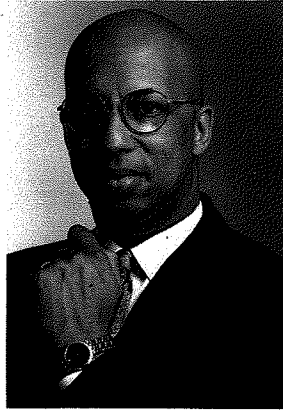


Talks My Father Never Had With Me

Helping the
young male
reach
adulthood

By Dr. Harold Davis

About The Author



Dr. Harold Davis brings to his role as author a variety of life experiences; minister, schoolteacher, professional musician, businessman, entrepreneur, husband and father. He currently serves as the Assistant Pastor and Pastor of Youth Activities at Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in Urbana, Illinois. He has earned the Doctor of

Ministry and the Master of Ministry degrees with honors from Bethany Bible College of Dothan, Alabama. Dr. Harold and Dr. Ollie Watts Davis live in Champaign, Illinois with their four children, Kirstie, Jonathan, Ashley and Charity.

About This Book

Newspapers are filled with articles regarding the plight of America's young men. The likelihood of many of them reaching adulthood is dismal. This book addresses many of the forces that young men are up against. The principles upon which strong societies have been built are presented as the solutions to this generation's dilemma. The young man who will give himself to these truths will have a greater chance of achieving manhood.

The chapters are offered as appetizers in order to stimulate thought and discussion. Transgenerational sharing is critical to success. Exposure to the written wisdom contained in this book and that spoken by mentors will provide young men with training in the skills and values needed to carry them through life.

Harold Davis, M.M.,D.Min.

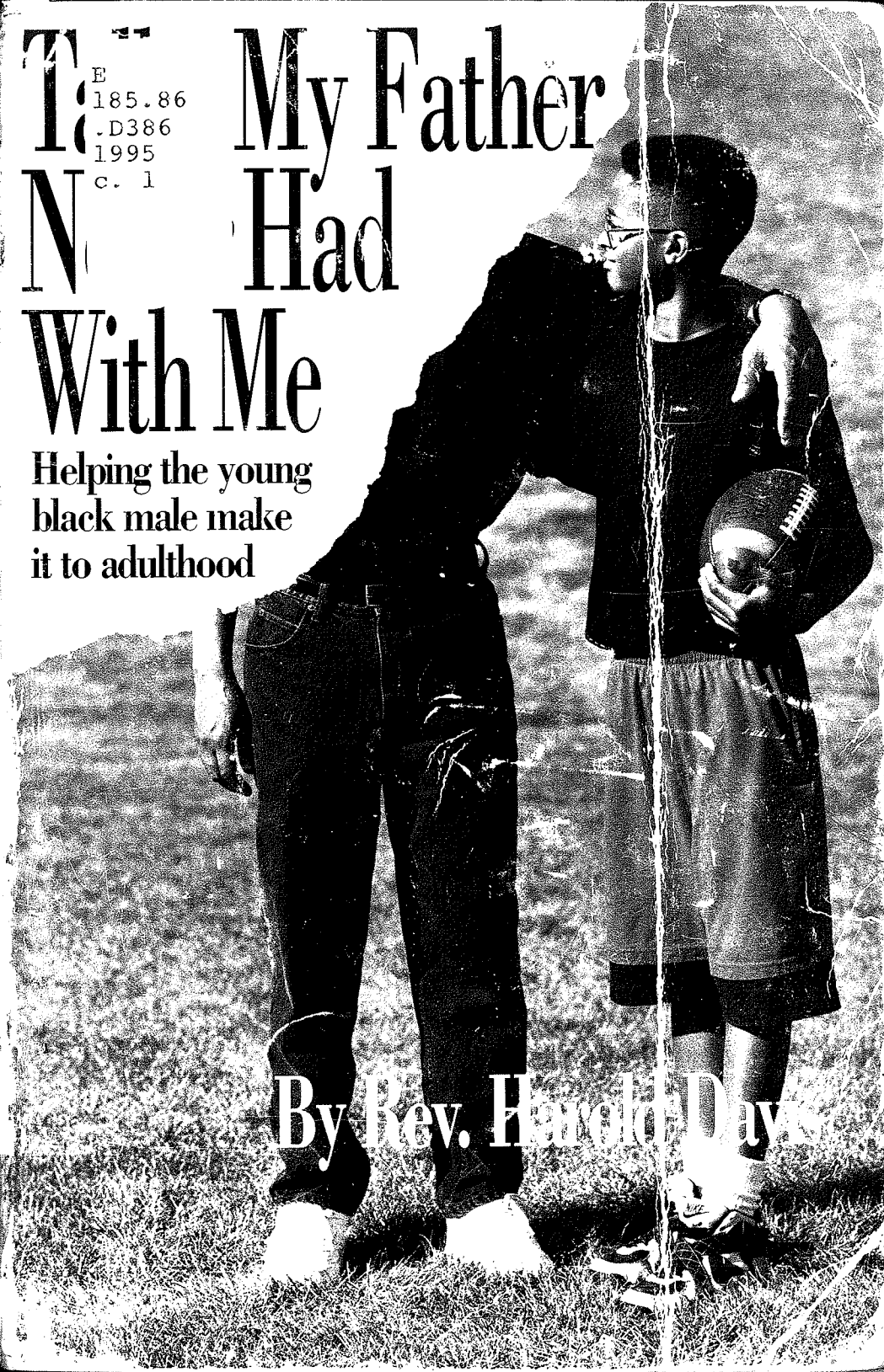
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My Father Had With Me

Helping the young
black male make
it to adulthood

By Rev. Harold Davis





TALKS MY FATHER NEVER HAD WITH ME

(Helping The Young Black Male Make
It To Adulthood)

By Rev. Harold Davis

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to John Thomas Davis (1904-1993) who taught me by precept (teaching and rules) and by practice (example). It is his consistent, continuing influence in my life that has made me the man that I am today. Although his head is cold in the grave, his voice still resounds loudly and clearly with counsel, correction, rebuke, and encouragement that helps me on a daily basis. Thanks Pops.



Special Thanks to:

- ◆ Dr. Ollie Watts Davis, my wife, counsellor, friend, lover and the mother of my children;
Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD.

Proverbs 18:22

- ◆ Rev. B.J. Tatum, my pastor with strong shoulders;
Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

I Timothy 5:17

- ◆ Rev. Dr. Kenneth Edward Copeland and Rev. Matthew Julius Watts, my brothers in the ministry;
Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17

- ◆ Kirstie, Jonathan, Ashley and Charity, my wonderful children whom I love and squeeze daily.
Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalms 127:3-5

Note To The Young Black Male

This book is designed to make you think and consider many things. Young men throughout the ages have had a tendency to make many of the same mistakes. If you can avoid these mistakes, you will have a better chance at being successful in life. As you read these pages, consider your life and how you can apply what you read to your life. If you disagree with a point made in the book, find an older, wiser man to discuss it with. Lastly, I challenge you to read the Scriptures included in each chapter because they will have a supernatural effect on your life. (I know I'm right about it.)

A Note To The Older Black Male

This book is designed to be a tool that will enable you to interact with a younger man and instill in him solid, proven principles for success. I challenge you to schedule a time once a week to spend with one to three young men to read and discuss the book together. The young Black male of today is gifted with many talents and in most cases possesses an untapped potential lying dormant in his soul. The topics in this book are designed to stimulate conversation and open the door to more topics of discussion which will surface as young men open up and share their concerns. When the young men open up, you can share from your rich experience, which will impact the young men greatly. Let me make some suggestions:

1. Pray and ask God for guidance.
2. Select up to three young men, maybe total strangers who are in need of guidance. Please note: in most cases the young men are not aware that they need guidance. If there is no father in the home or any form of dysfunction, the young man is a good candidate for your attention.

