

# A Man's Battles in The Red Zone



Making decisions during the critical  
times of your life!

# A Man's Battle in the Red Zone

## Preference

This study is designed to help you make decisions during the critical times of life, when the stakes are high and the risks are real. The basic theme is built around one single thought:

“If today is really the first day of your life, how are the decisions you make today impacting your tomorrows?”

It may be a simple thought, but if you could see the future impact of the decisions you make today, what would you change? How would you change the way you make decisions?

Every decision you've made in the past has put you or someone you love on a very specific path. Likewise, the decisions you make today will lead you or someone else down a new path. What seems like a small decision today, could lead down a path that has a big impact on someone's life tomorrow.

What if you had the ability and insight to see the path each decision you make will lead? Would you change anything? Hopefully, working through this study will help you answer these questions!

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I hope most you have completed Manhood Revolution and you are learning how to apply **Galatians 2:20** (*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*) and **Ephesians 5: 1-2** (*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved [a]you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma*). If you have not completed your Manhood Plan, no worries, you can circle back and complete it as you work your way through this study.

In the Manhood Plan you learned four key things about yourself. The points were;

- Discovering who we are, “Awakening”
- Discovering where we are in life, “Awareness”
- Discovering how to turn our life around, “Pivot”
- Your Legacy

These are key elements of your life as a Godly man and they play a major part in your decision making when you are in the critical times of life – The Red Zone. When you are in the Red Zone and need to call an important play, what resources do you draw from?

Another part of the Manhood was to develop your Accountability Group. A Band of Brothers as it is referred to in various other studies and books. If you would compare this to a football game, this would be the coaches and other men on the team. These are men you respect and trust. Men you know that truly care about you!

The phrase “In The Red Zone” is nothing new. If you’ve watched a football game, you’ve heard this term repeated over and over. It is a critical part of a football field and teams are measured

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by how well they perform when they are in this area of the field. It is said that 80% of a football game is played between the 20 yard lines. But, it is how well a team performs inside the 20 yard line that determines their overall success, their time spent in the Red Zone!

In life, you spend most of your time doing normal everyday "stuff". The decisions you are faced with during this part of your life don't always have a big impact on your tomorrow's. Eventually, there comes a time when you are faced with a critical decision, a decision that has a huge impact on you as well as the ones you care most about. This study focuses on how well you respond during those critical times of your life. In other words, your Life in "In The Red Zone"!

Each decision you make leads you or someone you care about down a path. Sometimes the paths are well defined, the edges very easy to see. Other times, the paths do not have well defined edges and it becomes easy to wander off the path and into areas you shouldn't be.

There are several things that play a part in your ability to make decisions and impact how you respond during the critical times in your life. One thing is how you live your life during the normal times, the time spent between the 20 yard lines. One of the biggest risks you face is falling asleep. Not falling asleep in the physical state, but asleep in your awareness of things happening around you. You can become so comfortable with your daily life that you grow numb and lose real feeling to everything happening around you.

When you get to this stage of life a couple of things can happen, you can become very complacent and personally preoccupied. "Slow Fade" by Casting Crows says:



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"It's a slow fade when black and white have turned to gray  
Thoughts invade, choices are made, a price will be paid  
When you give yourself away

People never crumble in a day"

You start digging "ruts". Your daily routines follow the same path every day. The more comfortable you become with your routines, the deeper the ruts become. Then one day, one of the walls of your ruts caves in and you are lost. You have gotten so comfortable in your "normal life" that when something changes you don't know which way to turn. Your mind keeps telling you to follow the same path you've been following but that path is blocked and you're paralyzed! You have become so complacent with the "normal", you are lost and can't decide what to do next. You're confused, having lost the ability to focus and think clear enough make good decisions.

This may have been part of what happened to Adam in the Garden of Eden. When Eve was being tempted by the serpent in **Genesis chapter 3**, Adam watched and did nothing. This is very typical of us sometimes in our daily lives and routines today. You see things as they are unfolding around you, but you are so caught up with work, sports, plans for the weekend, or just hanging out with your buds you miss the opportunity to prevent something from going very wrong! Other terms we start to use are "I'll get to that later" or "I'll take care of that tomorrow"! We ignore the issues or put off the bigger they become.

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As you become comfortable with your "ruts" and the daily routines of your life, you take God's grace for granted! Eventually you get to the point where you are telling God, "I've got this"! You no longer believe you need "His" help.

You have become preoccupied. Your days are full of things to do and you run from event to event! Your daily life has turned into a race track. The pace of your life has become so fast you are going in circles trying to catch up and just survive. You start taking short cuts! You've lost all balance and control in your life. Next, you start eliminating things. Most of the time you eliminate things so you can catch up at a later time. But, you never catch up because you can't get your head above water.

