

## Lesson 6

# The Weakest Link

A man's ability to love is based on the strength of his identity. If you play football without exercising and practicing, your weaknesses affect the performance of the team.

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 5:

5 = I'm like Christ in what I'm doing in this area.

1 = I'm far from the image of Christ in what I'm doing in this area.

NOTE: The integration of God into your relationships becomes a personal endeavor because God wants you to become a whole person. (Galatians 2:20) It will be easy for you to think that God wants you to focus on your natural inclinations because that is where you are the most comfortable. There will be times, however, in a specific situation that God will ask you to move outside of your comfort zone by doing what is **not** easy for you. God's call for our lives includes learning how to live with balance.

- I. To love at his best, a man must resolve his past history. He must:
  - A. Deal with the rejections from his past; this allows him to fully engage in relationships in the present. (Philippians 3:13) \_\_\_\_\_

B. Let go of his bad habits to reduce the ways these negative patterns limit his relationships.  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

1. His use of pornography because these types of sexual images affect his view of women.  
(sexual compulsion) (2 Timothy 2:22) \_\_\_\_\_
2. His belief that a relationship with women includes dominating or devaluing them. (father)  
(Luke 1:38) \_\_\_\_\_
3. His expectation that women are there to take care of him. (mother) \_\_\_\_\_
4. His use of substances which help him appear to be present when, in actuality, he is not readily available. (addiction) \_\_\_\_\_
5. His refusal to express aggressive responses in healthy ways. (parental violence) (Ephesians 4:26)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. His tendency to worry excessively, which keeps him from trying. (anxious passivity) (Psalm 55:22)  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. His expectation that life needs to happen only in ways he is used to. (rigid) \_\_\_\_\_

8. His negative view of himself, which was formed as a result of the ways that people from his past defined him. (negative self-esteem) \_\_\_\_\_

- Worthless
- Lazy
- Not talented
- Bad
- “You’re just like your father.”

9. His belief that he is obligated to take care of others or fix them. (parentified child) \_\_\_\_\_

10. He purifies the beliefs that he holds by comparing them to God’s standard. (spiritually in tune) (Matthew 6:33) \_\_\_\_\_

II. To love at his best, a man will develop all of his strengths.

A. Males fail to develop important aspects of manhood and expect others to make up for what they should have developed. God wants a male to become a man and achieve balance in the following ways:

1. Spending versus making a sensible budget and maintaining it. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reaching out and engaging socially versus creating time for yourself. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Taking the hard line versus giving another chance. (rules versus grace) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Giving versus receiving. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Participating in activities that you choose versus being willing to do what someone else wants. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Being organized versus spontaneous. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Concentrating on the details versus being able to see the big picture. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Being task-oriented versus having fun. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Doing what I don't want to do versus doing what I do want to do. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Leading versus following. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Guarded conversation versus transparent conversation. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Spontaneous versus following set procedures. \_\_\_\_\_

B. A man develops certain skills which are foundational to life.

1. He understands his need for values and standards which are based on truth.  
(Matthew 7:24-27) \_\_\_\_\_
2. He is able to self-soothe in healthy ways when life becomes stressful. (1 Peter 5:7) \_\_\_\_\_
3. He has a strong work ethic and is willing to put effort into achieving his goals.  
(2 Thessalonians 3:10) \_\_\_\_\_
4. He is able to demonstrate self-discipline and self-control. (2 Peter 1:3-8)
  - Guides his instincts, including his sexual impulses. (Proverbs 25:28) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Expects all five types of emotional responses (tender, excited, scared, sad, angry) to be expressed appropriately. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Delays gratification in preparation for a future reward. (Proverbs 6:6-8) \_\_\_\_\_
5. He proactively plans for what he wants, understands that life often includes a cause and effect dynamic and follows through on the details in order to achieve his plan. (Luke 14:28-33) \_\_\_\_\_

6. He takes responsibility for his choices; he attempts to choose wisely. (Proverbs 1:33) \_\_\_\_\_
7. He maintains his commitments and is careful to keep his promises. (Deuteronomy 23:23) \_\_\_\_\_
8. He picks himself up after failure, and he tries again. (Galatians 6:9) \_\_\_\_\_
9. He builds strong relationships by naturally affirming others. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) \_\_\_\_\_
10. He pursues an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ, and he accepts His guidance, His forgiveness and His love. (Philippians 2:12-13) \_\_\_\_\_
11. He focuses his life on fulfilling the purpose that God has for his life. (1 Peter 2:21) \_\_\_\_\_
12. He willingly pursues unknown parts of life to follow God's call to love and serve others. (Mark 8:34) \_\_\_\_\_

*What's your score?*

To score how well you are able to resolve your past, add the points in Section I.

Your score: \_\_\_\_\_ Possible score: 55

It is important that you carefully evaluate any areas where you scored a 2 or less.

To score how well you are able to develop your strengths, add the points in Section II.

Your score: \_\_\_\_\_ Possible score: 130

It is important that you carefully evaluate any areas where you scored a 2 or less.

*For your thoughts...*

- It is a given fact that we establish friendships and choose to marry people who are at the same level of character development as ourselves. In order to make your relationships stronger, each person in the relationship must become more Christ-like (1 John 2:6); a relationship chain is only as strong as its weakest link.
- You can only change yourself; when you focus on fixing others, it only leads to frustration and anger. Show the other people in your life that you are motivated to become the man God has called you to be. (Exodus 7:10)

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**Campfire Discussion:** Share your answers with your group.

1. Briefly talk about your week, sharing the highlights or the concerns you may have. You may also want to give an update on what you shared last week.

2. Share a thought or an idea from this lesson that caught your attention. How does it relate to your life?
3. How hard is it for you to deal with the various pornographic and seductive images that are a part of our culture? What do you do to help yourself maintain Christ-like boundaries in this area?
4. Think about the various ways that others have defined you negatively in the past as described in Section I (B-8). Identify the people who called you names and the ways they labeled you negatively.
5. In Section II (A), identify the areas that you have difficulty keeping balanced (scored yourself with a 2 or less). Identify an area that you can work on and what you might do differently in these areas in order to become God's man.
6. Identify a life goal that you thought about in Section II (B-5). What specific details of life must you accomplish in order to achieve this personal goal?
7. What was your overall score for character strength in Section II (A)? Identify an area that you can work on over the next month in order to become more like Jesus.
8. 2 Corinthians 5:17 states: "Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creature. The old is gone! The new has come!" How can you apply this Bible verse to your manhood journey?