3. Explain to the young men that you are conducting a series of Black male enrichment sessions and as an older Black male, you would like to spend some time with them.
4. Secure a meeting place (home, Church, community center, or a park).
5. Plan to read and discuss 1 or 2 chapters a week, incorporating a social activity or two along the way such as a ball game, amusement park, McDonalds, or visit them at school. Be creative!
6. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom as HE ministers to the young men through you.
7. Don't gloss over the Scriptures, because they will work supernaturally in the lives of the young men.
8. At the end of the sessions, seek to involve the young men in a local Church's young men's fellowship. If the church doesn't have one, **START ONE!**
9. To God be the glory. Give Him the credit. Amen.

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Preface

If you are a young black man from the age of 9 to 19, the odds are against you surviving and reaching age 40. There are many reasons why this has come to pass. I sincerely believe that if a young man will attempt to understand the bigger picture and the destructive forces that come against him from many directions, a strategy can be developed to help overcome the hurdles.

This book seeks to provide young men with a perspective that helped earlier generations survive against tremendous odds such as illiteracy, slavery, prejudice and poverty. There is a source of tried and true wisdom available that can help today's generation of young Black men not only survive, but excel in our contemporary society.

A recent study has shown that of the Black males alive today, 70% will not be around in twenty years. This statistic points out the destructive lifestyle that has been adopted by a large number of our young Black men. Each young man that dies or is put in jail is someone's son, brother or father. For families, statistics are irrelevant but the loss of a relative is very significant.

This book attempts to address areas that the author feels we should strengthen in our young men in order to prepare them to live a successful and productive life. The questions at the end of each chapter are designed to provide a tool for discussion between older men and younger men.

PART ONE

I AM WHO I AM

1 The Importance Of Understanding Your Orientation

There are some fundamentals that a person needs to understand in order to be successful and stay successful. Fundamental number one is an understanding of how you were raised, and what those who raised you did right and what they did wrong. This is called YOUR ORIENTATION. **Gaining an understanding of your orientation is important because it will provide you with objectivity (fairness) when dealing with yourself and others.**

A few years ago I purchased a run-down house that I intended to remodel and rent out. There was a lot of damage to the house, much of which was visible to the naked eye. What I did not know was that there was additional damage that I could not see. Not long after buying the house, I found out that the foundation under the middle wall of the house was cracked and sinking. It required going under the house, digging around the foundation and reinforcing it. It was very hard work, but necessary to make the house safe and liveable.

Your orientation is your foundation (how you were raised). It is what your life today and tomorrow is built upon. In most cases, foundations are covered up and not seen once a house is built. This can be tragic because some of our foundations (orientations) are faulty and need to be re-examined. As you read the next few pages, take a shovel and remove the hard soil from around your foundation and take a close look for cracks and defects.

My earliest memories are pleasant memories of spending time with my dad. My dad was and is a source of strength and wisdom that has been with me through the years. He always had time for me, and though he was not extensively

verbal (he did not talk a lot,) he did give me many insights into human nature.

On one occasion when I had a business deal that went sour, he heard me angrily tell the person over the phone that I was on my way to see him and that I would discuss the matter with him when I got there. My dad informed me that you don't tell people that you are coming over to discuss an issue with them, for if you do that, they will have time to prepare a defense. The way to do it is, to just show up and discuss it with them. Then you have a better chance at success. I appreciated my dad's advice. Because of my relationship with my dad and watching him for years and years, there are some benefits that I picked up from being around a wise older man who loved me.

It was not until I was grown that I began to understand the impact of my relationship with my dad. I attribute my desire to work to my dad. He modeled a strong work ethic for me. I learned at an early age to hustle because I saw my dad hustling. I thought that all men hustled. My dad never argued with my mother even though he did get frustrated with her. As a result of living in that environment, I don't fuss and cuss with my wife, and to my knowledge, none of my brothers fuss and cuss with their wives.

I don't know what your orientation has been, but one thing is for sure, I do know that it has affected you greatly. You are what you are largely because of your orientation or upbringing. There is a saying that if a child is raised with criticism he learns to criticize. If he lives with hostility, he learns how to be hostile. As a parent of four children, I am amazed at how my children have picked up the characteristics of their parents. My children are all musical; so are their parents. My children are all spiritual; so are their parents. There are many other characteristics that they have acquired as a byproduct of growing up in our house. I know of

unfortunate cases where the parents are doing all of the wrong things and their children are acquiring these traits as well.

Many males wait until they are 40 years old before they start to examine and correct the mistakes their parents made in raising them. Please note that there is a proper way to raise children. If the children are not raised properly, there will be forms of dysfunction that follow. What I mean by dysfunction is that something in your family is not working right. It could be that your family has been touched by divorce, abuse, violence, extreme poverty, drugs, crime, hate, shame, guilt, and the list is endless. If you want to get ahead in life, you need to start studying yourself (your orientation) now.

Only YOU can figure out why you act the way you act and do the things you do. Only YOU can change you.

Here are some things to consider and think about:

1. What Man Has Served As Your Role Model While You Were Growing Up?

Every male is exposed to older men as he grows up. These men may be family members, neighbors or friends, but we all have had men in our lives that we learned from. Now that you are getting older, do you recognize the bad habits that you observed these men display that you should not copy? Have you noted how an older man's mistakes and bad choices have hurt him? Have you determined to avoid at all costs the traps that scarred his life?

My main role model was my father, who was a wonderful man and wonderful father, but he still was not perfect. There are habits that my father had that I fight whenever I see them developing in me. Are you fighting all known negative influences?

Applicable Scriptures

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Proverbs 18:19

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24

And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Genesis 37:4

And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Genesis 25:28

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17

Then came Peter to him, and saith, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him: till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Matthew 18:21-22

4 Living In The Projects: A Housing Development (or living in the trap of a poor hood)

Recently I was spending some time in a housing project in our city. As a grown man, I am fascinated with the projects because I lived in one as a child. I now spend time there seeking to enrich the lives of children who live there. When I lived there as a child, I learned how to be amused with whatever was lying around. I made toys out of trash and entertained myself with whatever I found.

The other day while in the neighborhood I found myself doing something that I had done as a child. I was looking at the ground. While looking at the ground, I found a quarter on the street and a cat's-eye marble partly submerged in the dirt outside of an apartment. I was excited with my discovery and I found myself reliving part of my childhood. Even though I am many years removed from the "manor" as we use to call it, the "manor" is still very much in me. I have a fondness for the atmosphere that is found there. Even the negative aspects of the projects are firmly a part of my past that I think of occasionally.

If you are a young man who was raised or is being raised in the projects, there are some things that I learned as I grew up that you should be aware of now.

1. You Can Work Your Way Out Of The Projects.

We know about sports as a way out, but we need to consider some additional ways that are less based on chance.

- Education will get you out of the projects, and it will enrich your personal life.

- The Army will get you out of the projects, but without the education you may end up right back.
- Musical talent may get you out of the projects, but without an education you may end up right back.
- There are many illegal ways to get out of the projects, but you may die or go to jail in the process.

My wife and I made it out of the projects and out of poverty through education. With an education you have a better chance of getting a job, and the education helps you better understand the world in which you live.

2. Turn Any Anger Into Positive Energy.

I used to watch my dad clean toilets with his hands, and it made me angry because racism limited him to that job. I grabbed that anger and refused to throw bricks during the riots but took that energy and channeled it into building my own business and getting an education.

Look around you. Does what you see (drugs, crime, despair, poverty) make you angry? If it does, good! Take the energy that results from that anger and channel it into those things (education, integrity, love, prayer, work) that will make a difference. **NEVER WASTE YOUR ANGER!** Seek to develop the habit of directing the energy that comes from your anger in positive ways.