One of the first things you eliminate is your "self time". Not the "self time" you spend with your buds or doing things you like, but the time reserved for yourself. Time you spend in prayer and reading God's word. Your routine has become so full you fool yourself into thinking you can make time later and that time never comes! This is when you start relying on yourself for making the difficult decisions and not seeking God's guidance.

You also start avoiding critical decisions or hoping they will go away. You don't have the time needed to make the right decision. You ignore these events until they've grown into something overwhelming. Out of the blue you are blindsided and are hit by something you thought you had time for later. Had you not been so consumed by your own daily life and its selfish desires, you would have been aware of the events as they were happening around you. You would have been ready when the time came to make a decision.

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Either one of these situations can have a major impact on your tomorrow's, not to mention on those close to you! The question becomes, "how do you prevent this from happening"?

First you must understand some of the things that make you who we are and governs your thinking process. It's your normal thinking process that keep you from taking action. This process prevents you from seeing things clearly and hinders your ability to prepare for events in the Red Zone. I think **Proverbs 23:7** states one of the main reasons you are often caught off guard by life's events. **Proverbs 23:7** says, "*For as he thinks within himself, so he is*". This verse is talking about a selfish man and how he sees himself. I think we all have a tendency to be selfish at times. This selfishness is brought on by some of the things you were taught in your youth. This type of behavior was influenced by your parents and other influential people in your early life. All during your youth you were taught how to behave, how to act, what to say and what not to say. These influences had both a positive and negative impact, and they are still part of you today. Whether you want to admit it or not, these influences are part of your DNA.

Influences in your life came from two very distinct areas. The first was from the things you were told by your parents. The other area of influence came from people you wanted to be like when you were growing up. You watched everything they did and tried your best to be just like them. Good or bad, it didn't really matter. All you knew was that other people admired them and if you could be like them, you would get the same admiration. But the admiration never came or fell short of what you were expecting. This left you wanting more admiration and drove you to try almost anything to achieve recognition. How you

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eventually acted depended on which statements from your youth you let influence your choices most of the time.

Listed below is a brief list of the typical statements we all probably heard when we were growing up. Check the ones you remember. If you remember the statement(s) today, it is still having an impact on you!

Check the ones you heard while growing up:

### Negative Things

- ☐ Why can't you be more like your brother!
- ☐ You're good for nothing?
- ☐ You'll never mount to anything!
- ☐ Stop acting like a sissy!
- ☐ You'll never learn!
- ☐ You're so stupid!

### Positive Things

- ☐ You can do anything!
- ☐ You are the only one that matters!
- ☐ You are perfect!
- ☐ Everyone wants to be like you!
- ☐ It's not your fault!
- ☐ You're special!

I'm sure there are others statements you remember! Write these additional statements down on a sheet of paper. If you really look hard at both the positive and negative statements, you'll be able to see the patterns they've created and their impacts on your life.

All these comments you heard while you were growing up were made with good intentions. The statements and comments were made to make you a stronger man! However, these untruths still affect your thinking today.

You also heard what I call, "myths". Myths such as, "real men don't cry". Men were not to show any type of emotion and we were probably told, "this is a sign of weakness.

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These myths still exist in our society today. In today's society, men are allowed to show basically only two emotions, happiness and anger. I remember growing up one of my father's favorite sayings when I got hurt was, "it doesn't hurt, just rub it and it will be okay"! I know he meant well and deep down he was concerned, he was only trying to make me tough! I think of all the things he missed in life because he was taught as a young man not to show emotions! As my dad aged, I was lucky to see his softer side. He really was a caring man and loved his family! Because of these early influences on me, I have to say I made some of the same mistakes my father did. I did not make them on purpose, it was just part of who I was! Some of the traits I developed are based on what I was told or witnessed while growing up. These traits are still being fed me today!

Traits can be divided into two categories: Personal Traits and Life Style Traits. Personal Traits are the behaviors we inherited through the influences in our lives and our genetics. No matter how hard we want to ignore it, we must face the fact we do have some of the physical traits of our parents.

Life Style Traits are things we choose for ourselves such as what type of home to buy, size and location of our home, type of car we drive and where we shop! This is all done by personal choice in an effort to exhibit the image we want people to see! Our image may be to be involved in everything so that you can be seen and admired by others. This could be anything from the activities of your children to your involvement in church activities. Your desire is to be noticed. Another choice you make is to remain in the background. You don't want to stand out, someone will want something from you or ask

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someone will want something from you or ask you to do something. You just want to be left alone so you are free to do "your thing". You don't have to worry about "anyone else".

