

Topics for Men's Fellowship

Month	Topic	Email	Verse
January	Seekers	Over 2,000 years ago, magi traveled a great distance, following a star and seeking a promised king. As we celebrate the Epiphany this weekend, I thought that we could relate this great story to the lives that we are living today. Like the magi, we are all seekers. What is it that you are seeking as you enter into a new year? What is the star that you are following? What are the obstacles in your path?	Matthew 2:2
January	A Fresh Start	It's a new year and this weekend we will celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Both are great reasons for us to talk about getting a fresh start. We all mess up, we all have fallen, we all are sinners. But through our bad experiences comes wisdom... and hopefully a fresh start. This may come in the way of a baptism, a reconciliation, a New Year's resolution, a clean slate, or even a second chance. So did you ever get a fresh start? Were you able to stay on your new path or did you wander back to the old one? What did you use for motivation? What does scripture say about fresh starts?	Matthew 3:16
January	Duplicity	If you're like me, you've probably heard the word "duplicity" many times, but never really given it much thought. It basically means to be contradictory in one's thoughts, words, or actions. It's a sense of doubleness or being "two faced." There are plenty of examples of this in our world today... hidden agendas, masks, secrets, lies. I'm sure we have all fallen into this in one way or another... I know I have. It makes you wonder, why can't people just be at peace with the way God made them and the cards they have been dealt? Why are we driven to appear more successful, cool, smart, attractive, etc. than we really are? What are some examples of duplicity that you've witnessed? How did you respond? Don't you actually respect someone more if they have the humility to admit their faults and failures rather than hide them? Doesn't living a life with nothing to hide help keep us from doing those things which separate us from God and others? How can our faith help us to be true to ourselves and live a life of integrity?	John 1:47
January	The Fire	During this cold time of the year, a good fire can be very comforting. Unfortunately, we also hear stories where a fire could be quite destructive. So it also goes in our spiritual life. It's quite comforting to have that fire of your faith to warm your heart. This was the fire that we received with our baptism. But on the other hand, no one ever wants to be thrown into that eternal fire. So, do you still feel that fire burning in your heart? What does "faith on fire" look like? How can we spread that fire into the hearts of others? And how can our faith keep us clear of that destructive fire?	Luke 3:16

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January	Call to Action	It seems like there's no shortage of great ideas in our world... lot's of talk about what needs to get done. We often hear the "call to action," but following through and actually doing something is a completely different story. It's quite easy to come up with perfectly good reasons for standing back on the sidelines and not getting involved. In what ways are you being called into action? Do you have anything in particular that stirs the passion deep in your heart? What are the obstacles that are keeping you from following through?	Romans 8:28
January	Connections	I'm amazed by how easy it is now to reach out to so many people in an instant. We've come a long way over the past couple decades, from email to cell phones, to text messages and IM, to Blackberries and iPhones. We just can't seem to live without all of our gadgets that keep us "connected." But are we really staying connected? What does it take for you to feel connected to those people who are most important to you in your life? Since I don't think God carries a Blackberry yet (He might just have email), what are the ways that you stay connected to Him? And how does God stay connected to you?	1 Kings 19:11-12
January	Diversity	This past week we celebrated the birthday of a great American who really helped our nation embrace diversity. Dr. King helped us all to understand that God made everyone different for a very good reason... it's those differences which make us stronger! And sure enough, once you take the time to get to know that person who seems so very different from you, you discover that you have quite a bit in common. Perhaps that's because we are all made in the image of God. So what stories do you have of encounters with diversity? Have you ever seen prejudice or discrimination in action? Have you ever been the target? How can we encourage others to embrace our differences? What role can God play in all of this?	2 Corinthians 13:20
January	Accountability	There's really a fine line between judgment and accountability. No one likes to be judged, but being held accountable is a different story. In fact, I think we'd all agree that you would appreciate it if someone were to discretely point out that you had a piece of broccoli stuck in your teeth, something unsightly hanging from your nose, or, God forbid, your zipper was left wide open. At work, we often are held accountable for our performance. Good parenting calls for us to hold our kids accountable. But as Christians is it alright for us to hold each other accountable? Don't we need other people in our life who can help us become better Christians? Do you have examples where you held someone accountable or they held you accountable? When does this pass that line toward judgment? Do you have to invite accountability or is it alright to provide unsolicited accountability? What does scripture say?	Proverbs 27:17

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January	Miracles	A passenger jet is stricken with a serious emergency and must make a forced landing in an icy river. A young girl disappears and has apparently been kidnapped. A soldier, husband, father, brother, and son is reported missing in action. A young mother is suddenly overcome by a debilitating illness. An innocent man is condemned to death. In all of these scenarios, we all pray for miracles. We know from reading the Bible that God has His hand in many miracles. Can miracles still happen today? Is it alright to pray for miracles, or should we just pray for God's will to be done?	Galatians 3:5
January	The Gates	Our physical world is full of many gates. At my house, I have a couple of gates around my yard. They keep my dog in the yard, while also deterring unwanted people from entering. The dog helps in this area, too. You'll also see gates at airports, sporting events, and amusement parks. These are usually geared toward ensuring only the right people get through. In the spiritual world, scripture speaks of gates in numerous places. There's the narrow gate, the pearly gates, and also the gates of hell, to name a few. So how have both physical and spiritual gates impacted your life? Have you ever felt like the gate was too narrow for you to reach a goal? Have you ever felt like you were trapped inside the gate of a desperate situation? How does hope play into all of this?	Matthew 16:18
February	"Headin' to Disney World!"	What better way to celebrate a victory than by going to "the happiest place on earth." Well, maybe you haven't won anything that big in your life, but I'm sure you've had plenty of other victories to celebrate. What were your greatest victories and how did you celebrate? Since we're now in the season of Easter, why was this considered Christ's greatest victory? In what ways can we celebrate this victory?	Luke 23:43
February	Heartbreak Hotel	We've all had heartbreaks in our lives. It seems like just when we think that everything is going perfectly, it all comes crashing down around us. Some of you might have lost the love of your life, a real close friend, or even the best job you've ever had. And if you've ever played sports, you might have had certain victory snatched from your grasp... the agony of defeat! So what did you do to pick up the pieces? Where did you turn to regain your hope and move forward? Have you ever had to help someone else pull themselves out of the dump? What role did God play in all this?	2 Timothy 1:7
February	Love	This is your official craniums up... just one week until Valentine's Day so there's no excuse for not getting something nice for your sweetheart. With that in mind, I thought that this week would be the perfect time for us to talk about something that we all find near and dear to our hearts... golf. No, just kidding. We're going to talk about love. What is God's idea of love? And how have we twisted that around in our world today?	1 Corinthians 13:13