3. Refuse To Be Apathetic.

Apathy is when you just don't care. Many people die in projects in poverty because they became apathetic (ain't no use tryin', they ain't gonna let us get no where). Say to yourself "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" and I can work my way out of here.

Black folks created the blues, and we could sing them because we were oppressed. I feel that the blues as an art

form is an important part of our history which should be maintained. On the other hand, singing the blues will not help you elevate your thinking to where it should be maintained. Learn to cultivate a passion toward improving your status in life. Don't hang around negative, lazy, apathetic people who are going nowhere.

4. Don't Be Stingy.

Learn to become a flowing brook and not a stagnant pond. Water flows in and out of a brook and it stays fresh. Water flows into a pond, stays there and gets stale.

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that waterth shall be watered also himself.

Proverbs 11:25

Learn to give and be sure not to step on people as you rise out of poverty. When you step on people to get ahead you will find yourself standing on shaky ground.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6:38

I am sure that you have heard people say: "You reap what you sow." This simply means what you dish out will come back to you. This applies to the good as well as to the bad.

5. Develop An Empowerment Mentality Now.

Just because you live in the ghetto does not mean that

Size is very important when you are young. It is also very important to learn how to capitalize on the size that God gave you and use it to your best advantage. Endomorph, Ectomorph, Mesomorph, respectively, are the technical names for fat, skinny and muscular body types. Whether or not you know it or want to acknowledge it, your body type has a lot to do with how you view yourself and how others view you. The goal of this chapter is to help you consider your attitude about your body size and help you determine what attitudinal adjustments you need to make in order to have a healthy self-esteem. Also, we want to examine how others (teachers, White police officers, store clerks, etc.) relate to your body size.

Let's Consider The Endomorph (Fat Dudes)

Not too long ago, I was visiting with a youth group. There was a young man in the group who was very large. He was an endomorph, or we would say fat. To my amazement this brother was much younger than I thought he was. He appeared to be High School age, but he was only in elementary school.

It is a fact that young people are eating more today than they did in years past and it is also a fact that the fast foods are high in fat content. For this and other reasons, there are many young men who are large for their age. If you are a large young man, and have an endomorphic body type, you need to analyze how it has affected you. Is your self-esteem intact? Have you taken the time to analyze why you are big? Is it in your genes or do you just eat a lot?

Sometimes young men will eat when they are depressed, feel defeated, helpless and hopeless. Friction in the home can lead young men to eat as a way to escape. When

we add to that the various video games which tend to limit exercise, we see why the rate of obesity is increasing.

I Want To Challenge The Endomorph To Do Several Things:

1. Make Sure That You Are Getting Enough Exercise.

As you get older this need will become more apparent.

2. Develop A Discipline Regarding Your Eating Habits.

Don't eat late at night. Try to eat healthy foods (fruits, vegetables, etc.). If you do this you will thank yourself for it later.

3. Determine Not To Be Defeated By A Weight Problem.

Never give up. Remember that everyone is struggling with some real or imagined deficiency. Some deficiencies are more visible than others. Remember that your problem is common and if it is caused by your bad habits, God can help you get over it.

4. Decide Where You Want To Excel In Life And Pursue Excellence With All Of Your Might.

You must believe that you are gifted and good at something. Seek to find what that is and get even better at it. I grew up with a friend who had a physical deformity. He was not able to play ball and do many of the things that other young people did. His hobby was collecting model airplanes. While other kids were out playing he would be inside studying the various types of planes. He learned so much with his childhood hobby that he was able to get a job as an adult with an aerospace company.

You will never reach your full potential if your path is lined by negative thoughts regarding those who are bigger than you are.

2. Work To Develop The Attitude That Your Size Is A Unique Asset As Opposed To A Liability.

You should view life like you view basketball. Because of my size, there are some positions on the court that I do not play well. On one occasion while playing basketball, I found myself in the hole (under the basket) with the big men. I saw the ball coming down and I jumped up to get it. The only problem is that the big men (some weighing 100lbs more than I do) saw the ball also and they jumped to get it. At that moment I realized that I was not playing the game wisely. So, I moved outside and started working on my killer jump shot while using my speed to out maneuver the big dudes.

3. Make A List Of The Many Things That You Can Do Well.

To focus on the positive gifts and abilities that you have is a healthy habit. It helps you see the positive side of your existence rather than focusing on what you can't do. You should take the time to write your strengths down on a sheet of paper. Writing these things down will further enhance your understanding and awareness of the areas in which you are strong.

4. Don't Be Afraid To Be Smart.

Anyone who does not appreciate your God-given brains is either jealous or is not your friend. In either case you should not concern yourself with how they feel about you. I know kids who are so insecure about themselves that they will

purposely not do their best in order to fit in with some of the kids who put pressure on them.

5. Be Sensitive To The Temptation To Overcompensate For Your Size By Doing Things Such As Having Three Girlfriends, Dressing Crazy Or Any Such Thing.

To **overcompensate** for your size is to say to the world: "I don't like myself or I'm not satisfied with myself." People can see how you are behaving and will believe that you have a weak personality. Resist the temptation to overcompensate for your size. Please, always do your best, but don't overcompensate.

The small dude needs to consider how others view him. Generally ectomorphs are seen as less of a threat than endomorphs or mesomorphs. It is advisable for the small dude to have a healthy vocabulary and learn how to use it wisely. Ectomorphs have a tendency to run their mouths. Try to control that temptation and attempt to speak with wisdom. This can help you gain the respect that you may not otherwise get. It is possible for ectomorphs to gain access to positions and opportunities that others may not get because of the fact that they are not physically threatening. Be sure to take advantage of this.

Let's Look At The Mesomorph (Muscular Dudes)

The mesomorph is the muscular type. I live in a college-town and there are a lot of athletes in this town. I frequently watch the University of Illinois football and basketball teams on television to see how the season is going. Not long ago, I was in the grocery store when a van load of athletes came into the store. At first I thought it was an invasion of giants. When they came in the store it was as if everybody else in the store shrank. Mesomorphs are imposing people.

I have a good friend who is muscular. One day while we were playing, I jumped on his back and wrapped my arms around him in an attempt to hold him. He simply exhaled, and lifted his arms, breaking my hold with little to no effort.

In our society people are impressed with muscular men. It has always been that way with human beings. I think of the children of Israel who when they wanted a king, looked on the physical stature of a man named Saul. The Bible says of Saul that from his shoulders up he was higher than any of the people. He was chosen to be the king when the people wanted a king. The interesting thing is that he did not make a good king. You see, a man must be a king on the inside before he can ever be a good king, regardless of what he looks like on the outside.

I Want To Challenge The Mesomorph To Do Several Things:

1. Take Advantage Of The Mystique That Comes With Having A Mesomorphic Body Type.

This mystique can help you get jobs and positions of leadership. There have been many studies done that show that the tall, dark, handsome men get the best jobs. I know that it is unfair, but it is a fact of life that is a plus for the mesomorphs and causes others to work a little harder.

2. Remember That As You Get Older, The Mystique And Its Advantages Will Diminish.

As with Saul, the mystique wore off and the people were depending on his character, wisdom, integrity, and courage to lead them. Saul was lacking in these areas. Although others may be impressed with your size, don't you

be impressed; instead, prepare for your future when size is no longer an asset.

3. Don't Neglect To Get An Education.

Once you and your admirers become adults, the fascination over your body will diminish and you will need to be qualified to get a job. This is particularly important with the young Black males who only want to be in the NFL or NBA. There is nothing sadder than a 6'3" Black male with no education who almost made it to the big money arena of professional sports. This brother's past great moments on the court are now forgotten because people will forget quickly. The only thing that can help him now is an education or a rich uncle.

4. Don't Allow The Athletic Community To Push You If You Don't Feel Gifted In That Area.

Just because you are muscular does not mean that you should be an athlete. You will never be a great athlete unless your heart is in it. Another sad situation is the Black males who play sports and get hurt because they really weren't gifted athletes.

