

INTRODUCTION

Real Men is a fourteen-session Bible-study guide to be used by an older man and a teenage guy (or two teenage guys). The odd-numbered sessions (1, 3, 5 and so on) are to be done jointly, as a one-to-one (or a one-to-two, if you're doing *Real Men* with two teenage guys). The even-numbered sessions (2, 4, 6 etc) are to do on your own, in between meeting up. It's great if you can meet weekly, but fortnightly is fine too.

Each joint session should last between 30 and 45 minutes. But it works best as part of a time together that lasts between 60 and 75 minutes, and includes doing something together before you dig into the Bible. What you do depends on who you're working through *Real Men* with. It might be playing on a games console, or playing chess, or watching a TV series. But this time is almost as important as the time you spend studying the Bible—it helps build a real, trusting friendship between the two of you.

As you get towards the end of *Real Men*, it would be great to organise something to do together as friends. It might be going to a sports match, or doing some clearing out of a garden or yard, or some DIY—something that allows you to enjoy being guys together.

Of course, both with meeting up, and with a “social”, make sure that both the teenager's parent/guardian and your church pastor know what you are doing. If possible, meet up at the teenager's house—and, wherever you do meet, always make sure that there is someone else around and you are never in a room with the doors shut. Equally, try to do the sessions somewhere where you won't be overheard or constantly interrupted.

The aim of this leader's guide is simply to give you confidence that you're on the right track! You might want to use it to help you prepare sessions beforehand, or to check things afterwards—or you may find you don't need it at all! It's wise not to encourage the teenager to use these notes for his “solo” sessions, because the temptation to cheat and not bother to look at the Bible to find the answers might be overwhelming. The reason there are notes for the solo (even-numbered) sessions is so that you can help him with anything he found confusing when you next meet up.

These notes are not exhaustive and are kept deliberately short. If you want to look into Ephesians in more depth, a great place to start is the commentary in the *Bible Speaks Today* series, by John Stott. You can grab a copy here (<http://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-message-of-ephesians>).

We hope that *Real Men* helps both you, and the teenage guy you're reading it with, to be thrilled by what God has done for you through the Lord Jesus; to be equipped and challenged to live for Him every day; and to build a real, lifelong friendship, where

you can encourage each other to keep following Christ until you reach your glorious, eternal inheritance.

In other words, we pray that the Spirit will work through His word to enable and inspire you to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4 v 1).

SESSION 1 (Joint): YOU'RE A MAN IN A PLAN (Ephesians 1 v 1-14)

BIG IDEA:

Christian men are part of God's eternal plan, saved by the cross, given God's Spirit, and headed for eternity under Jesus' loving rule.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. This helps you both think about who you are—what it is that defines you. It's worth referring back to it when you get to Question 11 towards the end of the session.
2. From Paul, to the "saints" or "faithful" in Ephesus ie: the church there. You might like to look at the jargon buster for "saint" and then ask: what is Paul reminding Christians straight away about how they will live?
3. "In Christ". Do encourage your partner to read out loud unless he struggles with reading, in which case you should read out loud for him. Don't be tempted to ask him to read silently; if he struggles with a word, he'll just skip that sentence (we all do it!).
4. At this stage we get to the timeline (which is also in the book, p10-11) for the teenager to fill in). Write on different pieces of card: "Creation", "Cross", "Now" and "The end—Jesus returns". Put them on the floor in that order and explain that this is a timeline (timelines are much used in school history lessons, so the teenager should be familiar with the concept). Make an arrow and put it underneath to show the direction of time. Explain that we're going to look at a few verses in a bit more detail and work out what God's plan is.
Firstly, v 4—God chose us IN CHRIST even before the world was made. Get the teenager to write on a card "Chosen by God" (or something like that) and put it down under the timeline, before the "Creation" card.
This is amazing, because before God even made the world, let alone us, He had already chosen to bring particular people to eternal life with Him, as His children. Let your minds be blown away by that!
5. God paid the price, which was His own Son's blood—His death—in order to set us free, and to forgive our sins. Notice that forgiveness is won not by us doing anything, but by what God has done for us through Jesus' death.
There's no need at the moment to think too much about why people need redeeming – that comes in the next couple of studies.
The teenager can write on a card "Redeemed/bought back by God" and put it under "Cross".
6. The Holy Spirit.

Write down “Given Holy Spirit by God” and put it underneath the timeline, shortly before “Now” (assuming that your teenager is a Christian—otherwise, use this as an opportunity to talk about how you became a Christian yourself).

7. A slightly tricky question—make sure you’ve read and understood the text above the question about what a “deposit” is. The Spirit is given to someone as soon as they believe the gospel, and is a guarantee that they’ll one day be given the inheritance of eternal life with God. It’s great to have God living in us now—but that’s just a little taste of how amazing eternal life is going to be!

On the timeline, write “Enjoy inheritance of eternal life/place in God’s perfect world” (or however the teenager expresses it) and put it underneath “Jesus returns”.

Note: In verse 7, Paul talked about having been redeemed, set free, at the cross ie: in our past. In verse 14, he looks forward to being redeemed when we reach our inheritance. If this confuses one (or both!) of you, Paul is looking at the cross where we were set free, and our future inheritance as the place where we’ll fully enjoy the freedom that Jesus’ death brings us.

8. Christ. He will be “head” of everything, having judged sin and rebellion against Him, recreated the world perfectly, and given those He has redeemed their wonderful inheritance.

On the timeline, write “Jesus rules everything” and put it under “Jesus returns”.

9. This is to reinforce the timeline you’ve drawn up. If you want, you can clear away the timeline you’ve created and see how much of it you both remember as you write it in your booklets! Alternatively, if you haven’t created your timeline as you’ve gone along, you can just write it in from what you’ve seen in Q4-8.

10. “The praise of his glory”. God brings people into His eternal plan so that they can praise Him for who He is and what He’s done.

