

Based on the Original **MEN'S** **FRATERNITY** C L A S S I C Material Created by Dr. Robert Lewis

33

THE SERIES™

AUTHENTIC™
MANHOOD

VOLUME 1 TRAINING
GUIDE

A MAN AND HIS DESIGN

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33

THE SERIES™

**AUTHENTIC
MANHOOD**

**VOLUME 1
TRAINING
GUIDE**

A MAN AND HIS DESIGN

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A MAN AND HIS DESIGN

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The Importance of Being in a Community of Men

Climbing a mountain alone is a difficult and even dangerous idea. Attempting to climb the mountain of manhood alone is also not recommended. Just like a literal mountain climber needs to belay or connect with another man for safety and support, we need other men around us to help us stay on course with our manhood. *Having other guys deeply connected to us becomes invaluable when we slip, struggle, or stray off course in our manhood journey.*

One of the biggest mistakes you can make with regards to 33 *The Series* is to watch or listen to this material in isolation. The goal of this study is not just to fill in the blanks of your **Training Guide**, but also to actually fill in the blanks of your life. Having other men walk through the experience with you is the key to moving this material from the pages of your **Training Guide** to actually being fleshed out in your everyday life.



MANHOOD COMMUNITY

- 1 Provides encouragement.** Every man needs other men cheering for him and encouraging him on his journey to manhood.
- 2 Gives you additional insight.** Having other men around you helps you get a much better perspective on your life. Others can help you discover your blind spots and avoid costly mistakes.
- 3 Brings constructive criticism.** We all need men in our lives who will be honest with us to help us become better men.
- 4 Makes your journey richer.** Sharing life with a community of men makes the great times feel like a celebration and provides much needed support when life gets rough.

No one can force you to open up your life and work to make a connection with another man. Although it can be challenging and frightening, it's well worth the risk. **33**

From a Weekly Gathering to a Global Movement

Several years ago, Dr. Robert Lewis responded to the desire of a handful of men who were hungering for more than a Bible study. They wanted a map for manhood – a definition of what it meant to be a man. They needed help to leap over the hurdles they were encountering in life and they needed healing from the wounds of their past.



Robert responded by launching a weekly gathering called **Men's Fraternity**, challenging men to join him at six o'clock each Wednesday morning for twenty-four weeks. From the depth of his own personal experience and the pages of Scripture, Robert developed what came to be known as the Men's Fraternity series:



- *The Quest for Authentic Manhood*
- *Winning at Work & Home*
- *The Great Adventure*

What began with a few men huddling up to talk about what it meant to be a man rapidly grew into a weekly gathering of more than three hundred men. In just a few years, local attendance at Men's Fraternity climbed to more than one thousand men.

The message of Authentic Manhood that began at Men's Fraternity could not be contained in that room. It began to spread and soon exploded into a global movement **impacting more than a million men in more than 20,000 locations worldwide** – from locker rooms to boardrooms, from churches to prisons, on military bases and the

field of battle, at NASA and even on a space shuttle mission. Wherever the messages were heard, the challenge has remained the same. It is the call for men to step up and follow the biblical manhood modeled by Jesus Christ.

The Men's Fraternity curriculum was not developed in a corporate cubicle environment, written by an out-of-touch writer and pushed on men as a nice thing to do. **It was created on the front lines where men live, written in the trenches in response to men who pleaded for purpose and direction.** It has proven to be the most widely used and effective material on Authentic Manhood available today. **What began as a weekly meeting of men searching for answers to their manhood questions has grown into a bold movement that has dramatically impacted the lives of men, their families and communities.** **33**



Presenter Profiles

JOHN BRYSON

Seeing firsthand the impact the original Men's Fraternity curriculum had on his own life, John Bryson decided to teach the material himself. In the years since, he's led thousands of men through the basic ideas of biblical manhood. Most recently, he's launched groups for men in 20 different cities and college campuses.



John is a co-founding teaching pastor of Fellowship Memphis, a multi-cultural church ministering in the evolving urban core of Memphis, Tennessee.

