

CHALLENGE by Paul Tsika

There is a worldwide problem that has existed for many years, and it is making itself manifest in today's society. This problem has broken homes, destroyed children, devastated marriages and crippled the church. Do you really want to know what the problem is?

Many men have not been challenged, nor have they accepted the challenge to be the protector of their homes, fathers to their children, husbands to their wives, or leaders in the House of God.

Men are called to lead. Never forget that "the task ahead of you is never greater than the power behind you." With God's help you can be all God has called you to be! Look at Philippians 4:13. This problem has run rampant for far too long, and it is time to fix the problem!

Here's the solution: the church needs men who challenge other men and accept the challenge laid out before them by the leaders God has set in their lives. Mark Twain once said, "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you

didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore! Dream! Discover!"

Many men settle for far less than what God has provided for them. The world needs real men, the church needs real men. What type of men you may ask? I am glad you asked!!! Men who cannot be bought; whose word is their bond; who put character above wealth; who possess opinions and a will; who are larger than their vocations; who do not hesitate to take chances; who will not lose their individuality in a crowd; who will be as honest in small things as in great things; who will make no compromise with wrong; whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires; who will not say they do it "because everybody else does it"; who are true to their friends through good report and evil report, in adversity as well as in prosperity; who do not believe that shrewdness, cunning, and hardheadedness are the best qualities for winning success; who are not ashamed or

afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular; who can say "no" with emphasis, although all the rest of the world says "yes" -- men who are willing to let their kingdoms go, so God's Kingdom can come!

God has created us to conquer the environment around us, solve problems, achieve goals, and we find no real satisfaction or happiness in life without obstacles to conquer and goals to achieve. In other words, "take on the challenge!"

Henry Kaiser said, "Trouble is only opportunity in work clothes." If you want more opportunities, you need to accept the challenge and get to work. The conclusion of the matter is simple. Men, it is time you started challenging other men and accepting the challenge of the leaders God has put in your lives. 2 Samuel 23:24-39 gives a list of David's chief men, which were known as "The Thirty". The passage begins by saying: "Among the Thirty were..." but ends by saying there were thirty-seven in all. How can that be? How can "The Thirty" consist of thirty-seven? The answer is that there is always

PROVERBS 27:17 - "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another!"

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **April 29-May 1** - Men's BFW (Danbury Lodge)
- **May 7** - Father-Daughter Dinner & Dance

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- Equip (Michael Limas) ...and more!

room for more mighty men in God's army. David began with thirty chief men, but seven others accepted the challenge and joined the ranks. It will take dedication, obedience and hard work on our part, but the door is always open. God is always looking for mighty men to do his bidding; he can never have too many.

Join us, and be that one more added to the ranks -- I CHALLENGE YOU!!!!

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ORDER by Myles Sweeney

We measure the value of time by how we spend it. "How was your weekend?" a friend asks. "Wonderful," you respond, "I had a great time." In another instance your wife inquires about how your meeting went. "Terrible," you reply, "It was a waste of time." Rich is not about money; it's about life. And life is marked off by time.

Bringing order to your life, therefore, has to involve bringing order to the use of your time. We cannot increase the hours in the day, so whether it's home or work, we must learn to "redeem our time". Ephesians 5:16 commands us to be "redeeming the time". Redeem means to "buy back, or to purchase". Here in this verse it means to rescue or recover our time from waste, or to improve it for great and important purposes.

A popular phraseology of our day is "time management", but the truth is that you can no more manage time than age. Time was set in perpetual motion by God in Genesis chapter one, and there is no slowing its pace. Trying to manage time is unrealistic, and generally leads only to more frustration that there never seems to be enough hours to do all that we intend to do. Some of us have accepted this

as our lot in life – the way it has to be. But there is a way out.

Instead of attempting to manage our time, we focus our efforts on managing our tasks. Time management is a waste of time, but we can easily and effectively engage in task management with great rewards to our life.

Task management has many facets to it. It includes slowing the flow of unnecessary tasks, and keeping focused on the current task before you. This would involved things like no longer surfing the net, or checking your text messages at specific times – things that whittle away your time quicker than you may realize. But the biggest area of task management is an extremely simple, yet amazingly underused tool: a daily "To Do" list.