Since God—Father, Son and Spirit—is totally perfect, it’s right that He receives praise. And since the members of the Trinity are perfectly loving towards each other, they each work to bring each other the praise they deserve. So God’s plan is to bring Himself praise.

11. Make sure you stick to what you’ve got on your timelines, so that the answers are coming from the passage. Refer back to Question 1, and you might like to ask your teenager what Paul is showing us should be what is the most important things about us, if we’re Christians. (It’s likely your answers to Q1 are a bit different to the answer to Q11!)

12. Excited, privileged, grateful, and so on. There are no “right answers” here!

13. It might be worth spending some time writing your answers down separately, and then compare them. If you can see your partner is struggling, you could ask: What have we seen that God has done for Christians? Where are Christians headed? Is it good to be part of God's plan? Why, or why not? How should Christians feel about being a Christian? Is this how you feel about it? Why / why not? (or, if they're not a Christian—is this how you feel about the idea of being and living as a Christian?)

PRAYER TIME:

Encourage the teenager to write down a one-sentence prayer, from the passage; do it yourself too. Then pray those prayers together out loud, if he's happy to.

To finish, point out the memory verse and encourage the teenager to see if he can memorise it before the next week (unless your teenager has never read the Bible before, in which case don't push him too much!). And remind him about the "solo" session, which you'll both do on your own before the next "joint" session.

Do remember to praise the teenager and encourage him. This is a pretty tricky passage (it gets easier!) and he'll have done well to get through it!

SESSION 2 (Solo): MAN'S BIGGEST PROBLEM (Ephesians 2 v 1-3)

BIG IDEA:

Our biggest problem in life is that we are all sinners, spiritually dead and facing God's deserved anger.

How long you spend going through this study with the teenager next time you meet up will depend on their experience of Bible reading, general ability, and commitment. Since this is the first one, it's worth checking they've understood and answered each question from the passage (churched teenagers particularly like to pluck the "right answer" from their minds rather than actually looking at the passage!). Go through together any answers which they've put a "?" next to. And check that they've grasped the Big Idea. Again, it's important to offer lots of encouragement and praise; this may be the first Bible study they've ever done on their own.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

2. Without a diagnosis, you can't understand why you need the cure, or why it's great news that there *is* a cure!
4. Dead
5. "Transgressions and sins". Simply put, these mean the same thing—falling short of God's standards.
6. Objects of wrath.
7. We are all facing God's anger because of our sin.
8. Because it means we are sinners, and we are spiritually dead. We cannot enjoy eternal life in God's perfect world under Christ's loving rule (see Session One).
9. No. We are all sinners, rebels.

SESSION 3 (Joint): THE MAN'S SOLUTION (Ephesians 2 v 4-10)

BIG IDEA:

Because God is a loving God, full of grace (undeserved kindness), He has given us life and a place with Him in heaven through His Son. Amazing!

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS

1 – 2. These will help you check that the teenager grasped the main message of 2 v 1-3: that we are spiritually dead because of our sin, facing God's deserved anger, or "wrath".

If he struggles then, since it's a short section, do just read it through and take him through it gently. It is the first study he's done on his own in this booklet, and may be the first study he's ever done on his own!

3. "But" means that there is something to say which is the opposite to, or the solution to, what's gone before. So in Ephesians 2 v 4, it means that us facing God's deserved anger isn't the end of the story. There's still hope!

If your teenager is confident and is reasonably happy reading the Bible on his own, it is worth pointing out that looking out for linking words often helps us understand the meaning of a passage. Here "But" (as in Romans 3 v 21) is crucial. Other linking words include:

- *"Therefore"*—ask "What's the therefore there for?". It means: "Given what I've just said, here's how it applies" (eg: Romans 12 v1).
- *"So"*—is the shorter version of "Therefore".
- *"For"*—is the opposite of "therefore". It tells you why you should do the thing you've just been told to do (eg: Ephesians 5 v 8).

4. Verse 5—Made us alive. We were dead, facing eternity without God (v 1-3). Now we are alive, in relationship with God.

Verse 6—Raised us up with Christ. Just as Jesus rose from the dead to begin eternal life, so also has anyone who believes in Him.

Paul does not mention the cross explicitly in Ephesians 2 v 1-10, and so neither does the study. But as you go through, it is worth asking your teenager *how* people who are dead because of their disobedience can be made alive again. Remind him that in 1 v 7 we found that the way God redeems or "buys us back" is "through [Christ's] blood"; then perhaps use a verse such as 1 Peter 3 v 18—"Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" to make the following points, using the language of Ephesians 2 v 1-10:

- Christ, even though He was perfect ie: righteous, died a spiritual death of separation from God, which people who are disobedient deserve.
- He did this "for sins", in other words, to take our place—the righteous for the unrighteous.
- By taking our spiritual death and giving us His spiritual life (His "righteousness") He is able to bring us to God, to give us eternal life with God.

5. In heaven. Pretty exciting!

6. Because of His great love.

7. By GRACE—undeserved kindness.

One simple way to explain grace is in the form of a scenario:

You're playing with a tennis ball near a really expensive old window. Your headteacher asks you not to play with the ball near it as it might get smashed and then he will punish you by giving you a detention. You ignore him and sure enough the window is smashed. Three ways in which the head can react:

- *Judgment*: Punishing you by giving you a detention—giving you what you deserve and what he had warned you would happen.
- *Mercy*: Not giving you what you deserve. Letting you off the detention.
- *Grace*: Giving you something you don't deserve. Letting you off the detention and allowing you to have his three-course lunch. That is undeserved kindness.

Of course, God does judge our wrongdoing; He judges it in Christ instead of us (1 Peter 3 v 18). But this analogy, imperfect though it is, helps us understand what it means for God to give us grace.

