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Every Man
Series

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STEPHEN ARTERBURN
FRED STOEKER WITH MIKE YORKEY

WORKBOOK INCLUDED

Every Young Man's Battle

Strategies for Victory
in the Real World of Sexual Temptation

Praise for
Every Young Man's Battle

“*Every Young Man's Battle* does the best job I have ever seen on the subject of sexual temptation. Once upon a time we lived in a world that didn't talk about secrets, and that world has brought us to the mess we are in today. Young men must have an honest, blunt, and unashamedly Christian look at their sexuality. This book will save thousands of future marriages.”

—JIM BURNS, president, YouthBuilders

“I have never read a book as direct and open as *Every Young Man's Battle*. The profound principles communicate the authors' personal experiences and provide the hope that anyone can overcome a day-to-day battle with impure thoughts. *Every Young Man's Battle* helps you see the importance of taking control over your eyes, your mind, and your heart so that you can completely honor God in every facet of your life.”

—SCOTT BULLARD, of musical recording group Soul Focus

“It's encouraging to see some real men stand up and sound the alarm to young men. Stephen, Fred, and Mike's courage to tell their stories exposes what has unfortunately become a dirty little secret among men in the church. The battle cry of the day is for men of all ages to live a pure and holy life, and this book will crush Satan's strategy by giving the troops the guts to talk about what has been taboo in the church for so long. The authors' poignant stories paint a picture of battle in which all men can relate and offer hope and camaraderie to win the war.”

—TROY VANLIERE, artist/manager (representing NewSong,
Carolyn Arends, Soul Focus, Jadynd Strand, and Glad)

“There has been a gaping void in the search for holiness, and *Every Young Man's Battle* addresses those issues where others have been comfortably silent. If there is even a spark of desire for purity in your life, this book will kindle that fire... It *is* possible to walk in victory, as you will surely find out after reading the Every Man series.”

—MATT BUTLER, of musical recording group NewSong

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From Fred Stoeker:

To my heavenly Father,
who lifts the needy from the ash heap
and seats them with princes.

And to Brent and Barry, my brothers-in-law
and my brothers in God's grace.

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foreword

by Stephen Arterburn

Being part of the Every Man series has been one of the great joys of my life. If I'd written and published only this one series, I would've been completely fulfilled. I owe all this to Fred, who lived out this message long before he was called by God to write about it.

Now, it may sound strange to some, but I believe Fred had one of those rare experiences where God interrupts what we're doing and gives us a new mission. I'm quite confident God spoke to him directly. Fred's coming to me with his manuscript was also part of God's plan, and I'm so glad for it! As a result, my life has been filled with words I could never replace, in the form of e-mails, letters, hugs, crying eyes, and expressions of gratitude. Here are a few comments from the men:

- "Thank you—you've saved my marriage."
- "I am now the man I always wanted to be, living the life I always wanted to live."
- "Oh! This feeling of freedom. I feel so clean!"
- "I don't know where I would be today if it were not for this book."

And from the wives:

- "Thank you for giving the man I married back to me."
- "We would not still be married if not for this book."
- "I wish you could see the man my husband has become today."
- "My man was totally transformed reading your book."

I've received these kinds of messages every day:

I never go into Christian bookstores, but I was jogging one day and stopped in one. Staring back at me was your book. I was compelled

by it. I ran home, got my money, and came back and bought it. It changed everything!

Somebody gave me this book about five years ago, and right before I was about to go back online, there it was looking up at me from the floor. I picked it up and read it through my tears. Our marriage has been healed.

Years ago at New Life, we started an Every Man's Battle Workshop weekend. More than six thousand men have attended since that time. For a few men, it was just a way to get someone off their backs. But for almost all, it's been the start of a whole new life. One of my favorite stories is of a husband who came because his wife demanded it. After the conference he confessed his affair. He was truly repentant and said he would do anything to make it up to her. She asked him to sign over all the property and assets to her—because the name on them wouldn't matter if he was truly finished with his lust and adultery. She asked him to shave his chest, and she asked him to get braces on his teeth. He did all three because he realized his actions had humiliated her and he was willing to do anything to humble himself and win back her heart. I speak with them both regularly, and they are doing well.

