



healing along the **MASCULINE JOURNEY**

A 6-day Plan

Adapted from chapters 6-10 of
Michael Thompson's book *King Me*

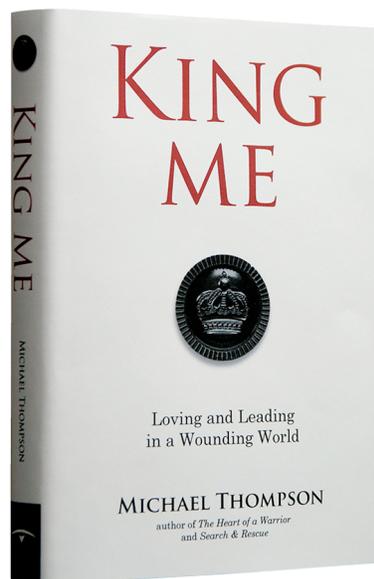


Healing on the Masculine Journey

a six-day plan

Plan Description:

Men, you are invited to step with courage and hope into an exploration of your story through the Six Stages of the Masculine Journey, and ask God these critical questions: Who am I? Where am I? What is the way home? In this six-day plan, you will venture through each stage, exploring and discovering God's desire to heal you from past wounds so that you can move forward living free.



**Adapted from chapters 6-10 of Michael Thompson's book
*King Me: Loving and Leading in a Wounding World.***

Day 1: Boyhood

(Infancy - Preteen)

Scripture:

- And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:52 NIV
- And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. Matthew 18:3-5 NIV
- For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14 NIV

Devotional:

The Boyhood Stage of the Masculine Journey is, or *should be*, a time of being seen, wanted, and affirmed, a time of play and wonder, a time when a boy experiences that he is the joy of his father and has the attention of his mother. This is the time for the boy to experience that someone is looking out for him, that the world is not up to him, that Mom is attentively present and "Dad's got things under control."

In all of it, the main job of Dad and Mom is to answer the deep questions of their boy's heart—*Do you see me? Do you love what you see?*—hundreds of times over with strong and tender replies, *Yes, and yes!*

To a boy who is *safe*, his entire world feels like a great adventure. Being the beloved son pours deep, strong foundational footings in this stage. And that good foundation, and what is built upon it, will in turn be able to withstand the storms and battles in the stages to come.

Since being loved is core to how we were created and receiving love is what we were created for, our experience of being a *beloved son* is the foundation from which all other stages in our development are built. Whether you were born in the newest birthing facility or in a manger, the environment that matters most is how your parents welcomed you into their lives. The ways you were nurtured, protected, and provided for in the womb and in the early days of infancy all lay the foundation for how you receive, how you interpret, and how you pursue being loved.

We are made for love, and yet all hearts have been missed, overlooked, even sinned against. Every heart has been wounded. Those assigned to protect us, have at one time or another wounded us. It cannot be avoided; there are just too many opportunities for it to happen. Even the best of parents is imperfect, and our enemy is that good at capitalizing on even the smallest opportunities.

Awful as wounding moments may be, the lying messages we derive from them are even worse. Such lies hit hard when we are young, and when we agree with them, they have the power to shape our beliefs and control our lives. In response, we make vows about how we will carry on: "I will never" or "I will always." That's how it works: whether consciously or subconsciously, we make an *agreement* that the lie is true, and we vow how we will act or think in response to prove ourselves right or protect ourselves henceforth. *That combination of agreements and vows, internalized, makes up the system of the false self that is so powerful and operational in a man's life.* It explains why, left undealt with, what happened to us when we were four years old can remain fully operational in us when we're fifty-four.

But here's the incredibly good news: regardless of what you did or didn't get as a boy, your heart can be healed. Remember, we are all unfinished and unfathered to some degree. This is what our Trinity God wants to walk you through as a man so you can reclaim what was taken from you. *God's unconditional love is the remedy that heals all wounds and transforms you.* Our heavenly Father is at work, and his intention for us is Life with a capital L. He has a way forward toward reclaiming the wonder.

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, what kind of story was I born into? Would you help me understand my boyhood?