8. Not by ourselves, and not by our works—in other words, not by anything we are or anything that we do.

Extra: Why does this mean “no-one can boast”? Because me being saved and having eternal life isn't anything to do with me. I can't pat myself on the back—I can only praise God. He sent Jesus to make me alive, and He gave me faith to believe in Jesus (v 8). God gets all the praise, and I don't do any boasting!

9. “Gift”.

a. No. It's given to you. If you had to earn it, it wouldn't be a present; it'd be your wages!

b. Because they like you, or love you, and want you to know that.

c. Take it! That's all. (Though it's good to say thank you!)

To illustrate this, you could give the teenager a wrapped-up bar of chocolate with a tag saying: “For [their name], with love from [your name]”

Ask whether they've earned it. Ask what the tag says about why you're giving it. Ask what they have to do to make the gift you're offering their own.

10. God gives His gift of eternal life on the basis of His love and mercy, to people who don't deserve it. So God's gift is given *despite* what we have done, not *because of* what we have done.

BOXED QUESTIONS

Depending on where you think your teenager is spiritually, choose one box or the other. Use the right-hand box if you're not sure he's a Christian. Use the left-hand one if you are confident he is.

- *Right-hand box:* Encourage the teenager to read each sentence, and work out his answers in his own mind. Then ask him if there's anything he wants to ask you about or talk to you about. You might want to ask him where he thinks he is heading beyond his death—equally you might judge that now is not the best time.
- *Left-hand box:* The idea here is to help the teenager see how God's grace gives us total assurance that we're going to heaven, because it's about what He's done for us through Jesus, not what we do. It'll also help you check they've understood grace!

11. "Do good works". We don't live God's way (ie: do good) *to be* saved, but *because we are* saved. It's exciting because God's prepared these for us to do. He's given us jobs to do for Him!

12-14: These are simply recapping the main thrust of the passage. You can spend longer or shorter amounts of time as you think best for your particular teenager.

PRAYER TIME

Two-sentence prayers this time!

Again, encourage each other to learn the memory verse—and see if you can remember last week's!

SESSION 4 (Solo): A MAN OF PRAYER (Ephesians 3 v 14-21)

BIG IDEA:

God's power works in us to help us grasp how massive Jesus' love for us is: and to change us so that Jesus rules our hearts more and more. We need to pray for this power!

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. Praying!
2. He can do absolutely anything—even more than we can imagine. So it's well worth asking Him for things!
3. Power.
4. Grasp how massive Jesus' love for us is.
5. Enable Jesus to dwell (ie: make Himself at home) in their hearts by faith.
6. Yes!
7. Because God can do anything for us.
8. For His power to work in them, to help them appreciate how much Jesus loves them, and to become more and more people whose hearts Jesus rules.

PRAYER TIME:

There are some practical tips here. You might like to use this section at the beginning of the next session, and ask the teenager how he gets on with praying; whether he has used/would find it helpful to use the STOP prayer structure (p23 in the booklet); and to share some tips from your own experiences of prayer. Don't be tempted to make excuses for not praying! It's easy to say it's hard, or a bit strange, or can seem like nothing's happening—but these can sound like reasons why it's OK not to pray.

SESSION 5 (Joint): A MAN AT CHURCH (Ephesians 4 v 1-13)

THE BIG IDEA:

As Paul tells us how to live as men who are part of God's plan, the first thing he says is to be part of a church, and to use our abilities to serve our church.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. A deceptively hard question! We might say: "Because they believe in Jesus". But you can't *see* belief! We might say: "Because they say they are". But they might be wrong, or lying. Keep encouraging the teenager to think about it, and hopefully he'll begin to think about the fact that it makes a difference to how they behave.

2. Encourage the teenager to put verse 1 in his own words. Paul urges Christians to live in a way which matches their "calling".

3. Holy (ie: distinctive) and blameless in God's view of us. We are meant to live in a way which shows our praise of His grace to us.

You might like to point to verse 5, too—we've been called to be God's children, living as part of His family.

4. The body of Christ, and as "one body".

5. Be in "unity" ie: good, close relationship with other Christians in a church community. Point out this isn't easy and doesn't come naturally—we need to make an *effort* to enjoy this kind of unity.

6. Be humble (ie: put others first) and gentle (kind). Be patient, bearing with one another in love (not getting cross or irritated by others' failings, but loving them even when they're not very lovely). This is difficult because we're used to thinking of ourselves, and because other people in church aren't perfect, and so they will annoy us!

Christians can work for a united church by... patiently loving each other.

7. Grace. All of us. (**Note:** Paul's talking to Christians here. Not absolutely everyone has been given this grace—but absolutely every Christian has.)

8. This is a hard question, because the beginning of v 12 ("prepare God's people") is a job for church leaders and teachers, not every single church member. The answer lies in what church leaders are to prepare all God's people (ie: us!) to do—"works of service". Make sure you tease out together what this means—we're to use the gifts God's given us to serve His people.

9. The church will be built up (end v 12)—it will grow and be strong. The church will be united (v 13). And the church will become more mature (v 13)—it will become more grown up and un-babyish in its faith (the next Solo session deals with the concept of Christian maturity).

Christians can work for a united church by... using their God-given gifts to serve each other.

10. Church isn't an incidental add-on for a Christian, of any age. It's essential. If we are serious about living as a Christian (v 1), we will be part of a church. This is crucial, because Christians often see (or treat) church as an optional extra—I go when I want to. Paul sees church as central to the Christian life—we go because we serve our Christian family there.

11. With humility, gentleness, patience and love. You might like to ask the teenager to give examples of what this would look like for him specifically in his particular church.

12. Jesus. To serve His people. Take your time thinking about the last part of this question—you might like to look forwards to *Section G: But what can I do?* at this stage.

SCENARIOS:

This is the first week with “scenarios”, which simply present the teenager with a realistic life situation and ask him to apply the Bible section to that circumstance or problem. The scenarios deal with the most likely mistakes in Christian lifestyle which the section addresses, and therefore hopefully allow the Christian teenager to see a wrong lifestyle and apply the passage to it, without you having to point out directly the ways in which he is/may be getting it wrong!