In 2010, he completed his Doctor of Ministry in "Redemptive and Organizational Leadership" from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

John is also the author of *College Ready*, a curriculum for college students, and travels the country consulting and investing in churches, church planters, leaders and new ideas.

A native of Harlan, Kentucky, John played baseball at Asbury College.

He and his wife Beth have 5 kids: Brooke, Beck, Bo, Boss and Blair.



BRYAN CARTER

Bryan Carter taught the original Men's Fraternity curriculum to a

group of more than 800 men over a three-year period at Concord Church. Additionally, he's been a frequent speaker at local and international churches, conferences and events.

Bryan is the Senior Pastor of Concord Church in Dallas, Texas.

He is author of a 28-day devotional book entitled, *Great Expectations*. Bryan also contributed to the book *What Two White Men of God Learned from Black Men of God*, co-authored by Dr. Joel Gregory and Dr. Bill Crouch.

A recreational basketball player, Bryan is a fan of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks.

Bryan and his wife Stephanie are the parents of two daughters, Kaitlyn and Kennedy, and one son, Carson.

TIERCE GREEN

Tierce Green teaches the principles of Authentic Manhood to well over a thousand men each week at a gathering called *The Quest*. He is also one of the teaching pastors in the bullpen for his Senior Pastor, Kerry Shook.

Tierce is the Executive Pastor of Small Groups at Woodlands Church in The Woodlands, Texas.

Prior to joining the staff at Woodlands Church, Tierce was a speaker and consultant for conferences, retreats and churches across the country for twenty-six years. He has written curriculum for Student Life, North American Mission Board and LifeWay. His most recent project is a 12-week series for men called *Fight Club: Some Things Are Worth Fighting For*.

A lifelong Dallas Cowboys fan, Tierce's favorite activities include landscaping, good food and conversation.

He and his wife Dana have one daughter, Anna.



Manhood Realities

SESSION ONE | Training Guide NOTES

Manhood Realities

I. INTRODUCTION

Our world desperately needs better _____.

II. CURRENT MANHOOD REALITIES

1. Men are in a state of _____.

2. Men are experiencing a general disappointment with life.

3. Men are experiencing _____.

4. Men are lonely.

5. Men are _____.

6. Men are turning to escapes to numb the pain.

7. Confused men create major _____. For example:

- Recent statistics reveal that 90% of murders are committed by men. 88% of robberies are committed by men,¹ and 75% of all people arrested are men.²
- “Gender is the single best predictor of criminal behavior: men commit more crime, and women commit less. This distinction holds throughout history, for all societies, for all groups, and for nearly every crime category.”³

8. Without a compelling _____ for manhood, men will settle for less in life.

¹ U.S. Department of Justice, “Crime in the United States.” Table 42. Online: http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/data/table_42.html.

² U.S. Department of Justice, “Crime in the United States.” Overview. Online: <http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/arrests/index.html>.

³ Darrell Steffensmeier and Emilie Allan, “Gender and Crime,” in *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice*, ed. Joshua Dressler (Macmillan Reference, 2002), 728.

III. HISTORICAL ROOTS OF OUR PRESENT MANHOOD CRISIS

1. Racism

2. The Industrial Revolution

3. The War Years

4. Feminism

5. Extended Adolescence

IV. CONCLUSION

1. You need to show up.

2. You need a team.

3. Preview of future sessions.

DISCUSSION / REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why did you join this manhood journey? What expectations do you have personally?

2. What stood out to you the most from session one?

3. Are you experiencing any of the current “manhood realities” discussed?

4. Have any of the historical roots of our current manhood crisis affected you, if so how?



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Cross, Gary. *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity.* Columbia University Press, 2008. A historian’s explanation of extended adolescence.

Kimmel, Michael. *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men.* Harper Collins, 2009. A sociologist’s perspective on extended adolescence.

Piper, John and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism.* Crossway Books, 2006. A collection of articles by evangelical scholars countering the claims of evangelical feminism.

Rhoads, Steven E. *Taking Sex Differences Seriously.* Encounter Books, 2004. An analysis of the scientific evidence demonstrating that male and female role distinctions are based in biology and are not merely socially constructed.

