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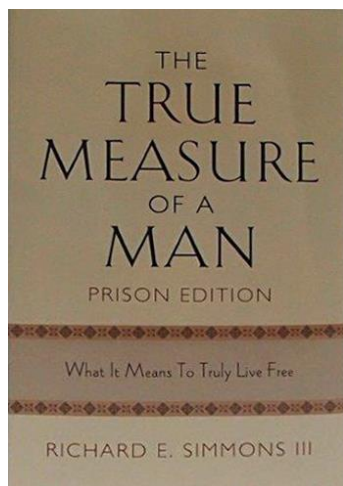
THE
TRUE
MEASURE

OF A
MAN
(Prison Edition)

What It Means
To Truly Live Free

Richard E. Simmons III

STUDY GUIDE



The True Measure of a Man *Prison Edition*

What It Means To Truly Live Free

by Richard E. Simmons, III

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“The message in *The True Measure of a Man* is life-changing, particularly for men in prison. Those that read, study and discuss this book are experiencing positive lifestyle change through spiritual transformation. This book is a very effective resource for small group participation.”

– Kim Thomas, Former State Commissioner; Alabama Department of Corrections

INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to be used with the book *The True Measure of a Man* by Richard E. Simmons III and the supplemental reading guide. This study guide has been designed for individual study as well as for use with small groups involved in prison ministry. For information about obtaining copies please contact:

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The study is designed to be completed in nine weeks. Each study should take about 45-50 minutes in a group setting or 30 minutes for personal study unless you choose to take more time. Below are tips for leading a small group discussion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER

I think the most effective way to facilitate a discussion is to get the men in your group to open up and share. Men do not do this often, but when they do, it truly impacts them as men. We have looked for ways to do this in each session. If this group is meeting for the first time, we suggest you go around and let each of them introduce themselves, tell a little about themselves, their spiritual journey, and what they hope to get out of these sessions.

- Be as well prepared as you can, particularly in regard to the questions in this guide. You may even want to come up with some of your own questions.
- I suggest you read the book entirely, then go back and read each chapter before each session.
- You may want to come up with some closing comments to share at the end of each session to wrap up your time together.
- I suggest you spend time praying before each session that God would bless the time and that these men's lives would be changed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

- I suggest you read through the entire book and then re-read each chapter again before the session.
- Be willing to answer and discuss each question with the group.
- In each chapter, it will be most meaningful to the group if you can share specific examples in your own life as it relates to the issues being discussed. It will be a good thing for you as well!

Enjoy the study! –Richard

The True Measure of a Man (*Prison Edition*) READING GUIDE

The Preface

While every man has things in his life that make him different from other men, it is in our best interest to admit that we all have certain _____ and _____ . (xix)

While most men will not admit it, many men live alone in their _____ worlds of and fear. (xix) Eventually, many men come to realize that much of what happens in the world is _____ their _____. (xix)

Chapter 1

“The Persona”

Almost all men want to look strong and successful. Because of that many men feel pressure to maintain an _____, even if it is not real. (p.2)

Often, this image of who they are is not real. Most men hide what is troubling them deep inside, such as _____, _____, _____ and _____ . (p.3)

All men must deal with these at some time in their lives but usually at a loss as to . (p.3)

In *The Persona*, the boat builder was acting based on what the _____ would think — not the _____ of the vessel. (p.4)

A man who builds only “_____ the water-_____” does not realize that he has built less than _____ of a _____. (p.5-6)

Chapter 2

“Life Is, After All, Difficult”

Every man’s life, whether he shows it or not, is difficult and full of _____ and _____. (p.7) Unfortunately, many men are _____ that they are going through difficult times. (p.8)

Most likely because of this, in the U.S. about 8 out of 10 people who commit _____ and most Americans who are struggling with _____ are men. (p.8)

Men often view asking for help as an admission of _____ or a betrayal of their male identities. (p.9)

Unfortunately, in our society, a “real” or successful man is always up, _____, in _____, and in _____ of his emotions. (p.9)

Just like the builder of *The Persona*, most men make the mistake of repeatedly asking themselves: “What will _____ about _____?” (p.11)

We have come to believe that men should never show any type of _____. (p.13)

For men, weakness or failure often leads to “shame”. Shame is what _____ men’s _____. (p.13)

When we experience _____ most men retreat into ourselves, trying to protect our _____ as _____ men. (p.14)

If we do this and live our lives to impress people, then we might go through all our days missing out on the life _____ intended for us. (p.14)

Lesson 2

I recommend you start each session with the following question: What part of the chapter spoke most profoundly to you, or what new insights have you gained from reading this chapter? (I suggest you start each session with this question and then have each man respond to it. It is a good icebreaker.)