5. Make Sure That Any Woman That You Are With Has Considered Your Personality As Well As Your Physical Attraction.

It is a fact that men want beautiful women and women want handsome men. This natural tendency can get you into big trouble in the long run. If she is only interested in you while the crowds are shouting and there is a chance for a professional career, then you are in trouble. You will be better off with a woman that you seek out rather than a woman who seeks you out. (I know I'm right about it.)

How Do You Cope With Personal Problems?

Problems can be devastating! The problems of youth only compound themselves in later life. One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is the gift of studying and applying problem solving skills. No problem should be allowed to have a greater influence on you than it deserves. Many times it is our inappropriate response to a minor problem that creates a bigger problem. I have learned (as ridiculous as this sounds) to view each problem as an opportunity to grow, especially in the area of relationships.

How Aggressively Do You Shun Drugs?

Just the other day, I was talking to a young man who had been on drugs for two years. He stated that it all started when he innocently went to a party. As the party progressed, the drugs were put on the table. He stated that he knew he should have left immediately. Unfortunately, he didn't leave and his life is currently in shambles as a result.

It is a wise man who walks away from drugs and any form of pressure from "friends" who would bring drugs into his presence. A simple point to remember is that anyone who would attempt to get you high is not a friend but a minister (servant) of satan. Have predetermined boundaries or limits when it comes to dealing with drugs. Those boundaries should be to go to all lengths to avoid them.

Understanding The Bigger Picture.

Drugs are destroying Black communities and weakening the strength of the United States of America. The question has been asked: "Is there a conspiracy against Blacks and have drugs been used to do Blacks in?" Well it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that drugs have always been sent to the ghetto. It was never intended for cocaine to

hit the suburbs, but if you dig one ditch, you had better dig two. The bigger picture shows that there are people who would like to destroy the Black community but they can only do it with our cooperation.

Planned Parenthood's goal in the beginning was to limit the number of undesirables (Blacks, and Hispanics) so they placed the abortion clinics in Black neighborhoods and made abortion free. The liquor companies don't place advertisements in the suburbs but in the Black communities so that the weak are constantly bombarded with visuals to stimulate their weaknesses. Morality in America in general, and in Black America particularly, is at an all-time low.

So, the big picture is one of rapid moral, civil, social, and religious degeneration of a country which is affecting all. The greatest damage is being done to those who have the least power to resist, the minorities. The only redeeming fact in this whole scenario is that **YOU CAN CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DESTRUCTION.**

I have decided that I am not going to be poor, illiterate, uneducated, deprived, abused, victimized, oppressed and many other things. In as much as I have control of my life and can do as I please, I have chosen the route of success and you can too.

A Drug Is A Drug Is A Drug

Crack cocaine is not the only drug. Cigarettes, alcohol, snuff, and beer are all drugs. If you are addicted to one drug, you are no better than a person who is addicted to another drug. Don't seek to rate drugs according to their destructive qualities but according to their addictive qualities. I have been told that it is just as hard to get off of cigarettes as it is to get off of cocaine.

Remember that the only successful approach to drugs is to never introduce your body to them.

9 My First Job

I had hung out in the music store for some time now. I loved music, played several instruments and loved to hang out in the store. On this particular day I was on my way to find a job when the store owner asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was on my way to get a job and he stated that I could work for him. This was a dream come true!

What I did not anticipate was Mr Pratt. Mr. Pratt was my immediate supervisor. Mr. Pratt was a White man about 6'2" tall and right at 300 pounds. At 15 years old, I was 120 pounds soaking wet. As I look back, I appreciate Mr. Pratt for he solidified many basic principles that my dad taught me which have contributed to my success in life.

I am going to share with you some basic things that young men need to incorporate into their success plans that I learned on my first job.

The Hand Shake (the fine line between firmness and arrogance)

In this world of fickleness there is a need for genuine commitments. When two men shake hands a lot of information is transmitted. A hand shake can tell you if a person is genuinely glad to meet you or if they are shaking just as a formality.

Mr. Pratt, my 6'2", 300lb. boss taught me how to shake hands when I was 15 years old. He met me as I came to work each day, extended his huge hand to me and shook it. His grip was almost unbearable. He would tell me: "When you shake a man's hand, look him in the eye!" I learned how to do that. After some practice I learned how to confidently shake the hand of a man who:

- Was bigger than I was.

- Held the power to fire me, and
- Presented a challenge because of his high expectations of me.

The ability to shake hands properly can determine if you get a job and how others treat you, and it gives an indication of the spirit that lies within you. A famous blind musician stated that he could shake a woman's hand and tell how tall she was and how much she weighed, and the texture of her skin told him additional things. Well, I am not talking about shaking a woman's hand. I am talking about shaking a man's hand. Be careful to be genuine when you shake hands with someone because a discerning person can tell when you are not genuine. Also, don't overdo the macho hand shake. In other words don't try too hard to impress another man by squeezing his hand.

It is not how hard you squeeze his hand, it is simply being firm and genuine that conveys through your handshake a sense of purity of character that will impress men of integrity. Your handshake can convey to some degree the content of your character.

The Importance Of Being Dependable

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

Proverbs 25:19

This proverb very accurately describes how it feels to be let down when you are depending on someone. An employer is dependant on those who work for him. Each man is like a link in a chain that depends on the strength of the other links to successfully complete the task at hand.

Just the other day I watched one of my favorite football teams in a play-off game. The score was tied with seconds to go and it was up to the punter to kick an easy field goal. He missed! His failure, though unintentional, let the whole team down. When someone depends on you, don't let them down. If you develop the discipline of being dependable, you will have in your possession part of a strong foundation to build a successful life upon. Don't ever allow yourself to be like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.

The Importance Of Being Punctual

I resent the concept and term "CP time" which stands for "colored people's time." This idea promotes an old Southern stereotype that Black people cannot be on time. Any event that I am involved in I strongly insist on starting on time. The reason is that it helps develop a positive attitude about what you are doing.

In the business world you don't get ahead by being on time, you get ahead by being **early!** Your punctuality speaks volumes about you before you ever open your mouth. When you are punctual people perceive you as:

1. Organized
2. Prepared
3. Anxious for the task at hand
4. A potential Leader

While in school, be at least 3 minutes early for each class and take that time to get yourself together for the class. Please believe me when I tell you that teachers notice this and it will help you in the long run.

The Importance Of Being Trustworthy

A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

Proverbs 17:2

Not long ago a business in my town went bankrupt. The reason that the owner gave for going under was that his employees ripped him off. Employers are frantically searching for trustworthy employees to man their businesses. We live in an age when respect for the possessions of others is at an all time low. When you determine that you will be trustworthy you have increased your marketability. It is still possible to get a job and be promoted because you can be trusted. Trust is something that is invaluable.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Proverbs 22:1

Here is a good place to make the point that it is important to establish yourself with a group of reputable, responsible persons who will attest to your trustworthiness. This can be done by establishing your integrity in school, becoming an active member in a local Church or some reputable civic organization or any affiliation that is positive. You never know when you will need people on your side.

Your first job is very important because it is the beginning of a lifetime of work. If you take the time to work on these basics that we are discussing, your working career will get off to a good start.

The Importance Of Being Professional On The Job

I stopped by a fast food restaurant the other day because I needed some food in a hurry. The brother who was flippin' the burgers was involved in a heated discussion with his woman about a problem they had the night before. I was not interested in their personal problems because I wanted a double burger, fries and a large drink (in a hurry). The brother stood there talking to his woman for at least 3 minutes (which is a long time) during the peak lunch time rush hour. Now, check this out: If I had been his boss, I would have fired the brother on the spot!! He was acting unprofessionally on the job. He was causing the customers to become dissatisfied which translates into lost funds for the business.