Sommers, Christina Hoff. *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men.* Simon and Schuster, 2001. Philosopher Christina Hoff Sommers discusses the negative effects of feminism on men.

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son.* Soft Skull Press, 2008. Reflections on the advantages and disadvantages of race from a prominent antiracist author.

The content in the supporting resources above does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Authentic Manhood. Not all of the books are written from a Christian perspective. Readers should use these books as resources but form their own opinions.



Training Guide **NOTES**

SESSION ONE | MANHOOD REALITIES

Recalculating

By Bryan Carter

That's the word I see on my GPS when I miss a turn or go the wrong direction.

RECALCULATING. Even when I feel like I'm on the right track, that one word—recalculating—gives me a vivid reminder that I need to make immediate adjustments if I'm going to reach my destination.

In many ways, Session One is like pausing to recalculate where we are as men on our journey to manhood. The great reality of life is that even with the best of intentions, every man will make a wrong turn at some point. Yet, when you make that wrong turn, one of the keys to your Authentic Manhood journey is not to focus too much on the mistaken turn, but to make proper adjustments for the future.

SOME MEN CHOOSE TO TURN ONTO BOYHOOD BOULEVARD.

Boyhood. Those were exceptional days. We played all day, hung out with our friends, did only the things that made us happy, had no responsibility or accountability... the good 'ol days of growing up. The reality of boyhood is that it is intended to be an on-ramp to responsibility not a boulevard to continuous cruising. **It's time to RECALCULATE.**

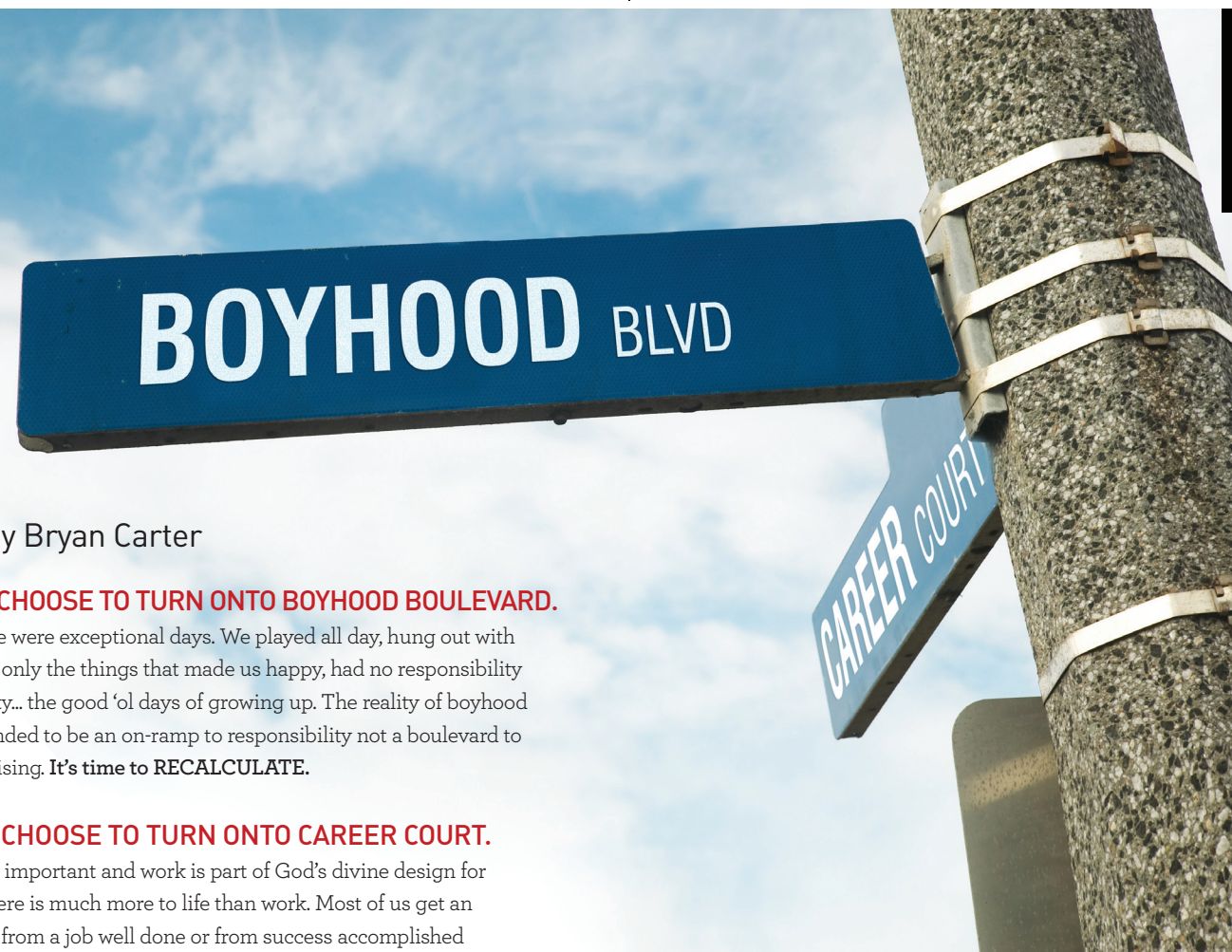
SOME MEN CHOOSE TO TURN ONTO CAREER COURT.