Discussion questions from Chapter 2: Life Is, After All, Difficult

1. Why do you think men are afraid of sharing openly with other men, their struggles, their fears, or their weaknesses?

2. Does the question: "What will people think of me?" have anything to do with our unwillingness to be vulnerable with others?

3. What do you think of this statement: "Shame is the cancer of manhood" (bottom of page 13)?

4. In the book, the author says: "The fear of shame is so paralyzing because so many of us have been scarred by it from events in the past." Can you think of times in the past when you felt shame, and it still brings pain when you think about it?

5. How might an economic recession create a fear of failure or shame in a man's life?

Chapter 3

“A Man’s Identity”

Men often define themselves by what they _____, who they _____, or what they _____ . (p.18)

In America today, we are told to act like a man but often are never taught what that means. If a young man is not taught this at home, then their roles as “men” will be shaped by the _____. (p.20)

Circle some of the places you think boys and young men learn what they think it is to be a man: a) **at home**, b) **TV**, c) **the streets**, d) **at school from their friends**, e) **at church**, f) the lyrics to **popular music, magazines** and **movies**.

When things are going well for us, and our actions, work or performance seem to be paying off, we, as men, often feel successful. This is when we are most likely to get personal _____ confused with our true _____ and _____ as men. (p.21) This is very risky.

Any type of perceived failure from the perspective of an ego built on such a shaky foundation can easily lead us to conclude that our _____ are not _____ very much (p.22)

The problem is that, for most of us, we are out to impress an audience. For most of us, our “audience” are the people out there that powerfully influence who I _____ and how I _____ up. We give these people the power to determine our and worth as an individual. (p.23)

“A person gets his identity (and purpose) in life based on how the most _____ in his _____ him.” (p.23)

For a child that person is usually the _____;(p.24)

For teenagers that person is usually that person’s _____ (p.24)

For adults it can be men and women in the _____ and in the community. (p.24)

The problem is, if we have the wrong “audience” who we are judging our success by, if things go wrong or we do not succeed, we cannot count on our “audience” to stand by us, even when we need help. “No matter how much applause we received _____, we can’t be certain we will receive it again _____.” (p.24)

In our culture today, so much of what others think of us is based on what we can buy

(as consumers), what material things that we have. “We are becoming more i
conscious and less q_____conscious.” (p.27)

“The standards and measures of what constitutes success have changed”. For many in
today’s society, success now has more to do with public
i_____ and the a_____ of success than it does with the quality of our
work and our c_____. (p.27)

“Men would rather be envied for their m_____ success than _____ for their
character.” (p.27)

Our “legacy” is ‘how will my life be r_____ once it is _____?’ (p.29)

Take some time to think seriously about:

- 1) “What do you want your life to have been about once it’s over? (p.30)
- 2) “What do you want to be remembered for?” (p. 30) *(Remember, no matter how old
you are, or what’s in your past, you can begin to shape your legacy **today**.)*

What are your thoughts about your “**legacy**” and the **rest of your life**?

“As we b_____ to focus on the type of people we are becoming (or want to become),
(you can start today), and how our lives are contributing to the lives of others, it will
change the way we m_____ our lives as men.” (p.31)

If we truly want to be _____ from this addiction to perform and impress, each of
us must discover a _____ (p.31)

*If we find a new audience, we will be finding someone else who we will allow to
determine our identities.*

What would happen if we let the person who determines our w_____ be
_____? (p.32) Recognizing that God is the s_____ and ultimate
r_____ who stands behind all of _____ is crucial for all of us. (p.32)

Scripture is clear about this truth. In *Ephesians 2:10* we learn:

We are His _____, created in Christ _____ for good works, which God prepared _____ of _____ so that we should walk in them (author paraphrase). (p.32)