There is a time to talk to your woman, and it is not while you are being paid to work. I know that there are emergencies, but I am not talking about an emergency. What I am talking about is displaying the attitude that the boss should pay you regardless of how hard you work and how bad your attitude is. The bottom line is to give the man a good day's work for your pay. This is how you get ahead in life.

The Ability To Be Able To Take A Rebuke

It amazes me how so many young people have so much pride that they cannot receive a rebuke (correction). A rebuke properly given is in your best interest. Let me say that I appreciate rebukes because I know that they are designed to eliminate future mistakes and pain.

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

Proverbs 9:8

In the following space, write the Scripture from this chapter that blessed you, challenged you, made you mad, or made you think.

Notes _____

11 I Was Treated Unfairly Today (Prejudice)

Recently, I was in a mall with my two youngest children. On this particular day I had on a suit and tie and was dressed very professionally. As I approached the cosmetics counter, I noticed a woman that I had previously worked with at the counter making a purchase.

This woman was a tall, attractive, White woman with blue eyes and flowing blond hair. I had worked with the woman every day for a number of years and I was more impressed with her character than I was with her carriage (body). As I approached her to say hello, her back was turned so I cleared my throat to get her attention. Upon seeing this, the sales lady dissed me. She frowned, looked at me and said: "Sir, go on down the aisle, just! go! on! down! the! aisle!" I was shocked.

My female associate standing at the counter, not knowing what was going on, turned around, saw me, smiled and we talked like two friends who had not seen each other for a while.

The question on the floor now is: What should I say to the sales lady who dissed me? With the look on her face you could have bought her with a wet food stamp. What should I say? WHAT SHOULD I SAY! Should I just walk away and forget that she said anything? Should I make a face? Should I walk away with my nose in the air? Or, should I diss her like she dissed me?

When you are treated unfairly you should seek to respond knowledgeably. A wise response is the best response because it will bring the most good from the situation.

In order to respond wisely there are some things you should consider first. To check yourself, ask yourself these questions before you respond:

- Am I in a bad mood or having a bad day?
- Did I do something wrong to provoke this person?

Regarding the other person, ask yourself these questions:

- Is this person crazy?
- Has this person been exposed to intelligent Black folks?
- What would I have done if the situation was reversed?
- How can I do the right thing and come out ahead in this situation?

A proper assessment of the situation is necessary before you say anything.

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

Proverbs 13:3

The most effective way for you to help people realize that they have wronged you, is for you to let God show them. In my situation, the sales lady knew she was wrong. At that point, for me to say anything would have been anti-climatic. Nothing I could have said would have made her feel any worse than she felt nor further impress upon her how wrong she was. So, I suggest that the best approach is to let God fix it and don't plead your own case. This is not always easy, but I challenge you to look at history and see how people who were dissed eventually shined because the truth will eventually come forth.

If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

Proverbs 30:32

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

Proverbs 25:21-22

I know that kindness to people who are dissin' you may be a difficult concept to embrace but it clearly is the best policy. Well, what about those situations where the person is going off and it seems like there is no justice and the person seems to be getting away with it. Shouldn't I go off then?

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Romans 12:18

Let me confess for a minute. I don't want you to think that I don't struggle with what I am trying to share with you. Just the other day, I blew it. My day was not going well and I encountered a situation at the bank where it seemed like the teller was trying to diss me. Yes, I am sorry to say that I went off (a little bit) and said to the woman: "Is there a problem, I've been banking here for five years, IS THERE A PROBLEM?!" As I write this I am still sorry that I went off (a little bit) on the teller. The bad thing is that my going off did not help me get my money any faster and now the people at the bank look at me funny.

I believe that the best way to handle ignorant people and abusive situations is to walk away from them. You should have enough self-esteem and confidence to know that the

Applicable Scriptures

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Proverbs 25:21-22

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Romans 12:18

Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

Proverbs 30:33

12 A Proper Attitude About Money

A very popular Bible verse is often misquoted like this: "Money is the root of all evil." The verse, I Timothy 6:10a says: "*For the love of money is the root of all evil.*" So, it is not money but the love of money that gets people into trouble. Please be advised that there is nothing inherently wrong with money. Money is AMORAL which means that it is not good and it is not bad. Money becomes a factor only if we have an unhealthy attitude about it.

When a man loves money, he becomes a candidate for all types of traps. A man's attitude about finances or money is a CRITICAL factor in his future success. Those who are crazy about getting money will take one of several courses:

1. Become A Crook To Get It.

I am amazed at the many times I have had the opportunity to get money dishonestly. I have had opportunities to do almost everything wrong that you could think of. Most of you who read these pages will be presented with many opportunities to do wrong. What saves you at this point is what could be called internal restraints (something inside of you that keeps you in check when you are tempted.) One restraint that has always helped me when it comes to getting money illegally is the fact that I know if I get it illegally, I won't be able to keep it without a lot of sorrow. You may not see the sorrow immediately but it will come.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Proverbs 10:22

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Proverbs 22:7

A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

Proverbs 17:18

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Malachi 3:8-10

In the following space, write the Scripture from this chapter that blessed you, challenged you, made you mad, or made you think.

Notes _____

13 The King's English And Employment

I was assisting a young brother who was in search of a job. He had put in applications all over town when one day he received a call at the Church because he didn't have a phone. I went and found him and took him to the prospective employer and stood there while the prospective employer talked to him. The employer asked him: "Why do you want to work here?" The brother replied: "I need a job." The employer continued to ask the brother questions and each answer was about the brother's personal problems and not about solving the problems of the potential employer. Needless to say, he didn't get the job.

The brother talked with his prospective employer as if he was talking with his homey in the hood. When a Black man does this, his value and worth in the eyes of his employer diminishes. Young people must learn that people are put at ease when you talk in a manner that they are comfortable with. I had the opportunity to go to another country where the people talked differently than I do. It was very difficult to order food and to be understood and understand others. I was very glad to get back to the States where I could understand and be understood. Don't put your employer in a foreign country every time he tries to talk with you.

The ability to speak "Standard English" is a skill that will take you far in life and many young Black men don't see the value in it. Here are some things to consider:

1. Standard English Will Get You Noticed And Listened To.

Not too long ago, I was at a local housing complex on

a Saturday afternoon and I came up on a young man leaning against a car with a wine bottle in one hand and his woman in the other. As it so happened, I was waiting on someone and while waiting, I got into a conversation with the young man, who was extremely cool, laid back, and in his own world. During the conversation, the brother looked at me and said something like this:

"Yo man, it be rough on the street
trying to get enough to eat
kids gettin' me down
don't wanna mess around
job's hard to find
got my woman on my mind
can't seem to get straight
got to stop and meditate
I'm going to give you the spiel
I know the real deal".....

He continued on and on and finally stopped. After he stopped, he hugged his woman, sat back and grinned, taking pride in his linguistic accomplishment. I looked at him and said something like this:

"I understand that the vicissitudes of life can be contentious and contrary, assailing and assaulting the ego and retiring a man's monumental efforts to a condition of ignominious invalidation. I also understand that the daily doldrums of sustaining this diminutive existence can be very exasperating, but I conclude that to retreat into a cocoon of inebriation in an attempt to incapacitate and invalidate life's incessant blows will not be efficacious."

At this point the brother stood up straight, his countenance (face) changed and he looked at me and said: "Who are you?" I told him who I was and he began to listen

to the wisdom of one who was older and wiser than he was.

Now, I want you to realize that because of how I answered him, he wanted to know who I was. With my vocabulary, (which is accepted wherever the English language is spoken), I challenged the brother to perform on the world's stage rather than only on the stage in his head.

2. An Increased Vocabulary Will Point Out To You That The World Is A Huge Place.

Many of the words we use come from other countries and maintain their native pronunciation. The word "kindergarten" is a German word that means the children's garden; however, in America, we never translated it for usage. There are other words which are transliterated, which means the spellings may differ somewhat but the pronunciation and meaning is nearly the same. The word Hallelujah (Praise the Lord) is one such word.

