



SANDALS CHURCH MEN
ADVANCE **SEASON 6**

ALIENS.
PORN AND
PETER PANS



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In the wake of the #metoo movement, aggressive politicians, creepy actors and the like; the term “toxic masculinity” has become a household name. A brand of sorts that conjures an understanding of whomever has been tattooed by it.

The Chevy or Ford of men.

For some, the term brings a sting and compassion for the women and men who have been ground up by the gears of toxic masculinity. The sexual abuse, the verbal abuse, the physical abuse, the abuse of power and privilege that comes to light after years of loitering in the darkness has been a regular rerun over the last couple years. Disrespect of women, objectification of their bodies, and the general dismissal of them as equal has given the term real legs in our current society. So for some men, toxic masculinity is a very pressing issue that they feel strongly about.

For others a sigh or eye roll is released the moment they hear “toxic masculinity.” Perhaps an irritation of it being used too liberally: a watering down of a concentrated concept that leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. The term has become a catch-all for anything remotely masculine and the mere act of being a man is condemned. Perhaps some men may feel that we are paying for the things men did decades before we were even alive. Perhaps they’re right, perhaps they’re not.

Generally speaking, there are two halves to this whole. Generally speaking, there are usually two halves to the whole on most issues, meaning either side is half correct.

As men who follow Jesus, however, we have the whole truth available to us. For he was equal parts God and equal parts man. Therefore we must be able to deduct what it means to be a man in our actions, thought, and words. We must also be able to identify what is toxic and in need of correction.

Masculinity is not toxic in its nature. It is beautiful and crafted by God and the world has never needed men more than it does right now.

QUESTIONS

For the Group After the Video

- 1.** What does the term toxic masculinity actually mean and why does this term exist?
- 2.** When was a time you were affected by the actions of a toxic male? How did this experience uniquely affect you?
- 3.** How are men in church specifically toxic? How are we passing that down to the generation behind us?
- 4.** How do the men of the church need to look different from those of society around us?
- 5.** Why does the world need men?



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WEEK 2 • TOXIC MASCULINITY

Day 1: Freedom and Privilege

“Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other.
Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love.”

JOHN STEINBECK

READ: Galatians 5:13

EXPLORE THE THEME: Paul had visited Galatia on one of his missionary journeys (as told in Acts) and planted churches there. Being so far from Israel, the churches there were made up of mostly Gentiles (or non-Jewish people). Because of this ethnic make-up, there was a lot of conflict between the church concerning what it meant to be a Christian now that Jesus had risen from the dead.

To simplify it, the Jews were a bit stuck in their old ways/traditions and the gentiles were heavily influenced by the culture and beliefs of Galatia at the time. Remember the “two halves of the whole,” thing from the intro? It was very much like that.

In order to help with this, Paul wrote a letter that became the book Galatians, helping to specify what being a Christian meant and looked like.

WRITE IT OUT: What are the dangers of abusing the things in your life such as freedom, power, and privilege? What freedoms, powers, and privileges do you have as a man? Spend some time thinking about those questions and writing them down. Where do they intersect?

LIVE IT OUT: Do you have a man in your life who can act like Paul and call you out on the things that need to be called out? If you do, reach out to them this week and ask them to speak into your life. If you don't, partner up with someone in your group who needs the same. If you're not in a group GET IN ONE TODAY!

WEEK 2 • TOXIC MASCULINITY

Day 2: Two dogs in a fight

“Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other.
Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love.”

JOHN STEINBECK

READ: Galatians 5:16-18

EXPLORE THE THEME: Paul goes further into explaining what freedom is. He also touches on the fact that there are two opposing forces inside of us, the spirit and the flesh. One is going to contradict the other and ultimately beat out the other.

I have heard this compared to two dogs that are fighting each other. The one you feed and train more is going to win the fight.

WRITE IT OUT: Write out some of the desires you have that are in conflict within you. Think about the things that you really want to do, or find yourself thinking about, that you know you shouldn't. Be honest and real with yourself as you explore these things.

LIVE IT OUT: Going back to that man in your life, would you be comfortable sharing the things you have written out? Why or why not? If you can, discuss at least one of the things you have written down with him. The most toxic and damaging things we do in life start out as thoughts/desires and can be stopped there if we are willing to talk about them. Take that opportunity today.

WEEK 2 • TOXIC MASCULINITY

Day 3: Acts of the Flesh

“Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other.
Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love.”

JOHN STEINBECK

READ: Galatians 5:18-21

EXPLORE THE THEME: Paul continues to clarify what the acts of the flesh look like. These are all things that would be considered normal or natural in Galatia’s society, yet unnatural and harmful to those who are professing to follow Jesus. There seems to be quite a few similarities between Galatia and our current society.

WRITE IT OUT: What do the acts of your flesh look like? Write down those acts and the repercussions that you have experienced when acting on those things?

LIVE IT OUT: Ask for prayer from one of the men in your life or group today. Be specific in what areas of your flesh that you need help in fighting against. Ask for grace and for strength. Then ask them how you can pray for them and what areas they need help in as well.

WEEK 2 • TOXIC MASCULINITY

Day 4: Fruit of the Spirit

“Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other.
Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love.”

JOHN STEINBECK

READ: Galatians 5:22-26

EXPLORE THE THEME: The flipside or opposite of the acts of the flesh is the fruit of the spirit. Paul actually considers all of these to be symptoms from one cause - following Jesus.

This is to say, that when you fight against the acts of the flesh and follow Jesus, those acts are actually replaced by the attributes Paul mentions in this passage. This also points to an additional incredible fact: You cannot achieve those wonderful attributes mentioned without the presence of the holy spirit in your life.

WRITE IT OUT: When you read about the fruit of the spirit, what attribute do you see lacking in your life the most? Why do you think that is? Spend some time writing this out and praying with God as you do.

LIVE IT OUT: Think about the men in your life and group. Who is someone that you see displaying the fruit of the spirit in their life? Pray and thank God for them. If you can, reach out to them today and let them know how thankful you are for them in your life and how you see God moving in their life.

WEEK 2 • TOXIC MASCULINITY

Day 5: No-Toxic Masculinity

“Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other.
Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love.”

JOHN STEINBECK

READ: Galatians 5:13-26

EXPLORE THE THEME: Reread the portion of Paul’s letter to Galatia again as you close out the week. Pray as you do so and ask God to open your eyes to anything you have missed. Keep in mind who Paul is writing to and what things were like for the early church in Galatia. Keep in mind that Paul is also writing to us in our current day and age.

WRITE IT OUT: What has stuck out to you the most from this week of reading? What are the things you need to work on? Where have you seen God change you and your life already?

LIVE IT OUT: Remember that Jesus brings grace to us. No matter the things we do, good or bad, he has given us grace and it’s through him that we are saved. Throughout the day today, whenever a thought about the things you have done in the past comes to mind, pray through it with God. If you need forgiveness, ask for it; if you need grace, ask for it. If you are thankful, express it.