

# RISE OF THE SERVANT KINGS

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS  
ABOUT BEING A MAN

LEADER'S GUIDE

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Maybe I should call this a “servant’s guide,” not a “leader’s guide,” because if you facilitate a discussion group around my book *Rise of the Servant Kings*, you will be practicing servanthood with the other guys in your group. And that’s what it’s all about!

Whatever you call it, this guide—alongside the book—contains everything you need for conducting life-changing discussions about godly manhood. I’ve grouped the seventeen chapters of the book into six focused sessions. Each session should take about forty-five minutes to an hour. I don’t think you’ll find that keeping a good conversation going is hard at all.

Before each session, read the chapters to be discussed and mark them up with your own underlining and margin comments. Then look at the questions for the session in this guide and think about your own answers to them. Feel free to adapt or expand the session material for your particular group. Throughout it all, pray for God to speak into the hearts of your group members—your servant kings.

My prayer for *you* is that you will find studying and applying *Rise of the Servant Kings* to be personally transforming, so that you will be able to not merely discuss concepts from the book but also model how a man surrenders to God.

Thanks for serving,

Ken

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# SESSION 1

Based on chapters 1–3 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

Warm-up

If the servant kings in your group don't know one another well, start out by asking them questions like these:

- Tell us about your family.
- What's your work?
- What do you do for fun?
- Who is one leader in history you admire, and why?
- When did God become more than a word to you?

## Introduction

Use these words (or similar ones of your own) to introduce this session's theme: Most of us guys think that being a man is all about *doing*. And in a way, it is. But for a man who is following Christ, we have to remember that it's not about *our* desires and *our* actions. Instead, what does *God* want us to do? Being a servant king requires us first to submit ourselves to the Lord. He can do greater things through us, as we are yielded to Him, than we could ever do on our own.

# Prayer

Before starting a discussion based on the first three chapters of the book, invite God to be present in your group and teach all of you to how to become men who earn His approbation “Well done!”

# Discussion

[1.1] What motivated you to read *Rise of the Servant Kings*?

*PRO TIP: If no one immediately answers a question, you've got some options: (1) Give your own answer first, thereby priming the pump. (2) Call on one of the servant kings, by name, to answer. (3) Let the silence go on for a while, giving your servant kings more time to think of a response.*

[1.2] What are the major life goals you are pursuing or want to pursue?

[1.3] Describe your struggles or advances in surrendering yourself to God.

[Scripture Question] Ask one of your servant kings to read aloud Matthew 25:14-30.

After the reading, ask: What might change in your life if you reminded yourself every morning that your goal is to deserve the Lord's “Well done”?

[2.1] How have your own sinful tendencies stood in the way of your becoming the godly man you want to be?

PRO TIP: *Whenever a question requires your servant kings to reveal their weaknesses or touches on hurts in their hearts, DO encourage transparency but DON'T coerce individuals into answering. Developing a culture of trust and confidentiality within the group will help your servant kings feel more comfortable opening up over time.*

[2.2] Describe some progress you've made in overcoming sin. What helped?

[2.3] How has putting sinful practices behind you freed you up to serve God more effectively?

[3.1] Who is Satan and what is his game?

[3.2] What is an example of a lie that "the father of lies" has told you—and you believed it? What impact did this have on your life?

[3.3] Describe a time when you recognized a temptation Satan had laid before you for what it was—and you avoided it.

## Summary

To make sure your servant kings have a succinct summary of this session's key idea, read this to them: God calls us to become men of faith and action who do His will—and that's not easy. It requires us to overcome our own sinful nature and ignore the lies Satan tells us.

## Challenge

Encourage your servant kings to set aside some extended time—at least one full hour—during the coming week to spend in prayer, confessing sin, recommitting themselves to following Jesus, and seeking the Holy Spirit's leading in their life.

# SESSION 2

Based on chapters 4–6 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

## Lookback

Ask your servant kings how their “challenge” prayer time went after the last session. Would one or more guys want to describe something they thought the Holy Spirit was telling them while they were praying?

## Introduction

How do we, as men, know what we should be spending our lives doing? Should we be following our own vision and doing what we want, how we want? Should we be doing what others are telling us to do? (But what if they are wrong?) It’s easy to expend a lot of effort in an endeavor that was never worth doing in the first place. Maybe, therefore, before we act we should make sure we’ve heard from God what we should be doing.

## Prayer

Pray for your servant kings, asking God to give them the grace they need to yield their lives wholly to Him so that His will becomes their will.

## Discussion

[4.1] Have you ever tried to do something for God in your own strength and according to your own agenda—and then seen it blow up in your face? Tell the story.

[4.2] A preacher said, “If we are truly converted, we shall not only be turned and converted from sinful self, but we shall be converted from righteous self.” How can our “righteous self” get in the way of trusting in God?

[Scripture Question] Ask one servant king to read aloud Romans 7:14—8:13. The others may wish to read along silently in their own Bibles. After the reading, ask: What does Paul say here about himself that reminds you of you?

[4.3] What steps do you still need to take in yielding to God and not relying on yourself to accomplish good works?