Your worth as a person has to do with your v_____. Your value is not based on what you do but on who _____. God has a p_____ for our lives—a plan that is full of m_____ and p_____. (p.32)

God loves each and every one of us; no matter what we may have done that displeases Him. The great demonstration of our incredible w_____ and value to God is that He His Son, _____, into the world. Jesus' willingness to _____ for _____ was the most visible way that _____ could express to each of us that we m_____ to Him and He loves us i_____, each and every one of us. (p.33)

When a man can get this truth into his life it will t_____ his identity. (p.33) A person gets his _____ in life based on how the most I_____ person in his life sees him. (p.33)

Think about what would happen if J_____ Christ were the “a_____” we sought to please most. (p.33) *If you have any ideas or thoughts, write them in the space, below.*

If you are really going to find your life and live it to the _____, you have to give up your life and surrender it to C_____. (p.34)

Who we live our life to please; who we are going to serve; (*who is our audience*) is a decision we all have to make that will make or _____ us as _____. (p.36)

Why?

Lesson 3

Again, ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 3: A Man's Identity

1. What strikes you about the printed e-mail found on page 17? Where do you get your feelings of manhood?

2. After reading the remarks about Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, where do you think most men get their dreams and aspirations for life?

3. As you look back on your life, did you grow up with a sense of false masculinity? Do you think you have a good grasp of true masculinity? Discuss.

4. What are your thoughts of this quote on page 21: "I feel a lot more worthwhile when things are going good"? Does our worth go up and down with the market or our financial situation?

5. Do you think Charles Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self" on page 23 is valid in your life? Whose opinions matter most to you in life?

6. Let's consider your legacy. As the years go by, do you find yourself thinking more about this? Are you worried about how you will be remembered?

7. How can we identify the God/god that we serve in this life?

Chapter 4

“A Man’s Courage”

Whether a man is successful in business, or without a job or a place to live, for most men, their basic motivational drive is f_____. (p.37) Fear is often created by uncertainty over the f_____. (p.38) Most men do not know how to d with fear and it can cripple them in many ways. (p.38)

Fear of the future leads to stress. Stress can lead to sleeplessness, a_____, d_____ and even suicide. (p.39)

Many believe that man’s greatest psychological need is for s_____ and s_____ (p. 39) “Significance” is the belief that your l_____ is i_____. (p.39) Every person must find some way to justify their e_____. (p.39)

In the 1960’s, President Lyndon Johnson became the most powerful leader in the world. Even then, when he was dying he admitted that his life did not have much enduring v_____. (p.41)

Experiencing fear and shame is a main cause of d_____ in men, especially during difficult times. (p.42) Rather than sharing their problems with others, men often withdraw from others and live very l_____, i_____ lives. (p.42)

Do You Want to Get W_____? (p.44) God’s ways and p_____ are much higher and grander than _____. (p.46)

In the Nazi concentration camp, what happened when the Jewish prisoners realized that their work, struggles and pain had no purpose? (p.47)

The Concentration Camp example showed us that without m_____ and p_____ in our lives, especially when p_____ and s_____ are a factor, we can become bl_____ and h_____. (p.47)

God’s Trials (p.49)

In the Bible, God makes it very clear to us that there is a p_____ to our pain and suffering. (p.49) Often, there is a purpose to a “trial” or “challenge.” It can make you focus on what is really im_____, and that we are often powerless to fix it ourselves. (p.49)

“What is the object (or purpose) of life”? (p.50) As Solzhenitsyn told us when he got out of the Russian prison, he “learned the purpose of life was not comfort, pleasure and prosperity but the maturing of the s_____”, (p.50) or changing our character through knowing and g_____ God. If we let our hardships do this, as Solzhenitsyn did, we will learn that, in many hardships and difficulties, *God has the only true answer.* (p.50)

How do you respond to difficulties and hardships?

