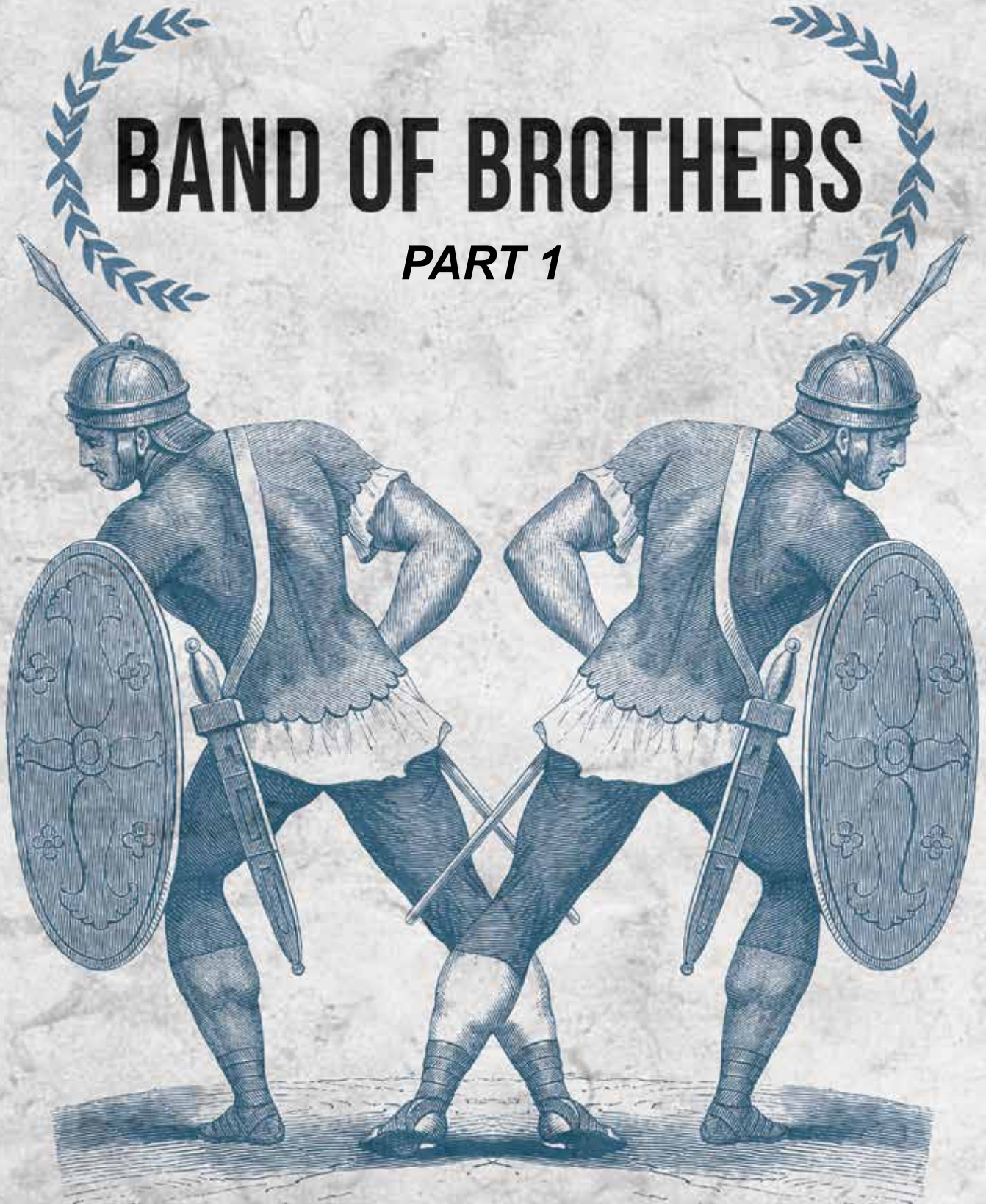


TRUE STRENGTH
MANHOOD
SESSION 3



BAND OF BROTHERS

PART 1



SESSION 3

BAND

OF BROTHERS

PART 1

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SESSION OVERVIEW

As a discipleship group, you have likely visited the theme of friendship already, and you are hopefully watching friendships grow within your group. The theme of this study is about something deeper than friendship: it is about brotherhood. For real conversion to happen in the lives of teens, they will need the support of true brothers and mentors around them.

