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# FOREWORD

by Pam Forster

The idea for this book was born when a young man in our church and his new bride shared the story of their courtship with our church family. I can't recall all the details, but I remember that the young husband described the many emails and phone conversations that had taken place with his future father-in-law. Daniel's good friend was joking with him after the meeting. With his characteristic blend of discernment and humor, Bryan laughed and suggested that the guys should get their act together and start studying so they would be prepared when the right lady came along!

That suggestion got the creative wheels turning in our household! How should parents prepare their sons for courtship and marriage? Surely there was a place for a book that encouraged young men to vigorously apply themselves to gaining wisdom in their single years! What a great project for Daniel, our oldest son, to work on as he sought to wisely use the years of young manhood for God's glory!

It took awhile to convince Daniel that, with God's help and a lot of counsel from other men, he could complete a project like this. But, being the teachable son that he is, he accepted our challenge.

He met with many men, some older and some just recently married, asking questions and seeking counsel. He studied his Bible and read books and talked with us and listened to tapes. He organized and wrote and rewrote. He gave manuscripts to older men and revised his work again to incorporate their suggestions and counsel.

Then, in the middle of all his research and writing, Daniel was given the privilege of witnessing and learning from a real-life courtship in our own household! Our family's concept of courtship has been put into action as our daughter prepares to marry a fine young man who lived out the principles of this book before Daniel ever wrote it.

The result is a book that is written, not by an "expert," but by an eager young man who desires with all his heart to please His Lord in all that he does. After three years of work, Daniel is now a much wiser and more mature young man who can humbly offer this book to other young men and their parents, with the prayer that his labors will bear fruit for Christ's kingdom.

Parents, lead your sons through this book. These are the **only** years you have to prepare your son for courtship and marriage!

Young men, prayerfully work your way through this book, and prepare those "fields" that God has placed you in right now. And then be ready to "build your house."

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book will be most effective as a father/son study. I have written this book hoping it will be a helpful tool for parents who desire to better prepare their sons for Christian marriage. Young men who aren't able to go through this book with their fathers would do well to find another godly adult or young man to study and discuss questions with. It might work well to meet once a month with another father and son as they go through the book at the same time. Find someone you can be accountable to for the completion of each section. Plan to get together on a regular basis to discuss the questions and your thoughts on each topic. The studies, discussions, and recommended reading will take quite a while to complete, so plan to work through this book over several months or maybe even a year or two. Many of the sections can easily take longer than a month to complete, but the time and effort will be well-spent!

Each topic in this book contains the following subsections; below are some notes and directions for using each section:

## ***Study Scripture:***

These sections contain Scripture references related to the section's topic, along with questions to help you think about what you are reading. There are blanks following each question for writing in your answers. In a group or class setting, you may want to complete this study portion individually, and then discuss your answers when you meet together. A concordance or topical Bible may be used to more completely study out many of the questions given.

## ***Examine Yourself:***

The questions under this heading are primarily directed to young men, to help them evaluate their present situation and their think-

ing on the particular topic. These questions should be used for self-examination, in sparking or guiding discussion times, and for group conversation topics.

### ***Hear Counsel:***

Most of these points of wisdom are also directed to young men, but many points speak to parents as well. This advice all comes from godly men, teachers, writers, and friends in my own life. During the first stages of writing this book, I interviewed many fathers and recently married men in my church, and this counsel is primarily the result of those interviews. Like the Proverbs, many of these points need not be seen as hard and fast rules, but as the voice of experience, often coming from several different angles. These points of advice will make great fuel for discussion times between sons and parents, with a class group, or with other godly men. This life experience is something we young men lack, and yet desperately need!

### ***Take Action:***

All the study, examination, and counsel will be of no use if you don't act on your knowledge! Under this heading, you will find suggested projects to help you grow in each area. Many good books are suggested for your study and growth, some with study questions given in Appendix B of this book. In a group setting, you may choose to do a few projects together as a group and/or give other projects as "homework" assignments. The most important actions are listed under this heading, and additional projects follow under the heading:

### ***For Further Study:***

While the assignments under this heading are more optional than those in the "Take Action" section, these additional studies and projects will still be helpful if you have time to do them.

### **Resources:**

The resource lists at the end of each chapter give suggestions of other books, audio recordings, and websites that you may find helpful. I recommend many of these resources in the “Take Action” and “For Further Study” sections, but I have listed some additional resources as well. Appendix A contains a numbered list of suppliers, where most of these resources may be purchased. Numbers in italics (*1, 3, 6*) with each resource listing denote which suppliers each book may be purchased from. Study questions for several of these books are included in Appendix B.