I'm so glad *you* have come upon this book. For some reason God has put it in front of you. I'm not just hoping you'll read it; I'm hoping you'll live it. And while I know personally that every marriage can't be saved, I know that every man can reclaim his sexual integrity and every spouse can fully heal. Every man can walk with his head held high—free, honorable, and a man after God's own heart.

It doesn't really matter what you've done; it's no worse than what others have done. And it doesn't matter where you've been; others have been down that path before. What matters is what you are willing to do now and what you will choose to do. You may have thought you were entitled to do the

things you did, but now your entitlement is to live clean, renewed, and without even a hint of impurity. I challenge you to join the millions across this country who have reclaimed their integrity, their faith, and their respect. If Fred and I can do it—those who know us would confirm this—you can certainly do it too.

acknowledgments

I'd like to thank Andy Turcotte, Steve Beeman, Richard Pickrell, Ron Strack, and Mark Oberbeck for your great insights into the hearts of young men and women. You are wonderful pastors and I'm amazed at your friendship.

I thank my prayer team as well. Pastor Palmer and Deacon Mike Swaim have lifted me in the darker moments. I thank Vicky Cluney, Diana Koontz, and Ray and Joyce Henderson, who never stop praying or believing. And the head of the prayer pack is my wife, Brenda. What a warrior. What a woman!

I thank my friends who have understood my absence at important events because of the deadlines. I thank you younger friends of mine who have opened your hearts to tell some of your deepest stories, all for the sake of Christ. I've changed a few details to protect your privacy, but God knows who you are, and He is forever grateful.

Gary Meyer, you've always been there to make me laugh, even if it meant eating a cricket or waking me with horns and drums at two in the morning. Thanks for accepting me as your "intense friend."

Mike Yorkey, you are a master. I'm lost without you. And thanks to Dan Rich, Thomas Womack, Michele Tennesen, and all of WaterBrook Press. Stephen Arterburn, what can I say? Your support and encouragement are ceaseless. It is amazing to me.

My mother-in-law, Gwen, has carried the ball many times when we needed a first down. She's a real gamer. Jasen, Laura, Rebecca, and Michael, you are the finest children on the planet. You've sacrificed much. God will make it up to you, now and forever.

—Fred Stoeker

breaking the silence code

(by Stephen Arterburn)

There's a time-honored code that almost every male I've known has followed. I'm positive that my father and my brothers followed what I call the "Sexual Code of Silence." The code states that it's okay to joke about sex or even lie about it, but other than that, it's your solemn duty—as a male—to keep silent whenever a *serious* discussion about sex takes place.

Since everyone is determined not to talk about this, or maybe is embarrassed to do so, you probably don't have a clear picture of what healthy sex is all about. In fact, you're probably thinking that some very wonderful things are not normal and that some very normal things are pretty weird. That's one of the reasons we wanted to write this book for you. We wanted you to have accurate information about a wonderful subject that's prone to misinformation and ignorance. You're a sexual being and deserve to know what's right and true about your sexuality so you can have the greatest chance possible for a fantastic sexual relationship with the person you marry.

It's sad that in the Christian community, where we have access to God's truth, we operate with so many lies and myths about sex. Some teens and young men with a low sex drive think they're not real men, when in reality they may have a chemical or hormonal variance that lowers the drive. Some teens and young men with a strong sex drive may view themselves as slightly crazy and in need of major help to squelch their urges.

You may be vacillating between those two extremes, especially if you're

in the middle of your adolescent years. Because your body is in a constant state of growth, you feel driven one minute and almost asexual the next. Don't let this concern you. You're right on schedule, and everything you're experiencing is normal.

One of the most difficult assignments you'll ever have is to integrate your sexuality with the emotional, spiritual, social, and relational person you want to be. Many have the tendency to see their sexuality as something shamefully separate and distinct from themselves, but that shouldn't be the case at all.