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February	Love Your Enemy?	We all have those people in our lives who are really easy to love. It might be your parents, your wife, your kids, or any number of other people you've been drawn to in your life. On the other hand, there are other people that we've run into over the course of our lives that just rub us the wrong way. Or maybe they even take it further and do their best to make your life a living hell. These are the people who are just hard to love. So how do you react to these "enemies" in your life? Are you out for revenge, or do you "turn the other cheek?" What does Christ say about how we should treat our enemies? What example did he set for us to follow?	Matthew 5:46
February	Separation	If you think about the relationships you have in your life, there are some that are really close and then others where you have drifted apart. Perhaps you may have experienced physical separation from those you love. And then sometimes a marriage can lead to separation. In our relationship with God, we can also experience separation. Of course, this is not of God's choosing, but of our own free will. There are things we do in our lives that cause us to drift away from God and the course that he's set us on, sort of like a ship that's lost power. Often times, we don't even realize we're drifting away in these relationships until we look back and wonder what happened. How have you experienced this sort of separation in your life? Did it happen quickly or just gradually build up? How were you able to get back? What can we do in our relationships with others and with God to keep the separation from building?	Psalms 51:3
February	Multi-tasking	We've gotten quite adept to doing a lot of different things at the same time... some call it multi-tasking. In fact, as I am typing this email, I am also watching the morning news. While I'm out and about, I've noticed others who can eat a meal with friends while carrying on a text message with other friends all at the same time. And the pinnacle of multi-tasking is someone who can drive their car while talking on the phone, eating a meal, and changing the radio all at once. This usually involves knees to actually steer the vehicle. Have we taken this multi-tasking too far? Have our efforts to stay connected actually resulted in us being disconnected from what's important? How do you react if someone in your family pulls out a cell phone during a family meal or if a friend / co-worker starts texting away during an important meeting? How can our faith help us to stay grounded in the moment and resist the temptation to succumb to the distractions?	Matthew 6:34

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February	Temptation	As we enter the season of Lent this week, I thought it would be good for us to revisit something that we all struggle with every day... temptation. As was discussed last week, one of the Catholic traditions of Lent is to give something up for the 40 days. It also calls for fasting and abstinence on certain occasions. I think these smaller trials we put ourselves through during Lent prepare us for even bigger tests. The temptations are all around us, whether it's food, drink, drugs, porn, gambling, anger... the list goes on and on. What do you do when you are faced with a temptation? Perhaps you help hold others accountable for their temptations. How do you encourage them to stand firm? What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping you deal with temptation?	1 Corinthians 10:13
February	Revelations	Have you ever had one of those "Aha!" moments? Sometimes it's like a light bulb showing you what you've missed, while other times its like a 2 x 4 whacking you across your cranium. The truth is often elusive, but when it is finally revealed everything becomes so much clearer. What kind of major revelations have you had in your life? What was it that finally opened your eyes? Has God ever revealed a major or minor insight to you? How did He open your eyes? Has He ever revealed Himself to you through others or in some situation you found yourself in?	Luke 9:29
February	Making a Stand	As disciples of Christ, we are often called to take a stand against those things which might separate us or others from God. It seems easy to take a stand against these things when we're inside the walls of our parish, but does your call to be a disciple continue when you leave our parish buildings? When we're faced with things going on around us that are contrary to Christ's will (e.g. pornography, adultery, abortion, profanity, deception, etc...), we have choices. Do we participate? Do we sit on the sidelines and just watch? Do we verbalize our objections? Do we become actively involved in opposition to whatever it is?..... What DO we do? What SHOULD we do? If we don't DO what we think we SHOULD, what obstacles are standing in our way?	Ephesians 6:11
February	Body Building	Many men spend a great deal of time and effort trying to build their physical bodies so they can be healthy and maybe even more attractive. We try to implement a regiment of working out, running, playing sports, and eating the right kinds of foods. Sometimes our health kick might even stick for a while, but then other times we quickly slack off and return to building our body the wrong way, leading to fat instead of muscle. In this season of Lent, we're called to the discipline of fasting and even giving up something that might help us become a stronger part of Christ's body. So how has your Lenten discipline been going? What exactly is Christ's body? How do our Catholic leaders encourage us to build this body? How can we reach out to others during this season of Lent to encourage others to become part of Christ's body and help us in our quest to build it up?	1 Corinthians 12:27

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March	Strength	It's been said that adversity makes us stronger. In fact, in order to build up your muscles you actually have to damage them during your workout. You know... "No Pain, No Gain!" Whether it's a pro football team or a combat unit, ultimate strength seems to come by being pushed to one's limits. It seems like sometimes God works this way too. No matter how faithful we seem to be, things just don't always go our way. We can either get angry about it or use it to make us stronger. This week, I thought we could talk about a subject that is intertwined in our male ego... strength. In what areas of your life do you seek strength? What are you doing to grow stronger in those areas? Are there events that happened to you in your life that made you stronger? What is the ultimate source of your strength?	Philippians 4:13
March	Excuses	Last week we had a great discussion on how we can get strength through our weakness by turning to others and God. This week, I thought we'd turn the table and look at the illusion of strength. I'm talking about excuses. No matter how bad we screw up, we always seem to find a way to shift the blame off of ourselves and onto someone or something else. Sometimes it's just so much easier to just stretch the truth a little or flat out lie. We're quick to point out the weakness in others so that we can maintain the facade of our own strength in the eyes of the world. Who can blame us? And has there ever been anyone who was blameless, without fault? Is it OK to show your weakness by taking responsibility for your mistakes or actually admitting that you were wrong?	Proverbs 27:17
March	Cheatin' Death	At some point your life, you have probably known or heard of someone who has lived their life on the edge. Perhaps this might have even been the way you lived your own life. These are the people who seem to do incredibly stupid things and yet walk away unscathed... we say they're "cheatin' death." Our society seems to almost idolize people who embrace this type of lifestyle. On the other hand, every so often, we are reminded of our own mortality. Perhaps you have lost someone you have been close to or even faced a near death experience yourself. These sort of experiences can be life changing. As we participate in Ash Wednesday next week, we all will once again have the opportunity to contemplate our own mortality. So what brushes with death have you had in your life? How has it changed you? What role does your faith play in how you face death?	Matthew 4:7

