


# Challenges Facing American Men Today

From the 2024 Study State of Manhood by Gospel Family Ministries & BetterMan

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# Agenda

1. The Current Crisis in Faith and Family
  2. Work and Identity Challenges
  3. Restoring Manhood: A Path Forward
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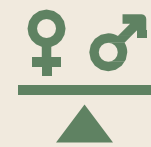
# The Current Crisis in Faith and Family

# Setting the Stage: Why This Matters



## Unprecedented Challenges for Men

- Men are facing struggles in **faith, family, and work.**



## Cultural and Church Crossroads

- Both church and society are rethinking men's roles and engagement.



## Urgency for Action

- Current trends demand a **fresh approach** to supporting men.

# Faith in Retreat: Men Leaving Church



## Men Are Leaving the Church

- Nearly **40 million** former churchgoers no longer attend services.
- Men are at the forefront of this exodus, outpacing women in disengagement.



## Widening Gender Gap in Congregations

- Typical U.S. churches are **61% female** and only 39% male.
- There are **13 million** more adult women than men in church on any Sunday.



## Churches Struggle to Engage Men

- Less than 10% of Western churches have vibrant men's ministries.
- Most church activities and ministries cater to youth and women, leaving men feeling sidelined.

# The Gender Gap in Religious Life

## Men Are Missing from Church

- Typical congregations are **61% female** and only 39% male.
- Nearly 13 million more adult women than men attend church on any given Sunday.

## Women's Ministries Flourish

- 80% of churches have active women's ministries, but fewer than 10% sustain vibrant men's ministries.

## Future Church Trends

- Christian colleges now enroll almost two women for every man, signaling a **female-dominant future**.



# Spiritual Leadership at Home

## Emotional Burdens Impact Leadership

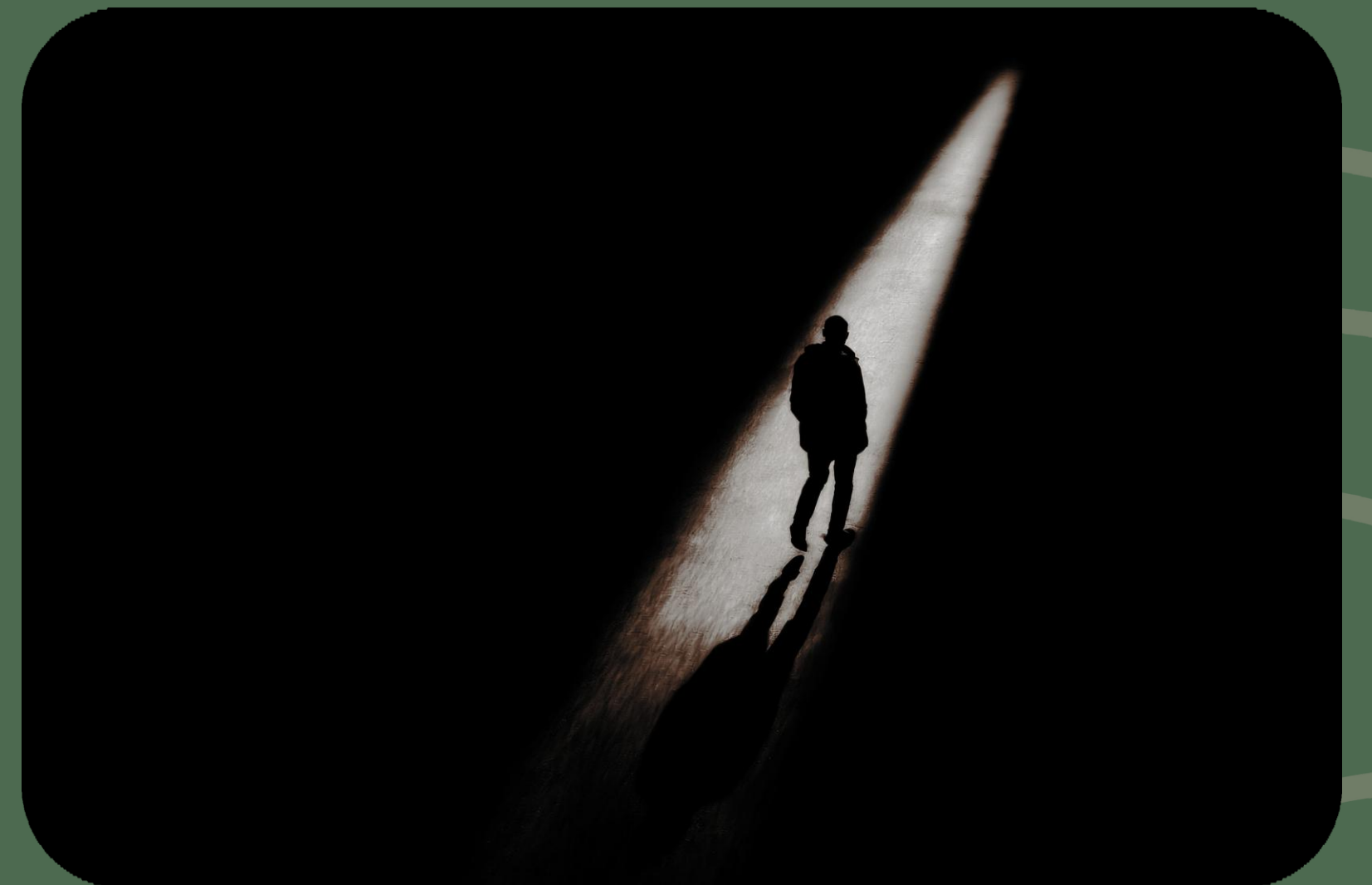
- Many men struggle with **burnout, anxiety, and discouragement**.
- Feelings of **loneliness and isolation** hinder spiritual engagement.

