CONFESSIONAL COURAGE

“The Crisis For Manhood”

Review Booklet and Questions

OVERVIEW

Summary

Modern culture hands men a costume: the things they own, the vehicle they drive, the status they have reached, and the political side they take. The message is that enough accomplishing and earning will finally make a man real. What this produces is not manliness but self-absorption, a habit of measuring life by what can be displayed to others instead of by the life God has actually given.

Meanwhile, many men stay silent about the truth they have received (the Word, the Gospel, and the Sacraments), treating faith as a private hobby. That silence leaves other voices free to shape families, and it shows up as excuses, chasing another hit of dopamine through screens, absence in the home, and passivity in the Church. Failures get softer names (cowardice becomes wisdom, laziness becomes rest, selfishness becomes boundaries), and renaming sin becomes a way to avoid repentance. Sin is rebellion against God, and it never harms only the one who commits it; wives, sons, and daughters all feel the weight.

The answer is not to brainstorm a better version of manhood alone, nor to hide from God in shame, but to return to Christ. Jesus lived faithfully where men have failed and gave himself for his bride, the Church. His authority was never used to serve himself, and that self-giving love is the pattern for husbands and fathers. A Christian man is not one who never fails, but one who stops making peace with his sin and keeps coming back to Christ for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is delivered through the means of grace: the Word, Baptism, absolution, and the Lord's Supper. Because Christ has saved us, men are free to live for others: to confess to a pastor, to seek forgiveness from a wife, to pray with children, to read Scripture and teach the Small Catechism at home, and to stand firm in the faith. Authentic manliness begins at the foot of the cross, in the identity given in Baptism, and it is lived out in strength that rests on faith rather than pride.

READ

Scripture to Read

1 Corinthians 16:13–14	Be watchful, stand firm, act like men, be strong, and do everything in love.
Ephesians 5:25–33	Christ gave himself up for his bride, the pattern for a husband's self-giving love.
Deuteronomy 6:4–9	Teaching God's Word to children in the ordinary life of the home.
1 John 1:8–9	Refusing to excuse sin, confessing it, and receiving forgiveness.
Romans 6:3–11	Identity given in Baptism: united to Christ in his death and resurrection.

REFLECT

Review Questions

1. Which pieces of the “costume” (possessions, vehicle, status, politics) are you most tempted to measure yourself by, and what does that cost the people closest to you?

2. What softer names do you tend to give your own sins? What would it look like to call one of them what it is and bring it to Christ?

3. Where has silence crept into your home or your church? What conversation or responsibility have you been avoiding?

4. Who looks to you for an example of what a man is? Name one faithful, concrete thing you will do this week for them.

5. When you fail, where do you run? How does your Baptism change the way you answer the question “Who am I?”

WRITE

Notes