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March	Just Say "Yes"	We've gotten quite adept at saying "no." Telemarketer on the phone... no. Salesman at the door... no. Pan handler on the corner... no. Dinner with co-workers... no. Call from God... no. Oh wait, that one was supposed to be a "yes." This is not too pass judgment on anyone. In fact, I'm guilty of almost all of those just over the past few days. It made me think... how can you discern that "call from God?" I know for me, sometimes I'm initially reluctant to answer the call. There are lots of excuses... most have to do with not having the time. But then when I actually make the sacrifice to answer the call, I find that the blessings far exceed the cost. So what examples have you had in your life where you reluctantly said "yes?" Did it take a lot of "no's" before you finally gave in? How did God play into your decision? Was it worth the effort? Aren't we all called to a higher purpose? How do you know what your calling is? How can we encourage others to say "yes?"	John 5:30
March	The Wilderness	Do you ever feel like you're just wandering aimlessly in the wilderness? I look around me in the world today, and it seems like a lot of people seem to be lost in the "wilderness." There's lost jobs, lost homes, lost families, lost love, lost faith, and lost hope. People are hungry for something to fill their bellies and thirsty for something true and pure. The Jews wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Christ went out into the wilderness for 40 days. Have you had a wilderness experience? What did you do to survive? Was there anything positive that came out of it? Did God have a role in helping you find your way back to civilization?	Deuteronomy 1:31
March	March Madness	About this time every year, a phenomenon starts to sweep our land. They call it March Madness. Of course, we all think it's related to the NCAA basketball tournament. Are you ready to fill out your bracket? But in reality, this March Madness seems to reach much deeper. There's lots of people doing crazy things and then there's people who get mad at those people who are doing crazy things. And then there's those people who get mad at those people who just get on their nerves. And then there's those people who just get mad at about everything. Where do you stand on this March Madness spectrum? When others do crazy things or just get on your nerves, is there a way to quell the madness? Do you have any good strategies to control you anger? Does scripture give us any good advice in regards to dealing with the March Madness, as well as the madness that pops up during the rest of the year?	Proverbs 14:29
March	Thorns	We all have those pains in our lives that just never seem to go away. While some are physical, others might be from those problem relationships you have in your life. These "thorns" might be just a nuisance, or they might be a nagging pain that is sometimes unbearable. So, what are the thorns that nag at your life the most? What have you done to try to "pull" them out? And what role does Christ have in helping you to endure?	2 Corinthians 12:9

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March	Triumph	We're heading down the stretch into Holy Week... this Sunday we'll celebrate Christ's "triumphant" entry into Jerusalem. On the surface, riding into the city on a mule doesn't appear very triumphant. But when you pull back to take in the entire picture of Holy Week it really is. So what triumphs have you had in your life? Did you have any triumphs during Lent this year? What exactly was Christ's triumph during Holy Week?	Matthew 21:5
March	Passion	There's so many examples of passion that we see all around us every day... a musician, singer, or actor performing for an audience, a politician giving a speech, a couple caught up in their romance, a parent praying over a sick child. This week as we remember the Passion that our Lord showed us, I thought we could talk about the role that "passion" plays in our own lives. What are you passionate about? How can the example of Jesus' passion make you a better Christian?	1 John 3:16
March	Presence	As we approach Holy Week and the celebration of Jesus' presence in our lives, I thought this would be a great opportunity for us to talk about the concept of "presence." How often in our lives are we physically present with the important people in our lives, but we're not really "there"? Sometimes it's just so easy to be distracted by something on the TV, or to relive some great victory or defeat from our work. We don't even realize that we're missing out on some previous moments with our loved ones that we may never get back. What can we do to have a greater "presence" in the lives of those we are closest to? And taking this a step further, in what ways is God present for us in our lives? How can we nurture an awareness of God's presence?	John 14:23
April	Limits	As children and teens, we often pushed the boundaries just to see how far our parents would let us go. In today's culture, we're bombarded everyday by stories about celebrities who thought that rules or laws just didn't apply to them. And before I push the limits of your attention span any further, let me get to the point. What kinds of limits do you have in place in your life? How did you set them? Are there any areas where you take risk to push past limits? Does God play a role in helping you set your limits? In the immortal words of Dirty Harry, "A man's got to know his limits."	Proverbs 3:5-6

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April	Witness	We witness many things in the world as we go about our day... some good and some not so good. Sometimes we might even be called upon to share what we've witnessed with others to help recreate what actually happened. As we entered into the Easter season this past week, we heard the incredible story that was witnessed by the first disciples... the first witnesses to carry the Gospel story of Christ's resurrection forward for the next 2000+ years. And even after that many years, we all have a our own story to tell about the impact that Christ still has on our lives. I've heard some amazing stories that really make you realize that Christ is still alive and well in our world today. So, have you ever felt called to share your witness? What obstacles did you have to overcome? What does it really mean to "witness the Gospel?" Have even seen such a witness transform the faith of another?	Acts 3:15
April	Without a Doubt	With the start of the Easter season this past week, we hear many stories of how the Apostles reacted to Christ's resurrection. One Apostle, Thomas, reacted by saying he wouldn't be able to believe unless he could touch the wounds in Christ's hands, earning him the nickname "Doubting" Thomas. Today, we're asked to believe in Christ's resurrection without seeing the physical evidence. We call this faith, which leads to our own confidence that our belief is true. So what is the source of your faith and confidence in the resurrection? Our faith and confidence can also play a big role in other areas of our life, like faith and confidence in ourselves or others. Is this a good trait? When does this faith and confidence cross the line to become pride?	John 20:29
April	Good News!	Everyday we seem to get bombarded by more bad news. Well, this week, I thought we could talk about the good news in our lives. Have you heard any good news lately? What do you do when you hear good news? Are you like the disciple Thomas who says "No Way" when told of the resurrection? What do you do with good news when you hear it? Do you keep it to yourself or shout it from the roof top?	Mark 16:15
April	The Road	As we finish up this second week of Easter, I thought we could talk about what it would have been like to have been the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Try to put yourself in their sandals. They had just witnessed the brutal crucifixion of someone they had dedicated their lives to. The disappointment must have been tremendous. Then, when Christ does come to them on this road, it takes them a while to realize it's him. How many times in your life have you faced disappointment because things didn't turn out quite the way you planned? And in your disappointment, did you recognize Christ coming to you for consolation? In a way our own journey through life is just like the road to Emmaus.	Luke 24:30-31

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April	American Idolatry	Back in the biblical days, idolatry was a really big deal. The folks would basically worship some object, like a golden calf, as if it was a god... and turn their backs on their one true God. Although idolatry isn't quite as blatant today, we Americans still have plenty of idolatry to separate us from our one true God. It seems like our favorite pastime is worshipping our idols from movies, sports, TV, music, politics, But there's more! We love our toys... boats, planes, guns, cars, smart phones, flat screen TVs... We love our hobbies, jobs, vacations, sports, ... And we are especially are very fond of having the money to buy and do all this great stuff. And on top of all this, as men, we have a big tendency to idolize women... and not for who they are inside, but instead for how they look. So what are the idols that you have erected in your life? And what does all of this American Idolatry mean for our relationship with God?	Exodus 20:3
April	The Pope	If you're like me, you closely follow the comings and goings of the Pope. His message is often centered of love, hope, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This man is a true beacon of Christ's love and is obviously filled with the Holy Spirit. For our discussion this week, I thought that we could share our thoughts and feelings about all things Papal. What was the origin of the Pope? Does the Bible say there should be a Pope? What does the concept of Papal infallibility really mean? What impact does the Pope have in your daily life?	Matthew 16:18
April	Rise and Shine!	Have you ever known someone who just has an aura about them? They always seem to shine, even in the face of adversity. Maybe you have felt this way at some point in your life. Maybe you feel that way all the time. Maybe you feel that way now. So where does this energy come from? What role does your faith play in this radiance? When you feel it, do you try to keep it bottled up inside, or do you let it out for all to see?	Matthew 5:16
April	Every Man's Battle	There's a battle raging in this world that every man must face... LUST. It seems like the temptations are all around us... TV, movies, magazines, the internet, the gym. We might try to convince ourselves that it's really no big deal, since we're not hurting anyone else. But in reality lust is considered a deadly sin since it separates us from God and others. We hear stories in the news every day of men who have fallen in this battle... it creates a lot of pain not only to the men who have fallen, but also to those around them. The battle is not easy, but it can be won. So, what situations do you think make us most vulnerable? How can we avoid these situations? What kind of strategies do you have in winning this battle? How can our faith help us claim victory?	Matthew 5:28