While we may not understand it, God has a purpose for the hardships that He gives us. (p.52) What is it? What you are experiencing in p_____ is a result of personal irr_____. (p. 52) Looking back in history, all men seem to find ways to make bad decisions that c_____ and bring tr_____ into our lives. (p.52) Yet _____ is al there to fo_____ our mistakes. (p.52)

Why? He is trying to use these trying times for our g_____, if we allow Him to. (p.52) He is trying to help us find a spiritual br_____, (p.52) by showing us that we cannot continue to rely on things in life that can be taken away from us, instead of looking to Him for the s_____ and s_____ that we need. (p.53)

All of us have a desire (or thirst) for security and significance, but also for p_____, m_____ and contentment. What we fail to realize is that that thirst can only be quenched by God. (p.53)

What do you think is meant on page 55 when Jesus says “*there is no other stream*”? (p.53-55)

Lesson 4

Again, ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 4: A Man's Courage

1. How does our nation, having become a consumer driven economy (and such conspicuous consumers), impact our ideas of success? How does it impact our family life?

2. What are your thoughts on this line from the book: "...no matter how much a man accomplishes, he does not believe he is successful unless others know about it"?

3. Do you agree that in times of economic uncertainty, women's security feels threatened while men's significance is threatened?

4. Do you believe the author's assessment that most men are not driven to succeed but instead are driven not to fail? Why?

5. Why is believing what is false so dangerous—particularly our ideas about success and masculinity?

6. Discuss fear and the storms of life and the importance of seeing them through the lens of God's truth.

Chapter 5

“A Man’s Truth”

Lee Iacocca was a world-famous multi-millionaire who ran the 3rd largest car manufacturer in America. In his old age he said: “I am still w_____ what it is all about...I can tell you this, _____ and _____ is for the birds.” (p.56)

Jesus teaches us that it is crucial to understand our view of life and manhood must be rooted, or based in the t_____. (p.57) Our culture teaches many boys and men false ideas about what it takes to be a man. It is not being chosen first on the p_____ (p.57); when boys reach puberty, it is not about s_____ conquest (p.58); and when we become adults, it is not about our money, j_____ or pos_____. (Even though those with the most wealth are considered “real men.”) (p.58) **Are they Really?**

As time goes by, the b_____, the b_____, and the b_____, are never able to convince us in our innermost being that we truly measure up as real men. (p.58) By middle age, men find that their lives are focused on two things: what they are a_____ing and what they are e_____ing. (p.60)

Pleasure was _____ idea, but *only* if experienced as God designed it. (p.61) The Scriptures make it very clear that a_____, p_____, and material w_____ are not very important to _____. (p.61)

So, if a_____, p_____, and m_____ are not that important in God’s eyes, then, *from God’s point of view, what is the true measure of a man?* (p. 62)

God’s desire is that we become like _____ (p.62) Do not fear. Being “Christlike” is very manly. (p.63) Jesus was not r_____. God is asking us to strive to be like C in all our t_____, w_____, and d_____ (p.63) This does not mean a life with an absence of ach_____ and pl_____ (p.63) It does mean to be transformed in our ch_____; to grow in w_____; and to l_____, have c_____ and to have quality r_____. (p.64)

Character is what kind of person we are. A good r_____ is a by-product of a strong c_____. (p.64). Our r_____ is the way other people see us, while our character is who we r_____ a_____ (p.65) Ultimately, we will be known for and not for the i_____ we make on others. (p.65)

Wisdom is having the skill to see things as they r_____ a_____ and not just as they a_____ to be. (p.65) Wisdom helps us know what is important and what is not and what is right and what is not. Many very knowledgeable people lack wisdom. (p.68)

Relationships with others whom you trust are very important. They enable a man to have someone to whom they can speak and honor the truth openly which is at the h_____ of being a healthy, a_____ man. (p.72)

How can we transform and make these changes in our lives in these areas? We c (p.72) Only _____ can bring forth these changes.(p.72)

True masculinity involves I _____ your l _____ in a cause that is bigger than your own individual h _____, d _____, and d _____. (p.75)

Christianity is about k _____ Christ p _____ and walking through l with Him. (p.76) Even if we b _____ in Him, go to ch _____, and want Him to b _____ us, most of us do not want to k _____ Him, be close to Him or allow Him to g _____ us through life. (p.76)

Read Matthew 7:21-23 on page 76. What does it mean to you?

Read 1 Chronicles 28:9 on page 78 which tells us how we can find God.

Lesson 5

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 5: A Man's Truth

1. Identify the components of false masculinity. Is the assessment of false masculinity accurate? Discuss.

2. What is more important to a man—what he achieves or what he experiences? Why do you think we get so focused on these two components of life?