SESSION 6 (Solo): A GROWN-UP MAN (Ephesians 4 v 14-16)

THE BIG IDEA:

We grow up as Christian men and avoid getting things wrong by being part of a church, and by loving and speaking the truth to each other.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

3. By speaking the truth in love.

4. Christians are the “parts”. They do their work by using their God-given gifts to serve one another.

5. By speaking the truth in love.

Boxed bit:

The first quotation is speaking with love, but not in truth. The second is speaking the truth in love. The third is speaking the truth, but not in love.

SCENARIO:

You might want to start the next session by talking about this scenario, as it'll help you see whether the teenager has grasped the teaching of this session, and will be a useful recap of it.

6. They can be “tossed back and forth”, “blown here and there by every wind of teaching” because they listen to “deceitful” people. It's quite hard to put this in your own words! But essentially, “baby” Christians can easily be convinced to listen to someone who isn't teaching the truth of God's word, and so they can easily be led astray from believing in Jesus and living how He wants them to.

7. A useful question to think about at the beginning of Session 7. We need to go to church:

to serve other Christians with our gifts.

to grow up in our faith.

to speak the truth in love.

to avoid being led astray.

8. Because each part of a body relies on all the other bits. All of us need to do our “work” (of using our gifts and speaking the truth in love) if all the other bits are to grow well.

When you recap this session, don't dwell on false teaching with the teenager, unless you're concerned that he is or could be being exposed to it, in which case it might be worth taking a few moments to point out that clearly Paul felt this was a real danger in a real church, and that the solution is not to worry about false teaching but to aim for unity in faith in Jesus Christ (ie: to keep believing in and teaching salvation by grace, 2 v 8); and to aim to grow in knowledge of the Son of God (4 v 13). The more we know what is right the more we will be able to spot what is not right!

SESSION 7 (Joint): A MAN WHO IS DIFFERENT (Ephesians 4 v 17-28)

THE BIG IDEA:

Christian men won't live like those around us, because we've taken off our "old selves" and now live God's way. We must expect to be different!

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1-2. This is to introduce the idea of an old top and new top (or "self", v 22 and v 24)—one which you love to wear, the other which has been thrown out or is always left at the back of the wardrobe! You might like to come back to this idea after Q5, and point out that the behaviour which belongs to the "old self" should be just as alien to us, seem just as ridiculous to us, as putting back on a top we threw out ages ago because we hated it.

3. Old self = being corrupted (ie: ruined) by its deceitful desires ie: our feelings, which tell us doing something is a good idea, but which are lying to us.
New self = like God (wow!), in true (not deceitful) righteousness (living rightly) and holiness (purity).

You might like to have a coloured, preferably black, shirt to visualise the old self and a white shirt for the new self and take the black one off and put the white one on, and then lay them on the floor/table to use later on whenever necessary.

4-5. These questions are simply to make the point that if we take v 22 and v 24 seriously, we cannot expect to be similar to non-Christians around us. If we live as Christians, we'll be wearing a white shirt among people who wear black shirts, and of course that's noticeable. It's only if we put our old self back on that we will blend in. So, especially for teenagers, this isn't easy at all, and it's good to encourage the teenager to recognise this – if he doesn't, he will simply end up blending in with everyone else when things become hard. You might like to point out that when we are different to those around us because we are trying to live God's way, this is a sign that we're on the right track, not that something is wrong!

6. A Gentile (ie: non-Christian) is separated from the life of God. They do not have the spiritual life, the eternal perfect life, that only God can give (as we saw in 2 v 1-10).

7. No! "Lust" means a desperate desire for something. The things non-Christians do because they think it will satisfy them are never really satisfying. We always feel we need more of it.

You might like to think of examples from your own past of this, in case the teenager can't think of any or simply hasn't experienced this. One example would be getting drunk—it doesn't really satisfy, and we will need to do it again the next time anyway. Or our exam grades—we may get an "A", but there'll always be another exam we then feel we must do well in. It never seems enough.

8. Hopefully, the strength of the words Paul uses: futility (ie: uselessness), darkened, ignorant, hardening. Paul is talking about *our* non-Christian friends. And he's saying that there is a total difference between a Christian teenager and a non-Christian teenager. It's not that they're basically the same, but one happens to be a Christian. It's that everything about how they think, feel and act should and will be different. Point out to your teenager that this isn't how we tend to think about our friendship group and our world!

9. Taught. We need to be taught God's word, so that we can change our minds to see the world and our lives as God does.

10. (You might like to use stickers to put each of these "old self" and "new self" actions on the black and the white shirts, if you are using them.)

TABLE

V25:

Old self—Falsehood.

New self—Speak truthfully.

Why—Because we are all Christians, part of the church (Paul seems to be thinking of "neighbour" as "other Christians" here).

V 26-27:

Old self—Don't sin when you're angry, or hold a grudge.

New self—(Ask the teenager to come up with the opposite of the old self here: obeying God even when you're cross, forgiving quickly.)

Why—Because these things give the devil a chance to have influence over your life.

V 28:

Old self—Don't steal (or just expect others to give you stuff).

New self—Work hard yourself.

Why—So that you can share what you have with others (instead of making others give you things).

11. Each of us has different regular times and circumstances where living differently because we're a Christian is a particular challenge. Identifying those times is really helpful. Encourage each other to pick particular verses or truths from this passage to call to mind next time. You might like to "report back" next time you meet on how you got on.