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April	Gifts of the Spirit	This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost, which signifies the end of the Easter season with the coming of the Holy Spirit. This weekend is in essence the official birthday of our church. Therefore, I thought it might be appropriate for us to talk about all of the gifts which the Holy Spirit has brought to His party. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Can you see examples of them in your everyday life? What's the difference between the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit? What kind of fruit has the Holy Spirit planted in your life?	Galatians 5:22-23
May	Conscience	When I was growing up (which wasn't that long ago), I used to get a kick out cartoons where the main character was torn between a little devil whispering in one ear and an angel whispering in the other. Still today, whenever the subject of conscience comes up, I picture this image of the competing voices. If they would only stay on the same side of my head, I'd know which one to listen to! So this week, I thought we could talk about how we can figure out which voice to follow. How can we be more conscious of our conscience? Do we just follow our gut instinct? How is our conscience formed? Is it something that just comes from inside of us or is it influenced by outside sources? What role does God have in helping us to form and examine our conscience?	Romans 2:15
May	Under the Influence of ...	There are so many things in our lives that have an influence over us. Some things we choose to let into our lives, while others things that influence us are just out of our control. Some things that we fall under the influence of can be considered bad for us, while others are considered good. Which influences have you been under lately? Was it your choice? Which ones are good and which are bad? Did it cloud your judgment or help you to escape from some pain you have been feeling? Or did it help you to see things clearly and know that you were living out God's will for your life?	James 4:7
May	Honor	In honor of our mothers, I thought we could discuss the concept of "honor" during our fellowship tomorrow. Scripture calls us to honor our mothers and fathers... what exactly does this mean? It seems like we throw the word "honor" around quite a bit in our culture... "Duty, Honor, Country", "Honor Code", "Honor Guard", "Your Honor"... What does it really mean to live an honorable life? What does it mean to honor someone? Do you have any examples where you honored someone else?	John 5:23
May	Mothers and Mary	This week, in celebration of all of the mothers in our lives, I thought we could talk about our moms, the women in our lives who are moms, and the most virtuous mom of all... Mary. What is it that all of these moms have in common? How have these moms been beacons of Christ's unselfish love? How has your own mom interceded on your behalf to make you the man you are today? What role does Mary play in your spiritual life?	John 2:5

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May	A Cross to Bear	As part of living in this fallen world, all of us have to bear our crosses everyday. Some are small and some are big. What kinds of cross do you carry? What gives you strength to bear it? How can you help others to bear their cross? How did Christ offer us an example of how we can bear our cross? How was His cross different from ours?	1 Corinthians 10:13
May	Pearls of Wisdom	With graduations quickly approaching, this is not only a time of the year for reminiscing, but also for passing on "pearls of wisdom" to the graduates who are about to head off to even greater endeavors. I'm sure that over the course of your life, you have had some of these pearls passed on to you. Of course, some of the other pearls could only be learned from falling down and getting back up. So this week, I was hoping that we could share some of these pearls with one another. If you could only pass a few pearls of wisdom to the next generation, what would they be? What's the best way to pass these pearls on?	James 3:13
May	Band of Brothers	This weekend we remember and pay tribute to the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice to create and protect the great freedoms that we enjoy today. And in doing so, they formed some of the tightest bonds with their comrades that are humanly possible. For any of you who have read the book or seen the mini-series, the bonds between men in combat can become so strong that they could aptly be called a "Band of Brothers." Although we are not subject to the same hardships as these men who fought so valiantly, we are in a battle. Everyday we wage spiritual combat against the demons in our lives that are trying to separate us from God and each other. Some of the battles are small, while others might rage on for years. Thank God, we don't have to fight these battles alone. For our discussion this week, I thought we could discuss what it really means to be a "Band of Brothers." What is it that actually bonds us together? How do these bonds help us to fight for our own freedom?	Proverbs 27:17
May	Heroes	As we celebrate Memorial Day this weekend, I thought it would be appropriate to remember the heroes who have gone before us. Who are the greatest heroes that you have had in your life? Is it someone who was close to you or someone more distant who has inspired you? What makes them stand out as a hero? How have they had an impact on your life?	Judges 6:12
May	Sacrifice	In honor of those heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service of the greater good, I thought we could talk about sacrifice during our gathering this week. What drives a man to set aside fear and rush a line of enemy troops, confront a criminal who is terrorizing our fellow citizens, or enter a burning building that could come crashing down at any moment? How does faith play into these decisions? What sort of sacrifices are we willing to make? What kind of fears do these sacrifices bring and how can we overcome that fear?	John 3:16

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May	The Final Exam	This time of the year, many of the younger members of our community are faced with that ever dreaded right of passage, the Final Exam. As we make our way through this life on Earth, we often are tested in one way or another. And when we get to the end, many of us are expecting the ultimate Final Exam. This weekend, as remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice by laying down their life in service to a higher cause, I think it's appropriate for us to consider that ultimate Final Exam. How does our world judge the worth of a life? How do you think God judges our worth? Does scripture shed any light on our Final Exam? Can you cram for your Final Exam? How do you picture your Final Exam playing out?	Matthew 25:21
June	Choices	I feel very blessed to live in a country where we have so many choices. But it also seems like that freedom is very easy to abuse. Everyday, we hear stories about people who are faced with some very difficult choices. This week, I thought we could talk about some of these choices. What sorts of dilemmas have you faced in your life? How did you decide what path to take? Did God have any role in your choice? Do you have any regrets now?	Luke 16:15
June	Teams	I've always enjoyed watching team sports because it's amazing what a group of people can do when they focus all of their preparation and energy on a common purpose. For this week's discussion topic, I thought we could talk about being a part of a team. What teams have you been on in your life? Was there someone in particular who motivated you to perform at your peak? Who are you playing for today? For some of us this is a chance to relive those long gone glory days.	1 Corinthians 12:20
June	Hide 'n Seek	In our younger days, we've all had the chance to play "hide 'n seek." Now that we're older, many of us still play this game in many aspects of our lives... we may hide our mistakes, while seeking greater recognition. Or maybe we hide from our boss or wife, while seeking some sort of pleasure. I think this also carries over to our relationship with God. Our goal should be to seek God, but unfortunately we often find ourselves trying to hide from Him. So where are you in your relationship with God? Are you hiding or seeking?	Genesis 3:8
June	All In	If you've ever watched or played poker, you know there's sometimes a moment in the game where a player has so much confidence in their hand that they go "all in." In other words, they bet everything they have on the table that they are going to win. Likewise, with the cards we are dealt in life, we sometimes are called to make the decision to go "all in"... maybe it's a job decision, maybe it's an investment, maybe it's as part of a team or even a combat unit, or for many of us it's our marriage. These are the types of decisions where you are literally betting your life on it. This also can carry over to our faith. So, what types of "all in" moments have you had in your life? What role does faith play in these types of decisions? Do you have enough confidence in your relationship with God that you are "all in?" What does it really mean to be "all in" for Christ?	Philippians 4:13

