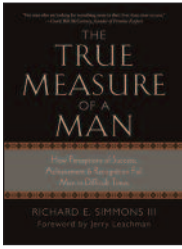


The True Measure of a Man

An 8-Session Study Guide by Richard E. Simmons III



The True Measure of a Man—How Perceptions of Success, Achievement, & Recognition Fail Men in Difficult Times by Richard E. Simmons III

If you've ever asked yourself what people think of you as a man—whether you measure up in their eyes—welcome to the club! Simmons presents a new benchmark for assessing your worth as a man. ISBN 978158169-3591 160 pg. Hardcover **\$21.95**

INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to be used with the book *The True Measure of a Man* by Richard E. Simmons III. This study guide has been designed for individual study as well as for use with small groups in a home, business, or church setting. For information about obtaining copies of *TTMM*, see the last page of this study guide.

The study is designed to be completed in eight weeks. Each study should take about 45-50 minutes in a group setting or 30 minutes for personal study unless you choose to take more time. Below are tips for leading a small group discussion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER

I think the most effective way to facilitate a discussion is to get the men in your group to open up and share. Men do not do this often, but when they do, it truly impacts them as men. We have looked for ways to do this in each session. If this group is meeting for the first time, we suggest you go around and let each of them introduce themselves, tell a little about themselves, their spiritual journey, and what they hope to get out of these sessions.

- Be as well prepared as you can, particularly in regard to the questions in this guide. You may even want to come up with some of your own questions.
- I suggest you read the book entirely, then go back and read each chapter before each session.
- You may want to come up with some closing comments to share at the end of each session to wrap up your time together.
- I suggest you spend time praying before each session that God would bless the time and that these men's lives would be changed.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

- I suggest you read through the entire book and then re-read each chapter again before the session.
- Be willing to answer and discuss each question with the group.
- In each chapter, it will be most meaningful to the group if you can share specific examples in your own life as it relates to the issues being discussed. It will be a good thing for you as well!

Enjoy the study! –Richard

RICHARD E. SIMMONS III received a B.A. in economics from the University of the South. Now retired, he served as president of an insurance brokerage firm. He is the director of the Center for Executive Leadership in Birmingham, AL, where he lives with his wife, Holly, and their three children.



Lesson 1

Many groups like to cover Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in this first session. However, some groups prefer to spend the entire first session discussing and interpreting the parable of *The Persona*.

I recommend you start each session with the following question: What part of the chapter spoke most profoundly to you, or what new insights have you gained from reading this chapter? (I suggest you start each session with this question and then have each man respond to it. It is a good icebreaker.)

Discussion questions from Chapter 2: Life Is, After All, Difficult

1. Why do you think men are afraid of sharing openly with other men, their struggles, their fears, or their weaknesses?

2. Does the question: “What will people think of me?” have anything to do with our unwillingness to be vulnerable with others?

3. What do you think of this statement: “Shame is the leukemia of masculinity” (top of page 24)?

4. In the book, the author says: “The fear of shame is so paralyzing because so many of us have been scarred by it from events in the past.” Can you think of times in the past when you felt shame, and it still brings pain when you think about it?

5. How might an economic recession create a fear of failure or shame in a man’s life?

Lesson 2

Again, ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 3: A Man's Identity

1. What strikes you about the printed e-mail found at the bottom of page 29 and the top of page 30? Where do you get your feelings of manhood?

2. After reading the remarks about Authur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, where do you think most men get their dreams and aspirations for life?

3. As you look back on your life, did you grow up with a sense of false masculinity? Do you think you have a good grasp of true masculinity? Discuss.

4. What are your thoughts of this quote on page 34: "I feel like my life is of much greater value when my business is going well"? Does our worth go up and down with the market or our financial situation?

5. Do you think Charles Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self" on page 26 is valid in your life? Whose opinions matter most to you in life?

6. Let's consider your legacy. As the years go by, do you find yourself thinking more about this? Are you worried about how you will be remembered?

7. How can we identify the God/god that we serve in this life?

Lesson 3

Again, ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 4: A Man's Courage

1. How does our nation, having become a consumer driven economy (and such conspicuous consumers), impact our ideas of success? How does it impact our family life?