In the early 1900's Charles Schwab was one of the most well-respected CEO's of his day. He was in charge of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in the USA. Ivy Lee, a business consultant, told Schwab that he could dramatically improve the company's productivity. Schwab asked, "How much will it cost me?" Lee replied, "After three months, you can send me a check for whatever you feel it's worth to you." He then gave Schwab a blank sheet of paper

and said, "I want you to write on this sheet of paper the six most important things you need to do tomorrow, and list them in order of their priority. As number one, put the most important thing you should do tomorrow. As number two, put the second most important thing you should do, and so forth. Then when you go into work tomorrow morning, start with the first thing on your list and stick with it until you finish it. Then move on to number two, and so forth. You more than likely will not be able to accomplish all the things on your list in a given day, but you will have accomplished the most important thing on your list, or at least made a major effort regarding it. Then tomorrow night, make a new list for the upcoming day."

It seemed almost elementary to Schwab, but he and his top management tried it. At the end of the three months, he sent Lee a check for \$25,000 – a huge sum in the early twentieth century.

I have used this method for many years, and I heartily endorse it. And I add an additional key ingredient to the mix: prayer. In my morning time of prayer, I mentally draw a circle around myself and say, "I'm not coming out

of this circle until you give me Your priorities for this day.”

Ask the Lord each morning to show you the priorities He has for you that day. And don't limit it to the tasks you have at work. Ask the Lord to reveal priorities in areas of family, recreation, friendships, ministry, and evangelism.

This system encourages you to focus on your most important tasks. Usually, the minor tasks are quicker, and so we fall into the trap of thinking, “I can get a bunch of these small things off of my list.” But the simpler tasks may not be the tasks that move your life forward. Effectiveness – redeeming the time – is

all about doing the most important tasks, even if you leave minor tasks undone. Along with it comes a sense of true accomplishment and fulfillment.

RESOLVE by Bo Magehee

It was February 22nd, 1980 in Lake Placid, New York. The United States hockey team was made up of amateur and collegiate players and were led by coach Herb Brooks onto the ice. On the ice along with them was one of the greatest hockey teams ever assembled. The Soviet team was composed of the best professional players in the USSR...I would assume that we all know how the game turned out...“The Miracle on Ice.”

I wonder how many of you can still remember the first time watching this game... your heart pounding, wringing your hands, on the edge of your seat. Wow, what a great win for the USA, especially at that time in history! There were definitely some nervous moments, and the US team pulled out the victory.

How many of you have ever gone back and watched the game again? Maybe you watched the Disney movie “Miracle”. Every time that I see that game, I still get goose-bumps. However, there is something different about watching it the first time. On February 22nd, 1980, I have heard people say that you could literally feel the nervousness of the entire nation. I have heard people give recounts of throwing up due to a nervous stomach.

Do you know what has removed the nervousness from people about that game as they watch it again today? They know the outcome!! The game has been resolved! Oh, did I get your attention, Mr. Christian?

We as men struggle with unknown outcomes so much; especially, when we cannot control those outcomes, we don't know who is going to “win the game” and it keeps us tied up in knots. We don't know what is going to happen in our current job situation. We don't know what is going to happen with the status of our economy. We don't know... has God not resolved all of these questions?

Life can be exciting! Life can be adventurous! Life can have some unexpected ends! But knowing that God is in complete control of my life, knowing that God has resolved who I am and where I am going...gives me peace. I am sure that we have all read, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Do we really believe this scripture? I am sure that most of us believe that this is God's word for you and I; however, when the storms of life come

crashing on our personal shores, we seem to forget promises that God has given us. We get so wrapped up in trying to fix the problems ourselves that we forget that God has His hand on our life, and that every trial that we face is an opportunity for God's glory to be revealed. We read in Psalms 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. God is telling us, “Relax...am I not God?” We need to quit struggling with the stress that we so easily pick up at every turn in life, and understand that we can relax.

We can be still, not just because we know how it is going to work out, but because we know the God who will work it out!

I encourage all of you when you face times of uncertainty or trouble to simply call upon our God, be still and know that He has a plan for your life. His plan is to prosper you in all things.

