

Passionate Manhood Part 4

Session 1 Stories

By Arthur Burk

Story 1: The Skateboarder

Dad, Mom, three kids in a stable setting in suburbia.

Johnny is a third born Exhorter.

A runt with a motion anointing.

Often the sparkplug of the group of kids, deciding what they would play.

Not much loyalty to anyone or anything. Just followed the fun.

Lived a long way from water, but loved adventure stories about rivers, lakes and oceans.

Looked out for the underdog in a mothering sort of way.

Not a sparkly student.

Was famous on a skateboard until he broke his leg in Jr. High and could never go back.

Hung with the wrong crowd in high school and got stuck holding the bag in a drug caper.

Was released by the courts to his parents on the condition of six months grounding at home.

Had to be homeschooled and could not physically see any of his friends for that time.

His mom was diagnosed with fast growing cancer in that time.

The older siblings were away at college already.

Discovered wood carving and became quite good at it.



Started an online business of his athletes-in-motion figures and made some money.

Got busted a few years later for never filing taxes on his business income, because he thought his dad handled those things.

Started traveling to trade shows with his art and missed his mother's death, since he was so self-absorbed.

His college educated siblings were fiercely jealous of him for his income and travel opportunities, but used the mother's death as an opportunity to hate on him.

His dad watched the whole thing go down, did nothing to intervene or coach him. Johnny left home at 21, a lonely, confused highly talented artist.

Story 2: The Career Woman

Sondra grew up poor and determined.

She went to junior college, got a scholarship to state university and another to a prestigious graduate school where she got an MBA.

She was recruited to work at Big Big Corp, and started with 40 other newbies at age 25.

She found that academia had not prepared her for the real world.

After watching the scene, she deliberately decided not to leverage her body for promotions.

For six years, she lagged behind, being shuffled from one department to another.

She drifted further and further behind, until she was assigned to be an assistant to a highly dysfunctional researcher who was "On the Spectrum."

Deeply dismayed, she sought God. Thought she heard that this was "Her place."

She took it as a hard slap in the face that God thought as little of her as the corporate climbers did.

Sondra died to hope, and settled in to be a drone the rest of her life, in this dead-end assignment.

She learned how to team with an autistic mind.



She restructured his whole paper tracking process so his research could be embraced by the marketing side of the company.

And she lived small, at work and after, not at all like she had envisioned.

Her skilled work allowed his research to increase. He developed a staff and she ran all but the lab work.

Suddenly one of his experiments scored big and he was thrust into the limelight. And was of course, utterly dependent on her to manage the public dynamics so he could look good.

And she did.

Corporate noticed him and her, and promotions ensued.

The political players tried to sideline her but he turned out to be amazingly astute and loyal to her.

By midlife, she was traveling the world in support of her boss, living well and largely, and managing a larger team than most of the group that started with her.

Story 3: The Church Guy

Joey was raised in church. Saved at 7 and baptized at 12, compliantly.

He had no spiritual walk but was comfortably religious and “committed” to God.

Was broadly aware that the youth group participated in unholy things during the week.

Went to college, more or less stayed out of trouble, got a BA in cultural studies in case he became a missionary someday.

Went to the denominational seminary to become a pastor.

Was grieved at the lack of intellectual and organizational excellence compared to the secular university.

Became a youth pastor at an area church and had to deal with sex and drugs in the youth group.

He became aware of the paucity of tools beyond White Knuckle Christianity.



And he felt badly burned by the fact that the leadership mostly wanted to protect the church's reputation, not fix anything foundational in the program or the kids.

He deeply resented being thrown under the bus, so became a runner.

After leaving that job and that church, he doubled down on his studies, and made the famous vow, "When I am a senior pastor, I will do things differently."

He was graduated with an M. Div. in Pastoral Ministries.

His denomination required three years of assistant pastor work before ordination.

He opted for a large church with sundry staff and programs.

And was bitterly disappointed by the blatant, political self-serving of the staff.

He finished the three years, was ordained and resigned to the vast relief of the church.

In deep resentment over the lifelessness of the church scene, he turned to mercy ministries.

Working in the 'hood with raw and ugly "stuff" he found more authenticity and no power.

Eventually he went camping for three weeks alone, wrestling with his desire to mediate the life of God to a community, and the history of no life of God flowing through him. Demoralizing.

Story 4: The Visionary Teacher

She trained as an elementary education teacher just to do something. No vision.

Got in the trenches and figured out she was made for the hard cases.

Further training for a special ed cert, then poured herself into studying the available cutting edge orthodox and unorthodox resources out there. Went to the conferences. Studied the blogs. Met SLG.

She was celebrated by her principal and the staff. They funded her travels and seminars.

It was good to be able to get the problem children out of their classes and into her cluster.

Then she began to succeed. Small levels of jealousy wafted by.



She pulled back from the petty community and poured herself into the kids.

Became amazing with non-verbal autistic kids, using spirit tools.

As she championed her kids, she took the message to the marketplace.

Singlehandedly, she built an unofficial program of finding places for her graduates in industry.

The principal watched without comment or interference.

She gained confidence and saw how her methods could help the other teachers.

Spoke up in staff meetings and in private conversations in the faculty lounge.

Ran into a brick wall. Repeatedly.

Finally, she was overtly slapped down. The teachers did not care about the kids, and certainly did not want to work as hard as she worked.

She stayed another two years, gained national recognition, and left the field.

She went to work for a visionary ministry, to equip their best people to work smarter.

She was briefly famous until no one would come to her trainings because she expected them to learn much and work hard. She left there too.

She became self-employed in yet another field. Worked really hard. Excelled and had a breakdown.

Where was there a place for the fire God placed in her?

Story 5: The Athlete

Vickie was a terror before she was two. Nothing she couldn't climb, throw or destroy.

Neither the carrot nor the stick nor therapy nor meds did much to change her. She and her family had an extremely adversarial relationship, especially because her sister was a stupendously odious good girl.

In junior high, she discovered team sports. She had utter contempt and disdain for golf, but signed up for basketball, soccer and swimming.



Her behavior improved but her drive for intense motion was inflamed. Out of self-preservation, the family enrolled her in gymnastics and martial arts also because the school didn't offer those.

By high school she was the de facto team leader in every undertaking, and slowly learned some motivational skills that were more nuanced than screaming at those who failed to deliver.

NCAA rewards skill more than character. She won a scholarship and swiftly leveraged her NIL.

Wealth, fame and trophies flowed to her. Still, she was driven for more, more, more, more.

An accident in the championship game of her junior year cost her a painful surgery and sitting out the senior year. There was still plenty of money and fame, but not fresh weekly spotlight, and no motion.

She made it through summer, surgery and PT. By Christmas time, she was coming unraveled.

Her friends (bravely) staged an intervention. She was too shattered to whack anyone's head off.

In therapy she learned that she was all about giving but not receiving, and this was not a good thing.

She dropped out of university to weep, rage and work on her inner world.

It was excruciatingly humiliating to have a bunch of non-achievers reframe all of her life's efforts as a bad thing. She didn't yield ground easily, but slowly accepted that there might be a better way.

She still despised the little people who achieved nothing, dreamed of less, and portrayed themselves as superior to her because they had "friends."

Healing went poorly. And the doctor finally said, "No more sports the rest of your life."

She walked away from PT, university, sports, motion, competition and everything she had once lived for.

Her engine was massive. She had no transmission anymore. The world was before her. She had fame and money. And she had no idea what she wanted to be and do, while treating her body as fragile, for the rest of her life.

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