Topics for Men's Fellowship

Month	Topic	Email	Verse
June	A Father's Wisdom	In honor of our fathers this weekend, I think that it's appropriate to talk about a father's wisdom during our fellowship tomorrow morning. What's the one piece of advice that's stuck with you? What was the source of this wisdom? Is it worth passing on to someone else? Do you think that passing on wisdom makes any difference, or do people just need to develop their own wisdom as they plod through life?	Proverbs 1:7
June	Tribute to Dads	This week, in honor of Father's Day, I thought we could dedicate our discussion to all of the fathers in the world. It seems like in today's culture, the role of fathers is getting more and more diminished. So, why is it important for our youth to have strong father figures in their lives? What are some of the qualities that good fathers must have? And how does our Father in heaven provide us the ultimate example on how to be a good dad?	Ephesians 6:4
June	Fear	There's so many things in our world today which can strike fear into your heart... poor economy, loss of a job, loss of a relationship, catastrophic illness or injury, death of a loved one, natural disasters, terrorist attack, criminal attack, animal attack. There's definitely plenty to be afraid of. What role does fear play in your life? Is fear a good thing or a bad thing? And how does God play into all of this?	Matthew 10:26
June	Can You Relate?	Teenagers of the previous generation used to ask each other, "Can you relate?" This probably came out of a feeling that their parents couldn't relate. Many of us now experience this from the other side as we watch our own kids grow. I recently heard a profound observation... if you give your kids rules without relationship, then you get rebellion. I'd never looked at it that way, but it is very true. And the same can be said of our relationship with God. For many years in my Catholic faith, I tried to make it all about following the rules. Now that I've made a daily effort to relate to God, my faith is much more meaningful. So, have you ever been torn between rules versus relationship... maybe with your own kids and even at work? Have you witnessed rebellion? How can we balance the rules versus the relationship? Is it alright to go with all relationship and no rules? Where are you in your faith? Is it all rules, all relationship, or somewhere in the middle?	Matthew 23:25
June	Summer Vocations	This time of the year many of us are looking forward to getting away on that long awaited Summer Vacation. You've been saving up all year to go get fried on the beach, lost in the mountains, or perhaps queasy on a roller coaster. You've worked hard all year and you truly deserve a break from it all. Well, while summer is a great time for vacations, it's also the perfect time to reassess your vocations. What exactly are your vocations? Is it just what you do at work every day or is there more? What role does God play in leading us into our vocations? How can we help others answer the call of God as they consider their own vocations?	Matthew 4:19

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
June	Secrets and Lies	Some things in our lives are just not meant to be shared with others... we all value our privacy. We use this to justify keeping some things secret from others. Sometimes, these secrets turn into lies as we try to put up a facade that we can hide behind. Everyday in the news we hear another story of someone else who has had their facade ripped away. So when is it OK to keep a secret? Is it alright to put up that facade? Is there ever a justified reason to lie? Did Christ give us any wisdom in this area?	Psalms 44:21
July	Fireworks	Do you have plans this Fourth of July to go out and see some fireworks? Or perhaps you need to prove your manhood by blowing up some fireworks out in the street. I'm sure you can think of other times in your life besides the 4th when you encountered fireworks. Maybe you saw some fireworks when you first fell in love. Or maybe you saw fireworks when you were in a fight. So how have fireworks played a role in your life, either literally or symbolically? Have fireworks helped to shape you into the man you are today? Are there any examples of fireworks in scripture?	1 Corinthians 3:13
July	Serenity Now!	Have you ever noticed that there are a lot of uptight people in our world? It seems like sometimes, the slightest things will set them off. In fact, sometimes I'm one of those people. And then I see others who always stay calm, and even pleasant, no matter what chaos is going on around them. Some of my brothers in Men's Fellowship definitely fall into this latter category and I definitely admire you for it... the epitome of serenity. So what does it take to carry yourself with this sense of peace? Have you embraced the Serenity Prayer? Where do you turn to gain the wisdom that it calls for? How do you deal with people who are the opposite of serenity? When you get worked up, what does it take to bring yourself back to a sense of peace?	John 14:27
July	Discipline	There are definitely quite a lot of opportunities in our world today to show discipline. It seems like everywhere we turn, something else is trying to pull us off course, whether it's with our diet, our health, our work, or perhaps especially our spirituality. We usually know what we should do, but actually doing it is a different story. It all comes down to winning the battle between our ears. So what are the areas where you find it hardest to maintain discipline? Do you have any secrets to keep you on the right path? What do you do to make sure that the temptations don't get the best of you? Does living a life of discipline necessarily mean you can't have any fun? And what role does Christ play in all of this?	1 Corinthians 10:13
July	Promises, Promises	Everyday of our life is filled with promises, some kept and some forgotten. They say that a man is only as good as his word. So how good is your word? Do you keep your promises? Do you tell someone that you'll do something only to completely forget about it? Do you have a fear of even making promises or commitments because you doubt you'll be able to keep them? What kinds of promises (covenants in biblical terms) has God made with us? Does He keep His promises? Has He set an example for us to follow?	2 Corinthians 1:20

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July	Winning	As men in America, we have all been programmed with a strong desire to win at everything we do. We all want to be seen as "winners," not "losers." You've probably heard some of the sayings, like "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." But can this desire to win go to far? How should we treat our competitors? As the "enemy?" Do you know of any role models that you would consider as a good winner? How does our faith play into winning? Does scripture provide us with any guidance on being a good winner?	1 Corinthians 9:24
July	Judgment Day	As you go through your day today, take a look at how often you find yourself judging other people and how often you find that other people are judging you. If you're like me, it seems to be nearly constant. Our society just seems to be programmed that way... we're constantly passing judgment on each other. "He's a real jerk." "She's too fat." "He got what he deserved." The thoughts go on and on. So for this week's discussion, I thought we could talk about the role that judgment plays in your life. Is judgment a good thing? What kinds of prejudices do you hold? Is there a difference between passing judgment and standing up for what you believe is right? Is it your job to bring justice down upon someone? What did Christ say about judging others?	Psaln 28:7
July	Forgiveness	It seems like one of the hardest things to do in life is to forgive someone who has done you harm. How can you move from anger to forgiveness? Are there some things that are just "unforgivable?" Does the person have to show remorse or pay some kind of retribution to be worthy of your forgiveness? Is forgiveness a one time event, or does it continue indefinitely? What did Christ have to say on this subject?	Mark 11:25
July	The Drought	Every so often, our land is stricken with a drought. The lakes dry up, the grass dies, the ground cracks, and our water bills soar. How has drought impacted your life? What other kinds of droughts have you felt in your life? Have you ever felt like your spirituality was drying up? And once the rain finally came, did you feel like the drought actually made you stronger?	Isaiah 58:11
July	The Whisper	Have you talked to God lately? Have you actually heard his voice? For the longest time in my life, I couldn't understand how others could hear God's voice. In reality, I wasn't listening. In what ways does God make His will known to you? What does He say? Are you listening?	1 Kings 19:12

