not least of all, when you build your life on the word of God, you can have assurance for your eternal soul. You can have peace in the storm. When the storms of life come (and it is promised that they will come), you will be ready with the word of God.

So, how can we put the word of God into practice. How do we go from hearing to doing? First, we have to examine ourselves and how we are interacting with God's word in our life now. There may be some repentance that we need to step into and ask God for forgiveness if we are not obeying His word. Then, there are ways to take our disciplines and turn them into practices. For example, do you read your Bible regularly? If so, that is wonderful. Now, do you take time to reflect on what you read or do you just read it and move on? Are you

attending church and listening to teachings on God's word? If so, that is wonderful. But do you take notes during sermons at church? When a service is over, do you get up and go to talk to someone right away or do you pause for reflection on what God has spoken into your heart? Do you review what you heard in a sermon or the notes that you took at church later in the day or week? Are you part of a Bible study group where you can talk with others during the week about applying God's word to your life? These are all things that can help to process God's word and discover how it can be applied to your life right now. It can change our lives and how we live. The knowledge of God's word is a blessing to us and to others. But don't let it simply stay in your head. Put it to use in your actions and behaviors. As it says in James 2:26 "Faith without works is dead." Let's choose to live out our faith.

Nicholas is a husband and father of two boys. He is passionate about seeing men walk in God-given freedom and purpose and has been involved in various ways with The MST Project since August, 2022. Originally from Maryland, U.S.A., last June, 2024 Nicholas moved to Thailand to be on staff at The MST Project.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. How has putting God's word into practice blessed you in your life? If you can't think of anything, then how could it bless you?
2. What new habit can you start, in order to reflect on God's word?
3. Who can partner with you or hold you accountable to apply God's word in your life?

| *Read*

Psalm 119:105

| *Reflect on This*

"When you yield yourself in complete and whole-hearted obedience to God, He can do great things through you." - *Jim George*

LOOKING BACK...

DEVOTIONALS 1-6

During this connect group cycle, we pray that you have been challenged, encouraged, and inspired as you pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity in your life. We want to encourage you to now take some time to reflect on the last six devotionals and see how you can consistently apply the many truths that have been shared and that you have learned in your life.

Devotional 1

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 2

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 3

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 4

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 5

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 6

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

FAST AND PRAY FOR YOUR WIFE

Each month, we encourage you to set aside a time to fast and pray for your wife (or future wife) for one or all of the following points. As husbands (or future husbands) commit to praying and fasting for their wives, we will see a significant spiritual breakthrough and a spiritual legacy created.

Serve Her

My wife is not a project I need to work on or change; instead, I want to serve her better as her husband, lover, and friend.

Love Her

I want to love and support my wife better so that our marriage reflects Christ's love for the Church.

Honor Her

I want to honor my wife's emotions better by being a safe place where she can freely share her feelings without my trying to solve every problem.

Respect Her

I want to respect my wife better by learning to appreciate the unique talents, gifts, and perspectives she has. Couples should complement one another and not compete with each other.

Listen to Her

I want to be a better listener. I want to listen to my wife with my heart and not just my ears.

INTRODUCING RMPP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

| *What Is RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity (RMPP) is a community of men who are committed to growing in integrity, purity and wholeness through relevant teachings, accountability, mentoring and honest dialogue. You might not be sure that you really need to be part of a community like this because you don't struggle with compulsive addictions or sexual sin. While it is very important for many men to focus primarily on resisting sexual temptation and sin, we want to inspire and challenge you to pursue more. Although growing in purity is a big part of the vision for RMPP, it's much more than that. It's also learning about deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment with like-minded brothers. We believe that when we invite Him into these areas, He will extend His healing hand and bring about wholeness. Max Lucado says this very well.

EST. 2014

"Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But rather than recoil in horror, he reaches out in kindness and says, "I can clean that if you want."

We are men who are not willing to settle for a life of spiritual mediocrity. We choose to relentlessly pursue greater depths of purity and wholeness for ourselves and for our families. Welcome to the RMPP community.

| *How does RMPP support the local church?*

RMPP does not intend to replace or represent a church; it only creates a safe place for men who want to stay active in their own church community. When a man joins the RMPP community he joins other like-minded men who desire to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. He is choosing to walk out in greater honesty and vulnerability. He is choosing to pursue purity in all aspects of his life. Aspects such as deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work

boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment.