3. Discuss Forrest Gump's comment on page 61. Do you think it's true?

4. On page 63-64, is this a good description of Christlikeness? Is there anything you would add?

5. What are your thoughts on this quote from the book on page 64: "...our reputation is the way other people see us, while our character is who we really are. If the focus of our lives is on the development of our character and the maturing of our souls, then our reputation will take care of itself"?

6. The Bible says wisdom is more precious than jewels. Why do you think modern people do not value it more?

7. Do you think what Joe Ehrmann says is accurate, that "the typical male over the age of thirty-five has what psychologists would say is less than one genuine friend..."?

8. Many people believe that the verses in Matthew 7:21-24 are some of the most sobering in the Bible. Do you agree? Why?

Chapter 6

“Life’s Greatest Paradox”

Much of what the Bible teaches us is “paradoxical”, or a “paradox” A paradox is “...a statement or principle that is seemingly c_____ and opposed to c sense, but may in fact be t_____.” (p.83)

“**Humility**” or being “humble” is being someone who does not think that he is any better than anyone else. He is courteous, respectful, not proud and modest.

“Life’s Greatest Paradox”, which is Biblically based can best be summed up with the words “*True s_____ is found in h_____.*” (p. 83) Apostle Paul said, “... p is perfected in w_____.” (p.83) Paul is saying that i_____ strength is found only when we are willing to acknowledge our w_____, our f_____, and our i_____ as we h_____ ourselves. (p.84)

Biblical “weakness” – If we find true strength through weakness, then pride and arrogance (or a feeling of superiority) are what make men w_____. (p.84) It has been said that pride “is the complete anti-_____ state of mind.” (p.85) If we think that we are superior, then how can we be humble enough to seek God?

Pride explains why we fear the threat of shame and are always trying to hide our weaknesses, failures, fears, addictions, depression and other struggles. (p.86) Pride is what leads us to h_____ who we r_____ a_____. (p.86)

Read Tim Keller’s quote in the middle of page 87. *How can God’s help us to live more honest lives?* (p.87)

“**Humility** helps you to recognize that a____ you a_____ and all that you h_____ is a g_____ from G_____ and as a result of o_____ p_____ e contributing to your life.” (p.88) “...humility is a form of w_____ (p. 89) It is thinking c_____. It is knowing who r_____ deserves the credit and the glory for what we do.” (p.89)

The meek and humble are powerful people to God. (p.91) The Bible tells us that God desires to give His strength and power to His p_____ (p.94) The word often used in Scripture to describe the power God gives to us is “**grace**”. (p.91) G_____ is God’s life in us. (p.92) We see its s_____ in s_____ and in our d_____ to d_____ living. (p.92)

God’s people - God makes it very clear: He gives His grace o_____ to h_____ people. James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5 (p. 92) “The humble are kind and gentle,

but also brave and fearless....” (p. 93)

Strength, indeed, is found in humility, and that strength is a gift from God. (p. 93) Jesus was gentle and meek, yet fearless and bold.

Have you ever known anyone who had all of those qualities?

In the Bible Jesus was referred to as both a l_____ and a l_____ (p.94) God’s people’s lives are not consumed by trying to p_____ and i_____ others. (p. 95)

The prideful feel as though they are s_____ to others and have this need to i_____ them. While they think they are great and powerful, they are extremely n_____. The proud are clearly quite w_____. (p.96)

“**Humility** comes p_____ into our l_____ when _____ becomes the a_____ we perform for.” (p. 97) In God’s kingdom, it is the humble who are l_____ i_____ and it is the proud and self-righteous who are o_____. (p.97)

You decide – “Christianity is the f_____ of sins. (p. 99) The Christian life begins when we recognize we are s_____ p_____ and that we need God’s f_____.” (p.99). Only we can d_____ who will be the _____ of our _____. (**God**, or the **world**?)(p.99)

What’s in your box? (p. 99-100)

Lesson 6

Start by asking all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 6: Life's Greatest Paradox

1. Can you think of any other paradoxes in life (example: sometimes life's greatest blessings come from life's most painful circumstances)?