3. An Enhanced Vocabulary Will Make You Wise Beyond Your Years.

Words stimulate thought, and when you study their origins it gives you extra power when you use them. Every new word you learn opens the door to many other words, and the cycle is endless.

4. An Enhanced Vocabulary Comes From Using A Dictionary.

It is common knowledge that Malcolm X read the dictionary while in prison. It may be difficult to see the gain from such activity, but stop and think of the great men who had significant vocabularies: Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson, and Thurgood Marshall, just to name a few, were men of significant vocabularies. These men could think on their feet because they had words to express their thoughts.

We have many great young thinkers today who will never be great because they can't express their thoughts. The newspaper is another place to pick up additional words. Read the paper and write down all the new words you come in contact with.

5. An Enhanced Vocabulary Will Help You Get Better Grades In School And Will Help You Get Promoted On Your Job.

The ability to articulate your thoughts is power and money in the bank. Think about this. Musicians struggle to get what they hear in their heads recorded on their new CD. Fashion designers struggle to get what they see, in a new dress, manufactured and on the rack. Athletes struggle to make the play that is in their mind work on the field. You and I struggle to get what we are thinking out of our minds into our conversation. An enhanced vocabulary will help you get those valuable thoughts conveyed to other people. When this happens, you become more valuable, and wise in the sight of others.

6. Each Field Of Study (Discipline) Has Its Own Vocabulary.

Doctors talk doctor talk, lawyers talk lawyer talk, and so forth. I was impressed the last time I was in the court room by the vocabulary that was used there. I know a preacher who can take words and paint a picture so vividly that everyone in the congregation can see the picture. The other day I put my car in the shop. I told the mechanic that there was a low point on the front disc and that the disc needed to be turned. I LOVE to be able to speak the vocabulary of whatever we are talking about. Sometimes life forces us to learn new terms (vocabulary).

If you notice the handsome picture on the back of the book, you will see that this handsome author is bald. Well, my hair fell out after a very stressful period in my life. When this happened I had to learn a new term, "Alopecia." This term is what doctors use for baldness. My condition was alopecia totalis which means bald all over. My hair is now beginning to grow back, so my condition has become *alopecia areata* which means bald in some areas.

When I buried my father, I talked to the funeral director who had a whole new vocabulary: embalming, vaults, sealers, visitation, expired, etc. I pray that you have a good vocabulary, other than what is common on the streets. You need a street vocabulary, but you also need to be knowledgeable of the vocabulary of various disciplines or professions.

7. In Addition To Enhancing Your Vocabulary, Learn The Proper Structure Of The English Language.

If you are a citizen of the U.S.A., English is your official language. While there are numerous dialects, standard English is what's completely accepted. Discipline yourself and master the fundamentals of effective communication, which include subject-verb agreement and proper use of adverbs, adjectives, and prepositional phrases.

14 The Importance Of Controlling Your Passions And Not Letting Them Control You

I was called by a friend to give his elderly father a ride one day. After I picked his father up it soon became apparent to me that the old man wanted to talk. He proceeded to expound on issues of life that he felt needed to be addressed. At one point he said something that I distinctly remember. He said, "There are three things that will kill you: women, money, and alcohol."

I later thought about what he said and I feel that it is true but I also would like to state that it is an unbridled (uncontrolled) passion toward these things that is deadly.

Men have been destroyed for centuries because they could not control their passions. When I speak of passion, the mind automatically drifts toward sex. Passion is much broader than that, but because our society focuses on sex we need to be aware of the danger of **undisciplined** sexual passion.

There is a danger in not controlling your sexual passion. Unbridled sexual passion affects you in these ways:

1. Unbridled Passion Impairs Decision Making.

When you are in love, you don't think straight. When your passions are out of control, you don't think at all. Many men have made decisions in the heat of passion that controlled them for the rest of their lives. I was talking to a man the other day whose wife is making his life miserable. He married her based on the passion that he had for her when he first met her.

I know many men who hooked up with beautiful women just for their beauty and shortly after the beginning of their marriage or relationship they found out that they were very miserable. Remember that a pretty face can hide an empty mind.

6. Determine To What Degree You Choose To Be Controlled By Lustful Thoughts And Females In General.

I stopped in a convenience store to get some gas. As I went inside to pay, there was a woman standing at the counter with some beautiful legs and shorts on that were cut very high. Standing behind her in line were four men and I made the fifth. As I stood there I noticed that there was much tension in the air because all of the men standing behind her were nervous. All of them could see her legs, but none of them wanted to act like they were bothered by them. As the lady paid for her gas and left, all of the men's heads took a last peek at the legs that carried her to her car.

After she left, the men in the store sighed a sigh of relief. I said to the man in front of me: "She had some pretty legs didn't she?" He looked at me, shook his head and said: "SURE DID!" What I find interesting about this situation was the manner in which the men handled being in the presence of these pretty legs. There was a tenseness in the air because of the presence of this woman and how the men allowed themselves to be impacted by her. When this happens to you, this is what you do: Acknowledge to yourself or another man that the woman is pretty. When you do this, you release the pressure that is going on in your mind. This will help defuse many of the additional negative thoughts that would occur if the situation were not faced head on. This also allows you to be at peace with yourself because you are not fighting the negative thoughts that occur when you have secret sexual fantasies in your mind.

Somehow in our culture it has become acceptable behavior for a man to be out of control in the presence of a pretty woman. TV and movies make it appear that men have no control over the matter. **This is not the case!** You can CHOOSE to what degree you want to allow a woman's beauty to manipulate you.

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

Job 31:1

I challenge you to do like Job did, he made an agreement with his eyes. Many men need to do this today.

Questions For Introspection And Discussion (to make you think)

1. What do you think when a pretty young woman sits next to you? _____
2. Do you challenge negative sexual thoughts about women or do you let your mind run wild? _____
3. Do you have a pretty sister? _____
4. Who do you talk to about women or what source provides you with your information about women? _____
5. Have you considered the fact that if the Lord lets you live you will be older one day and sex will not be a priority in your life? _____

In the following space, write the Scripture from this chapter that blessed you, challenged you, made you mad, or made you think.

Notes _____

20 Is It Really Necessary To Curse???

I was in the mall the other day and there was a basketball court set up for a promotion. People were invited to take some shots for prizes. I must say that I was embarrassed at some brothers there who were foul. In a crowded mall they were talking like this: "Yo man, what the *&^% &6%^&<, *\$#&, you doin? You can't make no *&%^, ^%\$&, \$#% shots!" Not only were they using profanity, they were also very loud.

When you curse in public you only show that you:

- Have a limited vocabulary.
- Have not been properly trained. (no home trainin')
- Don't respect those who are offended by profanity.
- Don't respect yourself and the other Black men who will be looked upon negatively because of your behavior.
- Are probably not a person that people will want to get to know.

Profanity impresses no one but you. For some strange reason the person who curses believes that something positive is being accomplished through his negative behavior.

If you are one who is prone to foul language you need to consider several things:

- Your motivation for cursing.
- Your understanding of cursing.
- How you are perceived because of your cursing.
- What you can do to stop cursing.

Let's consider your motivation for cursing.

All behavior is motivated by something. If you are prone to profanity, there is a reason why you continue to do it. In most cases, it is because you grew up around it and found it to be the language spoken in your environment. If this is the case, you need to do what was stated in chapter one where we discussed dealing with your orientation. If you curse because you are pressured by those around you, then you need to get a grip. This type of response to peer pressure is an indication that you have a weak personality. If your motivation is that it makes you feel big or powerful, this is a misbelief because the opposite is true.

Let's look at your understanding of cursing.

