

# *GOD, GUTS, AND GALLANTRY*

## Discussion Questions for Men's Church/Bible Study Groups, or Men's Mentoring

Men who lack a copy of the book may obtain it at [www.willjoslin.com](http://www.willjoslin.com)

There is enough material here for several sessions. Please have the men bring their Bibles and a copy of *God, Guts, and Gallantry*, or else have some copies of each on hand.

### Introduction

Major Coker exemplified 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, which exhorts men to: "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." In his spiritual leadership, winsomeness, and productivity for the kingdom of God, he did just that.

Author and pastor Dr. Tony Evans in *Kingdom Man* wrote, "God wants to prepare you, kingdom man, for a big, bold, and adventurous life... You're not the man you think you are; you're a whole lot more."<sup>i</sup> Let's proceed in our quest, as the Major did, to live out our lives as kingdom men.

Please review the section from Major Coker's Attributes called [Vigorous Masculinity and Authentic Manhood](#).

1. How did Major Coker demonstrate authentic manhood?

Australian entrepreneur and Christian leader Peter J. Daniels, in his 2009 book *A Christian Code of Conduct*, commented:

The Christian church is probably at its lowest point of relevancy in our society for the last 100 years... Are we going to be courageous enough to stop and take stock of our failures and inadequacies, and create a plan for the next one hundred years with clear, concise measurements, and with works that follow our faith so that we will not be an embarrassment to the saints of old?<sup>ii</sup>

2. What do you think has caused the church to lose relevancy in our society at large?
3. What do you think the passivity of some Christian men has to do with it?

God gave man the privilege and the duty of ruling over the earth as His representative (read Genesis 1:26). This privilege carries a great responsibility to rule wisely and not abusively. One area of exercising dominion over the earth is at work.

4. Do you think most Christian men today earn respect for the Christian faith in the marketplace because they show genuine care for coworkers, vendors, and customers?
5. Do you think most Christian men carry themselves in the workplace with good attitudes, excellent ethics, and capable skills, as Major Coker did?
6. If not, how can we live out our relationship with Christ in such a way that we have a brighter witness for the God we represent?

Peter J. Daniels went on to say that Christians are often “used as employment fodder”<sup>iii</sup> because they work in companies without any ownership in the company and thus are unable to exert much influence over the business culture. Daniels urges Christians who are not influencing their companies to become very competent in their fields in order to gain as much credibility as possible.

For Christians who have the entrepreneurial knack, Peter Daniels urges them to think carefully about starting their own businesses, where they have a greater opportunity to spread the Word of God have a godly influence with employees, vendors, and customers, as Major Coker did.

7. If business ownership appeals to you, could you go ahead and develop a sound plan? If you implement it, how would you carry yourself and treat people so as to extend your influence for the kingdom of God in this way?
8. God certainly does not call all men to be entrepreneurs, and that is fine. We all can still positively affect the credibility of the gospel in the workplace by having a thankful attitude and being good workers.
9. What are some other ways you could shine your light in the workplace or marketplace?

Financially, relationally, spiritually, and in church work, Major Coker lived by Luke 16:10 - “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much.” The Major was faithful after the

Civil War when he had almost nothing, and was just as faithful when he had become the wealthiest man in South Carolina.

10. Are you faithful in little things? Do you tell the exact truth? Are you faithful when no one is looking? In God's economy, there is a fruit to every action.

11. When you take a look at your daily activities, what can you expect as the fruit of your faithfulness in little things?

Ephesians 5:15-17 has a lot to say about life purpose and our use of time:

Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The Major redeemed every moment of his life. Toward the end of his life, he said: "I have molded many bricks and have built them into serviceable beautiful walls. I envy no man who has sat unbruised amid the world's idler, dimmer, cooler corners, waiting for death to show him some justification for a record of empty days."

12. In today's culture, men are sometimes accused of being lazy and selfish. How can we improve in this area? How can we redeem the rest of the time allotted to us on earth in the best possible way?

What distractions can we avoid?

If we work more efficiently, we will have more time to be dads and husbands. How you make that work in your own life?

The Major considered it a given to serve in the church. The hymn "Rise up Oh Man of God" includes the following words: "Rise up, oh man of God, have done with lesser things. Give heart and soul and strength and might to server the king of kings. Rise up Oh Man of God, the church for you doth wait. Her strength unequal to her task, rise up, and make her great!"

13. Have you caught the Major's vision to serve God in a sold-out way? Are you making time to let God use you at church and/or a bible study? How could you spend more time serving the saints or the community?

14. If you are not yet committed to a Bible-teaching church, God wants you to move toward joining one and to start serving Him in a definite way. Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” and to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.”
15. If you are a church member, what needs do you see in your church? Where do you think God might best use you?
16. Could you help in the Christian Education department, with the children or youth, or support its local outreach? If unsure, ask the pastor, youth/children’s leader, education director, or outreach/missions director. You may even find an area where one or more of your own children can serve alongside you.

Major Coker was an attentive father who walked with his children in the snow, instructed them in the ways of nature, and later invited them into his businesses. And though the Major willingly taught God’s Word in the Sunday School, he was reticent to instruct his children directly concerning spiritual things at home. They even lamented that he chose to teach them almost completely by modeling. George Lee Simpson, Jr. wrote, “It was a matter of occasional exasperation to the children that he taught them almost wholly by example.”<sup>iv</sup> This was probably the Major’s biggest shortcoming.