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
July	Wingmen	In combat aviation, you learn to literally trust your life to your wingman. There's no way to complete your mission without him. Your wingman watches and guards your back from any enemy who might be rolling in behind you. In an emergency, he'll fly on your wing to make sure you make it home safely. No matter how bad you messed up the mission, a good wingman will never leave your side. And in the debrief he's not afraid to lay into you to help you learn from your mistakes. As brothers is Christ, we're all in need of a good wingman. So, who are the wingmen in your life? What makes a good wingman? And how can a good wingman help you complete your mission?	Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
August	Hypocrisy	We've all heard the stories. We've read them in the Bible. We may even have accused others or been accused ourselves. What does the word hypocrisy mean to you? Does it stir up your anger or your remorse? What do you do when faced with hypocrisy? What did Christ do? How can we help others and ourselves stay true to our values and beliefs?	Matthew 23:25
August	Unleashing Potential	God has placed potential in each of us... How do we unleash that potential? When the economy takes a nose dive, many of us are left wondering what we can do to provide security for ourselves and our families. Perhaps we can look at this time as an opportunity to unleash the true potential that God has placed within us all. Like the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), do we invest that potential to further God's kingdom or do we bury it in the ground? This week, we'll focus on what talents that God has given you that have yet to be unleashed.	Matthew 25:21
August	Beat the Heat!	This time of the year, it seems like we get into a full on battle with the heat. When battling the heat, you've probably come up with your own ways to keep the heat from claiming victory... drink lots of water, stay in air conditioned buildings, save outside work for the cooler time of the day, etc. In our lives, we often do many things to keep the symbolic heat off our backs. So where is the heat bearing down on you? How has the heat impacted your life this summer? In what ways can we battle the heat and claim victory? Does scripture give us any weapons in winning this battle?	Jeremiah 17:5
August	Be a Man!	What does it really take to become a man? Is it all about how big your muscles are? Is it related to how many beers you can chug? Do you have to prove yourself on the field of combat? Or do you need a woman to validate your manhood? Maybe it happens when you no longer cry when you get hurt. Our world seems to tell us that all these things are important to proving your manhood. Do you remember the moment in your life when you made your transition into manhood? What were the factors that drove your transformation? Does Christ or scripture provide us with any guidance on what it truly means to "be a man?"	Ephesians 6:13

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
August	Back to School	This is the time of the year that our kiddos head back to school. This might impact our lives in a number of ways... school shopping, morning routines, cheering our kids on at sports, helping with homework, or even adjusting to an empty nest if our kids have headed back to college. Our kids are back to learning about the things which will hopefully mold them into productive members of our society. Since most of us are well past our school years, we might think that we have nothing left to learn. But perhaps this is also a time for us get "back to school." Are there things in your life that you still want or need to learn? In what areas do you think you still need to grow? How is God calling you to reach beyond your comfort zone? What is your plan?	Proverbs 24:3-4
August	I Saw God Today	It's said that God is all around us. Have you seen Him lately? Maybe you saw Him in the boundless energy of a child or someone's act random of kindness. Perhaps you found God's fingerprint in the beauty of nature or in the smile of a stranger. And yet there are some times in our lives when God seems to be hiding from us. Or are we hiding from God? What have you done to look for God lately? How has he revealed Himself to you?	Philippians 4:13
August	Debt Crisis	Over the past few decades, it seems like debt has become a way of life for many people, families, businesses, and governments in our world. I'll admit, I'm probably as guilty as the next guy... mortgages, car loans, credit cards, lines of credit. If you follow politics at all, you'll hear quite a bit about our "national debt," or even about how the "debt crisis" has put us into recession. Well, rather than focus on the politics, I'd like us to focus on how debt has impacted our own personal lives. What is it about our human nature that makes it so easy to go into debt and then so hard to get out of it? Have you ever had your own personal debt crisis or do you know of someone else who has? What wisdom can you pass on to help motivate someone to live within their means? What does scripture say about how we deal with debt and relate to money in general?	1 Timothy 6:20
August	The Slippery Slope	As we travel though life, there are lines placed along our path that we're really not supposed to cross. Every so often, we wander across a line only to find out that the slope makes it hard to cross back over. It's takes a lot of work to get back up that slippery slope to where we're supposed to be. The next time, it's a little bit easier to cross that line, but even harder to get back. If this cycle continues, you can find yourself out of control sliding down the hill. So what sort of lines do you have in your life? How easy is it for you to cross them? Once you find yourself on that slippery slope, how can you work your way back up? What role does God play in keeping us off that slippery slope, or helping you get back to where you belong?	Psalms 73:2

Topics for Men's Fellowship

Month	Topic	Email	Verse
August	The Rich Soil	I'm sure you've heard the Parable of the Sower. This week let's take some time to reflect and discuss this parable in a bit more detail. It all comes down to letting God's word take root in your fertile soil so that it can bear fruit. So what are the birds, rocks, and thorns that are keeping the seeds from taking root? What can you do to nurture that rich soil in your life?	Matthew 13:8
August	Staying Connected to the Vine	In the electronic world of today we can stay connected to just about everything with the push of a button. We have over 100 TV channels to also keep us plugged in to what's happening in the world. We read emails, IMs, and text messages. We send and receive pictures and voice messages. We surf the web to get the latest news, weather, and sports scores. We update our Facebook, Twitter, and/or Blog so everyone can keep track of our "status", every movement, and most intimate feelings. We have so much in our lives to keep us connected to the world. But how can we stay connected to the vine that Christ described in the Gospel? What good can come out of staying connected to this vine? What are the consequences of not staying connected?	John 15:4
September	Sowing and Reaping	In observance of Labor Day this weekend, I thought we might discuss the value of hard work. It seems like there's a lot of folks out there in the world today that think they are entitled to reap without ever having put in the hard work to sow. So what's the hardest work that you have ever been called upon to accomplish? Have you ever surprised yourself by digging deeper than you thought possible to complete a job that you never thought you could do? How do you feel at the end of a tough job? Do you need someone else to tell you that you've done well, or is it enough to just know this for yourself?	Galatians 6:7
September	All Work and No Play...	In honor of the Labor Day weekend, I thought that this week we could focus our discussion on the balance between work and play. Do you consider your work a calling? Do you consider your play a calling? What do you do in your life to try to balance the two so you don't become a "dull boy?"	Genesis 3:17
September	Change is Coming	We're well into another heated election season and many people are calling for change. It's a real easy thing to do. When you see things happening in our world, in our country, in our community, and in our families that you don't like and don't agree with, you can't help but want to join in the call for change. So this week, let's talk about some things that you'd like to see changed. If you could be king for a day, what would you change and why? The changes could be big, on a worldwide level, or small, affecting just you and your loved ones. What specific actions can we take to bring about this change? And what role does God have in helping us to change ourselves and our world?	Philippians 3:13-14