2. What are your thoughts on this line from the book: "...no matter how much a man accomplishes, he does not believe he is successful unless others know about it"?

3. Do you agree that in times of economic uncertainty, women's security feels threatened while men's significance is threatened?

4. Do you believe the author's assessment that most men are not driven to succeed but instead are driven not to fail? Why?

5. Why is believing what is false so dangerous—particularly our ideas about success and masculinity?

6. Discuss fear and the storms of life and the importance of seeing them through the lens of God's truth.

Lesson 4

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 5: A Man's Truth

1. Identify the components of false masculinity. Is the assessment of false masculinity accurate? Discuss.

2. What is more important to a man—what he achieves or what he experiences? Why do you think we get so focused on these two components of life?

3. Discuss Forrest Gump's comment on page 80. Do you think it's true?

4. On page 83, is this a good description of Christlikeness? Is there anything you would add?

5. What are your thoughts on this quote from the book on page 85: "...our reputation is the way other people see us, while our character is who we really are. If our life focus is on the development of our character and the maturing of the soul, then our reputation will take care of itself"?

6. The Bible says wisdom is more precious than jewels. Why do you think modern people do not value it more?

7. Do you think what Joe Ehrmann says is accurate, that "the typical male over the age of thirty-five has what psychologists would say is less than one genuine friend..."?

8. Many people believe that the verses in Matthew 7:21-24 are some of the most sobering in the Bible. Do you agree? Why?

Lesson 5

Start by asking all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 6: Life's Greatest Paradox

1. Can you think of any other paradoxes in life (example: sometimes life's greatest blessings come from life's most painful circumstances)?

2. Why does a man's pride cause him to hide from others? (See Pascal on page 107.)

3. In your viewpoint, what are some key traits of a man who is humble?

4. Can you name some "level 5" leaders you have encountered in your life?

5. Why do you think the opinions of others matter more to us than God's opinion?

6. Compare and contrast the two people in the parable on page 119. What strikes you about each of them? What is the consequence of the Pharisee's pride? What is the consequence of the contriteness of the tax collector?

7. Discuss "what's in the box" on page 121. We need to be reminded that something is in each of our boxes.

Lesson 6

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 7: A Life of Contentment

1. Discuss some of the ways you plan on being happy in the future. What would you change in your circumstances that you think might increase your level of happiness?

2. Why do you think we compare ourselves with others? Do you ever find yourself getting pleasure out of someone else's failure or misfortune?

3. Discuss how God's calling on your life will impact your level of contentment.

4. Discuss this phrase about Paul's life: "He was wealthy in the possessions that really matter in life."

5. Does the fear of death prevent a person from experiencing true contentment in life?

6. What does contentment look like—how would you define it?

Lesson 7

Ask each person in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from Chapter 8: A Tangible Hope

1. What are your thoughts on this statement: “One of the causes of great pain in men’s lives is regret, the life that could have been”?

2. Do you have a vision for your life? How does a man develop a vision? (Begin with the end in mind.)

3. How does this relate to our legacy as discussed in session 2?

4. Discuss this thought from Peter Drucker that most men are underprepared for the second half of life and that there is no school or university to equip them for it.

5. What is the reason for life?

6. How might an economic recession create a fear of failure or shame in a man’s life?

Lesson 8

Ask all the men in the group to share what part of the chapter spoke to them most profoundly, or what new insights they might have gained.

Discussion questions from the Afterword: It All Adds Up in the End

1. Why do you think people look for a quick and easy way to be delivered from their problems instead of looking for God's purpose in them?

2. Can you remember how a storm in your life was a real blessing in disguise now that you look back upon it?

3. How is the movie *Castaway* reflective of modern life?

4. What are your thoughts on this quote from the book, "Deliverance from sin was a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction" (Robinson Crusoe)?

5. Discuss how the apostle Paul's words "God's grace is sufficient" relate to Robinson Crusoe and his life on the island.

6. Why do we often need wilderness experiences in order to discern God's truth?

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To buy books:

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<http://www.booksamillion.com/product/9781616584658>

Books are also available at your local Books-A-Million bookstore.