## Lack of Guidance and Example

- Over **30%** of men have never seen a model for family worship.
- Nearly **1 in 4** men admit to passivity in leading their families spiritually.

## Barriers to Family Discipleship

- Busy schedules and limited resources make spiritual leadership difficult.
- Some men lack support from spouses or children for spiritual activities.





## 1 in 4 Men

are not sure about their belief in God



## 1 in 3 Men

believe religion has no real bearing  
or importance on one's life



LESS THAN

## 1 in 3 Men

regularly attend religious service

# 70%

OF  
MEN

seldom, if ever, participate in any  
structured prayer, scripture study,  
or religious education group

# 70%

OF BOYS RAISED  
IN CHURCH

will leave the church during their  
late teens and twenties

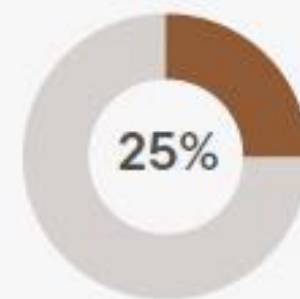
THERE ARE

# 13 Million

more adult women than men on any  
Sunday in America's churches



The landscape of the future  
Church will be female dominant—  
the typical Christian college in the  
U.S. enrolls almost two women for  
every man.



Almost 25% of married,  
churchgoing women will  
worship without their  
husbands this Sunday.

# Emotional Burdens and Isolation



## Emotional Struggles

- High rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, and discontentment among men
- Nearly all men report carrying at least one emotional burden



## Isolation and Friendship Gaps

- Almost **30%** of men lack genuine, godly male friendships
- Loneliness and despair directly impact spiritual health



## Challenges in Spiritual Leadership

- 1 in 4 men admit passivity in leading their families spiritually
- Common temptations include lust, pride, selfishness, impatience, and spiritual apathy

# Work and Identity Challenges

# Work: Disengagement and Unhappiness



## Men Leaving the Workforce

- Over **7 million men** of prime working age are not participating in the labor force.
- This trend is creating a significant gap in the American economy.



## Job Satisfaction at Historic Lows

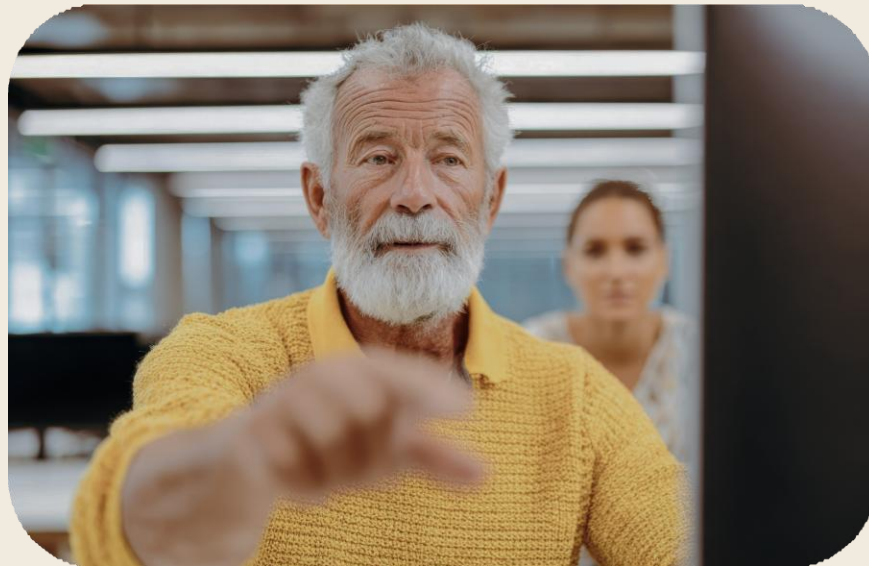
- Men report high levels of **emotional detachment** and dissatisfaction at work.
- Over **60%** are emotionally detached; **50%** feel daily stress.