2. Why does a man's pride cause him to hide from others? (See Pascal on page 86.)

3. In your viewpoint, what are some key traits of a man who is humble? (Pages 88-89)

4. Can you name some "level 5" leaders you have encountered in your life?

5. Why do you think the opinions of others matter more to us than God's opinion?

6. Compare and contrast the two people in the parable on page 97-98. What strikes you about each of them? What is the consequence of the Pharisee's pride? What is the consequence of the contriteness of the tax collector?

7. Discuss "what's in the box" on page 99. We need to be reminded that something is in each of our boxes.

Chapter 7

“A Life of Contentment”

Contentment - Everyone wants to be content which means to have happiness and satisfaction.

“If you are not happy with your life, you can change it in two ways: either improve the c in which you live, or improve your i s state. The first is not always p, but the s is.” (p.102) Even men who are not content believe that they will be so in the future. As long as humans are living in their f imaginings, their lives are not in harmony with r. (p. 104)

Contentment is what we s; but for most men, it will always be j a the next c. (p. 105) Unfortunately, before we know it, l is o. (p.105) One of the main reasons we are so discontent with our lives is because we are always c ourselves with o. (p.105)

Read about your neighbor, Charlie on pages 106 and 108. Then, honestly answer the questions:

- Are you truly happy for Charlie? (p. 107)
- And, which of the scenarios (**a**, **b**, **c**, or **d**) at the lower part of the page would make you feel better? (p.107)

Worry – So many men worry about their future. Read what the Jesus says in Matthew 6:25-34 about worrying about our future. (p.108) “So do not w about t; for tomorrow w c for i. Each day has enough t of its own.” (p.108)

Finding contentment –

1. We will not find contentment by c ourselves to other people. (p. 110)
2. The Lord repeatedly says “For I k the p I have for you, plans for your w ... to give you a f and a h.” (p. 112)

Happiness in Prison?

Apostle Paul, who spent the last years of his life in p_____, (where he was finally be-headed), trusted God and lived a happy life. (He wrote about ½ of the books of the New Testament).

Paul knew that the reason most people never find God's plan for their life is because they are s_____ to execute their o_____ plans for their lives. (p. 112) Paul was happy sitting in prison in chains because he believed the good hand of God had him there for a r_____. (p.113) (To write the Bible.)

Can you think of a reason or purpose?

"If there is no m_____ nor p_____ behind difficult outside circumstances, then life will always be b_____ and d_____, especially when we go through t_____ times." (p.111)

3. Paul had found life's great treasure, which was a relationship with _____. (p. 112) While he owned nothing, Paul considered himself wealthy. Why? (Read 2 Corinthians 6:10) (p.113)
4. Why did Paul have no fear of death? (Read Philippians 3:8) (p.112) Almost all people fear death. Paul, however, looked f_____ to his death because he knew he would have eternal life. Paul saw death as going h_____ to be with his F_____. (p.112-113)

Jesus knows and understands our b_____. (p.118). He sees our p_____. (p.115) And He promises that if we give our lives to him, "I will give you r_____." (p. 115)

The Bible says many times that Jesus sees us as s_____ wandering through life without a shepherd. (p.115) He promises to be our sh_____. As the last paragraph of p.115 shows, a shepherd loves his sheep and will give his life for them to give them protection, peace and comfort.

Lesson 7

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 7: A Life of Contentment

1. Discuss some of the ways you plan on being happy in the future. What would you change in your circumstances that you think might increase your level of happiness?

2. Why do you think we compare ourselves with others? Do you ever find yourself getting pleasure out of someone else's failure or misfortune?

3. Discuss how God's calling on your life will impact your level of contentment.

4. Discuss this phrase about Paul's life: "He was wealthy in the possessions that really matter in life."

5. Does the fear of death prevent a person from experiencing true contentment in life?

6. What does contentment look like—how would you define it?

Chapter 8

“A Tangible Hope”

Think about these very important questions.

1. What is the purpose of your life from this day forward?
2. What do you want your family, your friends and your spiritual friends to say about you in the future at your funeral?