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
September	Riding the Storm Out	This time of the year, we occasionally need to hunker down as a big ole storm rolls over our home. Unfortunately, there's lots of times in our lives when we're ravished by storms that have nothing to do with the weather. So what do you do to handle the storms in your life? Do you have a storm shelter or evacuation plan? Or are you the kind of person who likes to scoff at the storm by throwing a hurricane party? Maybe you're even the kind of person who heads out into the back yard to videotape the tornado coming at you. Does God play any role in helping you to survive? Does scripture have anything to say about storms?	Matthew 14:30
September	Foundation Repair	Have you ever seen those commercials about the guys who will come out and fix your home's sinking and cracking foundation? Well, in our lives there may also be times that we are in need of foundation repair. Over time, the downpour and currents from the world seem to wash away and undermine the morals and values that we have built our lives on. So what do you see as the foundation in your life? Is it strong and stable, or has it eroded over the years? What can happen if your foundation is not very strong? What can you do to stabilize your foundation and fill in those ugly cracks? What role does God play in all this?	Matthew 7:25
September	In a Rut	Sometimes life can deal us a really bad hand. At times like this, it seems very easy to roll into that rut of cynicism. We not only question our own judgment, but we also start to doubt the integrity and motives of others. This, in turn, tends to bring others down with us and may even separate us from others who are important in our life. You could also argue that the rut of cynicism ultimately separates us from God. Isn't this essentially the true definition of sin? So, where do you stand on the cynicism scale? When things don't go your way, are you more inclined to maintain a hopeful attitude or do you fall into the rut of despair and cynicism? What role does cynicism play in the life of you and your family? How do you think God views cynicism? How can God give us the strength to pull back out of the rut?	Genesis 3:5
September	Passing the Buck	You hear about it everyday... someone screws up, but it's always somebody else's fault. We learn from a very young age that, if at all possible, you never should admit your mistakes, because it will make you look stupid and weak. Not that you would ever pass the buck, but I'm sure you had examples in your life of people who have. So, why is it always so easy to blame others when we screw up? Who usually gets blamed? Are there any good examples of passing the buck in scripture? When you make a mistake (in that very rare case), are you quick to admit it? How hard is it to stop the buck with you? What can you do to make it easier?	Genesis 3:12

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September	Wake-up Call	If you're like me, just about every morning your peaceful slumber is abruptly interrupted by the buzz, beep, or ring of your alarm clock. Sometimes you bound out of bed, but most of the time it takes several "snooze" cycles to even get your feet to the floor. The sleep just feels too comfortable. In a broader sense, there are often times in our lives when we just go through the motions as if we're half asleep. This week, I thought we could talk about those instances in our life when we got a real wake-up call. Did you feel like it was a call from above? Did you try to screen the call by letting the answering machine take it? What did it take to finally kick your butt out of bed? Did the wake-up call help you to find your purpose? What are you doing now to answer the call?	Mark 14:37
September	Who Do You Serve?	Service is a fundamental tenant of our faith life... so this week I thought we could discuss a fundamental question. Who do you serve? No, really... who do you serve? We are often called to give of our time, talent, and treasure... but do you ever follow through? Do you only serve when it's convenient to you? Do you get anything back from the times that you have served? Please bring your examples of service.	1 Peter 4:10
September	Respect	There seems to be a rash of disrespect going on in our country these days. From town hall meetings, to outbursts in Congress, to yelling at sports officials, to stealing someone else's spotlight... we seem to have a big problem with listening to each other in a civil manner. As men of God, how can we model respect for the next generation? Does someone else have to earn your respect before you give it to them? How do you respond when someone doesn't show you the respect you feel that you deserve?	James 1:19-20
October	The Narrow Road	When we're young, our parents put the guard rails up to keep us on that narrow road. As we mature, they slowly start to pull the rails down in hopes that they've prepared us well enough to stay on that path. Unfortunately, for many of us it's nearly impossible to stay on that road with so many things in this world to lead us astray. So what are the instances in your life where you wandered away from the narrow road? How were you able to find your way back? What role does God play in helping you keep your hands on the wheel so you can keep it between the lines?	Matthew 7:14
October	Playing God	This week I thought we could talk about the whole concept of "playing God" in our lives. Since Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden, humankind seems to have been on a constant quest to be equal to or even better than God. How has this quest manifested itself in our modern society? What can we do to stand up for God?	Proverbs 3:6

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
October	Do It Anyway!	Have you ever been really inspired to do something, only to be told that it would never work or that you could never succeed? Have you ever been faced with those seemingly insurmountable obstacles at work, at home, or with your relationships? It seems like we're all so afraid to fail that we give up without trying. But with God all things are possible. Plus there's a lot to be gained just from putting forth your best effort. So what do you do to keep from getting discouraged? Have you ever tried really hard and failed? Was it worth the effort?	Mark 10:27
October	Peaks and Valleys	As we travel the journey of our life, we're bound to encounter many peaks and valleys along the way. Getting up the peaks is usually the result of a sustained and persistent effort. What role has God played in helping you reach those pinnacles in your life? On the other hand, we've all experienced valleys where, perhaps due to no fault of our own, everything seems to tower over us. How does your relationship with our Lord help you to navigate your way through this daunting journey?	Psalms 23:4
October	Purpose	This week I thought we would tackle a very basic question... What is the purpose of our lives? Why are we here? What should we be doing and how do we figure this out? Sports teams all know what their purpose is... to win the championship. Businesses all know what their purpose is... to please their customers and hopefully make a profit. These organizations spend countless hours working on their game plan or business plan... that's the only way they can figure out the small steps that are needed for them to achieve their purpose. How much time do you spend on your own life's game plan? Do you have a clear purpose?	James 4:7
October	Armor	This week, I thought we could discuss what it means to "put on the armor of God." We really are in a battle, but we're in this together and we gain strength through the love of God which flows through each and every one of us. Together we can help each other "fill the gap." What can we do in our lives to be prepared to take on the evil one? What is the nature of the enemy and what tools has God provided us to make us ready for battle?	Ephesians 6:11
October	Changing Weather	This is the time of year when things finally start to cool down. So, what have you been doing to get ready for the colder weather? In life, they say that the only thing for certain is change. Sometimes we can see it coming, but there's many other times when we can't. What were some of the major changes that rolled through your life? If you saw it coming, how did you prepare? And if it hit you like a squall line, how did you adapt? What role does God play in helping us cope with those changes that are bound to happen?	John 16:33
October	No Regrets	What a great world this would be if we could go through our life without any regrets. Do you have regrets that you're carrying around with you? What would it take for you to get past your regrets? Is there anyone that you know of that lived without regrets? How can you follow his or her example?	2 Corinthians 7:10