We then pray that as these men grow in greater maturity that they would influence their families. That they would impact their communities and their work places, and that they would be an example for other men in their home church. We believe that as men take hold of the awesome and holy call to live lives that reflect Christ, that the church will be inspired and the world will take notice.

| *What happens next?*

If you have ever attended a men's retreat, you probably remember being deeply impacted by worship, challenged by teaching, and being in community with many men who shared your excitement and enthusiasm for growth and change. A few weeks or months down the road, the gathering became a distant memory as you settled back into the routines of daily life. We don't want to create just another mountain top experience. We are committed to creating a long-term mentoring relationship for everyone who attends an event. That is why you are holding this devotional book in your hands. As you flip through these pages you will see that there devotionals with corresponding

questions. Each devotional is meant to solidify the teaching of the event by encouraging and challenging you, as well as helping to stimulate discussion through thought provoking questions, verses and quotes.

| *Who writes the devotionals?*

Christian men from around the world have written these devotionals and have overcome real issues in their life through God's grace, goodness, mercy and love. We hope and pray that their testimonies and stories inspire, challenge and point you to Christ.

| *What are RMPP connect groups?*

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue both purity and wholeness within an environment of peer support and encouragement. The journey to greater purity and wholeness is a journey that involves inviting other men to walk alongside of you. It is a place where you can share your prayer requests, victories, and struggles and where you can be heard, prayed for and challenged to grow in all areas of life. A connect group is designed to be a support system for you for as long as you want.

During your time in a connect group you will be:

***Challenged*:** You will be challenged to grow in your love for Biblical truth. The men in your group will challenge you to grow in your knowledge and application of God's Word thereby enabling you to stand firm in the midst of life's trials.

***Encouraged*:** You will be encouraged to persevere when life, work, and numerous responsibilities may seem overwhelming. The men in your group will support you through prayer, encouragement and a listening ear.

***Inspired*:** You will be inspired to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. While pursuing Christ-likeness may not always be easy, it will also be worth it. The men in your group will be there to inspire you on that journey.

***Accountable*:** The men in your group, as well as your group leader, will support you and hold you accountable as you pursue greater freedom and victory. Be assured that whatever you share in your group will be strictly confidential.

| *When are the events held?*

RMPP events are held online 4x a year in February, May, August, and November.

| *Who can attend?*

RMPP events are open to all men worldwide.

| *What about privacy?*

Because of the sensitive nature of RMPP events, video or audio recording by participants is not allowed. Also, details of personal testimonies are not to be published via email, social media, or in any other form. Thank you for contributing to a safe and secure environment that helps build honesty and vulnerability.

| *Who started RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity was founded in 2014 and is an initiative of The MST Project.

MEET THE TEAM

THE MST GLOBAL BOARD

Christian Lenty is the founder and director of The MST Project, a ministry that seeks to mentor men into a pursuit of sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity. Christian has lived in Thailand for over 21 years and resides in Bangkok with his wife.

Rex DeKoning is the 60-year old husband and father of a large family. A former nurse and pastor, he now works in Thailand with New Counseling Service as a counselor. Rex has experienced great healing of addictive behaviors after he confessed everything and began to live an accountable life. Rex is highly motivated to inspire other men to seek out a mentor, as it has helped him to walk freely, build honesty and vulnerability.

Nick Chilver is married and is part of a blended family containing 6 children. He is grateful for the people God has brought into his life and across his path. And as he continues to learn to better reflect Him, it is his prayer that God will grant

him the privilege of helping others on the path to freedom and into the Light. He resides in Thailand with his wife.

Mike B. Wood is married to his wonderful wife of 28 years. He is a Pastoral Counselor in the area of sexual recovery therapy. He is a man in process, passionate about bringing men together to share life together. This is where we study God's Word together and share the challenges we face. This inspires us to accept what God has freely given us: His love, mercy, grace and acceptance. He and his wife have lived in Thailand for 18 years.

Steve Odera...bio coming soon.

EVENT DATES AND RESOURCES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

| *2024 Event Dates and Zoom ID*

Mark your calendars, plan to attend, and invite a friend to one or all of the events below.

Event 43: November 16-17
Zoom ID for all events: 561 433 8821

| *The Pursuit of Purity*

The book, The Pursuit of Purity, is meant to transform the way you think and live, putting you on a lifetime path of purity and wholeness leading to consistent victory.

***W*:** themstproject.com/pathway-to-purity
***E*:** hello@themstproject.com

THANK YOU

| *With Gratitude*

We would like say thank you to the following for their contribution to RMPP.

Financial Donors

Thank you for generously providing funding that allows for RMPP events, seminars, and translation of materials.

Devotional Authors

Thank you for writing devotionals that inspire, encourage and challenge each of us to pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness and Christlike maturity.

| *Scriptural Oversight Team*

RMPP has a Scriptural Oversight Team consisting of several pastors from local churches that review all devotionals for theological integrity.

CONNECT GROUPS

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity within an environment of peer support, encouragement, and accountability.

Connect groups are held worldwide on a weekly basis. To inquire about joining a group or to find out more information please email **hello@themstproject.com**.

If you are interested in starting an RMPP connect group at your church, men's ministry, Bible study, college group, etc., please contact us. We'd love to support you and have the resources to help you.

JOIN ONE
TODAY!

AUGUST 2024