Family -

Friends -

Spiritual friends -

In the Nazi Jewish death camps during World War II, many of the prisoners wasted away and died, while others remained strong and survived. Psychologist Victor Frankl studied this and concluded that the single most significant factor was their v for their lives. (p.117) Those who survived had a strong belief that they s h something s to do with t l. (p.117)

Kevin Elko, a sports psychologist for Alabama and LSU, sadly has concluded that most men n establish a v for their lives, (p.118) allowing their circumstances and o people or our culture to control their lives and their future. (p.118)

If we are to live meaningful lives, we must give serious thought to the **“legacy”** (what we do with our lives) we will leave behind. In order to leave a positive legacy, we must start now by developing a well thought out **“vision”** or plan for what we want to do. (p.119) It is never too late!

Unfortunately, “we live in a world that is doing its best, night and day, to m (us) just like e e” (p.120) “We are seldom taught that the k to experiencing a m life is to make a d in the l of o.” (p.120)

The Most Important Decision of Your Life
“Love, Peace and Eternal Life”

God is not interested or impressed with our public life and success. He is v_____ interested in the type of m_____ we are b_____. He cares most about the development of our h_____ and the m_____ of our s_____. (p.121) He wants our hearts, not our minds.

God’s will for us is that we become Ch_____. (p.121) This has nothing to do with being r_____. Religion does not t_____ and i_____ our hearts. (p.121) When we have a relationship with God, we, as m_____, will be “p_____ and c_____ of responding to those situations in life in ways that are g_____ and r_____.” (p.121)

God wants a relationship with us. He wants us to know Him. If we give Him our hearts, He will care for us, sheperd us, guide us so that we might become the m_____ He created us to be. (p.122) When we enter into a relationship with Him, and truly get to know Him and serve Him, become c_____ and w_____. (p.123) We find a h_____ purpose for which to l_____ (p.123)

It is in **Jesus Christ**, indeed, that we discover **our reason for life**. (p.123)

Lesson 8

Ask each person in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 8: A Real Hope

1. What are your thoughts on this statement: "One of the causes of great pain in men's lives is regret, the life that could have been"?

2. Do you have a vision for your life? How does a man develop a vision? (Begin with the end in mind.)

3. How does this relate to our legacy as discussed in lesson 2? (Question #6)

4. Discuss this thought from Peter Drucker that most men are underprepared for the second half of life and that there is no school or university to equip them for it.

5. What is the reason for life?

6. How might an economic recession create a fear of failure or shame in a man's life?

Afterward

Two Lost Souls, One Found

Cast Away (“Chuck” played by Tom Hanks) - The movie
Robinson Crusoe – The book.

What did both men have in common? Both were i_____ on a desert island, a_____ and s_____ from those they loved. (p.126) Chuck asked God for help and freedom. (p.126)

Crusoe began to realize how wicked he was. (p.127) He earnestly sought the Lord’s help ... not to be rescued, but, in r_____ of his sins. (p.127) He sed his life to Jesus. (p.127) He realized that being set f_____ from his sinfulness was a much greater b_____ than deliverance from his h_____. (p.127) He began to realize that it was possible for him to be h in that difficult, lonely place that he would ever have e_____ in his old life. (p.127) C_____ experienced God’s s_____ and p_____. (p.128)

Crusoe lived a life (alone) of c_____ and his singular goal was to d_____ his relationship with _____. (p.128)

“The message of *Robinson Crusoe* is that man has to decide in a lonely struggle between his will and God’s will. Crusoe chose God and received God’s g_____ and m_____. (p.128)

Painful circumstances

So, why does God allow us to go through painful circumstances and struggles in our lives? God is trying to make a b_____ in each of us by humbling through the p and difficult struggles of life. For many men, this is the only way they humble themselves enough to reach out to God. (p.128)

Many men only really become truly humble in a storm in their life. It is often then that we understand *The True Measure of a Man*. For as Jesus said, it is often only when we are weak that we can become humble and, with God’s help, strong. (p.129)

Through Jesus Christ we can find a life of harmony and contentment.

Lesson 9

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from the Afterword: It All Adds Up in the End

1. Why do you think people look for a quick and easy way to be delivered from their problems instead of looking for God's purpose in them?

2. Can you remember how a storm in your life was a real blessing in disguise now that you look back upon it?

3. How is the movie Castaway reflective of modern life?

4. What are your thoughts on this quote from the book, "Deliverance from sin was a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction" (Robinson Crusoe)?

5. Discuss how the apostle Paul's words "God's grace is sufficient" relate to Robinson Crusoe and his life on the island.