Our careers are important and work is part of God's divine design for our lives, yet there is much more to life than work. Most of us get an incredible rush from a job well done or from success accomplished in the workplace. We are performers by nature and we thrive in these environments. We work long hours, take on additional responsibilities, but often we do it at the expense of our families and our own personal lives. **It's time to RECALCULATE.**

SOME MEN CHOOSE TO TURN ONTO APPETITE AVENUE.

Appetites are inner desires we all possess. They are healthy and designed for our own growth and development. We have appetites for food, success, sex, love and other things. Yet when these appetites go unchecked, they can cause considerable damage in our lives. When a man turns onto this road and allows his appetites to control his life,

“No matter where you may have made a wrong turn, this is your opportunity to make the course correction toward a better life.”



NEXT STEPS...

YOU'VE RECALCULATED. Maybe, you're headed down some wrong paths. You want to make a change—take steps toward becoming the man you were made to be, the man you've dreamed you could be—but you don't know how to begin. Consider these simple, but effective, steps:

- 1 TRUST AND PRAY** | Ask God for strength to embrace a new life. Trust Him to do what you're unable to do on your own.
- 2 THINK** | If you're given 80 years on this Earth, what's the best use of the time you have remaining? What do you want your story and your legacy to be?
- 3 SPEAK UP** | Take a close friend, a pastor, or a trusted advisor to lunch and come clean. Saying the words out loud to someone you trust is a big step away from destructive behavior and toward a new life.
- 4 CHANGE YOUR COURSE** | If you're engaged in destructive behavior, step away from it. Remove yourself from the source of your temptation and replace destructive behavior with healthy behavior.
- 5 FIND A MENTOR** | There are men who have already walked the path you're considering. Seek them out—we can't do this journey alone.
- 6 SEEK COUNSELING OR A SUPPORT GROUP** | Some behaviors are difficult to break, and years of destructive living have come with potentially far-reaching consequences. Spending time with a Christian counselor or a support group is a wise move for those dealing with excess baggage.

he's headed straight for disaster. **It's time to RECALCULATE.**

No matter where you may have made a wrong turn, this is your opportunity to make the course corrections toward a better life, toward the full life that God says is available to all of us. The simple fact that you've already begun to explore this material on Authentic Manhood reveals that you have the steering wheel in your hand and you've chosen to head down the path toward a life of Authentic Manhood, the life that brings true joy and fulfillment. If you're not dead, you're not done. Welcome to the journey!

It's time to RECALCULATE. **GO**





*I can be in
Birmingham tonight*

[IF YOU WANT ME TO BE.]

By Traylor Lowvorn

collateral

to damage

I T WAS A BRISK SATURDAY MORNING in early fall when those words popped up in a chat window on my computer screen.

MELODY, MY WIFE, was at the grocery store and I was home alone, having just logged into an online instant messenger service I used often. The woman on the other end of that post lived somewhere in Kentucky. I had recently made contact with her in an online chat room.