## Rise of Job-Hopping

- Average job tenure has dropped sharply across generations.
- Millennials and Gen Z men stay in jobs for less than **3 years** on average.

# Generational Shifts in Work and Identity



## Declining Job Tenure

- Average job length has dropped from over 8 years (Baby Boomers) to just 2.25 years (Gen Z).
- Younger men are switching jobs more frequently, reflecting less stability.



## Eroding Work Identity

- Many men report feeling **disengaged** and **unhappy** at work.
- Over 7 million men of prime working age have left the workforce entirely.



## Masculinity in Crisis

- Cultural confusion about what it means to be a man is at an all-time high.
- Generations of men lack clear models and definitions of manhood.

# Restoring Manhood: A Path Forward

# The Fatherless and Half-Orphaned Crisis



## Father Absence Shapes Identity

- **40% of young men** grew up without a father in the home
- Many face emotional detachment even with fathers physically present



## Guidance Gap Fuels Confusion

- Lack of positive male role models leaves young men unsure of their purpose
- Confusion about manhood and identity is widespread



## Impact on Faith and Leadership

- Without guidance, men struggle to lead at home, church, and work

# A Path Forward: Man-Building and Discipleship



## Building Men Through Relationships

- Invite men into **multigenerational, gender-based communities** for authentic growth.
- Move beyond traditional events—focus on ongoing, relational discipleship.



## Defining Godly Manhood

- Provide a **clear vision** rooted in Scripture for what it means to be God's man.
- Address confusion and lack of examples by teaching biblical masculinity.



## Transformation, Training, and Affirmation

- Create spaces for men to be **encouraged, corrected, and trained** in all areas of life.
- Test and affirm men's growth—recognize and bless their progress as a rite of passage.

# Key Takeaways and Call to Action



## Men Face Deep Challenges

- Struggles in **faith, family, and work** are widespread
- Many men feel **disconnected** from church and community



## Churches Must Step Up

- **Current approaches are not engaging men effectively**
- Prioritizing men's discipleship is essential for lasting change



## A Path Forward

- Return to **biblical, Christ-centered manhood**
- Equip men to lead in faith, family, and work

# Pornography and the Church

Insights from the  
Barna Research  
Group Report:

*Beyond the Porn  
Phenomenon*

# Demographic Breakdown



## Christian Men

**75% of Christian men** acknowledge that they have viewed pornography to some extent.



## Christian Women

Usage among women is rising, **with 40% now** admitting to having viewed pornography.



## Younger Generations

The struggle is most acute in Gen Z:

**74% of men and 64% of women say porn is a problem.**

# Rising Prevalence Trends

## A Growing Digital Reality

Between Barna's 2015 study and the current report, consumption in the general population grew from 55% to 61%.

This upward trend reflects the increasing accessibility and normalization of sexually explicit content in modern digital life.



# The Majority in the Pews

54%

OF PRACTICING CHRISTIANS

## A New Milestone

For the first time in Barna's tracking, a majority of practicing Christians—those who attend church regularly and say faith is vital—admit to viewing pornography.

This data reveals that the struggle is not on the fringes, but sits within the heart of the congregation.

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## **The Struggle in Silence**

Understanding the isolation and shame that surrounds pornography use within faith communities.

# Isolation and Secrecy



## Breaking the Silence

Barna found that **84%** of those who view porn say that no one is helping them avoid it.

Furthermore, **nearly half (48%)** of practicing Christians report that **no one even knows** about their struggle, keeping the habit hidden in a cycle of secrecy and shame.