Let me illustrate by using a good old hypocrite as an example. You probably know some people who are very religious when they go to church on Sunday, but you'd never know they were Christians by the way they act during the rest of the week. Sure, they say all the right words and go through the right motions on Sunday, but that part of their lives is reserved for Sunday. Come Monday morning, they sound more like they went to hell on Sunday rather than church. Those people haven't fully integrated their spiritual life with the rest of their lives.

The same could happen to you in the area of sexuality. This is an area you want to fully integrate with your Christian walk. When you do, you'll have a much healthier outlook regarding relationships with the opposite sex, premarital sex, and even what your marital relationship will be like in bed.

I have a friend whose son turned twelve a couple of years ago. He's a great dad, and he has a great kid. When the boy turned twelve, it's as if the spigot labeled Hormones was turned wide open. Stuff was happening inside his body, but he didn't understand why he was experiencing certain feelings. All he knew was that he had some urges that were difficult to control. The young boy then did a very courageous thing. He approached his father and said, "Dad, I just feel like taking off my clothes and standing in front of a girl naked."

That was an honest expression of feelings and an accurate description

of what it felt like to be a twelve-year-old boy. The fact that he could comfortably talk with his father about his feelings indicated that he wanted some answers to what was happening to him. All of us would benefit from a similar attitude.

In fact, *attitude* is everything when it comes to winning the battle for sexual integrity. If there's a single Bible verse that captures God's standard for sexual purity, this is it: "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity" (Ephesians 5:3).

For teens and young adults, this is a scary verse that prompts more questions. What does a "hint" mean? How far can I go with a girl when we're alone? How far can I go with myself when I'm alone? Is masturbation okay?

These are great questions, and we'll answer them straight up. That's why you're going to find *Every Young Man's Battle* to be the most honest and forthright resource on teen and young adult sexuality out there.

Ready to get started? So are we. We're going to begin by letting Fred tell you his story and, as we say in Texas, it's a humdinger.

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PART I

where are we?

when football was king

FROM FRED: THE START OF MY STORY

Growing up amid the Iowan cornfields, I made football my god. The sport dominated everything about me, and I happily played and practiced year-round. I even liked two-a-days in hot, muggy August. Football was such a big part of my life that I let the noble sport dictate what I did off the field. After the games, I never joined my teammates at Lake McBride for the kegger parties. Drinking beer, I believed, would weaken my focus and soften my drive. As for girlfriends, I viewed them as high-maintenance commitments that would distract me from my goal—becoming an all-state quarterback.

Like any red-blooded football player, however, I had more than a passing interest in sex. I'd been hooked on *Playboy* centerfolds ever since I found a stack of the magazines beneath my dad's bed when I was in first grade. I also discovered copies of *From Sex to Sexty*, a publication filled with naughty jokes and sexy comic strips.

When Dad divorced Mom, he moved to his bachelor pad, where he hung a giant velvet nude in his living room. I couldn't help but glance at this mural-like painting whenever we played cards during my Sunday afternoon visits. On other occasions, Dad gave me a list of chores whenever I dropped by to see him. Once, while emptying the trash can in his bedroom, I came across a nude photo of his mistress. All this caused sexual feelings to churn deep inside me.

Hollywood movies filled me with lustful curiosity and burning passion. In one film, Diana Ross poured a bucket of ice on her boss's belly just as he orgasmed, which seemed to intensify the experience. My mouth dropped open. *What's up with this?* I pondered such scenes in my mind for days upon days. On those rare occasions that I went out on a date during the off-season, these deep churning often stirred and bubbled over. Too often, I'd push a girl's boundaries while I tried to get a hand under her bra.

Still, my passion for football kept my sexual yearnings in check. I performed well on the gridiron and was named "Athlete of the Year" at Thomas Jefferson High School—a 4-A powerhouse in Cedar Rapids. I received full-ride scholarship offers from the Air Force Academy and Yale University.

I had bigger dreams, however—PAC-10 football, even if it meant trying out for the team as a walk-on. I wouldn't settle for anything less. Soon I stood before my locker at Stanford University, staring in awe at the familiar white helmet with the red *S* and the name Stoeker taped across the front. Strapping on my helmet and chin strap, I proudly raced onto the field in my attempt to win a spot on the team. Before long everyone in the country would know my name when I tossed long rainbow passes into the end zone. I was living my dream.

