

THE SWORD & SHIELD LETTER

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December 2025

Upcoming!

- Tullahoma SDA Men's Ministry monthly **"Connect"** meeting December 4th @ 8:30 PM via Zoom or phone
- Men's Ministry meeting December 7th @ 8 AM. **Session 5 "Becoming Courageous in the Mission."**

The Night the Lights Didn't Go Out: "The Courage of Nicholas of Myra"

(*The Real Historical Man Behind "St. Nicholas"*) In the year AD 325, winter winds cut across the Mediterranean as Christian bishops from around the world gathered in the city of Nicaea. Among them was a man whose name would echo through history, not for fairy tales, not for red suits, but for courage, generosity, and uncompromising faith: Nicholas of Myra. Most people today know the legend...but few know the man. Before he became a symbol of giving, Nicholas lived during a time of fear. The Roman Empire had brutally persecuted Christians for decades. Pastors were executed. Fathers torn from families. Churches burned. Nicholas himself had been imprisoned for refusing to renounce his faith, his hands and feet bore the scars of shackles.

When the persecution finally ended, the winter of AD 325 brought a new challenge: dangerous false teachings were entering the church, threatening the core belief about who Jesus really is. At the Council of Nicaea, a teacher named Arius claimed that Jesus was not truly God, not eternal, not divine, not equal with the Father. Nicholas, a gentle man toward the poor but a lion toward falsehood, stood up in the crowded hall and defended the truth of Christ with boldness few expected from the humble bishop. Church tradition says Nicholas became so passionate defending the deity of Christ that he confronted Arius directly in front of the council. *The message was loud and clear: "Christ is not created. He is the eternal Son of God."* Nicholas's courage helped preserve the truth of the gospel for future generations. Long before he became known for giving gifts, he was known for defending the greatest Gift the world has ever received: Jesus Christ.



Resource Spotlight: ManhoodJourney.org bible reading plan



Becoming an Intentional Father

Being a father who intentionally disciplines his family is tough work. Not only do we need to learn how to run this race, we must simultaneously remove obstacles blocking our way. Biblical fatherhood is not for the faint of heart. This plan will help you identify the things standing in your way. Then it will show you how, with God's help, you can remove these roadblocks on your journey to becoming an intentional father. **8 days**

[→ Click here for the bible reading plan](#)

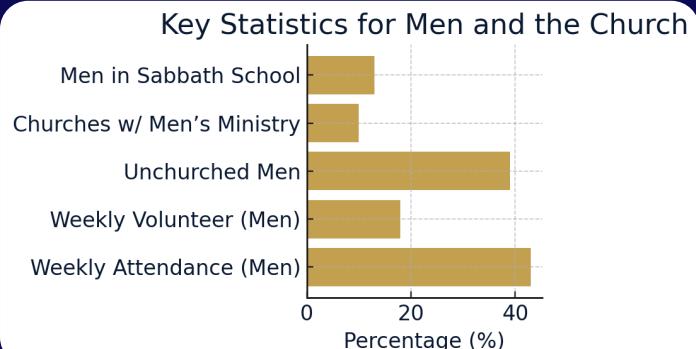
Scripture shows us clearly that men need discipleship, brotherhood, accountability, spiritual training, and encouragement to become who God has called them to be. Leaders in their homes, servants in the church, and warriors for Christ.

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **2 Timothy 2:2**

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. **Titus 2:6-8**



- As of 2025, **43%** of men reported attending church weekly, compared to 36% of women, the largest gender gap in the data to date. (Barna group 2025 report)
- Approximately **39%** of men are considered "unchurched," meaning they did not attend a church event (other than a wedding or funeral) in the past six months. (Barna Group)
- Fewer than **10%** of U.S. churches have a vibrant, maintained men's ministry; and fewer than 1% of church-going men participate in ongoing men's ministry programs (Becoming Man)





As we remember Christ's first coming, we're also reminded that He is coming again. That reality should shape how we love, how we lead, and how we fight our battles, especially the ones nobody else can see. My prayer is that, as men, we will finish this year not coasting, but growing. Not just surviving, but standing firm in the faith, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and guarding one another's backs.

I'm grateful for each of you. Thank you for showing up, for being willing to grow, and for letting God work in your life. Let's close this year as men who are more devoted, more surrendered, and more connected to God and to one another. More than we were when this year began.

Standing with you,

Dustin

CHALLENGES FOR MEN



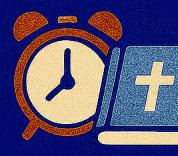
**PRAY WITH
YOUR FAMILY**



**REACH OUT TO
ONE BROTHER
WHO HASN'T BEEN
AT CHURCH IN A WHILE**



**DO ONE ACT OF
QUIET SERVICE
WITH NO RECOGNITION**



**SPEND 10 MINUTES
OF FORGING TIME
EACH MORNING**

