



SANDALS CHURCH MEN

ADVANCE **SEASON 6**

ALIENS.

PORN AND

PETER PANS

WEEK 6 • BOYS CLUB

“COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING, STAYING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS, AND WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.” – HENRY FORD

From the back of the cave comes a steady sound. Reverberating from the stoney throat, coming from the lungs hidden under the ground, a hypnotising chant is beginning to grow louder and louder. Soon, the clap of bare feet accompanies the chorus as it explodes into a deafening roar. A group of men clad in warpaint, clutching spears and bows, bleed from the cave’s mouth and into the wilderness.

As a single unit, they comb through the labyrinth of leaves and trees in pursuit of sustenance. One of the men, known for his ability to track, comes to the front of the gang as the others fall behind him. In the green guts of the jungle he finds what he’s been trusted to. He spots tracks and then raises his fist as the locomotive of warpaint and man comes to a sudden halt. They all begin to roll along the tracks slowly as the man in the front directs them with hand movements. When they are close, when the tracker indicates that they are close rather, they stop again and two men break off from the pack in a full sprint. Equipped with the lightest load and corresponding colors, these men are the runners. Other members, other colors, set up for the ambush.

The beasts are flushed out into a well planned ambush. Spears, arrows and knives make quick work of the prey. The meat is butchered, quartered, packed out, and sent away by the different men whose jobs align with their abilities. Back at the cave some of the men who remained have prepared fires to cook the chow that was breathing hours prior to entering the cave. Other men are on patrol making sure the cave is safe in the hunters’ absence.

Each man, individual in nature, is as a cog in a machine that acts in a singular organism. At the heart of it is willingness. The secret of the cave, the moral of the tribe’s

survival, is willingness and duty. There is an acceptance here of responsibility. There is an understanding of importance. There is an understanding of each other and their abilities. There is discipleship, teaching of trades, investment and the like. There is friendship. There is health and life.

Why does this all feel so prehistoric?

Present day America. Churches stand like ruins of a bygone civilization, their steeples like arthritic fingers of stained glass and memory. Fodder for the bulldozer's jaws and prey for the packs of developers hunting the parcels their carcasses rest upon, the church is dying and one of the biggest reasons is men.

Like cave paintings, the sight of men investing, discipling, and the like are archaic. That's in relationships outside of the church. Men in community, actual community, within the church is a thing of myth. Stories of fabled hunters that went out from the cave, the bride of Christ, and never returned. In their absence, safety and life have bled and led to death on a massive scale.

This lack of community isn't just killing the church either, it's killing men. When it comes to the statistics, men are much more likely to kill themselves, get arrested, kill someone else, die young, etc. than any other people group at any other time in history. It is a historical record for men.

At the heart of men, the secret of our spirit, is a desperate need for community. That goes for the church as well.

From the back of the cave comes a steady sound. Reverberating from the stoney throat, coming from the lungs hidden under the ground, a hypnotising chant is beginning to grow louder and louder. It calls out to every man asking with a broken heart,

"Where have you gone?"

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP AFTER THE VIDEO

- 1.** Why is it so hard for men to make and maintain friends?
- 2.** Where do most men make their friends? Where did you make some of your own best friends?
- 3.** How important is friendship to you? Share a story about the need for friendship/community.
- 4.** Are you in a community group? Why? How has being in a community/Sandals men's group affected your life? Why is it important?
- 5.** What would the church look like if men pursued community?
- 6.** Why are men, specifically, in such need for community? Why does the church need men?

Day 1: Hand Me Down Wisdom

READ: Proverbs 1

EXPLORE THE THEME: The book of Proverbs is an account of a man handing down wisdom to his son. Written (mostly) by Solomon, wisdom is at the heart of this book. Solomon had asked God directly for wisdom and was granted his request (1Kings 3 and 4). What you are reading is the direct result of that ask, and ultimately wisdom straight from God himself.

As you read this passage take notice of three things. First, wisdom comes directly from God. Wisdom is God's nature. Second, the center of all wisdom is the fear of God. Don't get caught up on the word fear, think of it more as a healthy sense of reverence and awe of God. Think of it as scale, showing you your place in the universe. Don't think of it as terror. Thirdly and finally, this book is a man passing wisdom down to his son, therefore, wisdom is a taught thing. There is a responsibility to learning wisdom and then passing along that wisdom to those who are younger/under you.

WRITE IT OUT: After reading this passage, do you think you fear the Lord? Do your actions support this? What are the things in your life that need to change that will lead you into a more wise life?

LIVE IT OUT: Throughout this week, this practice is going to be the same so really spend this week meditating on the exercise. Examine your life and identify who the person in your life is that you go to for advice. Does this person's life align with the qualities as described in the passages from this week? If not, what changes do you need to make to have someone that can speak real wisdom into your life? Is there a young man in your life that you are mentoring/discipling/speaking wisdom to? If so, continue to do so and make sure your actions and advice continue to align with the passages we read. If not, take a look at your life and see who you can be a mentor/discipler to. Look at your community, friends group, family, men in your church, etc and take actions to become a mentor/discipler. It may not be something you want to do, but the future of the church and the world depend on it. That isn't dramatic writing either. They literally do.