SESSION 8 (Solo): MAN-TALK (Ephesians 4 v 29-32)

THE BIG IDEA:

A Christian is careful to use his tongue to build others up and help them, including pointing them to Jesus; and doesn't use his words to put others down.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. Say things which are "unwholesome".
2. This is fairly tricky: it includes swearing, sexual innuendo or jokes which cheapen sex, being harsh in criticising other people, being rude, talking about others negatively behind their backs, etc.
3. Because everyone else does. And because we want to look clever, or funny, or popular in what we say.
4. What is helpful to those around us, having thought about what they need us to say. It could be some praise, or a kindness, or stepping in to stop someone else being nasty. It also means encouraging Christians to keep following Jesus, and non-Christians to think about Jesus, as the text below the question points out.
5. Life would be better for them! The world around us would be a slightly happier, more positive, more trusting, more loving place.
7. They may well be more attracted to it. They will see that it makes a difference; that it changes people for the better.
8. We're to use our words on texts, Facebook etc in the same way as we do when we speak. Social networking is a place where people think far less about the content and consequences of what they say than they do when speaking face to face. We need to remember v 29 when using our mobiles or computers!

When you recap this session at the beginning of your next joint session, you might like to write out v 29 twice, and stick it above your computer and encourage your teenager to do the same (or to make the words his screensaver on his phone).

SESSION 9 (Joint): A MAN WHO LOVES RIGHT (Ephesians 5 v 1-14)

THE BIG IDEA:

God's people are to have a giving love, not a greedy love. This means avoiding all sexual immorality—no sex outside marriage, and no treating sex like a joke in how we talk about it.

Notes: Teenagers are all very different – and that's certainly true when it comes to sex and relationships. A 14-year-old guy may not have faced these issues in his own life yet. An 18-year-old may already have several sexual relationships behind him. A teenager might be sexually active, or have been brought up never even to mention it. In leading this session, you will need to gauge, firstly, where your teenager is at, and what issues they and/or their friends are likely to be facing in this area. And you will also need to be sensitive about the level of trust there is between you and him. You may know him well enough to have earned the trust to ask difficult questions in addition to what is in the booklet; or you may not have earned that level of trust yet. Also, this session may throw up lots of issues that you want to stop and think about as you work through the questions. It may be that it's a good idea to split this session into two, to give yourselves time to deal properly with any questions or issues that crop up.

Finally, it is possible that during this session your teenager will want to tell you something confidentially. Since you are in a position of trust as the legal adult, don't promise not to tell anyone else—he may be about to tell you something that you would need to share with your pastor. If anything crops up which you are concerned about, do speak to your pastor in confidence in the first instance. You might also like to read your church's advice on child protection issues.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. This is another image which makes the same point as the old self/new self picture. A Christian is someone who has passed from darkness to light. Notice that while we were once darkness all by ourselves, but we're made light "in the Lord"—it's knowing Him that makes us "light", not anything about ourselves.

2. Through grace (2 v 8). Not through what we do, or don't do. It's not by our works (v 9). The idea is to begin this study, and end it (Q12) by remembering that we're saved by what God has done for us, not by the way we live for Him.

3. **Correction:** The booklet should say verses 8-10, not verses 9-10.

V 8: Live as children of light. Since it's the Lord Jesus who *is* light, you might like to point out that this means being like Jesus.

V 9: Aim to show goodness, righteousness (living how God says) and truth in how you live.

V 10: Find out how to live in a way which pleases Jesus.

4. TABLE:

v 3 (a): Not even a hint of sexual immorality.

This means steering well clear of any form of sex outside marriage. (If the teenager has never come across why Christians don't have sex outside marriage, you might like to turn to Genesis 2 v 21-25, where we see the perfect relationship: marriage (v 24) is followed by "becoming one flesh" or sex—marriage comes before sex.)

v 3 (b): Impurity.

This means pretty much the same as sexual immorality above!

v 3 (c): Greed.

The context here is how we think about and "do" sex. So it's viewing intimacy with someone else in terms of what we get out of it, rather than how we can love and serve the other. (We return to this idea in Q10.)

v 4 (a): Obscenity.

Saying things about sex that make sex sound dirty or abusive or crude.

v 4 (b): Foolish talk.

Talking about sex in a way which ignores or denies what we know about sex – that it's a good, precious gift from God.

v 4 (c): Coarse joking.

Joking about things to do with sex

Note: Often for teenage boys, talking about sex with friends comes well before actually having any form of sex! So your teenager may well need to be challenged by verse 4, even if he's not yet at the stage where v 3-type actions have become a realistic possibility for him. You might also want to point out that there's a link between how we talk about something and how we end up thinking about and acting in that area of life. We mustn't think that talking about sex in a flippant, coarse, cheapening way won't have an effect on our actions when it comes to sex.

5. You might like to get the teenager simply to write the answer down in his booklet, rather than having to tell you. This may help him to be more honest.

6. Probably because Paul wants to drive home the seriousness of sinful sexual behaviour. Our culture tells us to be careful with sex because of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies—the consequences of getting it wrong are a horrible disease or a baby you don't want (or an abortion). The Bible tells us that the consequences of ingrained, unrepentant wrong behaviour are much worse than that—"God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient" (v 6). Paul is not messing about here—he wants to remind us that our behaviour in this area is a serious matter, not to be taken lightly.

BUT this doesn't mean we cannot be forgiven. We all deserve God's wrath for our disobedience—2 v 3-5 reminds us that in Christ Jesus, God offers us new life and forgiveness. Paul's point in 5 v 5-6 is that someone who goes on doing the things mentioned in v 3-4, without being sorry, asking for God's forgiveness, and honestly trying to change, is actually not living with Jesus as King—they are not a saved Christian. But if we are living like that, we can always ask for, and receive, forgiveness by turning back to Jesus as King.

7. Being thankful (to God). Because sex is a gift from God. We're not never to talk about it—but when we do talk about it, we're to do so in a way which acknowledges that sex is great, special, and God's gift to us. You might like to encourage the teenager, next time his non-Christian friends are talking about sex in a verse-4 way, to say something that mentions that sex is great, and God-gifted.