An adult chat room. I stared at the words on my screen. My heartbeat sped up...palms began to sweat.



How easy it would have been to simply ignore her post. How easy it

would have been to tell her that I was not available to meet her later.

It was the moment of decision. I had recently found myself in adult chat rooms again after a ten-month hiatus. I started back innocently enough with sports chat, but quickly migrated back to the seedy and titillating adult rooms full of other bored, lonely, checked-out people looking to connect with

someone...anyone. Chat rooms and pornography gave me an instant escape from the pain of my past and the uncertainty of my present.

And there I sat staring at those haunting words on my screen...watching the cursor blink...knowing she was on the other end waiting for a response. I typed, "Ok" and, after what seemed like forever, finally hit "send."

At that moment, I knew my life would never be the same. Paralyzing fear and intense excitement rushed through me simultaneously. Terrifying fear because I knew what she was coming for and I knew that I would cross that final line...if

for no other reason than because she had driven all the way from Kentucky and I felt some twisted sense of obligation. The excitement flowed from playing with the forbidden. A needy and desperate part of me relished the fact that someone... anyone... was willing to drive over 350 miles to meet me.

I had sex with her that night and never even got her last name. Today, I can't even remember her first name. I never spoke to her again, but the damage had been done. I had added physical adultery to my secret life of pornography and chat rooms. I crossed a line that I never imagined crossing. The lies I had fed myself for years about pornography being innocent and "something men do" mocked me as I drove home that fateful Saturday night.



One word consumed my thoughts. Adulterer. The shame I felt and the contempt I had for myself was suffocating. I didn't recognize who I had become. What I had convinced myself was "not a big deal" had literally sucked the life out of me. I had become a shell of a man thinking only about the next opportunity I would have alone in order to get my fix.

And then I thought about my wife and kids. Telling Melody what I had done was not even remotely on my radar. I vowed this was the last time and was successful in "white-knuckling" my way around it for a while. Nine months later it happened again.

And again. And again. And again. By the time my secrets came out, it had happened seven times. Seven times over a three-year period. Secrets. Lies. Cover-up.

One word consumed my thoughts. Adulterer.

I was a desperate, conflicted, empty shell. I was a confused man...creating major problems. And then my two worlds collided and I was exposed. It was a beautiful undoing. Pain and relief rushed into my empty soul simultaneously. I finally stepped off my performance treadmill and was slapped in the face with the utter devastation my selfish behavior had caused. Words can't describe my wife's heartache and anguish over years of deception and betrayal. Her anguishing wail from behind our locked bedroom door will forever haunt me.

Our divorce was final in December of 2002.

recovery: *The journey home*



My secret struggle devastated my wife and four precious children. It had also devastated

me and led me to places I never dreamed I would go. It took losing my wife and kids for me to wake up and, like the prodigal son in Luke 15 who finally hit rock bottom and wandered back home, decide to come home. Unfortunately, I had drifted blindly for so many years that I first had to figure out where I was and how I had gotten there. Like the proverbial frog who failed to recognize the gradual changes in the water's temperature, I had been cooked alive.

The watershed event that threw me into the pot, so to speak, happened in the fall of 1993 when I was 22 years old. Though I had been exposed to pornography when I was 8, everything in my life had basically unfolded in a positive direction until then. I considered myself on the path of spiritual maturity as a teenager. I was able to keep my porn habit as an occasional, secret place of escape. My ultimate dreams were to play Division 1 basketball and become a pastor, leading others on their spiritual journeys.

During my junior year in high school, Samford University, a school that had just moved to Division 1, started recruiting me. They later had a change of heart and stopped recruiting me for an athletic scholarship, but instead asked me to be an invited walk-on. By that time I had secured a Presidential scholarship to Samford, so I still felt like everything was on track. I could clearly see how God was working things out.

Soon after arriving on campus, I realized I didn't have a spot on the team. I was devastated. My dream to play Division 1 basketball was crushed and it hurt deeply. Then, a few weeks later I got a call inviting me to pastor a new church plant starting nearby. One door closed and another opened, leaving me to reason that God had closed the door to my basketball dream so that I could fully devote my energies to becoming a pastor. This experience would set me up perfectly to make the most of future opportunities.