Day 2: Iron and Iron

READ: Proverbs 27:17

EXPLORE THE THEME: This is probably one of the most used Bible verses when it comes to men's ministry. Iron sharpening iron paints a very masculine picture of sparks and thundering results. Despite its over-use the moral of the metaphor is incredible. It takes iron to sharpen iron the same way it takes a man to teach a man. It takes a man to correct a man.

Think of a chef's knife. What value is the knife to the chef when it gets dulled and can no longer cut as it used to? Same applies to dull men. Why do you think in this vast book of wisdom, this verse appeals to men so much?

WRITE IT OUT: What areas in your life do you currently feel sharp spiritually/emotionally/physically? Where do you feel dull? Write out your answers and pray over them. If you can, reach out to your Advance/community group and ask for prayer over the areas you feel dull.

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Day 3: A Friend and Brother Walk Into a Bar

READ: Proverbs 17:17 and Proverbs 18:24

EXPLORE THE THEME: This passage is a bit confusing, but try digging deeper into the meaning. Think of your life and the people around you in it. There are some friends that you will go a certain distance with in your relationship. You might not tell Frank that works at the desk across from you your deepest regrets, but you still enjoy grabbing lunch (or even a beer) from time to time. There are different types of friendships and relationships that help us get through some of the toughest times in our lives. This passage shows that God recognises friendship/community to be something essential to our survival as men.

WRITE IT OUT: Who are some of the friends who have gotten you through the toughest times in your life? Write their names down and spend some time in prayer thanking God for them. If you can, reach out to them today and let them know how much you appreciate them and their friendship.

LIVE IT OUT: Throughout this week, this practice is going to be the same so really spend this week meditating on the exercise. Examine your life and identify who the person in your life is that you go to for advice. Does this person's life align with the qualities as described in the passages from this week? If not, what changes do you need to make to have someone that can speak real wisdom into your life? Is there a young man in your life that you are mentoring/discipling/speaking wisdom to? If so, continue to do so and make sure your actions and advice continue to align with the passages we read. If not, take a look at your life and see who you can be a mentor/discipler to. Look at your community, friends group, family, men in your church, etc and take actions to become a mentor/discipler. It may not be something you want to do, but the future of the church and the world depend on it. That isn't dramatic writing either. They literally do.

Day 4: Of Fools and Friends

READ: Proverbs 26

EXPLORE THE THEME: The mention of fools and their ability to infect and influence others is a very common theme in proverbs. It shows up many, many times. Foolishness begins to sound more like a virus than an attribute as you read through the book. Keep in mind that when you read the word fool that it isn't describing someone who mentally handicapped or ignorant. The word fool is actually the polar opposite of wise. Therefore, when someone is described as foolish they are actually being described as someone who is living or acting in direct opposition to wisdom.

WRITE IT OUT: Think of those friends in your life who got you into some of the biggest trouble. Think of those who you got into trouble. Write out their names and spend some time praying for them and asking for grace for you and those names you wrote down.

LIVE IT OUT: Throughout this week, this practice is going to be the same so really spend this week meditating on the exercise. Examine your life and identify who the person in your life is that you go to for advice. Does this person's life align with the qualities as described in the passages from this week? If not, what changes do you need to make to have someone that can speak real wisdom into your life? Is there a young man in your life that you are mentoring/discipling/speaking wisdom to? If so, continue to do so and make sure your actions and advice continue to align with the passages we read. If not, take a look at your life and see who you can be a mentor/discipler to. Look at your community, friends group, family, men in your church, etc and take actions to become a mentor/discipler. It may not be something you want to do, but the future of the church and the world depend on it. That isn't dramatic writing either. They literally do.

Day 5: Let There Be Love

READ: Proverbs 3

EXPLORE THE THEME: This whole chapter revolves around one thing: love. Wisdom leads to love and love cannot be experienced at its full potential in a vacuum. Which is to say, you cannot love alone. You were made to experience life with others. You were made to be in relationships and to have people know you. The real you.

As a man, you must fight the urge to seal yourself off and become an island. You have to open the doors to the pain and work that is relationships. You have to commit to investing in people and your church. This is the way God made you. To live on your own, bottled up and quarantined, is to live as a fool. After spending this week in Proverbs, you must know now that being a fool is a nightmare.

WRITE IT OUT: Write out a commitment to God today that promises you will pursue community and investing in the younger men in your life. Commit to serving at the campus you go to. This might feel corny, but do it anyway. After you have written this out, spend some time praying for strength and grace to uphold the commitment you just wrote out.

LIVE IT OUT: Throughout this week, this practice is going to be the same so really spend this week meditating on the exercise. Examine your life and identify who the person in your life is that you go to for advice. Does this person's life align with the qualities as described in the passages from this week? If not, what changes do you need to make to have someone that can speak real wisdom into your life? Is there a young man in your life that you are mentoring/discipling/speaking wisdom to? If so, continue to do so and make sure your actions and advice continue to align with the passages we read. If not, take a look at your life and see who you can be a mentor/discipler to. Look at your community, friends group, family, men in your church, etc and take actions to become a mentor/discipler. It may not be something you want to do, but the future of the church and the world depend on it. That isn't dramatic writing either. They literally do.