I was in the presence of an elderly gentleman who was angry and he was cursing. He was so old that he had one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel. As a pastor I went to him and gently reminded him that he shouldn't curse. He looked at me angrily and said: "I ain't cursing, only God can curse somebody." I thought about what he said and he was right.

When you curse what you are really doing is asking God to place His displeasure and condemnation on something or someone. When you say: "Damn It! or Damn You" you are actually asking God to condemn that person or thing to Hell! If God were listening to you the people you cursed would be in big trouble. The fact of the matter is that when you curse, God does not listen to you, he laughs at you.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

Psalm 2:1,4

Cursing really makes a mockery of God and the fact that people who reject Him will actually be damned because they refused the free gift of salvation. It is a dangerous thing to play with God by cursing.

Let's consider how you are perceived because of your cursing.

When you curse around other people who curse, you fit in. If fitting in is your major goal in life then it will be necessary for you to curse for the rest of your life. Fitting in around those who curse is not what I consider to be a progressive attitude and approach to life. Cursing appeals to the wrong crowd. I suggest that you choose to appeal to the crowd that rejects this lifestyle and attitude.

Let's consider how to stop if you have started cursing.

1. Start with a realization that God is displeased by the behavior.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Deuteronomy 30:19

God's design for us is a pure heart and clean lips. The fact that you are angry is not an issue with God.

2. Realize that you will hear all of your words again when you stand before God in judgment.

real deal with the White man is that he does not want things to change much.

As I said earlier, White men are scared. The media perpetuates the fear. Each evening on the news they see Black men committing crimes against helpless victims. Consequently, when they meet a Black male who looks like those seen on TV, common sense tells him to beware.

For those Black men who have had the opportunity to develop good friendships with White men who are educationally and economically similar, they learn that the difference between Black and White men are cosmetic and cultural. Close interracial friends soon learn that they struggle with the same things. The major differences between Black and White are those which come as a result of economic and educational opportunities.

One of the greatest challenges that Black and White men face is the challenge of giving each other the opportunity to evaluate each other on the basis of the individual's character as opposed to the way one looks.

The problem is that it is not that simple. You cannot judge a book by its cover. I work with youth and I occasionally dress like a man much younger than I actually am. When I dress in jeans and tennis shoes, it is very common for me to be followed around in the mall by the security staff. Yes, that's right, the Reverend Doctor Harold Davis who is on the pastoral staff of Canaan Missionary Baptist Church is followed around in the mall when he dresses a certain way. The reason this happens is that people are scared and they will judge you based on how you look.

This is a terrible reality that Black and White people must realize. I am not as hard on White people as I used to be when they are suspicious of me based on how I look. I can

remember being afraid of White people because of how they looked.

I am a member of a predominantly Black Church with a few very faithful and loving White members. Not too long ago, a young White Christian brother and his friend cut off all of their hair and came to Bible study. They sat on the far side of the Church. From where I sat, I had difficulty seeing who they were with all of their hair cut off.

As I looked at the two unknown White men with all of the skin showing on the top of their heads, I was initially uncomfortable. They reminded me of the racist, violent skin heads who were gaining popularity. After service, when I was able to get close enough to see who it was, I realized that I, just like White people could jump to conclusions, based on what could be seen.

Ignorance of individuals or ignorance of groups of individuals fosters fear. And then again, we all know that there are some people who are just ignorant and have decided to hate people that are different than they are. Listen to what King David prayed concerning these men:

Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; Which imagine mischiefs in their heart continually are they gathered together for war. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah. Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

Psalms 140:1-4

I am convinced based on the Bible and history that those who hate without cause will be rewarded with evil on earth and also in the world to come. Freedom comes when a

Applicable Scriptures

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

I John 2:9

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Romans 10:12

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Ephesians 4:31

Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

I Corinthians 14:20

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

II Timothy 3:13

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:8

23 Cops And Robbers

One of the great challenges facing young Black men is the legal system, with the local police department in particular. Not long ago I was going to a friend's house to pick up my son. As I neared his house I noticed four police cars up the street. I went around the block to avoid the scene and passed one police car in the process. As I parked my car and got out, a policeman approached me and told me to stand still. The thought that first went through my mind was: "What does he want?" The second thought was: "I don't like being told what to do." The third thought was: "Be cool and remember Rodney King. As the officer approached me, I purposely maintained an attitude and posture of confidence (not arrogance).

The officer and I talked, and I was very pleasant with him and treated him with all of the respect that his uniform deserved. He informed me that there had been an altercation (fight) up the street and one of the men had on a red shirt (I had on a red shirt) and blue pants (I had on blue pants). After talking with me very briefly the officer determined that I was not the person that he was looking for and APOLOGIZED and went his way.

One of the joys of getting older is you learn how to handle potentially dangerous situations. You develop a perspective that is broader than your own interests. You learn to see the other side of the picture. When it comes to law enforcement the young Black male needs to be objectively taught how to handle himself around policemen. To help gain some objectivity, let's look from the perspective of the police department.

Police Are People And Police Are Human

- If you hit them they will hit you back.
- They make mistakes just like anybody else.
- There are good cops and bad cops.

I had a lady come to my office crying about the fact that she and her husband had an argument and somebody called the police. When the police arrived the argument had been settled and the couple was fine. The officers talked with the couple to determine what had happened. One officer was satisfied and was ready to leave. The other officer insisted that he needed to remove the children from the home in the event of future violence. The officers were divided but the older officer insisted on taking the children out of the home.

There is a reason why people act the way they act. It was later discovered that the older officer had had personal problems with his wife and children earlier in life and his children had been removed for a time. Every time he was confronted with a situation where children were involved, he quickly removed the children from the situation regardless of how minor the violence was between parents. There will be times when you are confronted by a policeman who may not make the best judgment. Remember that they are human and subject to the same passions that all humans are subject to.

Police Make Mistakes

When we watch TV or movies and there is a good guy and a bad guy, we get to see both sides at the same time. The camera will shift from what the criminal is doing to the police on their way to the crime. In real life, this is not the case. The police usually don't know who committed a crime. They know it could be anybody so they suspect everybody.

Blacks resent the fact that from the White perspective, many of us look the same. Well, to me Koreans and Japanese

look the same. They resent that. I mean them no harm but my knowledge of them is limited. In some parts of the country, the police are very limited, and easily make mistakes identifying young Black men.

Police Are Hindered

The laws of our land are written to protect us from the infringements of government. These laws trickle down to the local level and put restrictions on the local police department. A criminal:

- Must be caught according to certain guidelines.
- Must be arrested according to certain guidelines.
- Has many loopholes to use to get off of the hook.

The police are frustrated when they risk their lives to arrest a criminal and see him on the streets the next day continuing to do his thing. The police know where the crack houses are but they cannot bust the crack houses without sufficient concrete evidence. This evidence is hard to get because witnesses don't want to testify against pushers.

Police Are Hesitant

During their training period the police are shown pictures of fellow officers who were killed in the line of duty. These pictures are shown to encourage them to be very careful when approaching criminals.

Let me paint a picture of a typically dangerous situation. A young executive at the local bank has been having trouble with his wife and this has disturbed him deeply. He decides to go home and discuss the problem with her so that they can iron things out. When he goes home unannounced, he finds his wife and another man intimately involved. At that moment he snaps and all of his pent-up frustration comes out. He goes into his den, grabs his 38 and

begins to chase the man that has just run out of his house. The first man gets in his car and takes off, the second man follows in his BMW. Now, Officer Smith is sitting at the corner of 4th and Lexington during his morning shift. He notices the blue BMW going at a high rate of speed down Lexington and he engages in pursuit. He has no idea what is wrong, he just knows to be cautious. After two blocks the BMW pulls over, Officer Smith and other officers approach the car. Now what do you think happens next? You don't know, but you do know that if you were Officer Smith you would be hesitant because of the potential danger.

Police are also hesitant because whenever they have on a uniform they are a walking target for a criminal or any deranged person who happens to have a gun.