EQUIP by Michael Limas

“Don’t get muddy! Sit still! Quit wiggling in that chair! Put that stick down! You’ll shoot your eye out! Play kindly with the other boys and girls.” I am sure some of us remember these words from well-meaning teachers, parents, and/or friends.

Many of us heard these words as a challenge to our manhood and they propelled us to push the envelope to see if we would really get hurt. If there was a mud puddle, we were not looking to only step into it, but rather immerse ourselves in it as much as possible. The dirtier the better! We knew no fear. If we felt a tinge of fear, we knew we were headed in the right direction. Nothing was going to stop us from pushing past our fears, tasting victory or spilling a little blood. We were boys racing to be men, challenging our manhood, trying to find out “what we were made of”.

This past summer, some friends and I jumped out of a perfectly good airplane. As the airplane climbed to altitude, a sense of fear overcame us. This sense of fear was not of life or death, but a sure certainty that we were not prepared for this. Still, we were not going to back down or give in. What a ride!

As we get older and more “mature” our adventures require that we have training mixed in with the zest for life. Many men try to blaze the same trails they burned as teenagers and young adults with little or no preparation for life.

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 from the Message Bible we read, “You’ve all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They

do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You’re after one that’s gold eternally. I don’t know about you, but I’m running hard for the finish line. I’m giving it everything I’ve got. No sloppy living for me! I’m staying alert and in top condition. I’m not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.”

We, the men of Grace Community Fellowship, are not sloppy, and we will not be caught napping. God the father has called us to be in tiptop shape and to stay alert in our relationship with Him and in our lives. We know we are called to these things, but let me ask, “How are you staying in tip top shape? What are you doing day-by-day, week by week to equip yourself to run the race set before you?”

Let me share with you two powerful ways to equip yourself for the challenges of being a Godly man, father, and brother in Christ. The best tool for equipping yourself is reading, hands down! Years ago, the Houston Chronicle ran an ad that stated, “Readers are leaders and leaders are readers.” As the heads of our homes, one of the best ways to equip yourself is by reading great books. Every year we are given great books to read for Father’s day. Have you read last year’s book yet? “In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day” by Mark Batterson was one of my top five books of the year last year. Let me encourage you to reach for the

“eternal gold” and pick up a book today! I can hear some of you right now saying, “Yes! I am on!” So, where should you start? Let me recommend a couple of great books to you: *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, *Training for Reigning* by Rick Godwin, *The Measure of a Man* by Gene A. Getz, or *The Hearing Ear* by Larry Lea. Will you equip yourself this year by reading great books?

The second way to equip yourself is by getting involved with other men within the church and being part of C.O.R.E. One of our best attributes is the ability to conquer battles without any help. At the same time, it is one of our greatest weaknesses. We have one of the best men’s ministries around. The more we surround ourselves with Godly men and draw from one another, the better we are equipped to face the challenges in our lives. As we read in Proverbs 27:17, “as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” We do not have all the answers within ourselves, but when we meet together and become open and honest to one another, God can reveal the things in our lives that He wants us to deal with so we may be stronger. We are blessed to have Crossing Rivers Taking Cities, Burning Fire Within, and other events put on throughout the year. Are we taking advantage of them? Are you running hard for the finish line by

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yourself or with a brother or two?
Will you commit this year to cast
off sloppy living and quit wondering
“what if”?

If so, by next December, you will
be able to say that you have equipped
yourself well.

REAL STORIES by Bill Holt

*Note: Bill Holt was sending me a reply
from a email I sent him about his expe-
rience with baptism of the Holy Spirit,
and this is his email to me. I wanted to
share it with you guys as testimony to
what God does when He speaks.*

- Doug Amerson

Hey Doug...

Having a blessed day. I am excited
about my baptism in the Holy Spirit
and the changes I already see in myself.
Sarah is getting baptized in the Holy
Spirit on Thursday if everything works
out. Seems like the Holy Spirit is
already working on me, so can I share
with you?

On Saturday, I was thinking about
God being the captain of our lives and
that message from a few weeks ago,
and a picture came to me out of the
blue that was not my own thought (It
could only have been the Holy Spirit -
how cool!).