8. Christ's. By GIVING Himself up for us as a sacrifice—ie: by dying on the cross to take the punishment of God's wrath that we deserve.

9. Imitating it.

10. "Gives", and "greedy".

11. This is worth taking some time on in discussion.

12. We're saved by God's undeserved kindness in giving us Jesus to die for us and give us new life. We mustn't ever think that because we've messed up, we can't be forgiven or be Christians any more. When we sin, we need to thank Jesus for dying and rising for us.

It may be that during the session your Bible-reading partner (or you yourself) has realised that there needs to be serious, and difficult and costly, changes in his life. Do encourage him both that he can be forgiven for what he's got wrong, but also challenge him that he can't simply go on as he is—there needs to be a turning away from sinful behaviour.

13. Again, let the teenager (and yourself!) fill this in without sharing.

If you haven't already, at this stage remember to encourage the teenager to fill in "old self" and "new self" behaviour on his two tops in his booklet (p64-65).

SCENARIOS:

Mike needs to be challenged by verse 4.

Joel and Sarah may not be having full sex, but they are not obeying the command to avoid even a hint of sexual immorality. Anything that "isn't really sex" probably *is* sexually immoral. Better to avoid anything that even *might* be immoral, and save it to be enjoyed in marriage. Plus, notice that there is some greed in Joel's outlook—he wants to do things with Sarah so that he can look good in front of his friends. And Joel needs to remember verse 4, too—it's not right, or fair, to discuss Sarah with his mates.

Matt needs to listen to what God has said—and what He's said is that it's wrong. Sometimes (often!) our feelings are not good guides to right and wrong. And if we talk to God about something, we must be prepared to listen to Him too—and the way He speaks to us is primarily through His word. If His word says sex outside marriage is wrong (and it does!), then it's wrong. Matt needs to decide who he will obey: himself, or God?

SESSION 10 (Solo): A MAN WHO LIVES RIGHT (Ephesians 5 v 15-20)

THE BIG IDEA:

Christian men need to live carefully and thoughtfully—one main area to do this is in not getting drunk, but instead being influenced by the Holy Spirit.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

2. Careful. Wise.

3. Because the days are evil. We live in a world which is in rebellion against God (2 v 1-3), and so what's "normal" and acceptable to the world around us may well not be OK with God. So we need to be careful and think hard about how we live.

4. Get drunk.

Note: The Bible doesn't say not to drink alcohol at all (Luke 22 v 17-18).

Drunkenness is not having drunk alcohol: it's when you think or act differently than you would normally, because you've drunk alcohol. For some people, getting drunk means having one glass of wine; for others, it's eight pints of lager.

5. Because we want to fit in with what everyone else says is fun, and what everyone else does.

6. Be filled with the (Holy) Spirit. "Filled" here is about fully allowing the Spirit to influence and direct us—not about whether we have the Spirit or not.

7. a (v 19): Sing to one another the truths about God, and sing about God *to* God.

b (v 20): Give thanks to God for everything we have and do.

SESSION 11 (Joint): A MAN AND HIS WIFE (Ephesians 5 v 21-33)

THE BIG IDEA

Marriage is designed by God to be a picture of how Christ leads His people lovingly and sacrificially (a husband); and how His people lovingly submit to Him (a wife).

Note:

Your teenager (probably!) isn't married! But there are some good reasons for thinking carefully about the biblical view of marriage:

- It's good to realise that God sets the agenda for what we think about in the Bible, not our questions or current issues.
- Knowing what marriage is helps us to think about issues like dating and sexual ethics.
- Marriage helps us understand the relationship between Christ and His people, the church.

Do keep in mind the teenager's family background as you go through this study. Marriage may be a very raw topic.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

Because the Bible's view of marriage is always based on the first marriage in the Garden of Eden, we start in Genesis 2 v 21-25 before going to Ephesians.

1. Marriage (v 24—"A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife").
2. Perfect. They didn't want to hide anything from each other; they had no insecurities or embarrassment; they could trust each other completely. This was a perfect human relationship.
3. Because it would remind you of how lovely that place was.
4. It would be worth *something* (if only the paper it's printed on!). The better the likeness, the more valuable it would be. But it would never be as good as the real place itself.

Note: When you reach the image on page 60, return to the answers to Q3 and Q4. The idea is that marriage is a picture of something more wonderful than marriage itself—the relationship between Jesus and His church. Marriage is valuable in and of itself; and the more it portrays the love between Jesus and His church, the more valuable and enjoyable a marriage will be. But it can never be as good as the relationship it pictures.

5. Christ's example, in loving His church (this simply means His followers) and in giving Himself up for "her".

6. He gave Himself up for His followers. Make sure you both understand this means that, ultimately, He died for His church.

7. To die for her. It means giving up what's easiest, most comfortable, or most fun for you as a husband, and doing whatever it takes to do what's best for your wife. You won't have to die every day (obviously!), or perhaps ever—but every day, you will die to what you want, to do what's best for your wife.

8. The beginning of verse 27 is the place to focus—“radiant”, “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish”.

9. “Holy” (ie: pure) and “blameless” (ie: not having done anything wrong in God's sight).

10. A woman's purity, and the way she lives to please God. That should be more important to us as men than how a woman looks physically; and a husband's main aim in his marriage should be to help his wife continue to follow Jesus, and to do so better and better. It's worth pausing here to ask: how is this different from what films, magazines and our friends say matters most? How do you feel about this idea of the inner beauty of godliness being far more important?

Pause on the picture after Section E (p60 in the booklet): it might help you link this back to Q3 and Q4 by asking:

What is marriage a picture of? What should we be reminded of when we look at a husband and a wife together?

Is marriage worth anything in itself (Yes! Just as a picture can be great in and of itself.)

Is it as good as what it points to? (no! Jesus' love is better and achieves more than a husband's. Being a submitting follower of Jesus is more important and more wonderful than being a wife.)