You become so consumed with your own wants and desires, you lose sight of things as they happen all around you. You lose track and contact with reality! You turn a blind eye to things you don't want to deal with or that interferes with your life. Some examples are:

- ☐ Your wife and her need for your time and attention
- ☐ Your children and their activities
- ☐ Your daughter's new boyfriend
- ☐ Friends that don't agree with your lifestyle
- ☐ Guidance from your band of brothers
- ☐ Things at work that require extra time and attention

Then one day you wake up and find you've separated yourself from those around you and don't have a clue who you are or what you're doing! The people you live with have become strangers. The attention you denied your wife, she is seeking from other directions! It

doesn't have to be another man, she can gain attention from activities and group involvement. What has happened, she no longer seeks your attention or you! You have become room mates! Your children have done the same thing! They no longer seek your approval for things they need or do! All the approvals are given by their mother. At this point, if you needed to make a critical decision for your family, you would have to depend on your wife! You have become isolated in your own home. All the freedom you wanted for yourself, you

got it! As a stranger in your own home, you know the names of your wife and children and they know your name, but you don't know anything else about them! You don't the names

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of their friends, any of their interests or what they like to do. On the other hand, your wife and children know everything about you! They see you for who you truly are! They have watched you day after day slowly withdraw and separate yourself from them. You ignored their cries for attention and they went somewhere else to find the attention you deprived them! You're alone!

Earlier I referenced **Proverbs 23:7** talking about our selfishness. We don't think of ourselves as being selfish. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, we see what we want to see. **James**

**1:23-24** describes it best. *James 1:23-24 says he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind*

*of man he was"* . This is not something we do intentionally, it goes back to our traits! You have let the childhood influences and the myths you were told guide you! Can you change your traits? Yes! In the Manhood Plan you gained some insights on how to begin to change some of these traits. In this lesson, we will dig a little deeper. You will learn how to identify the negative influences that impact you and how to control or remove them completely. If you have already started your Manhood Plan, go back and review some of your answers or comments. Double check to make sure you were completely honest! We don't intentionally tell untruths when we talk about our past. We sometimes overlook or ignore some of the painful parts because they are too hurtful or embarrassing. But, you must recognize these painful and embarrassing moments for what they are and the influence they have over you. Facing and admitting these memories in your past is the "only way" you can work through them and start to change in a positive direction.



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At the end of this study is a short self assessment. Work your way through the assessment and take time to answer each question honestly. Make some notes about each question and the memories they stir. See if you can identify or start to recognize some of the traits in yourself! Do you see any habits or patterns that directly reflect back to any of the myths you were taught as a young man? It is important to be completely honest when answering the questions. This is the only way to gain insight, take control and create a change in you!

A psychiatrist once said that human beings have four basic needs. The basic needs are love, forgiveness, purpose and hope. For us men, I would like to add respect to the list. We are proud of the things we've accomplished and we want others to respect us for those accomplishments. But first, you must learn to respect yourself.

The first step in gaining self respect is truly understanding your innermost thoughts. Earlier we discussed **Proverbs 23:7**, "*As he thinks within himself, so he is.*" You can sort through the old messages that play in your mind while removing the negative impact they have on you. It doesn't matter if the messages are true or false! You control how they impact you. You can push the myths aside and eliminate the power they have over you.

If you need to seek forgiveness for something, then go to God and seek it! Then you must forgive yourself. If you need to forgive someone else, then do so and remove the control they have over you. It's important to gain control over your thoughts and begin to see yourself as God sees you. If you search the book of **Proverbs** (NASB) the word "man" is listed over a 100 times. Each one is a brief glimpse at a Godly man. Take some time to read each verse. A favorite of mine is Proverbs 12: "*The way of a fool is right in his*

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*own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel".* As men, we are capable of convincing ourselves of almost anything! No matter how absurd it may be, if it is something we want; we will believe anything we tell ourselves! That is why so many men are alone today. They see the man in the mirror and see who they want him to be. They can't see or won't let themselves see all the faults hidden deep inside.

Search through the book of Proverbs for the word "man" and read some of the verses. Below list the verses that stand out or get your attention. The verses that get your attention will also stir something in you. Jot down your thoughts or feelings as you read each verse. Don't wait and say I'll come back and write things down! You will have lost the pure emotion! Don't give time the ability to dull your senses and rob you of what God is stirring in your heart. Identify the verse and the feelings it stirs.

Verse
Thoughts / Feelings
Verse:
Thoughts / Feelings

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Verse:
Thoughts / Feelings
Verse:
Thoughts / Feelings
Verse:
Thoughts / Feelings

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My Thoughts and what am I feeling?

[illegible]