When graduation arrived in May 1993, I resigned from the church plant. Almost immediately, the perfect job seemed to present itself. I would travel the country, sharpening my skills as a communicator and leader, while making a difference in the lives of others. Things were coming together. It was all working out perfectly.

Then, out of nowhere, that door slammed shut. I was panicked and dejected. The next week, I found myself answering want ads, hoping to find a job so I could squeak out a living. I finally found a job in sales—something I'd never pictured myself doing. I had a dream, a quality education, solid experience and no doors to walk through. Selling cell phones in Birmingham wasn't a part of my plan. Couldn't be. As a result, I came to two fatal conclusions about God and His heart toward me based on that series of events:

1

God is angry about my struggle with pornography and this is His punishment.

2

God can't be counted on to take care of me. I am on my own.

Those two deadly lies began a slow drift that carried me aimlessly to that fateful Saturday morning staring at the blinking cursor of my computer. It wasn't a conscious parting of ways, but deep inside I felt like God was mad at me, punishing me, and that I had better fix things on my own so I could once again have fellowship with Him. I dutifully vowed to work harder and be more devout, but in my heart I wasn't so sure God could be trusted. I developed a strong sense that I was an orphan, on my own with a huge, perceived rift between God and me.

For the next decade, I dutifully went through the motions of being a devoted Christian husband and father, vowing over and



I was panicked and dejected... I had a dream, a quality education, solid experience and no doors to walk through.

over to “turn over a new leaf” and be more disciplined. I successfully walled myself off emotionally from those closest to me in order to avoid the possibility of being hurt any further. I numbed the ache of my soul by escaping to adult chat rooms...preferring to live in a virtual world that didn’t exist because I was too much of a coward to allow myself to live in the real world.

But early one morning as I was reading the Bible, God’s grace broke through with this thought:

“God knew all about my sexual addiction and seven affairs when He saved me at the age of 11.”

That lone thought broke the logjam of unbelief in my mind and I began to understand just how amazing and wonderful God’s grace is. I began to uncover more lies I had bought into that further skewed my view of God and His tender mercies toward me. I realized I had related to God in two inconsistent ways at the same time. I vacillated between believing God loved me because of my performance on the one hand, and thinking I had forfeited my relationship with my Father because of my habitual sin on the other.

My journey home has been painful and gut wrenching and there were many times I wondered if it was worth it. Along the way I discovered that true, genuine healing is found on the other side of pain. On this journey, God exposed my deep unbelief. And I discovered I could invite Him into my pain and trust that He desired to heal my brokenness.

I also discovered that God really does love me unconditionally and I don’t have to hide who I really am. I no longer have to keep people at arm’s length to protect my reputation. I can drop the masks that I hid behind for so long and connect with others at a point of weakness rather than trying to impress with strength. My own recovery journey into Authentic Manhood has taught me to live as God’s beloved son instead of believing the lie that I’m an abandoned orphan who has to figure life out on his own.

I also discovered that God really does love me unconditionally and I don’t have to hide who I really am.

The rest of the story



Melody and I were married for 11 years before my struggle with pornography and sexual addiction ripped our family apart. This tragic upheaval left both of us reeling and disrupted our status quo, to say the least. The appearance of the “perfect” life that we both worked so hard to maintain came crashing down around us in 2002.

I did not realize it at the time, but God placed us both on a journey into authenticity after our divorce. This journey painfully exposed the deep unbelief that haunted us and kept us on our performance treadmill for years. God lovingly brought us both to the end of ourselves and, after six years of divorce, we were remarried in October of 2008.

You can read more about our redemptive, grace story at our blog, **Ragamuffin Reflections**, at ragamuffinreflections.com. We also have a recovery ministry that offers help and hope to individuals and couples that have been impacted by porn and sex addiction called **Route1520** (route1520.com).



God lovingly brought us both to the end of ourselves and, after six years of divorce, we were remarried in October of 2008.

Create and Cultivate

SESSION TWO | Training Guide NOTES