Jesus, when I was a boy, what experiences did I have that told me I was special and mattered, and what experiences did I have that told me I wasn't special and didn't matter?

Spirit, would you reveal to my mind and heart any wounding moments and the vows I made as a boy and how they may be impacting me today?

Day 2: Explorer

(Pre-teens - Early 20s)

Scripture:

- Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9 NIV
- I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. 2 Corinthians 6:18 NIV
- David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." 1 Samuel 17:32-37 NIV

Devotional:

The Explorer Stage is a time of adventure and testing, of learning through trial and error how things work. During this stage, the questions asked by the young heart evolve from "Do you see me? Do you love what you see?" to "Do I have strength? Can I come through—do I have what it takes?"

This is a season of safety goggles and helmets, tools and equipment, a time of finding out how fast a thing can go, how high it can fly, how far it can travel. Far more is involved than physical strength alone, for strength comes in many ways: through risking, trying and testing, stepping out with courage into anything—sports, certainly, but also music, art, debate, creative writing, or a part in a play.

Now is when a boy's world expands from the safety of his bedroom, front yard, and backyard and becomes both more beautiful and more dangerous. The Explorer Stage tests a boy's strength so he can discover it and learn what it is for. When challenges come—and they will; this stage is the beginning of hard tests and important trials—the boy will succeed when he is surrounded with affirmation and encouragement, not criticism and sarcasm.

A father or a trusted father figure is key to framing the losses in this stage in a positive light and encouraging the boy to get up and try again. If a boy only hears through silence or words of rejection that he "doesn't have what it takes," the result is deep wounds of

insecurity and uncertainty. Every failure is in fact an opportunity to grow; a boy can learn from it if he's shown how. But he needs a father, a mentor, or a coach to help him redeem the disappointment and gain from the loss. And a mother to support him and encourage him to try again.

More is evolving for explorers than just the boy's body. His spiritual life also needs attention. The rote childhood prayers of Sunday school provided a foundation, but now he needs something deeper. It's time to introduce him to prayer as a heart-to-heart conversation with God. If up to this point, evil forces have somehow been held at bay, this is the stage of their great invasion, and a boy needs to start learning what he is up against and begin to learn how to guard his heart.

There's a twofold training in this for you, if you are a father: you need to see how you yourself were wounded at this stage and go to God for healing, and you've also got to learn what it will take to support and encourage your kid.

To recover your own explorer heart, this is where the warrior in you begins to bravely step up. As a man looking back, you can recover, with Jesus' help, that which was lost in your past as you began to explore this dangerous world. Healing your explorer heart allows you to go forward courageously with the Spirit, overcoming fear and insecurity, to learn how to reign and rule well because—wounded hearts wound hearts, but free hearts can free hearts.

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, what tests and trials of initiation did I face during my Explorer Stage?

Jesus, who stood beside me and helped me interpret those tests and trials, looking to validate me, warn me, coach me, and love me through the adventures and battles—the ones that went well and those that did not go so well?

Spirit, how did or didn't I learn that I "have what it takes"? How was I taught or not taught that I had a strength and was or wasn't helped to understand what it was for?

Day 3: Warrior

(Age 20's - Early 40's)

Scripture:

- The Lord is a Warrior, the Lord is his name. Exodus 15:3 NIV
- Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4:23 NIV
- Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. Numbers 14:6-9 NIV
- But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:14 NIV

Devotional:

There comes a time in one's journey when the masculine heart learns to *fight*.

The Warrior Stage is when the transferring of will takes place. The will of the parents diminishes, while the will of the young masculine heart takes on new force. More choices are to be exercised by the young warrior. In both the spiritual and natural realms, the burden of responsibility begins to transfer from parent to child. Mom and Dad cease to do for the warrior the things he must learn to do himself. The questions now become: **How do I discern between good and evil? And in a dangerous world, how do I offer my strength for good?**

It's during the Warrior Stage that a masculine heart comes to see what is really going on—to discern the devices and tactics of the unholy trinity: Satan, the false self (a.k.a. the flesh), and this fallen world. So begins the man's training to both guard his heart and wield his strength for others.