It's important for young men to have male role models who are good mentors and examples of what it means to be a man. It is also important to have brothers to partner with on the journey toward heaven. A lot of guys long for real brotherhood, which points toward their deeper desire to give their lives to Christ. The fact is that it's simply too hard to overcome our weaknesses alone. We need help to change our lives and give them to God. You have the opportunity to introduce young men to the idea of Christian friendship. They have a band of brothers right in front of them in their small group—brothers who can support them in their efforts to conform their lives to Christ.

SESSION SNAPSHOT

Review the entire lesson plan in advance so you are prepared to lead and discuss comfortably. Gather necessary supplies and review video segments prior to your gathering. Below is the outline for the session. Use the time allotments as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

TIME	SECTION	SECTION OVERVIEW
30 minutes	 CONNECT	Open with activities designed to build fellowship within the group.
45 minutes	 DISCUSS	Watch and discuss these video scenes.  Scene 1: What it means to be a band of brothers in Christ  Scene 2: How Christian brotherhood strengthens us
15 minutes	 COMMIT	Summarize the discussion, and have teens find accountability partners to help with disciplines that they have struggled with.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- » Media device to show video segments
- » Bibles
- » Glass bowl
- » Slips of paper
- » Pens or pencils
- » Teen Sheets

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

- » Have snacks ready.
- » Create a welcoming environment.



LEADER TIPS

- » Make sure you are watching the time during the opening activities so you allow plenty of time for the videos and discussion.
- » Scripture is full of wisdom and examples of true, lasting friendship. For more insight and passages on friendship, read:
- » Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – “Two are better than one”
- » Sirach 6:14-17 – “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter”
- » John 15:12-17 – “I have called you friends”
- » Romans 12:9-21 – “Love one another with brotherly affection”
- » The Brotherhood study is split into two sessions. Scene 1 and 2 will be covered in this session, and Scenes 3, 4 and 5 will be covered in the next session.
- » We often include possible responses after the discussion questions to help you facilitate the conversation. Let group members respond first; share the concepts in parentheses as needed.



CONNECT

SAY: Today we are going to get into the theme of brotherhood. Let's start by having a little fellowship with one another.



ACTIVITY

FISHBOWL

Explain the rules to the game below. You will need a bowl, slips of paper, and pens or pencils for each member of the group.

SAY: We will start this game with one person asking an interesting question of each member of the group. Here are some examples of good questions:

- » If you could only eat one food for an entire year, what would it be?
- » If you could pick one place in the world to visit, where would you go?
- » What is the most miserable experience you can think of?

Each person at the table, except for the person asking the question, will write an answer on a slip of paper, fold it once, and put it in the bowl. The “asker” will then read them out loud and try to identify which answer belongs to which person. If he guesses wrong, the person to the right will have the opportunity to steal by guessing the right people. If he guesses wrong, the change will again move to the right, until finally a person has correctly matched all of the answers with the correct people. That person receives a point.

Repeat this process until everyone has asked at least one question. This is a fun way to get to know each other better.



ACTIVITY

QUOTES

- » “Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” —C.S. Lewis
- » “True friendship is when you walk into someone’s house and your WiFi connects automatically.” —Author Unknown
- » “Anybody can sympathize with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathize with a friend’s success.” —Oscar Wilde
- » “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” —Dale Carnegie
- » “For those who live in the world and desire to embrace true virtue it is necessary to unite together in holy, sacred friendship. By this means they encourage, assist, and lead one another to perform good things. Men walking on level ground do not have to lend one another a hand, while those who are on a rugged, slippery road hold on to one another in order to walk more safely.” —St. Francis de Sales

- » “In this world two things are essential: life and friendship. Both should be highly prized and we must not undervalue them. Life and friendship are nature’s gifts. God created us that we might exist and live: this is life. But if we are not to remain solitary, there must be friendship.” —St. Augustine
- » “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter: he that has found one has found a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, and no scales can measure his excellence.” —Sirach 6:14-15
- » “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.” —Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
- » “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” —John 15:13 (Jesus Christ)
- » “A friend is, as it were, a second self.” —Cicero

Give the teens a couple of minutes to share which quotes they like the best.



INTRODUCTION

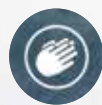
SAY: Today, the topic that we are getting into is about brotherhood and what it means to be a band of brothers. We just listened to a series of quotes on friendship. I want you to consider and reflect on one more quote:



“Men—this has always happened in history—bind their lives together to accomplish a collective mission and destiny. Is the unique destiny of eternal happiness worth less to the men and women of today?”

—St. Josemaría Escrivá, Furrow #729, Founder of Opus Dei

Allow a minute or so for teens to reflect on this quote.



OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Let’s open in prayer.

PRAY: Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us as young men who have a heart for true brotherhood. Teach us how to grow into good, loyal, and honorable men. Open our hearts to the truth of authentic friendship with our brothers in Christ. Light a fire in our hearts for something more than what the world has to offer us. Help us to see that You have surrounded us with a band of brothers, and give us the courage to live a life worthy of the call You have given us—to live as Your sons. Amen.



DISCUSS

SAY: Let's watch Scene 1.



Watch Scene 1. This segment will last approximately two minutes.

SAY: Scott uses the term “band of brothers.” Band of Brothers was an eleven-hour mini-series produced by Steven Spielberg in 2001. Extremely popular, especially among male demographics, this was a military mini-series following the Easy Company of the U.S. Army 101st Airborne division from their training and through their activity in World War II.

Scott talks about our need for a band of brothers. In the military, soldiers are trained and built up to be more than simply co-workers or even friends. In the creeds of various military branches, they all speak of never leaving a soldier behind. This reflects something deeper than friendship. The military trains their soldiers to be a band of brothers.

Let me ask you a few questions.

Take a few minutes between each question to let the group members share, and then continue.

- » Have you ever known anyone in the military? What was their training like? How do they speak of their relationships with the other members of their unit?
- » Why do you think it is so important that a soldier be trained to never leave another behind?

(Soldiers have to act as a team in order to accomplish their missions. If they cannot entrust their lives to the other members of their team, they will not trust their fellow soldiers and the mission would fail.)

- » How is brotherhood different from friendship?

(Brotherhood suggests a deeper bond and a shared mission. It is not simply about common interests or even fraternal love. Brotherhood suggests having a responsibility for another—being united together in something.)

Take a few minutes to let the group share and then continue.

Let's continue with Scene 2 of the study.



Watch Scene 2. This segment is about three minutes long.

SAY: Let's say you are rock climbing or whitewater rafting. What happens if your teammates are not dependable?

When Jesus sent the Apostles out in their public ministry, he sent them out two by two. There is a reason for this: the Christian life is not intended to be lived alone. Jesus knows that we need support and He knows that we cannot live out our faith alone. The goal is heaven and we cannot get there on our own. Jesus reconciled the world to Himself through His death and resurrection. The Church exists so that we can live and worship in community with one another.

» What happens if we try to go whitewater rafting or mountain climbing on our own?

(It is risky, dangerous, and your chances of successfully completing your task is greatly diminished).

» In the same way, what happens if we try to live the Christian life without brotherhood?

(Christianity is not something that can be lived alone; it requires community and support.)

» Scott mentions friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, and purpose. Is there a person in your life who embodies all of those qualities?

Take a few minutes to let the group share, and then continue.

SAY: Now let me give you a couple of situational questions:

» A guy in our group is depressed and may be suicidal. How would you respond?

» Someone in the group makes fun of someone else in the group. What would you do?

» You know that someone in the group regularly cheats in school. What would you do?

Take a few minutes to let the group share and then continue.



COMMIT



ACTIVITY

TAKE-AWAY

SAY: I am going to go around the circle, starting with the person on my right, and I'd like each of us to share something we remember that this person said tonight.

Take a minute and go around the room asking everyone to share briefly.

I want to go around the circle again, this time starting with the person on my left, and I'd like each of us to share one "take-away" from tonight; in other words, share something that resonates in your heart as a truth to live by.

Take a minute and go around the room again.

SAY: We have been meeting for several weeks, and each week I give you a challenge at the end of our session. These challenges are disciplines that we are supposed to be working on in our daily lives.

» Which discipline or challenge have you struggled with the most?

(Examples: going to Confession, replacing a bad habit with a good habit)

Brotherhood doesn't happen overnight, but it won't ever happen if we don't have the intention to grow as a band of brothers. This week, I want each of you to partner up with a person in the group. You are going to be accountability partners. I want you to share with that person the one daily discipline that you struggled with the most.

Give each of the guys a minute to partner up and share with their partners.

This week, I am going to challenge you to try to do the discipline you struggled with again. But I am making it the responsibility of your partner to make sure that you do it. It is up to you how you want to encourage one another—you can text reminders, talk to each other daily, or meet up and practice your disciplines together.



CLOSING PRAYER

SAY: Let's close in prayer.

PRAY: Lord, as we learned about what true brotherhood is, we ask that You would help us to be open to growing in discipline and service to our brothers.

I would like you to partner up with your accountability partner and take turns praying for each other's petitions.

Give the teens time to pray together with their partners.