## | Well-being and Mental Health

**Non-Porn Users**

75%

**Porn Users**

64%

Percentage of adults who feel "life has a purpose." Data shows that non users report significantly higher levels of overall well-being, while users experience higher rates of anxiety and depression.

# The Church's Response



Evaluating the gap between the scale of the problem and the resources provided by local churches.

## The Programming Gap

### A Scarcity of Support

Despite the high prevalence, only **10%** of U.S. Christians say their church offers specific programs for those struggling with porn.

**While 88% of pastors believe porn is a "major issue"** in their church, the lack of formalized ministry suggests a hesitation to address the topic directly from the pulpit or in ministry structures.



# Pathways to Healing



## Community

Accountability and support groups are proven to increase success in recovery.



## Counseling

56% of adults view therapy as the most effective path for addressing addiction.



## Dialogue

Open discussions within a moral framework help remove the stigma of seeking help.

# Image Sources



[https://img.freepik.com/free-vector/abstract-geometric-dots-lines-internet-technology\\_1017-60582.jpg?semt=ais\\_hybrid&w=740&q=80](https://img.freepik.com/free-vector/abstract-geometric-dots-lines-internet-technology_1017-60582.jpg?semt=ais_hybrid&w=740&q=80)

Source: [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

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iocguQxDa1Cs7vezIFyNcRxhtkP81Y= Source: [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

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Source: [pngtree.com](http://pngtree.com)

## A Man & His Faith

1. U.S. church membership was 73% when Gallup first measured it in 1937 and remained near 70% for the next six decades before beginning a steady decline around the turn of the 21st century. In 2020, 47% of U.S. adults belonged to a church, down more than 20 points from the turn of the century, primarily due to a rise in Americans with no religious preference — Jones, J.

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<https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>

2. Davis, J., Graham, M., & Burge, R. P. (2023). *The great dechurching: Who's leaving, why are they going, and what will it take to bring them back?* Zondervan.

3. This number is derived from the Faith Communities Today study and Gallup. Faith Communities Today studies trends in the religious landscape and conducted the largest national survey of congregations in the history of the U.S. (2020). According to Gallup, women were only slightly more likely than men to report attending a religious service in 2019. Still, when the pandemic hit, that gap grew as men's participation dropped more than women's. While women's attendance has since recovered completely, men's is significantly lower than it was pre-pandemic:

[https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Faith-Communities-Today-2020-](https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Faith-Communities-Today-2020-Summary-Report.pdf)

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Brenan, M. (2021, June 2). In-person religious service attendance is rebounding. Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/350462/person-religious-service-attendance-rebounding.aspx>

4. The 2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study [Pew] is based on telephone interviews with more than 35,000 Americans from all 50 states. This is the second time the Pew Research Center has conducted a Religious Landscape Study. The first was conducted in 2007 — Religion in America: U.S. religious data, demographics and statistics. (2015, May 12). Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project.

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5. David Murrow, author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. David is an award-winning tele-vision producer whose work has been seen on ABC, NBC, PBS, CBS, Discovery Networks, and the BBC World Service:

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# A MAN & HIS FAMILY

The data points in this section are derived from an independent study conducted by Dr. Jonathan Williams (Ph.D. Southwestern Theological Seminary) and his assistant, Maxel Fuget (Dallas Baptist University). In 2023, Dr. Williams instructed more than 4,000 families concerning family worship in 25 different churches. From those 4,000 families, his ministry (Gospel Family Ministries) surveyed 300 Christian men.

## A Man & His Work

7. 7,000,000+ men, recognized as NILFS (Not In the Labor Force), are not working, creating a hole in the American economy, as reported by the Brookings Institute, Milken Institute, Bureau of Labor Statistics, USA Today, the New York Times, CBS News, and various other sources:

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8. As reported by Forbes — Paulise, L. (2021, October 26). Why millennials and gen-Z are leading the great resignation trend. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/luciana-paulise/2021/10/26/why-millennials-and-gen-z-are-leading-the-great-resignation-trend/?sh=10baf21d44fe>

9. The average male worker spends 81,396 hours of his life working and, according to Gallup and CNBC, he is deeply dissatisfied: Clifton, J. (2022, June 14). The world's workplace is broken -- here's how to fix it. Gallup. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/393395/world-workplace-broken-fix.aspx> Collins, L. (2022, August 12). Job unhappiness is at a staggering all-time high, according to Gallup. CNBC.