Now is the time when a young man learns there are things worth fighting for, things that need a strong presence and voice:

A cause—the advancing of God's kingdom, kindness, fairness, care for the less fortunate, and a voice and presence for the poor, marginalized, or abused. A cause always involves people.

People—siblings, parents, and friends, as well as those a man may not know but who need an advocate or new friend.

Principles and character—the opportunities and challenges of learning how to care. The warrior's weapons are honesty, integrity, kindness, courage, and, above all else, love.

In addition to a cause, every warrior needs a good king to fight under; someone to teach him mission, vision, and strategy in day-to-day life and in the spiritual realm; someone who is caring and kind and can walk him through the stages of boyhood and explorer, and then step confidently into warrior, providing a foundational relationship with his true self and a healthy environment in which to learn to fight. Jesus did this with his disciples. Today, Jesus wants the job as the King you will fight under. He has placed small-k kings, both good and bad, on your path to show you how, and how not to one day care for the hearts in your kingdom. We can learn from both good and bad kings, but it's at this stage we need Jesus as the King of kings to step into his place in our lives.

The warrior's heart is wounded when there is no battle to fight—when we're told that to be assertive is bad, that to be passive is godly, and that there is never a time to rock the boat or confront others in love, fierce love if necessary. That's not how Jesus lived; he rocked boats, redrew lines, and confronted others redemptively.

Warriors need to be trained in how to fight! The warrior spirit in you and me is good and is placed in us for noble and valiant purposes. We must learn how to be dangerous for good, wielding a fierce loving kindness. Jesus fought and still fights for you because your enemy is real; Jesus wants you to join him in the fight first for your own heart, and then the fight for others.

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, would you show me who was there to fight for me? And who was there to love, lead, and encourage me by showing me how to fight?

Jesus, when did I learn—when did I observe or experience firsthand, or even secondhand—how to fight for my own heart or the heart of another?

Spirit, what was I taught about “fighting,” and about offering my own strength for good? How is that impacting the way I engage and fight for my own heart or for others today?

Day 4: Lover

(in Boyhood it is receiving love,
then learning to offer love in the rest of the stages)

Scripture:

- I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. Song of Songs 6:3 NIV
- For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39 NIV
- I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. Jeremiah 31:3

Devotional:

***To love beauty. To enter into mystery. To know and be known.
That is what my lover's heart was created for.***

Of all the things that the Gospels are, among all the truths, themes, and messages contained in scripture, the single great constant is this: that the larger story is, above all else, a *love story*.

But don't think that because it is a love story, it is for that reason soft. Rather, that's what makes it all the more dangerous. The characters in love stories are always on a journey. They must learn to be courageous, must find their strength, and, eventually, must confront and overcome evil. All for love. The Larger Story is no soap opera; it is an epic tale for the ages, and we have each been written a part. In the words of author Brent Curtis, "Our lives are not a random series of events; they tell a Story that has meaning. For above all else, the Christian life is a love affair of the heart. Most Christians have lost the life of their heart and with it, their romance with God."

So, it is that the questions of earlier stages now make room for a new awakening of the heart. It is this:

***If I was created for a sacred romance,
then my true destiny is this:
to love beauty,
to enter into mystery,
to know and be known.***

A love story requires lovers. The Lover Stage is foreshadowed in all the earlier stages of the masculine journey and, once entered, continues as a man becomes a king and, finally, a

sage. But while the raw material is there early on, there is a distinct time when the lover in every man's heart awakens into the Lover Stage and his training begins. Woman is its centerpiece—the wonder and allure of her beauty, outward and inward. And yet the lover stage is about much more and goes far deeper than just loving and romancing a woman.

The warrior stage lays the foundation and provides the proper perspective for the lover stage. That is why, ideally, the warrior comes first. Otherwise, feminine beauty will be approached by a man as a consumable item rather than a gift to be cherished, and he will attempt to get his strength from a woman rather than bring his strength to her. Sadly, this is exactly what happens with most men, and far too many women pay the price, deeply wounded by men who ought to be their protectors, not their consumers.