11. If your teenager struggles to come up with these differences, you could read out the “society” statements here, and get him to come up with the biblical response to them by asking: Does the Bible agree with this view? Why/why not?

Society: Sex is to be had as early as possible, as much as possible, and probably with lots of different people. It might be that you choose only to have sex with someone you're in love with—but it's definitely crazy to wait till you're married. That would mean you were missing out.

Bible: Sex is a wonderful gift, to be kept for someone you can totally trust, and be honest and open with, because you know they're sticking with you for life—a marriage partner. If you have it outside that wonderful relationship, you're missing out—and you're making yourself miss out on enjoying sex only within marriage.

Society: Marriage is a temporary thing, between two people, man and woman, two guys, or two women. If you stop feeling that you're in love, or the other person doesn't make you happy, then you can leave. And if you just want to live with someone, that's fine—you don't need to get married.

Bible: Marriage is a lifelong commitment, designed by God, between one man and one woman. It's the place where sex is to be enjoyed. It's the place where you can be yourself—where you can be open, honest, vulnerable, trusting. It's wonderful!

Society: Husbands and wives have the same role in a marriage. (Apart, obviously, from the fact that wives are the ones who give birth!)

Bible: Husbands are the loving, sacrificial head of a marriage. It's their responsibility to lead the marriage, giving up what's easiest for them to do what's best for their wife—even if that involves dying for them. Their main aim is to help their wife keep following Jesus, and to become a better follower of Jesus.

Wives love and submit to their husbands, letting them lead and encouraging them to do it. They let their husbands give up what they want to do what's best for the wife.

12. We need to ask: Am I willing to die for this girl? Am I going to, with God's help, put her first every day, even when I'm tired, or annoyed, or ill? Is my greatest desire for this girl that she keeps living as a Christian, and do I help her to love Jesus better and better? Am I willing to commit to her for life, whatever happens? If she got ill the day after our wedding and never did anything for me again, would I stick by her, loving her and doing what's best for her?

We need to ask: Is there a possibility I might marry this girl one day? Ie: is she a Christian, do we help each other follow Jesus, would I want to have sex with her once we're married? And, will I be able, with God's help, to go out with her and not be sexually immoral, because that would mean taking away her joy of only knowing her husband sexually, and it would mean stealing her future husband's (me, or someone else) joy of knowing she'd not already been sexually active with someone before marriage?

These are all big, and challenging, questions. It's worth pointing out that it's not the kind of thing most teenage guys ask! But Christian guys should do, because our love is meant to be like Jesus' love—giving, not greedy. We're meant to live as real men, not children who just are out to get what we want. And we are supposed to treat girls as real people, not just ways to sound impressive to our mates, or get pleasure for ourselves. It's very easy with marriage, sex and dating just to do the easy thing, especially when everyone else seems to be; but Christian men should be real men, and do the right thing.

Note: There are a couple of pages on what the Bible says about the issue of dating on page 66; and a couple of pages on a biblical view of homosexuality, too.

SESSION 12 (Solo): A FAMILY MAN (Ephesians 6 v 1-9)

THE BIG IDEA:

Christians who are dependent on their parents for somewhere to live and for their finances should obey their parents.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

3. Obey their parents.

4. Life goes better, and life lasts longer.

5. In lots of ways! By asking for, and seriously considering, their advice. By keeping in regular contact. By not criticising them or moaning about them to other people. By helping them when they need it (this is particularly an issue as parents get older). By spending time with them, even when that means missing out on something else.

6. Not to exasperate their children (ie: not to be unfair, or inconsistent, or use them to look good).

But to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (ie: teach them who Jesus is, and how people can live for Him). A father can't make a child a Christian (only God can do that); but they can show and teach them what a Christian believes about Jesus, and why it's great to live Jesus' way.

SCENARIOS:

It's worth looking at the last one together at the start of the next session. Christian children should obey God first and foremost; so if a parent tells them to do something which would disobey God, then a Christian child, respectfully and honestly, needs to disobey their parent so they can obey God. Of course, the vast majority of times when a teenager wants to disobey a parent, it is not because of how God tells them to live, but because of how they themselves would like to live!

SECTION 13 (Joint): A MAN OF WAR (Ephesians 6 v 10-20)

THE BIG IDEA:

The Christian life is a battle to resist the devil and follow Jesus—and God has given us each all we need to stand firm.

Depending on the character of your teenager, it might be worth watching a few minutes of a war movie (check the rating!) beforehand, as Q1 is intended to be a link between our enjoyment of war-hero films, and the reality of our spiritual warfare.

Since this is your last session together, do arrange to do something social together at some stage soon, either just the two of you or with friends, something which is suitably “manly” (like watching a war film! Alternatives might be: going to a sports event, going hiking, doing some DIY or garden-clearing.)

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. There’s something about a battle that is “blokey”! We tend to love the hero, who faces great odds and stands firm and in the end wins—and we tend to want to be him, too!

2. Correction: The word you’re looking for isn’t in verse 10.
STAND. Take your stand / stand your ground / stand / stand firm.

3. The devil, and all the powers and authorities in the spiritual world that are on his side. The struggle is “not against flesh and blood”—this wouldn’t be a battle you could film, but it is a real battle.

4. This answer isn’t in the passage, but the devil is “fighting” the Christian because he wants to overpower him, stopping him following Christ and living as a Christian. You might like to turn to 1 Peter 5 v 8: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”. The devil hates the fact that, in Christ, we are alive eternally—his great aim is to make us dead again, by convincing us not to trust Jesus anymore.

5. Again, the answer isn’t explicit in the passage—but Paul is writing to normal Christians in chapter 6, and so the answer is EVERY Christian. It’s not just a battle for pastors or youth workers or “special” Christians. It’s every Christian, including both of you.

6. Put on all the armour God gives us. Notice that God supplies the armour, but we need to decide to put it on.

7. *Belt = truth:* God’s truth is the foundation of everything—the belt went underneath a Roman soldier’s clothing and he tucked his tunic under it and hung his sword from it. The sense is of hidden strength and confidence.