Because I Realize This I Am Patient With Police When They Tell Me To Stand Still While They Check Me Out.

Police Are Hired

I taught elementary school for a while and it was a job I loved very much. I enjoyed the little children and wanted to impact their lives in a positive way. One day a parent pointed out to me that as a taxpayer, he paid my salary. I never thought of it that way. I now realize that teachers, policemen, politicians and all public employees are hired by the public. So, if I hire them, why should I fear them? When I started viewing the policeman as a person that I pay who is there to help me and my city, my attitude about him changed.

Too many young people see themselves as detached and distant from the local police officer, but that is not how a good police officer views you. They have a responsibility to protect you from others and sometimes from yourself. I suggest that you seek to develop an attitude of cooperation

with your local police department because in most cases they only want to serve you.

**Questions
For Introspection And Discussion
(to make you think)**

1. Do you know a policeman personally? ___ Yes ___ No
2. Are you afraid of the police? ___ Yes ___ No
3. Do you cooperate with them when they ask you questions or do you freeze up? _____
4. How has TV influenced your attitude about cops? _____

5. If you view policemen negatively, would you be willing to sit down and talk to a policeman to get to know him better? ___ Yes ___ No If you would like to talk to a policeman, ask an adult to set up a meeting with one.
6. Would you consider being a policeman? ___ Yes ___ No Why or why not? _____

7. What role do you feel that the police play in society? _____

8. We all know that there are some bad cops. Do you believe that there are some really good cops out there? _____

If you are mature enough to realize that you don't know something, then you are mature enough to see to it that you learn it.

If your parents neglected to teach you that:

- A. Stealing is wrong;
- B. Lying catches up with you;
- C. You reap what you sow;
- D. You should do your homework;
- E. Fast girls ain't NO good for you;
- F. You ought to get out of that bed and do something constructive;
- G. Everybody's not your friend; and
- H. Your attitude will take you a long way

You need to learn these things. If you were not taught these principles or many other basic truths, then as soon as you become aware of them, you need to teach yourself or reparent yourself.

3. Because Of Your Limited Knowledge Of The Future, And The Certainty Of Change, Your Socialization Skills Should Be Exposed To The Wisdom Of Your Counsellors.

My lovely wife is a singer of classical music. She has sung with some of the major symphony orchestras in this country. Occasionally, I accompany her to a concert. I am not extremely cultured and have very basic tastes.

Not too long ago she was invited to a dinner at a *SERIOUS* country club. I went along as her husband. As we took our seats I immediately knew that I was in trouble. On the table before me was a knife, two spoons and three forks. One fork to eat my meat with, one for the salad, and I had no idea what the other fork was for. Now, if you want to look foolish at the country club all you have to do is to use the wrong fork at the wrong time. My wife was gracious enough

to very discretely point to the right fork at the right time and saved me from looking out-classed.

Many young people want to better themselves, but they have not accepted the fact that if you want to operate in bigger circles you must learn some new things. If you want to go places you must be willing to learn about the acceptable social skills of the larger culture. The President of the United States has people who are specially trained to make sure that he conducts himself properly when he is around people from other cultures. I suggest that we seek to behave in a culturally appropriate way.

4. Because Of Your Limited Knowledge Of The Future And The Certainty Of Change, Your Attitudes Toward Women Should Be Exposed To The Wisdom Of Your Counsellors.

You must be careful with what you tell yourself regarding women. What you tell yourself regarding women will develop into your attitude about women.

A. Never seek to use women for your own personal pleasure. If you use them it only **guarantees** that you will be used by someone else. What is worse is that it may come back on your children later in life. The principle here is you reap what you sow. Sow the wind and it will come back as a tornado.

B. Seek a healthy, safe Biblical attitude about women.

The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

1 Timothy 5:2

This Scripture provides safe guidelines for young men when it comes to their approach to women.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:1-6

Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

I Corinthians 15:3-6

26 Never Forget The Shoulders That You Stand On

I have been impacted by many men but primarily, I stand on the shoulders of two men. The first man was John Thomas Davis (1904-1993) my father. The second man upon whose shoulders I stand is Rev. B.J. Tatum, my pastor and mentor. I praise God for these men and others who have influenced my life. I am what I am because of their influence.

Every culture acknowledges the aged. In many African tribes, it is the elders who make decisions, arrange marriages, decide when to go to war and so forth. I am not suggesting that we go to those extremes, but I am suggesting that the wisdom and strength that young men receive from older men is invaluable.

The shoulders of an older man serve as a foundation that enables young men to rise to higher heights. The strong shoulders at home give young men courage outside the home. It is the fact that there is a strong man who will fend for you that makes a difference. James Brown (The Godfather of Soul) says: "I'm a man, I'm a son of a man. If I don't get you, then Papa can."

I was fortunate to have a father until I was grown. As a grown man with children, there was still a strength I found from the fact that my father was only a few miles or a phone call away. Since he has passed, I have felt a sense of abandonment, confusion, and instability. Now that the physical shoulders are gone, I must stand on the strength that I received while they were here and the memories I have of having them.

Remembering the shoulders of our forefathers gives us a sense of connectedness to our past which gives us strength

to face the trials of today. When I think of my father's struggles in racist America and how he survived, I am encouraged to stand and face the battles that face my contemporary generation. I live in a different age than my father did yet my struggles are the same, and different. In spite of the differences between my father's decade and mine, the difference in specific details of the battles are small. The fact remains that it will take the same qualities of manhood to win in the present and future that it took to win in the past.

I can unequivocally say that the shoulders upon which I stand are the shoulders of undaunted manhood. I must say that my father never ran in the face of adversity. He was challenged to the outer limits of his strength, but he never ran. I will never forget this fact.

I feel that every young man needs to look in his past and find the strong shoulders in his family tree. Maybe your father's shoulders were not strong. If that is the case, then you should go back another generation to the shoulders of your grandfather. Don't be discouraged by the soft shoulders in your family tree, just keep looking until you find the strong ones and learn from them.

There is also a need to look outside of the family to find strong shoulders to stand on. As a Black man, I have my heroes. There have always been local Black men who were models in the community who served as heroes. I saw some of these men in Church, teachers in school or entrepreneurs in the Black neighborhood. When we look to the national level, we see the Black men who are making substantial contributions to society. As a young man, I revered Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. as an example of real manhood. There were so many Blacks who were becoming firsts in prominent positions in our nation. I was very proud of these men. It was their shoulders that enabled me to go to the integrated school, go to the bank to get a loan, live where I could afford to live

and stay in any motel in the country.

It is a terrible, terrible, terrible fact that many young Black men are forgetting that they are where they are because of the toil and sacrifice of others. Because of the sacrifice of my father, I was the first one in our family to get a college degree. I realize that I did not do it by myself, I reached that height only by standing on another Black man's shoulders. It is a fact that the young man who feels that he has made it and is making it alone is not aware of his roots nor does he have a general understanding of Black history.

I would like to make a few suggestions for you at this time regarding the shoulders that you stand on.

1. Seek To Become Fully Aware Of Whose Shoulders You Stand On.

It is a mistake to take your support for granted. Many Black males who have fathers take them for granted and assume that they will always be there. To do this causes you to miss many opportunities for growth that may soon be gone. Take time to examine the strength you have received from men who are family members and those who are non-family members. Take time to examine their influence again for a new and fresh stream of energy, strength, and encouragement.

2. Honor Those Individuals Openly.

At this point in my life I speak freely about my father and others who are deceased. I also speak highly of the men who are living from whom I have derived strength and direction. My Pastor, Rev. B.J. Tatum has been a model for me of what it is to be a minister, husband and father. I have known him for fifteen years, and during my early Christian years he was in front of me providing support and stability for my faltering feet and a source of protection from the dangers around me. Now that I am older and have experienced

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