In one afternoon, that dream shattered into a thousand pieces. I was one of eight quarterbacks warming up that day. From the corner of my eye, I saw Turk Shonert, a blue-chip recruit from Southern California, throwing thirty-five-yard bullets! Three other quarterbacks zipped the ball through the air as if it were on a string. These QBs were so good that all four would later start at Stanford *and* play in the NFL.

I, along with Corky Bradford, an all-state quarterback from Wyoming, and my dormmate at Wilbur Hall, stared in disbelief. There was no way either of us had the skill level to compete with these blue-chippers. When my football dreams died that afternoon, I turned my attention to . . . women. Pictures of naked women.

As I settled into normal college life without sports or dreams, my churning sexuality broke through every dike, and I was soon awash in pornography. I actually memorized the date when my favorite soft-core magazine, *Gallery*, arrived at the local drugstore. I'd be standing at the front door at opening time, even if I had to skip class to do it. I loved the "Girls Next Door" section in *Gallery*, which featured pictures of nude girls taken by their boyfriends and submitted to the magazine for publication.

While I waded into porn waters up to my neckline, I somehow kept sexual intercourse on some higher moral dry ground. From where I stood, making love was something *special* for when you were married. I still felt that way after I returned to Iowa following my freshman year. I got a summer job on a roofing crew to make some quick, big cash, and I began dating an old friend named Melissa, entering a relationship that quickly mushroomed into a heavy love affair. When I wasn't pounding nails on someone's roof, Melissa and I spent endless hours together. Just before I got set to return to Stanford for my sophomore year, we decided to spend a secluded weekend together at Dad's property on Shield's Lake in southern Minnesota.

Beneath a bright, full moon on a crystal-clear night, we lay down to sleep with a cool breeze blowing gently over us. The setting was romantic, and I was getting more excited by the minute. I quietly reached for Melissa, and she knew exactly where I was headed. Melissa looked up at me with a deep sadness in her big brown eyes, the moonlight framing her innocent face. "You know that I'm saving myself for marriage—hopefully ours," she said. "If you push forward with this, I want you to know that I won't stop you. But I will never be able to respect you as much as I do right now, and that would make me very sad for a very long time."

Laying her virginity on the line, she had delivered the ultimate pop quiz. How would I answer? Who did I love most—her or me? My head spun. My desire and passion pounded away as I gazed into that sweet face

glowing softly at me. We became silent for a long time. Finally, I smiled. Snuggling in next to her, I dozed off to sleep, passing her test with flying colors. Little did I know that it was the last test I'd pass for many years.

When I left Melissa behind on my drive back to Stanford University, a deep loneliness settled in. Far from home and with few Christian underpinnings, I wandered aimlessly through my days, feeling sorry for myself. Then one day during an intramural football game, my eyes caught sight of a female referee. She looked like a grown-up version of my childhood sweetheart, Melody Knight, who had moved to Canada when we were in the third grade.

I was in love! Since there was nothing holding us back, it wasn't too long before we were in bed making love. I justified it because I was having sex with the girl I *knew* I would marry. It seemed like such a small step away from my values. Sadly, the flame of our relationship burned out as quickly as it began, but sadder still: This small step led to many more steps down the hill.

The next time I made love, it was with a girl I *thought* I would marry. The time after that, it was with a good friend that I thought I could love and *maybe* marry. Then came the pleasant coed I barely knew who simply wanted to experience sex before she left college.

Within twelve short months, I'd gone from being able to say no in a secluded camper on a moonlit night to being able to say yes in any bed on any night. Just one year out of college in California, I found myself with four "steady" girlfriends simultaneously. I was sleeping with three of them and was essentially engaged to marry two of them. None knew of the others.

Why do I share all this?

First, so you'll know that I understand the fiery draw of premarital sex. I know where you're living. Second, if you're already sleeping around but know that you shouldn't, I bring you hope. As you'll soon see, God changed my whole mind-set about having sex before marriage.