

A Vision for Disciplemaking
Key Men's Conference

February 20-23, 2003

Temptation

John Mahon

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, abut with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Sin Is Proactive:

1. Gen 4:7 "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."
2. Gen 39:10 And it came about as she spoke to Joseph day after day, that he did not listen to her to lie beside her, or be with her.
3. Psalm 65:3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, Thou dost forgive them.
4. Ps 119:133 Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.
5. Rom 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.
6. Rom 7:11 for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.
7. Rom 7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.
8. Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.
9. James 4:1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?
10. I Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

What Sins Seek Me Out?

How Can I Gun Them Down Before They Reach My Doorstep?

The Attributes of God

Rediscovering A High View of God Through Worship

I. Caretaker

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety.
Psalm 63:7 For Thou hast been my help, And in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy.
Psalm 63:8 My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me.
Psalm 121:5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand.

II. Compassionate

Psalm 25:6 Remember, O Lord, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindnesses, For they have been from of old.
Psalm 78:38 But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger, And did not arouse all His wrath.
Psalm 103:8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

III. Complete

Ecl 3:14 14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.

IV. Creator

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.
Psalm 100:3 Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Psalm 115:15 May you be blessed of the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.

V. Faithful

Psalm 36:5 Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Thy faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Psalm 89:8 O Lord God of hosts, who is like Thee, O mighty Lord? Thy faithfulness also surrounds Thee.
Psalm 119:90 Thy faithfulness continues throughout all generations; Thou didst establish the earth, and it stands.

VI. Father

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

VII. Forgiving

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to Thee, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah. Psalm 86:5 For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee. Psalm 130:3 If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? Psalm 130:4 But there is forgiveness with Thee, That Thou mayest be feared.

VIII. Good

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! Psalm 119:68 Thou art good and doest good; Teach me Thy statutes. Psalm 135:3 Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely.

IX. Gracious

Psalm 103:8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. Psalm 111:4 He has made His wonders to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and compassionate. Psalm 116:5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.

X. Holy

Psalm 71:22 I will also praise Thee with a harp, Even Thy truth, O my God; To Thee I will sing praises with the lyre, O Thou Holy One of Israel. Psalm 99:5 Exalt the Lord our God, And worship at His footstool; Holy is He. Psalm 99:9 Exalt the Lord our God, And worship at His holy hill; For holy is the Lord our God.

XI. Humble

Ps 113:5-6 Who is like the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high, Who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?
Phil 2:6-8 Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

XII. Immutable

Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation. Psalm 102:27 "But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end. Malachi 3:6 "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

XIII. Indivisible/One

Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;
John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."
Col 2:9 For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

XIV. Infinite/Eternal

Psalm 9:7 But the Lord abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Psalm 93:2 Thy throne is established from of old; Thou art from everlasting.

XV. Inscrutable/Unfathomable

Job 26:14"Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?" Job 37:5 "God thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend. John 1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. Eph 3:18-20 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

XVI. Invisible / Spirit

Rom 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Col 1:15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 1 Tim 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

XVII. Jealous

Exodus 20:5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, Deut 4:24 "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. Nahum 1:2 A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies.

XVIII. Judge

Psalm 9:7 But the Lord abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, Psalm 9:8 And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. Psalm 75:7 But God is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another.

XIX. Just

Ps 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; lovingkindness and truth go before Thee. Psalm 111:7 The works of His hands are truth and justice; All His precepts are sure. Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. John 5:30 "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

XX. Loving

Psalm 63:3 Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise Thee. Psalm 107:43 Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things; And consider the lovingkindnesses of the Lord. Psalm 136:1 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:2 Give thanks to the God of gods, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:26 Give thanks to the God of heaven, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

XXI. Merciful

Psalm 86:15 But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Psalm 119:156 Great are Thy mercies, O Lord; Revive me according to Thine ordinances. Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. Psalm 145:9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

XXII. Omnipotent

Job 42:2 "I know that Thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. Psalm 21:13 Be Thou exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength; We will sing and praise Thy power. Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

XXIII. Omnipresence

Psalm 33:5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord. Psalm 139:7 & 8 Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. Psalm 139:9 & 10 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me. Jeremiah 23:23 & 24 "Am I a God who is near," declares the Lord, "And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places, So I do not see him?" declares the Lord. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord.

XXIV. Omniscient

I Samuel 2:3 "Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the Lord is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed. Psalm 33:13 & 14 The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; From His dwelling place He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth, Psalm 139:2 & 3 Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; Thou dost understand my thought from afar. Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways.

XXV. Personal

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever. Psalm 17:15 As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake. Psalm 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.