God invites the man to protect a woman while pursuing a romance with her. This is why nothing is more beautiful than two people walking with God together and why few things are more fragile than two hearts pursuing the thing they were created for: romance with God and romance with each other. It is what we were made for—and so it is what the enemy violently opposes.

In the lover stage, the formative years of boyhood and explorer make for either good or bad training. A man at this point either is settled through validation and initiation in the ways of the kingdom, or is unfathered, unfinished, and disoriented under the influence of darkness.

Thankfully, **healing and restoring the lover in us is the great priority of God**, the kindest and fiercest pursuit of our Maker. Our part is to let the Great Romancer catch us—again and again. We receive His love, experience it, so that we can offer love from a place of settled strength.

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, how have I lost the life of the heart and with it, my romance with you?

Jesus, would you show me how I was trained for good or for bad into this Lover Stage on my journey?

Spirit, what wounding and agreements are in the way of how I view women, particularly the women in my life? How do you desire for me to get these wounds and agreements out of the way?

Day 5: Kings

(Age 40's - 60's)

Scripture:

- His head will be adorned with a radiant crown. Psalm 132:18 NIV
- Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39 NIV
- A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1
- Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. James 1:2-4 MSG

Devotional:

How do I love and lead, provide for and protect, reign and rule well for those given to me?

In the King Stage, all the days of all the previous stages mix together to make for how a man will live, how he will see himself and see the world, and most importantly, how he will reign. This stage is the culmination of years—the collective work of trials and errors; the wounding and wounding moments over a lifetime; the agreements and vows a man makes; what he has come to believe about himself, others, and God; and the healing he has received, if he has received any—all will be on display in the king stage. This is the stage when how a man was loved over his lifetime will determine how he will love others at this time of his life. Here a man begins to feel his life. His response may blossom into a midlife crisis or it can become the man's gateway to the path of healing and overcoming.

If bad kings bear their unhealed wounds, good kings learn how healing brings great goodness and glory. Healed hearts heal hearts, and it's the hope of being good kings that inspires us to cross the checkerboard of life and become a new piece, take on a new role, and help others across the board so they can become more. The king stage is the time when a man learns how to wield power and authority—when his reign (where his will is offered and his choices affect others) has expanded in ways that, for better or worse, have far-reaching impact. A bad king can do great damage. But a good king has the love, the resources, the connections, the reputation, and the wisdom and experience to tremendously benefit other hearts and lives.

No matter how much brokenness or how much goodness you bring into the king stage, God wants the job of Fathering you. Every man needs that for his comeback: the Father to father him, Jesus to equip him, and the Holy Spirit to guide and counsel him in his masculine

journey. Every man needs the Trinity to kindly walk him to freedom. And the Trinity needs a few good men in your life to partner with in validating and initiating you with their words and presence. Your comeback and training require quite a team!

That's the glory of a good king. Recovering, overcoming and becoming, healing and training in the earlier stages of your past—this is the work of a king, while at the same time learning to love and lead well in a wounding world. That's the reason to heed the call and step onto the kingly path of healing. Your story is maturing. Your power is at its peak. And many hearts and destinies are counting on you. You will need friends, oriented friends, good warriors, kings and elder-sages to journey with you and with whom you can journey. Counselor and author Dan Allendar once wrote, "Find like hearted kings, living in the same direction and sign treaties. When they're at war, you're at war."

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, what hearts and lives do my reign and influence impact?

Jesus, what stands in the way of my being a good king living from my true self?

Spirit, what men are on my team for my comeback? How do I find them and engage with them well?

Day 6: Elder Sage

(Age 60 and Up)

Scripture:

- The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death. Proverbs 13:14 NIV
- Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Isaiah 46:4 NIV
- And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV

Devotional:

How can I finish well? Who is in my life to listen to and, in listening, to love?

How do I bring who I am to those who need my lifetime of wisdom and experience?

The Elder-Sage Stage characterizes men in their sixties and beyond whose legacies started long ago. These are their years of final repairs and final blessings. An elder-sage feels deeply the words of the Farmers Insurance commercial, “We know a thing or two because we’ve seen a thing or two.” Elder-sages need kings and warriors—and kings and warriors desperately need them.