As fathers, it is extremely important that we not repeat this shortcoming. Yes, we should express our beliefs by loving example, but we must also teach the Bible to our children with our words. Deuteronomy 6:6-7, NIV, instructs us: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Proverbs 15:2 underscores that *how* we teach is important: “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable.” And Psalm 19:10 says that God’s word is “sweeter than honey.” Proverbs 22:6 adds: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

17. If you are a father of boy(s), how can you model and build constructive manhood into your son(s)?
18. If you are a father of girl(s) How can you help your daughter(s) receive the emotional support they need?

- a. Do you have “tea parties” or do special things together?
  - b. Do you take the time to ask about her day?
  - c. Do you help her with her homework and school projects?
  - d. Do you talk to her about “life”?
  - e. Do you validate her feelings?
  - f. Do you intervene when she feels misunderstood?
19. Is there anything more important than this kind of investment in our progeny?
20. How do you think your spiritual coaching with your children or grandchildren could be more effective? How will it have the best chance of being received?
21. What else can we do to ensure that our children and other young people we influence don’t feel isolated, rejected, or lonely? How can you let them know that you are available to them?

Let’s think about the nature of our relationships with young people you and the roles that we play in their lives. When you are in a position to give them counsel, how is it usually received? Are there ways that you can make your spiritual coaching more effective?

22. We will not always see immediate results. Encourage several members of the group to share a story or two from their own experience about how God honored their faithfulness many years after their words had been spoken, their example had been set, and their prayers had been prayed. These stories encourage others in the group who hurt or who feel their parental influence has been less than effective.

Major Coker honored and served his wife Sue in 44 years of marriage. In 1 Peter 3:7, God’s word says, “You husbands, in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

23. Do you have an attitude of respect and protection toward your wife, your mother, and/or your grandmother?
24. Do you stand up for your wife in front of the children? Do you praise her in front of the children? If you disagree with her on a particular issue, do you agree with her in public and then wait until you are in private to discuss any disagreement?

Colossians 3:19 exhorts us as husbands: “Love your wives and do not be embittered against them.”

25. Are you quick to criticize and ridicule your wife, or are you quick to praise and encourage her? Are you big enough to not be embittered by small disagreements but to show love that is consistent and transcends your feelings and circumstances? If not, ask your brothers to pray for you now in this area.

Major Coker’s wife Sue, became sick before she turned sixty and died at age sixty-seven. His nephew, Arthur Rogers, boarded with them while attending Welsh Neck High School about 1898 to 1991. An eyewitness to their domestic life, he commented: “He was devoted to Aunt Sue, of course, just as gentle and considerate as he could be of her; her health wasn’t so good at the last.”

Re-read Ephesians 5:22-33 out loud in the group.

26. What are the husband’s duties toward his wife in these verses?

27. Are you gentle and considerate with your wife?

28. How can you let your wife know that you cherish her?

29. Even if she were to be stricken with cancer or become an invalid, would you fulfill your wedding vows, “in sickness and in health” and “till death do us part”?

30. Verse 22 addresses the wife’s submission to the husband. The word submission comes from two words, “sub,” meaning under, and “mission,” meaning a worthwhile purpose. Are you leading your wife in such a way that her life is under a worthwhile purpose? If so, elaborate? If not, how can you improve as a leader with a worthwhile mission?

Regarding sexual purity, 1 Thessalonians 4:3 admonishes us: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.” Major Coker stayed morally pure his whole life, never deviating from his life mission. He never had any wrong intentions toward Coker College young women or the women who worked in his offices. Billy Graham also stayed morally pure his whole life. He had a personal policy that he never broke - he refused to allow himself to be alone with any woman other than his wife. Both men left a shining example of a great Christian testimony for their families and the world.

Presbyterian pastor and scholar Eugene T. Peterson said, “The Christian life is a long obedience in the same direction.”

31. Do you have a plan to stay morally pure during your life? What is your specific plan moving forward?

32. What are your verbal, emotional, and spatial boundaries when it comes to other women?

If you haven't thought about boundaries, discuss this with your Christian brothers and create some limits right now. Graham's principle might be a good place to start. You may want to choose a small handful of Christian brothers among whom you can be mutually accountable in this area, bonding over your choice to keep these limits and praying for one another.

The Major was not one of those Christians who punted when it came to social justice. He lived out Proverbs 14:31: “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

33. How did Major Coker's views on African Americans compare with those of most other white southerners of his time? (His views are addressed in “Commentary on Slavery and the Cokers” in [Chapter 4](#) and in the inset called “Historical Background: Southern Reconstruction” in [Chapter 6](#).)

34. How did Major Coker's views compare with that of many Southern whites vis-à-vis the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? This amendment states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

35. What was the Major's attitude toward and response to underemployed and low-income Americans? How did his response translate into actions through his business accomplishments in [Chapter 6](#) through [Chapter 8](#)?

36. What was his response to public health issues in [Chapter 15](#)?

37. After telling the parable of the Good Samaritan who had mercy on a destitute man, Jesus said, “Go and do the same” (Luke 10:37). What do you think God wants you personally (or

us as a group) to do to respond to needs in our community relative to social justice, racial reconciliation, public health, and mercy ministries?

*Note: Take this opportunity to lead the class or group in prayer regarding God's leading toward serving Him in their lives.*

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<sup>i</sup> Dr. Tony Evans, *Kingdom Man* (Tyndale House Publishers: Carol Stream, IL), 2013), back cover.

<sup>ii</sup> Peter J. Daniels, Australian Christian statesman and business magnate, *A Christian Code of Conduct ... the missing link?*, World Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, Eastern Press, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 2009, pp. 21-23.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>iv</sup> George Lee Simpson, *The Cokers of Carolina* (UNC Press: Chapel Hill, 1956), p. 185.