The picture was of a ship sailing all
around the harbor but could not leave
the harbor and put to sea. The ship
didn't have enough fuel, supplies, etc.
One man was steering the ship, and
another man sat next to him occasion-
ally holding the wheel.

I saw the ship tie off to the dock,
the other man took the wheel, and the
ship was loaded with fuel, supplies,

equipment, and weapons. The new
captain steered the new ship out of
port and on to the high seas.

It was clear to me that the ship rep-
resented my life. I was the first captain,
and God was the second. Under my
control, my ship didn't have what it
took to get out of the harbor and really
set sail around the world. I didn't let
God have the wheel - He was just along
for the ride, navigating as best He
could, steering when I let Him, but I
was not letting Him be in total control.

Then the thought came to me that
some folks are already sailing with God
as the Great Captain, and that I was
joining them to do the Lord's work at
sea and every port of call around my
own little world of influence (and even
more).

It dawned on me that some are like
me - needing God to be the Great Sup-
plier - and need their ships filled with
what He has for us, and letting Him
take the helm.

Then I saw a ship taking on water.
We all know people like that, and
sometimes we feel that way about our
own lives. God is the Great Repair-
man. He can fix a ship, right it, fill it
up, and put it to sea.

Lastly, I saw a ship on the bottom.
Davy Jones' Locker. I know there are
those who think their ship is sunk.
But, nothing is impossible for God.

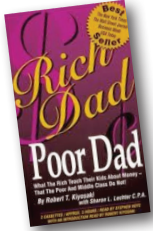
Hello??? Jesus Christ????!! God has
been running the most successful sal-
vage operation for the last 2000 years.
The Great Savior. The one and only
Savior. He can raise ships from the
depths, repair them, make them brand
new inside and out, fill them full, and
set them out to sea to do His work. He
can make mighty battleships out of
broken dinghies.

Don't mean to clutter your email
with all this, but I've been wanting to
tell someone what came to me. Don't
know if it could help anyone, or is rel-
evant, but it definitely spoke to me.

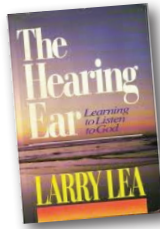
See you tonight.

Bill Holt

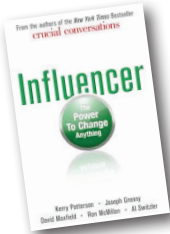
RECOMMENDED READING by Matt Sweeney



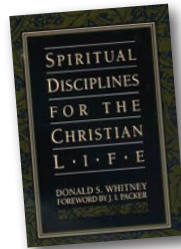
“Rich Dad, Poor Dad”
by Robert Kiyosaki



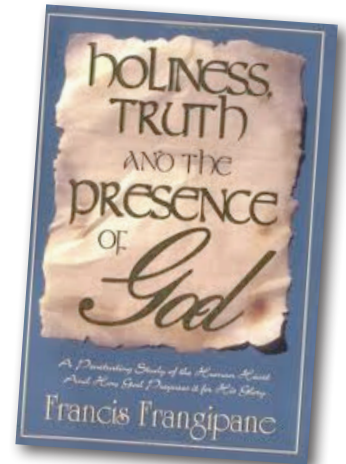
“The Hearing Ear”
by Larry Lea



“Influencer”
by Kerry Patterson, et al.



“Spiritual Disciplines
for the Christian Life”
by Donald S. Whitney



“Holiness, Truth, and the
Presence of God”
by Francis Frangipane

THE C.O.R.E. LEADERSHIP

VIC EVERETT

(Point Man) Bay City, TX

BOB CARTWRIGHT

Wharton, TX

TOD MUND

Wharton, TX

JIM SEBESTA

Wharton, TX

DOUG AMERSON

Boling, TX

FRED JOHNSON

Wharton, TX

MYLES SWEENEY

Wharton, TX

GERARD SCRANTON

Wharton, TX

DENNIS KELLY

Wharton, TX

LARRY BROOKS

Wharton, TX

EMILIO MATA

Wharton, TX

BUTCH WETZ

Wharton, TX

DARREN HELMS

Bay City, TX

LANDON MCCLAIN

El Campo, TX

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