This is the season when a man is wanted for his wisdom, his experience, and his stories, particularly those that relate to the times and ways God has brought healing, validation, and initiation into his life. His kingdom is being passed on, handed over to a younger king or kings, bequeathed to the next generation. But his presence and his words must remain. An elder-sage’s strength lies in gracious counsel, wise and gentle. He knows that kindness is stronger than anger and that love is the most powerful force of all. An elder-sage is a father to many, and the way he draws near to God is the most attractive thing about his life.

“Encourage” is the motto of an elder-sage. More than an answer man, he is a listener, question asker, and storyteller. Indeed, he sees his chief job as listening well and, in partnership with God, offering healing, training, validation, and initiation to the next generation. He can because he has experienced all of these from and with God for his own heart’s restoration. An engaged heart is his greatest invitation to others, and stories are his most powerful weapon. You know you are with an elder-sage when he can look not only at you but also into you.

The elder-sage is cunning, a spiritual warfare veteran, dangerous for good. He is far from retiring from the battle; rather, taking a frontline position in the battle for the hearts of others. He has learned to watch, listen, and wait for God to open doors. He knows well the lowest seat at the table and prefers it, though he is seldom there for long. His stories are transparent, tales of both his regrets and his victories over a lifetime of learning how—and how not—to walk with God. His walk has in fact deepened to the point where he is a friend of God, and he lives with an orientation that invites and attracts other men to that same closeness with the Father.

All kings, warriors, and explorers need such a man in their life—an older man, an elder-sage who looks out for them; one who can listen, listen, and listen; and when it's time, can share, comfort, pray, and tell the encouraging stories of God's goodness in his life. Retire? Never. Not now, when all the years are paying off and wise counsel is the gift such a man has to offer; not when friendship with God and friendship with others makes the elder-sage, like George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, “the richest man in town.”

As you ponder all this with God today, consider asking Him:

Father, where in my story have I enjoyed the benefits of an elder-sage?

Jesus, what in today's devotion and scripture, do you want me most to focus upon?

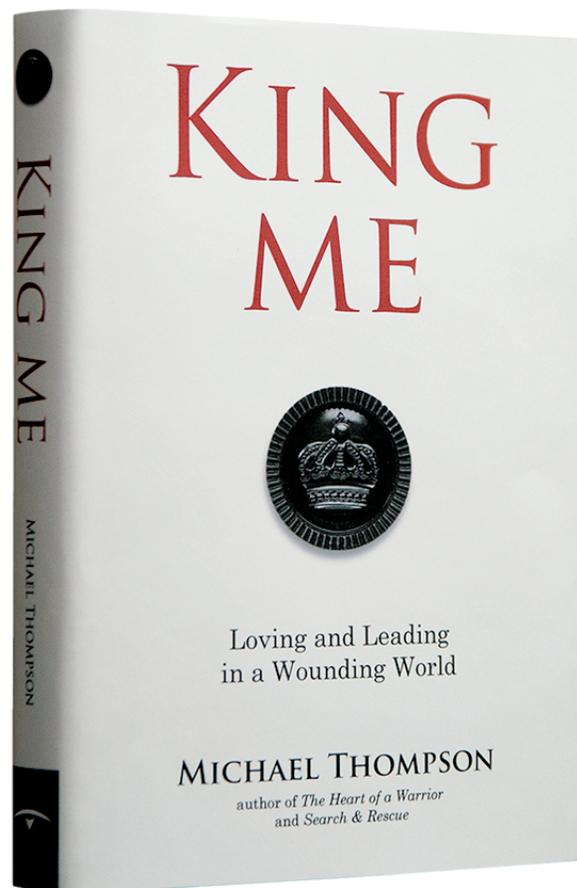
Spirit, of all we have explored and ventured through in the Six Stages of the Masculine Journey, would you bring to my mind what you want me to take away from this plan? What stage do you want to focus on where I was wounded, and would you help me recover, overcome, and heal?

If you enjoyed this devotional...

Check out the book it comes from:

Michael Thompson's
King Me: Loving and Leading in a Wounding World

(These six days were taken from chapters 6-10.)



You can find the book on
Amazon, Audible, and Zoweh.org/kingme

