

The Biggest Challenges Men Face: Introduction

The problems and challenges that men face today are not new but have been around since the beginning of humanity when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.

In this next series of posts, I'm writing about what I believe are the biggest challenges for most men today. I'll also include some guidance about how your God Buddies can help you overcome those challenges.

But first, let me set the table with this post.

Many Challenges: One Root Cause

If you ask the average man what he considers to be his biggest challenges, you're likely to hear a multitude of issues such as financial struggles, job stress, marriage & raising children, time management, anger, lack of confidence, etc.



The list could go on and on but I believe all of these challenges fall into three basic categories:

- Reordering Priorities
- Managing Work-Life Balance
- Resisting Temptations

And all are a result of the biggest challenge of all: our PRIDE.

Since the Beginning

Adam was naked with the responsibility to name the animals. Here, he was the first created man in a sinless environment. Tasked by the Creator Himself. Just sitting on a rock and overseeing things made by God. After Adam was finished with his inventory of all things good, life began to turn for him. But it also turned for the rest of manhood as well.

The book of Genesis describes the creation of the world and God's designed purpose for humanity. Mankind was created by God to rule over His creation. Genesis 1:26-31 portrays the big picture of the role Adam and Eve were to play in the world.

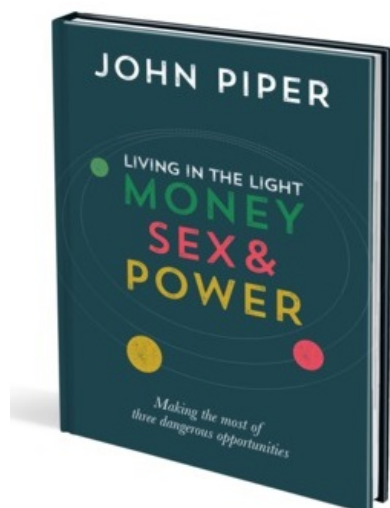
But Genesis 2 describes the story of the events in the Garden of Eden. Adam was placed in the garden to cultivate and keep it fruitful. He was given a helper in a woman named Eve because "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). All the trees –except one, were available to them.

Genesis 3 then describes how Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, which provided the foundation for humanity’s perpetual sin: that our pride tells us we do not need to listen to God.

Since then, the struggle with sin for men (and women too) creates all kinds of challenges in life. Each comes from our sense of pride. All lead to some level of danger.

Our Dangerous Opportunities

Pastor John Piper’s book, “Living in the Light: Money, Sex, and Power” is written in a very direct and confrontational manner, yet is inviting at the same time as noted in its subtitle: “Making the most of three dangerous opportunities.”



Piper explains that Money, Sex, and Power are not exactly evil by themselves since each is God’s gift to us. However, Piper says that Power (capacity to pursue what you value), Money (a cultural symbol that can be exchanged in pursuit of what you value), and Sex (one of the pleasures that people value and

their pursuit of it) are all very dangerous when misused.

Likewise, my list of challenges men face are not always dangerous and evil either. However, they are not fruitful either, we allow our pride to misuse and abuse these gifts.

Measured by False Standards

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, points out in his 1929 book, *Civilization and Its Discontents* that, *“It is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly use false standards of measurement – that they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and that they underestimate what is of true value in life.”*

Essentially, Freud implies that men underestimate their ability to live to a higher standard (God’s standard in the Christian life) and allow their pride to create the problems in their lives.

Pride: the Starting Point for all Challenges

Dr. Joe Martin, author, award-winning international speaker, and founder of RealMenConnect.com is the host of the Real Men Connect podcast – the #1-rated podcast on iTunes for Christian men.

Dr. Martin writes in the post, *Overcoming Man’s Biggest Challenges* that the biggest challenge a man faces is the same one he’s least likely to admit: his struggle with PRIDE. A

friend once told Martin that the word “PRIDE” stands for “(P)lease (R)emember, (I) (D)estroy (E)verything.”



If you don't believe that pride is man's biggest challenge, here are several questions Martin suggests you ask yourself:

- Are you judgmental toward those who make different lifestyle choices?
- Do you frequently correct or criticize those closest to you?
- Are you a perfectionist, and do you get easily annoyed or impatient with others?
- Do you think your way is the right way, the only way, or the best way most of the time?
- Is it hard for people to measure up to your expectations?
- Do you avoid participating in certain things for fear of being embarrassed or looking foolish?
- Are you afraid to ask for help or admit when you're struggling with something?
- Do you have a hard time reaching out and building relationships with men you don't know?
- Are you sitting there reading this thinking that none of these things apply to you?

These questions reveal the very reason why pride is such a great challenge for men.

So how do we overcome our pride?

Dr. Martin says simply do three things:

1. **Surrender** – Admit to others you need help and you can't solve your problem on your own.
2. **Pray** – Pray for the strength, the resources, and the support you need from others to deal with your struggle.
3. **Act** – Faithfully apply the wisdom you receive from the wise counsel of others in dealing with your struggle.

The sin of pride is a preoccupation with self so it is very fitting that the middle letter in the word is "i." Pride is all about "me, myself, and I." so even the word "sin" is centered upon an "i".

The God Buddy Principle

In addition to Dr. Martin's three suggestions above, I add my own two as the starting point to overcoming these challenges:

1. Find yourself a God Buddy with whom you can confidentially share your struggles.
2. Read my upcoming posts for more about these challenges men face.



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All this is why I believe pride is the root cause of our challenges and struggles with:

- Reordering Priorities
- Managing Work-Life Balance
- Resisting Temptations

So stay with me in the coming weeks as I unpack the big challenges we men face.