Righteousness = breastplate: the status of being right with God, and living God's way, is the ultimate defensive base.

Shield = faith, which puts out the devil's flaming arrows. When the devil attacks by suggesting that we are not good or able enough to stand on Christ's side, faith replies that on our own we are not but in Christ we find forgiveness and acceptance from him.

Sword = word of God: the Bible is what God uses to get through people's spiritual defences and enable them to see who he is. This is an attacking weapon, taking the fight to the devil.

Shoes = gospel of peace: this isn't completely clear, but "readiness" can also mean "equipment"—so we won't slip because we know we are at peace with God, and on His side.

8. Prayer.

9. Because God can do absolutely anything, and so can enable us to stand firm and not give in when the devil tempts us not to live Jesus' way. Prayer is a bit like an airstrike, which we can call in to hit the enemy and make him retreat. So Paul uses the word "all" repeatedly; spiritual warriors must pray all the time about all sorts of things and for all Christians, and always do so.

10. Make the gospel message known "fearlessly", even though he's in chains. The devil wants Christians to keep quiet, because talking about Christ's gospel is a wonderful way to take the fight into enemy territory and win new soldiers for Jesus. What better way for both of you to stand firm against the devil than to tell others that they can change sides and be made alive through Christ?!

11. When we are tempted, the devil is trying to knock us over as Christians. He's trying to stop us living under God's rule, and ultimately he's trying to get us to stop trusting that we have forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus.

When we're tempted, we need to *realise that we are in a battle*. So it is going to be hard to resist the temptation, but we must not give in. We need to *put on our armour*: to remember what is true about God and about how to live; to remember we are righteous; to have faith in Jesus; to remember we're at peace with God; to remember what God says in His word (interestingly, in Luke 4 v 1-11, when Jesus is tempted, He actually quotes Bible verses at the devil to resist him, which we could do, too). And we can pray that God will enable us to stand firm. And then we need simply to say "no" to the devil—we need to win this particular battle by simply *standing firm and living Jesus' way*.

13. Because it's how people can be rescued from living under the devil's power, disobeying God, and facing His eternal anger. It's the way people realise they can put their trust in Christ, follow Him, and have eternal perfect life.

We often try to avoid doing it because we are worried people might not listen; they might laugh at us; we might say the wrong thing; we just don't love people, or God,

enough to try to gain God more praise by telling people how great He is. These aren't very good reasons!

A word on the devil...

It may well be that as you go through this Bible section your teenager will want to know a bit more about the devil. This is just a short start-to-finish guide to what the Bible has to say.

When God made the physical and spiritual realms, He looked at it all and saw that it was "very good" (Genesis 1 v 31). At that time therefore the angelic world must have been wholly good. However, by the time of Genesis 3 the serpent, who is the devil (Revelation 12 v 9), was tempting Eve to sin, successfully. Therefore, at some stage between creation and the events of Genesis 3, some angels did "not keep their positions of authority [as angels, with great power under God's rule] but abandoned their own home" (Jude 6). It is likely that Isaiah 14, which is describing the fall of a Babylonian king, moves into describing the fall of the devil in verses 12-15, where Isaiah says: "You have fallen from heaven ... you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God ... I will make myself like the Most High'. But you are brought down ... to the depths of the pit."

Since then, beginning with Eve, the devil "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5 v 8). The devil has power because, as sinners, we are all under the right penalty of spiritual death and cannot have the eternal life that God created humanity to enjoy.

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3 v 8; see also Luke 11 v 17-22), which he did on the cross (Hebrews 2 v 14). Now that sinners can be forgiven, we need no longer be under the devil's power: his only real weapon, of pointing out to God that people have sinned and must be judged, has been taken away through Jesus becoming sin for us and bearing our judgment (2 Corinthians 5 v 21; Colossians 2 v 15).

One day the devil will be made totally powerless, and punished for ever by God (Revelation 20 v 10); until then, he still retains some power and thus wages war against God's people (Ephesians 6 v 10-13).

So at the moment, the devil is powerful but defeated. Perhaps a useful illustration is from the Second World War. Once the Allied troops had landed in France on D-Day in June 1944, Hitler's defeat in the war was certain. However, it took until May 1945 for final victory, when he was rendered powerless and destroyed. Between June 1944 and May 1945 Hitler was defeated but powerful, and succeeded in taking millions of people to death along with him. Living between the cross and the final judgment, we know the devil is defeated but he still has the power to tempt us. He is still aiming to convince us to sin, and then convince us we either do not need forgiveness, or cannot have forgiveness. So as Christians we need to "stand your ground" (Ephesians 6 v 13); and when we fail to, we need to turn back to Jesus as our King and the way we are forgiven.

SECTION 14 (Solo): A REAL MAN (Ephesians 6 v 21-24)

THE BIG IDEA:

The Christian life is all about grace, the grace that anyone who loves Jesus as their Lord and King enjoys.

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS:

1. Tychicus. A dear brother, faithful servant in (ie: "of") the Lord.
2. To tell them how Paul is doing, and to encourage them to keep going.
3. Because Paul faced the same challenges as we do, lived in the same world as we do, experienced the same highs and lows of life as we do. He's not telling us to live in any way that he wasn't trying to live himself. He knows what real life is like (as, of course, does Jesus, God's Son). So what he says isn't unrealistic or far-fetched—it's a real Christian man telling real Christian men how to follow the real Jesus in the real world.
4. Grace.
5. Undeserved kindness.
6.
2 v 5: made us alive (eternally).
1 v 13-14: given us the Holy Spirit now, and guaranteed us perfect life eternally (our "inheritance").
4 v 7, 11-12: given us gifts and abilities to use to serve other Christians in our church.
6 v 11: all we need to stand firm in our battle with the devil.