XXVI. Patient

I Timothy 1:16 And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. I Peter 3:20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. II Peter 3:8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

XXVII. Refuge

Psalm 46:1 (For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah, set to Alamoth. A Song.) God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Psalm 61:3 For Thou hast been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. Psalm 61:4 Let me dwell in Thy tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy wings. Selah. Psalm 62:8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

XXVIII. Righteous

Psalm 11:7 For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. Psalm 92:15 To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Daniel 9:14 "Therefore, the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

XXIX. Rock/ Fortress

Psalm 18:2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Psalm 71:3 Be Thou to me a rock of habitation, to which I may continually come; Thou hast given commandment to save me, For Thou art my rock and my fortress. Psalm 144:1 (A Psalm of David.) Blessed be the Lord, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle; Psalm 144:2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer; My shield and He in whom I take refuge; Who subdues my people under me.

XXX. Ruler

Exodus 15:18 "The Lord shall reign forever and ever." PSA 47:2 For the Lord Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth. PSA 47:3 He subdues peoples under us, And nations under our feet. PSA 47:6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises. Psalm 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful Psalm. Psalm 47:8 God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. Psalm 146:10 The Lord will reign forever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!

XXXI. Salvation

Psalm 3:8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people! Selah. Psalm 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; And deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Thy name's sake. Psalm 89:2 For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; In the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness." Psalm 98:3 He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

XXXII. Self Existent

Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Job 34:13 "Who gave Him authority over the earth? And who has laid on Him the whole world? John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

XXXIII. Shepherd

Psalm 23:1 ...The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Psalm 80:1 ...Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, Thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock; Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! Isaiah 40:11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs, And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

XXXIV. Transcendent

Eph 1:19-21 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

XXXV. Sovereign

Psalm 83:18 That they may know that Thou alone, whose name is the Lord, Art the Most High over all the earth. Psalm 93:1 The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Psalm 103:19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all.

XXXVI. Triune

Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Eph 2:18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 1 Pet 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: may grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

XXXVII. Unique

Sam 2:2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides Thee, nor is there any rock like our God. Ps 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts toward us; there is none to compare with Thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count. Isa 43:10 "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me.

XXXVIII. Unity/ONE

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; Eph 4:6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

XXXIX. Vengeful

Ps 94:1 O LORD, God of vengeance; God of vengeance, shine forth! Ezek 25:14 "And I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom according to My anger and according to My wrath; thus they will know My vengeance," declares the Lord GOD. Rom 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

XL. Wise

Job 12:13 "With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding. Psalm 104:24 O Lord, how many are Thy works! In wisdom Thou hast made them all; The earth is full of Thy possessions. Romans 16:27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

XLI. Wrathful

Psalm 21:9 You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; The Lord will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them. Psalm 38:1 (A Psalm of David, for a memorial.) O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath; And chasten me not in Thy burning anger. Psalm 89:46 How long, O Lord? Wilt Thou hide Thyself forever? Will Thy wrath burn like fire?

New Areas, Thoughts and Meditations...

Those Attributes To Which We May Aspire:

Caretaker	Gracious	Unique
Compassionate	Holy	Rock
Complete	Humble	Ruler
Faithful	Just	Shepherd
Father	Merciful	Wise
Forgiving	Personal	Just
Good	Refuge	

Those Attributes Which We Are Forbidden:

Creator	Judge	Triune
Immutable	Omnipotent	Vengeful
Infinite	Omnipresent	Judge
Infinite	Omniscient	Unity
Inscrutable	Self-existent	Salvation
Invisible	Transcendent	Providential
Jealous	Sovereign	

Purity of Life

Job 31:1 "I Have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Job 34:32 Teach Thou me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more?"

Psalms 11:7 For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.

Psalms 101:3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Ephesians 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 5:1,3 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

Ephesians 5:3-4 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

Ephesians 5:5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 5:7-8 Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light

Ephesians 5:11-12 And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

Ephesians 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,

Ephesians 5:16 Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

I Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

I Peter 4:1-2 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

I Peter 4:4 And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you;

II Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Quiet Times Alone with God
Jeremiah 15:16

THEME: Temptation & Purity on the Road

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1:1-2* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1: 3-6* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1: 7-10* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Quiet Times Alone with God
Jeremiah 15:16

THEME: Temptation & Purity on the Road

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1:11-13* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1:14-17* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1:18-21* How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Activity	Present Amount of Time Given		Time I Could Give to God's Word	
	<i>Day</i>	<i>Week</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Week</i>
TV				
Books				
Newspapers/ Magazines				
Radio				
Stereo				
Computer				
Internet				

Five Steps We Can Take to Lessen the Influence of the TV in Our Lives:

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

Five Steps We Can Take to Lessen the Influence of the Computer in Our Lives:

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

Where Am I Going That I Should Not Be Going?

What Am I Looking At That I Should Not Be Looking At?

Who Am I Talking To That I Should Not Be Talking?