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To contact the publisher write to: **info@evergreenpress.com**

What people are saying about *The True Measure of a Man*:

“Should you read this book? If you can relate to any of the following, you will definitely want to soak in Richard Simmons’ soul-probing *The True Measure of a Man*: You are weary, you’ve lost your way, or never found it. You’ve been humbled, had all the props knocked out, and been turned upside down. You want to know how you got off track, get your bearings back, and figure out what really matters. You want to surrender to the truth, and you’re tired of living a lie. However, if you still think you’re smarter than everyone else, you just wouldn’t get it. This is a book I plan to read again.”

—Patrick Morley, PhD, author of *The Man in the Mirror and How to Survive the Economic Meltdown*

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a book I wish I had written, which is about the best compliment I can pay to any book. It is what I would call a great read—both accessible and profound in its understanding of the inner forces that make up the male psychology as a man passes through midlife into, hopefully, a productive and fulfilling second season.”

—Bob Buford, Founder and Chairman, Leadership Network, author of *Halftime and Finishing Well*

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a book for every man of every faith or no faith at all. He’ll learn why he doesn’t have to live with the guilt, insecurity, and fear that most men experience but often pretend they don’t.”

—Fred Barnes, Executive Editor, Weekly Standard, and regular contributor/commentator with FOX News Channel

“As a coach, I’ve always had a desire to help shape the character of young players. Later, that burden extended to men in general through Promise Keepers. *The True Measure of a Man* captures the importance of character over achievement. He connects the dots for men who are looking for something more in their lives than mere success. I recommend this book for men at any stage of their lives.”

—Coach Bill McCartney, founder of Promise Keepers, author of *Two Minute Warning*

“Richard E. Simmons III’s book *The True Measure of a Man* is so full of common sense and practicality. It is especially poignant and meaningful at such a critical time in our country. May we all come to know God’s grace, that he might teach us humility and kindness for all.”

—Ben Crenshaw, golf legend and two-time Masters Tournament winner

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a provocative and credible challenge to the conventional wisdom of modern man’s value system. Richard Simmons gives us a clear picture of how we deceive ourselves into a false reliance on our own accomplishments to establish our identity and our worth. And he wisely counsels that we are in treacherous territory! Thankfully, he gives explicit guidance to a liberating and transformational course for a hopeful and fulfilling life. This is an inspirational and uplifting work!”

—Claude B. Nielsen, Chairman and CEO, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. United

“Richard Simmons’ book *The True Measure of a Man* provides inspirational and powerful answers to so many of the challenges men face in today’s world. He helps men better understand the forces that drive them and provides a framework for us to deal with issues we cannot and should not avoid. Ultimately, he provides us with a vision of the type of men we can become! Simmons’ timeless wisdom is a must read and should be shared from generation to generation.”

—Lee Styslinger III, President and CEO of Altec, Inc.

“Life inevitably presents us with difficult challenges, often as a consequence of the unhealthy and unrealistic expectations we impose upon ourselves and others . . . Richard Simmons’ *The True Measure of a Man* vividly presents the tensions and traps each of us must confront on a recurring basis and masterfully teaches what truly matters. It makes for compelling reading—so much so that I read it twice.”

—W. Stancil Starnes, Chairman and CEO, ProAssurance Corp.

“Richard’s book *The True Measure of a Man* provides answers to men’s deepest questions and helps them understand what they are feeling as they go through the storms of life. He points us to a life of contentment that can only be found in the Lord. I believe every man should read this book.”

—Pat Sullivan, Heisman Trophy winner, head football coach, Samford Univ.

“Richard Simmons knows the hearts and speaks the language of today’s business leaders. His message of God’s lovingkindness and our need for self-examination, purpose, and contentment is profound. It is a timeless message but an all the more compelling one during these challenging times.”

—Dr. Rob Pearigen, President, Millsaps College

“*The True Measure of a Man* is a timely book. I have seen many men go through difficult times these last few years. I believe one of the most critical needs for a man in times of economic distress is wisdom. Richard provides powerful insight into how to respond to the storms of life, and where a man should get his true identity. It is a very meaningful book!”

—Miller Gorrie, Chairman and CEO, Brasfield & Gorrie Construction