[5.1] What evil or worldly voices do you pay too much attention to? What makes you susceptible to these voices?

PRO TIP: *Try to keep the session from degenerating into complaints about other people or society as a whole. It's important to recognize the dangers that are out there, but here your group is focusing on the changes they need to make.*

[5.2] What helps you tune out false and distracting messages so that you can concentrate on what God is saying to you?

[5.3] If a friend told you that he had a big decision ahead of him and didn't know what to do, what advice would you give him about seeking the Lord's will?

[6.1] Have you ever been a part of a church or ministry that either overplayed sin or underplayed it? If so, describe the experience. What effect did it have on you?

[6.2] How do you struggle with a temptation to discriminate against a certain kind of people?

[6.3] What can you do to avoid false teaching and get to know God better as He really is and obey Him?

## Summary

Serving God means abandoning self-effort and listening to God's voice above all others (including misleading voices from within the church).

## Challenge

Encourage your servant kings to take some decisive action to cut themselves off from anything that prevents them from focusing on God's voice. This action will differ from man to man. For example, one might need to stop listening to a legalistic radio preacher. Someone else might need to break off a relationship with a friend who is racist.

# SESSION 3

Based on chapters 7–10 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

## Lookback

See if any of your servant kings would be willing to describe the decisive action they took to cut themselves off from something that was preventing them from hearing God's voice.

## Introduction

Starting with this session, we'll be looking at practical aspects of being a servant king. By now, you should not be surprised that the boldest and most costly actions start with the most lowly, Christlike attitudes. Today we'll look at holiness and humility and then courage and generosity.

## Prayer

Ask the Lord to help all the men in the group learn to see themselves as He sees them and to accept the changes He wants to make in them.

## Discussion

[Scripture Question] Ask one of your servant kings to read aloud 1 Peter 1:13-16. After the reading, ask: How do you feel about the fact that God expects you to be holy as He is holy?

[7.1] In what areas do you see yourself as having good self-control? In what other areas do you struggle to control yourself?

[7.2] How does the Holy Spirit help us in our pursuit of holiness?

[Scripture Reading] Read aloud Philippians 2:1-11 and then move on to the next question.

[8.1] Describe your struggles with pride.

[8.2] How has your view of yourself changed as a result of following Christ?

[9.1] Describe a time when a tough situation either exposed some cowardice inside you or else revealed to you that you can summon up bravery when you need to.

[9.2] What's the riskiest thing you've ever done to help someone else?

[9.3] Is courage something a man can learn or develop in himself if it's lacking? If so, how would you go about it?

[10.1] What is your reaction to the idea that generosity is a form of worship?

[10.2] In what areas are you most generous? In what areas are you less generous, and why do you think that is?

[10.3] How strong is your faith that God will provide for you and your family? Is this something you worry about?

## Summary

The qualities of a servant king begin with holiness (being set apart for God) and humility (seeing things as God sees them). Out of humility arise the further Christlike qualities of courage and generosity.

## Challenge

Challenge your servant kings to do something that takes courage or requires costly generosity to help another. Brainstorm with your group what these actions might be. Speak up for a co-worker who is being treated unfairly by a boss? Give up your Saturday afternoons to coach a kids' ball team? Go before the school board to criticize immoral assumptions in the sex ed being taught in your district?

# SESSION 4

Based on chapters 11 & 12 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

## Lookback

Ask for a volunteer or two to describe the courageous or generous act they performed in response to Session 3. Give praise to all who took action on others' behalf.

## Introduction

Most guys are ambivalent about leadership. We are attracted by the idea of being a leader, but at the same time we think of the demands and risks of leadership and feel like retreating into our shell, where it's safer. But God does call us all to be leaders—*servant* leaders—and He remains by our side as we obey Him.

## Prayer

Pray for your servant kings to learn to overcome the eternal male temptation of passivity and to accept the mantle of leadership God is holding out to them.

## Discussion

[11.1] How have you been influenced by false ideas of masculinity within your family or community?

[11.2] True masculinity is being *proactive*, being a *protector*, and being a *provider*. Of those three “p” areas, which are you weakest in, and why? Which are you strongest in, and why?

[11.3] Since overbusyness is an enemy of being proactive, how could you free up time in your schedule to make yourself more available for helping out others?

[11.4] If a man wanted to learn how to become a better leader, who or what might help him in that?

[Scripture Question] Ask one group member to read aloud Genesis 2:18-25 and another to read aloud Ephesians 5:24-27. After the readings, ask: What are some of the big take-aways about the nature of marriage in these two pivotal passages?

PRO TIP: If any of the servant kings in your group are unmarried, be sensitive to their feelings and try not to let them feel left out of the discussion. *All* men are called to be leaders—and in fact, figures such as Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul show us that some of the greatest leaders are single.

[12.1] What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? What does it mean for a husband to lead his wife?

[12.2] If you are married, in what ways do you want to become a better servant leader to your wife?

[12.3] What works in overcoming a lust problem, so that a husband may desire his wife alone?