Do I Hug Or Kiss Any Woman Other Than An Immediate Family Member?

What Vanities Of Dress, Appearance or Possession To I Afford Myself? (I think of what others will think)

What Steps Can I Take To Actively Align Myself With The Morally Pure / What Needs To Be Exposed?

What Do I Need To Flee From That I Am Toying With Or Trying To Ignore?

What Am I Considering Involving Myself In That I Would Not Invite My Teenage Son Or Daughter To Come Along With Me?

From Rob Stephen's Message, what are five steps you can take to better protect yourself from Temptation when you are "On The Road"?

From Dr. Mukolwe's Message, What Actions Steps Will You Take In Order Not To Fall Into The Traps He Illustrated In His Message?

Here's the dirt

Writer's gossip-fest on studio-era stars has faults but entertains

THE GOLDEN GIRLS OF MGM.

By Jane Ellen Wayne
Carroll & Graf, \$26, 432 pp.

BY STEVEN E. ALFORD

EARLY on in *The Golden Girls of MGM*, author Jane Ellen Wayne says "there were two prime interests in Hollywood: movies and gossip."

The same can be said of this tattle-fest about the more sordid events in the lives of Jeanette MacDonald, Norma Shearer, Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, Joan Crawford, Lana Turner, Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly, Elizabeth Taylor and other stars of Hollywood's studio era.

Golden Girls devotes a chapter each to these women, tracing their unhappy poor-and-anonymous origins to their unhappy wealth and fame, which they achieved primarily through either their spectacular appearance or the skill of MGM's beauty technicians and lighting directors.

Two men loom large in these stories, Irving Thalberg and Louis B. Mayer. They developed MGM into a Hollywood studio that for decades controlled the lives of its stars and, perhaps equally important, the local police. Wayne notes that "in its prime, MGM's empire consisted of 117 acres, 6 miles of road for their 4,000 employees, 25 sound stages, a police force, hospital, fire department, and their own telephone exchange. It was a kingdom with its own rules and morals."

One assumes Wayne is using the word "morals" ironically. Consider Gardner's de-

fense of her own love life: "I married three exciting men, all very talented, and fascinating to the ladies, and I might add, vice versa. But it's not all entirely my fault, when you consider that my three husbands have had a collection of twenty wives."

Why the level of activity that would make a colony of rabbits blush? The men wanted sex, and the women wanted a daddy. "How many MGM starlets were looking for a father figure? Lana, Ava, Grace, Liz and Joan," Wayne writes. Indeed, it's depressing to read chapter after chapter of young girls abused, abandoned and otherwise mistreated by their biological fathers, girls whose only refuge was a mother intent on turning them into a meal ticket.

The fear of and need for a father may also account for the remarkable number of these gorgeous women who married gay or bisexual men. Mayer sought to limit the number of gay actors at MGM, given the difficulty of covering up their sexual orientation. The most famous and well-liked,

Billy Haines, was given a choice between his career and his boyfriend. Haines chose love.

Alcohol and drugs, in addition to sex, are on parade here. Garland's manager and beau, Sid Luft, "was fairly successful in limiting her pill intake that had escalated to 25 amphetamines and 45 Ritalin a day." Many of Taylor's physical problems were brought on by substance abuse. By the time Taylor hooked up with Richard Burton, she had had 27 operations, "with more to follow."

For anyone acquainted with Hollywood and its stars,

these stories will have the slightly tedious ring of familiarity. Most everything in this volume, it seems, comes from already published sources, but it's often difficult to tell.

For example, "Legend has it that [Spencer] Tracy did not divorce Louise because they were Catholic, but the real reason was blaming himself for [their son] John's death." Wayne writes, "This important correction to the Tracy-Hepburn relationship may be true, but no evidence is offered.

It's amusing to hear about Burton's romantic references to Liz, immediately before their first wedding ("Where is that fat little tart?") and to discover that Katharine Hepburn "took up to eight showers a day." However, 400 pages of questionably sourced dirt on people not around to defend themselves grows tiresome.

In addition, the book is oddly repetitive, suggesting that the chapters were written separately and never compared. Here are two quotes, from two separate chapters:

"L.B. Mayer was busy with his racehorses and the courtship of a new young wife, Dore Schary was brought in as production head to put MGM in the black again after a \$6,500,000 deficit."

"L.B. Mayer... was paying more attention to his racehorses and the courting of his new young wife than MGM's \$6,500,000 deficit."

This happens too often, suggesting that either a revision or a more attentive editor would have helped. (For comparison, look at Jeanine Basinger's excellent *Silent Stars*.) Maybe this is mere carping to those seeking deep dish. As Esther Williams said, "Romances with beautiful leading men don't last forever, but don't knock it until you've had one."

For those of us unlikely to bed a movie star, *The Golden Girls of MGM* might be diverting for an evening or three.

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