### **Notes & Goals:**

Use this space after each chapter to set your own specific goals, to note your thoughts or convictions, to record additional advice, and to make notes of additional questions or topics for discussion with your parents, sons, or study group.

# CHAPTER 1

# FAITH & DOCTRINE

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and  
with all your soul and with all your might.  
Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)*

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God,  
and keep his commandments: for this is the  
whole duty of man.  
Ecclesiastes 12:13*

*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned  
and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast  
learned them;  
And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,  
which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through  
faith which is in Christ Jesus.  
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profit-  
able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction  
in righteousness:  
That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished  
unto all good works.  
2 Timothy 3:14-17*

## *14 Prepare Thy Work*

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The focus of this chapter is our foundational calling as Christians. As Christian men, each of us should be growing in faith and in love for God throughout our lives, and our desire to serve and glorify God should form the solid foundation for all our other ambitions. Later chapters in this book will discuss our additional callings as workers, husbands, and family leaders, but all these callings must be subject to our life purpose: to bring glory to God in all that we do.

One of the important ways of serving God and remaining faithful is to be a consistent member in a local church body. Furthermore, it is important to have a good grasp of Christian doctrine, founded in God's Word, and to understand your beliefs. As family leaders, we must be articulate about our faith in order to pass this faith to our children.

# Put God First

## Study Scripture:

### 1. What are God's most important commandments?

*Deut. 6:4-5; Mark 12:29-31*

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### 2. How are we to worship God?

*1 Sam. 15:22; Ps. 95:6; Matt. 7:21; John 4:24, 14:23; Rom. 12:1*

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### 3. Why should we worship God, and Jesus particularly?

*Deut. 6:13-15, 10:12-15; Ps. 22:27-28, 29:2a, 86:1-13; Ps. 95-100; Ps. 136:1; Isa. 45:22-23; Matt. 4:10; John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8, 8:35-39; Eph. 2:4-5; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 12:28-29; Rev. 15:4*

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*16 Prepare Thy Work*

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**4. What does God promise to those who love and fear Him?**

*Deut. 5:29, 7:9; Prov. 3:5-6, 9:10-11, 14:26, 29:25; John 15:4-10; Rom. 8:28*

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**5. What does God say we should be most proud of?**

*Ps. 34:2, 44:8; Jer. 9:23-24; 2 Cor. 10:17; Gal. 6:14*

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**6. In the following verses, what things are mentioned that men worshipped (or were tempted to worship) instead of God?**

*Gen. 22:1-14; 1 Sam. 2:27-30; Ps. 115:4; Matt. 6:19-33; Rom. 1:24-25; Gal. 1:10; Col. 3:1-10; 2 Tim. 3:4; 1 John 2:15-17*

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**7. Are you tempted to idolize any of these things? In what ways?**

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***Examine Yourself:***

1. Can you think of specific things in your life that drive you or guide your actions more than your desire to serve and please God?
2. What do you think it means to worship God?
3. Why should we worship God?
4. Do you take time every day to read God's Word?
5. Do you take time to pray to God every day? What do you thank Him for? What do you ask Him for?

***Hear Counsel:***

- Your relationship with God is the foundation for the rest of your life, and for all your other relationships.
- God has given us His Word so that we can truly know Him.
- You can't truly love anyone unless you love God more.
- Be sure you are worshiping God and not idolizing other good things, like success or a good marriage.
- Man is created to worship. Much frustration and confusion comes when we are worshiping (centering our life on) something or someone besides God.

***Take Action:***

1. Read chapter 2, “A Husband’s Understanding of God,” and chapter 7, “A Husband’s Responsibility: Worshiping Christ Only,” in **The Exemplary Husband**, by Stuart Scott.
2. Commit to a consistent time each day for Bible reading and prayer.
3. Pray that God will help you delight in Him and that He will help you be thankful for the way He works in your life.
4. List some ways God has demonstrated His love for you in your life.

***For Further Study:***

1. Make and follow a plan for memorizing at least one Bible verse each week.
2. Ask your parents or your pastor what it means to “worship.”
3. For more projects, Bible studies, and training ideas for young men and parents, see the nine chapters under “Godliness” in **Plants Grown Up**, by Pam Forster.