[12.4] What kinds of words and actions help a wife to feel safe and cherished by her husband?

## Summary

Being a servant king means being a leader, especially (if one is married) to one's wife.

## Challenge

Invite your servant kings to spend some time in the coming week prayerfully journaling about ways they could be more proactive about leadership—with their wife, with their kids, on the job, or wherever it might be. Being proactive means looking for problems and taking initiative to tackle them before they become worse.

# SESSION 5

Based on chapters 13–15 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

## Lookback

Ask for a volunteer or two to tell how they have begun to be more proactive as leaders. Mention that this session is about a particular kind of proactive leadership.

## Introduction

Godly men are fighters—spiritual fighters. We stay alert for threats (lies and temptations) to those we love and we come against the forces of evil in the spiritual realm with prayer and the truths of God’s Word.

## Prayer

Ask God to open the eyes of your servant kings to the dangers facing them and those they lead. Ask Him also to give each man boldness in spiritual warfare and confidence in Christ’s ultimate victory.

## Discussion

[13.1] What are some of the most destructive false ideas about faith or morality circulating in our society?

[13.2] How do you try to protect your family or others from falsehood?

[13.3] If you were a drill sergeant at a boot camp for spiritual warriors, what basic skills would you teach your recruits?

[14.1] Describe your prayer life and what it means to you.

[Scripture Question] Read aloud Ephesians 6:10-17. After the reading, draw a diagram of the armor of God (it doesn't matter if you're not a good artist) and identify the spiritual meaning of each piece. Ask, Which pieces are missing from your spiritual armor? Finally, read Ephesians 6:18 and go to the next question.

[14.2] How could you make intercessory prayer (praying for the needs of others) a bigger or more effective part of your spiritual life?

[14.3] If you had a friend who expressed that he was bored with praying or was weary of it, what would you say to him?

[15.1] What prayer are you waiting for God to answer? How do you feel about the wait you're enduring?

[15.2] How has waiting on God molded your character?

[15.3] What things help you renew your faith to keep praying and trusting in God to answer?

*PRO TIP: If you have time, invite your servant kings to get together in twos or threes, share the threats that they and their loved ones are currently facing, and pray for one another.*

## Summary

A servant king battles the forces of evil in the spiritual realm, persistently praying and patiently waiting on the Lord for His response.

# Challenge

Challenge your servant kings to lovingly and prayerfully—yet boldly—confront some instance of evil, falsehood, or injustice that is facing them or their families.

# SESSION 6

Based on chapters 16 & 17 of *Rise of the Servant Kings*

## Lookback

Ask your servant kings to tell what they did to confront evil, as they were challenged to do at the end of the previous session. Point out that these examples show that the men are truly becoming servant kings.

## Introduction

To conclude our time with *Rise of the Servant Kings*, we're going to push each other to actually start living as God's servant kings. If your relationship with Christ isn't what it should be, if you have lost confidence in yourself, it doesn't matter—you can begin *now* to live as a man of faith and action who is surrendered to and following God. Life's short. Today is the day to start living as if you're worthy of the crown that God wants to give you.

## Prayer

Give thanks and praise to God for creating and redeeming us—and being worthy of all our devotion.

## Discussion

[Scripture Question] Ask one of your servant kings to read aloud Revelation 3:14-22.

Then ask, How can a life of comfort or complacency blind us to our spiritual neediness?

Point out that, in verse 21, we see that overcoming spiritual lukewarmness is a requirement if we are going sit on a throne—that is, not just be *servants* but also *kings*.

[16.1] Take the temperature of your love for Christ. Is it cool? Lukewarm? Hot? If it's not hot, why is that?

[16.2] What harm can be caused by having a merely lukewarm devotion to the Lord?

[16.3] How can a man who is lukewarm get to a place of fiery passion for Christ?

*PRO TIP: This session is your last chance to push for this study of Rise of the Servant Kings to not just be a mental exercise but a life-changing experience. Be passionate yourself in urging your servant kings to fully surrender to God and boldly respond to His call on their lives. Perhaps you can work in some inspiring stories from your own life or the lives of other men who have been in love with the Lord.*

[17.1] How have you seen God redeem your mistakes or help you pick yourself up after you've failed?

[17.2] Right now, in this season of your life, how is God calling you to be a servant king for Him?

[17.3] What are the most important steps you can—and you *will*—take to fulfill God's calling on your life?

[17.4] As you continue to pursue servant kingship, how do you think your life might be different a month from now? A year from now? By the end of your life?

## Summary

A servant king is committed to staying passionate for Jesus. He moves past his failures and is confident that God will give him an eternal reward.

## Challenge

Urge each person in the group to agree with one of the others to become accountability partners, keeping in touch and encouraging one another to live as servant kings for Christ. Give them time to make these arrangements and exchange email addresses or phone numbers. If anyone doesn't have an accountability partner, offer yourself.

*PRO TIP: If you think one of the men in your group would make a good group leader, go to him and suggest that he take on the same role that you did, leading a discussion group on Rise of the Servant Kings with a different group of men.*