6. Why do we often need wilderness experiences in order to discern God's truth?

What people are saying about **The True Measure of a Man**:

“Should you read this book? If you can relate to any of the following, you will definitely want to soak in Richard Simmons’ soul-probing *The True Measure of a Man*: You are weary, you’ve lost your way, or never found it. You’ve been humbled, had all the props knocked out, and been turned upside down. You want to know how you got off track, get your bearings back, and figure out what really matters. You want to surrender to the truth, and you’re tired of living a lie. However, if you still think you’re smarter than everyone else, you just wouldn’t get it. This is a book I plan to read again.”

—**Patrick Morley, PhD**, author of *The Man in the Mirror* and *How to Survive the Economic Meltdown*

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a book I wish I had written, which is about the best compliment I can pay to any book. It is what I would call a great read—both accessible and profound in its understanding of the inner forces that make up the male psychology as a man passes through midlife into, hopefully, a productive and fulfilling second season.”

—**Bob Buford**, Founder and Chairman, Leadership Network, author of *Halftime* and *Finishing Well*

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a book for every man of every faith or no faith at all. He’ll learn why he doesn’t have to live with the guilt, insecurity, and fear that most men experience but often pretend they don’t.”

—**Fred Barnes**, Executive Editor, *Weekly Standard*, contributor/commentator with FOX News Channel

“Richard Simmons knows the hearts and speaks the language of today’s business leaders. His message of God’s loving kindness and our need for self-examination, purpose, and contentment is profound. It is a timeless message but an all the more compelling one during these challenging times.”

—**Dr. Rob Pearigen**, President, Millsaps College

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a timely book. I have seen many men go through difficult times these last few years. I believe one of the most critical needs for a man in times of economic distress is wisdom. Richard provides powerful insight into how to respond to the storms of life, and where a man should get his true identity. It is a very meaningful book!”

—**Miller Gorrie**, Chairman and CEO, Brasfield & Gorrie Construction

“As a coach, I’ve always had a desire to help shape the character of young players. Later, that burden extended to men in general through *Promise Keepers*. *The True Measure of a Man* captures the importance of character over achievement. He connects the dots for men who are looking for something more in their lives than mere success. I recommend this book for men at any stage of their lives.”

—**Coach Bill McCartney**, founder of *Promise Keepers*, author of *Two Minute Warning*

“Richard E. Simmons III’s book *The True Measure of a Man* is so full of common sense and practicality. It is especially poignant and meaningful at such a critical time in our country. May we all come to know God’s grace, that he might teach us humility and kindness for all.”

—**Ben Crenshaw**, golf legend and two-time Masters Tournament winner

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a provocative and credible challenge to the conventional wisdom of modern man’s value system. Richard Simmons gives us a clear picture of how we deceive ourselves into a false reliance on our own accomplishments to establish our identity and our worth. And he wisely counsels that we are in treacherous territory! Thankfully, he gives explicit guidance to a liberating and transformational course for a hopeful and fulfilling life. This is an inspirational and uplifting work!”

—**Claude B. Nielsen**, Chairman and CEO, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United

“Richard Simmons’ book *The True Measure of a Man* provides inspirational and powerful answers to so many of the challenges men face in today’s world. He helps men better understand the forces that drive them and provides a framework for us to deal with issues we cannot and should not avoid. Ultimately, he provides us with a vision of the type of men we can become! Simmons’ timeless wisdom is a must read and should be shared from generation to generation.”

—**Lee Styslinger III**, President and CEO of Altec, Inc.

“Life inevitably presents us with difficult challenges, often as a consequence of the unhealthy and unrealistic expectations we impose upon ourselves and others . . . Richard Simmons’ *The True Measure of a Man* vividly presents the tensions and traps each of us must confront on a recurring basis and masterfully teaches what truly matters. It makes for compelling reading—so much so that I read it twice.”

—**W. Stancil Starnes**, Chairman and CEO, ProAssurance Corp.

“Richard’s book *The True Measure of a Man* provides answers to men’s deepest questions and helps them understand what they are feeling as they go through the storms of life. He points us to a life of contentment that can only be found in the Lord. I believe every man should read this book.”

—**Pat Sullivan**, Heisman Trophy winner, head football coach, Samford University

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