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
October	Saints	This week, in anticipation of All Saints Day next week, I thought we could talk about the role that the saints have in helping us wage our daily battle. Who were the saints and what is their relevance in the Catholic church today? If there's one saint in particular that you find yourself turning to, come ready to discuss how that saint has helped you in your spiritual awareness.	Romans 14:13
October	Paying Tribute	This weekend we'll be remembering both the saints and the souls that have gone before us. What have their lives meant to you? Is there one person in particular that stands out in your mind as a shining light for all of us to follow? Which of their qualities did you find particularly endearing? How was their relationship with God? Do you feel their presence in the body of Christ? What can you do in your own life to pay tribute to theirs?	1 Peter 5:8
November	Battling Demons	With Halloween last week I'm sure you had your fair share of little demons showing up on your doorstep. Lucky for us, we can usually get these demons to go away by throwing a few treats their way. Unfortunately, many of us must still deal with other demons that are much more sneaky, persistent, and dangerous. What kinds of demons do people have to battle in the world today? What is the purpose of these demons? When you notice that a demon has taken root in your life, how long does it take you to take action? How do you deal with demons? Is it a negotiation or a battle? Do you fight the demon on your own or do you seek help? What role does Christ play in all of this?	James 4:7
November	Blinded by the Light	Our vision is truly one of our most cherished senses. Our eyes give us the ability to see what we're doing and where we are going. They let us see who we're talking to and pick up non-verbal cues which give deeper meaning to our relationships. They let us take in the glory of God's creation and sometimes leave us in awe. They can also allow us to truly comprehend what's happening in the world around us... to see what is real and true. However, there are also times when our vision gets distorted or even blinded by outside forces, like when driving into the sun. This can also be a great analogy for our spiritual lives. Scripture is full of examples of vision and blindness. So, how have your spiritual eyes allowed you to see the truth in your life? Have you ever felt like that truth was blinding? When you're faced with the blinding light of the truth, how can you refocus on the path God has set before you?	John 9:39
November	United We Stand	At the end of a long and divisive election season, there are often calls from both sides for healing and working together to conquer the many challenges that face us. The concepts of unity and union not only resonate with our great country, but also with our Church... we're all called to unite as the Body of Christ. What examples can you think of where the unity of a group helped them to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds? What are some ways that we can show our unity, both as a country and as a Christian community? How can you build an even stronger communion with God?	Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

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Month	Topic	Email	Verse
November	State of Grace	For our discussion this week, we'll be talking about what it means to be in a "state of grace" when you receive the Holy Eucharist. Are there instances when you shouldn't receive communion? Who decides? Why does the church specify who can and can't receive communion?	1 Thessalonians 5:18
November	Appreciation	As we head into the Thanksgiving holiday, I think it might be appropriate for us to reflect on the concept of appreciation. Of course we all want our homes and other investments to appreciate, but we also need to our relationships to appreciate by showing each other appreciation. And of course, our most important relationship is the one we have with God. So how do you show God and others your appreciation? Is it simply with a thank you, or is there more that you can do? What impact has someone else's genuine act of appreciation had on your relationship with them?	1 Timothy 4:4
November	Gluttony	I hope you all are recovering from Thanksgiving festivities. There truly is very much to be thankful for! Unfortunately, I also ate way to much over the course of the day. And as I was contemplating my swollen belly, I started thinking about gluttony. Sure, when you think of gluttony, you probably just think of eating way too much food, but I think this could also apply to other parts of our lives. In what other ways do we consume much more than we really need? How can we fight this temptation? What does scripture say about gluttony?	Galatians 5:22-23
November	Are you Ready?	With Thanksgiving behind us, it's now full speed ahead into the Christmas season. Decorating, shopping, parties, mailing cards, wrapping presents, traveling, cooking feasts, eating feasts, watching football... the list goes on and on as to all the things we need to do to prepare for this great celebration of God's love. But wait a minute... what about Advent? What's that all about? Since Advent starts Sunday, I thought it would be a great chance for us to discuss what this season means and what we can do to prepare our hearts for Christ's arrival. Are you ready?!?!?!?	Colossians 1:6
November	Looking Forward	I hope that you all had a very uplifting, meaningful, and thankful Thanksgiving celebration. In case you haven't noticed, Christmas is just around the corner. This Advent season is not only a great time to remember the glorious gift that God gave to us in the form of a little baby, but also to recognize the presence of Christ among us today and acknowledge His coming in the future to usher in the true kingdom of God. This season has so much for us to look forward to. So what are you looking forward to during Advent? Are you looking forward to the celebration of Jesus' birthday? What are you and your family doing to get ready? Does this season also help you to look forward to His second coming? Again, what are you doing to get ready?	John 14:3

Topics for Men's Fellowship

Month	Topic	Email	Verse
November	A New Start	I hope that you and your loved ones had a very bountiful and blessed Thanksgiving. As we head into the season of Advent and our church begins a new liturgical year, I thought we could discuss what it means to put our past in the past as we set off on fresh new path. Maybe there are things in your past that you'd just as soon forget. Maybe you're about to embark on a new phase in your life, like a new relationship, a new home, or a new job. Have there ever been times in your life when you just wanted to wipe the slate clean and start all over? How did you make the transition? What role did Christ play into preparing you for your new journey?	Philippians 3:13
November	Patience	The Advent season is full of preparations for the coming of our Lord Christ Jesus. As we rush around to try to get everything ready for the big day, we can sometimes work ourselves into a frenzy. There are decorations to put up, cards to mail, presents to buy and wrap, menus to prepare, parties to attend... and there never seems to be enough time to get it all done. We want it all done now so that we can just relax and enjoy this very special season. Our patience seems to take the biggest hit this time of year. We fight over parking spots, get frustrated by the big crowds and long lines, and throw a Clark Griswold fit when those Christmas lights that we just spent the day putting up don't come on. So, what can we do this year to enjoy the season more? How can you keep your patience when things don't go exactly the way you planned? Can your patience rub off on those around you? How does our faith help us to be patient during these busy times?	Isaiah 40:31
December	Take Me Home	With the holidays rapidly approaching, a lot of us are either heading home or our loved ones are heading home to us. What are your best memories of going home for the holidays? What made it so special? Have there ever been times when you were in the thick of it, wishing you were home? Christmas is also considered a time when many people come back home to the church. What can we do to welcome them back "home"? How does God react when we show back up on His doorstep?	Luke 15:20
December	Shorter, Colder, Darker	As we approach the winter solstice in this time of Advent, the days are getting shorter, colder, and darker. Unfortunately, these traits also seem to gain a foothold in many people who are caught up in the rush to get ready for Christmas. Whether someone steals your parking spot or you're stuck in a long line at the store, tempers will run short. Our daily encounters seem to become cold because we just don't have the time or energy for any deep, meaningful relationships. And lastly, when we start to wonder where the magic of Christmas has gone, a darkness seems to take hold of our heart. For our discussion this week, I thought we could share our thoughts on how we can reverse this trend. In fact, taking it a step further, what can we do as Christians to carry the warmth and light of Christ to those people we encounter each day who are in most need of the gift of our love?	James 1:17

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December	Hail Mary!	We're now well into the football season... the "Hail Mary" is always such an exciting play because it gives a team the chance to pull a victory right out of the jaws of death. I'm sure in your life, you've probably also thrown a few Hail Mary's. Oh, wait... there's also a prayer that goes along with it. As a matter of fact, this week our Church celebrates the Immaculate Conception (no, not the "Immaculate Reception"), a holy day of obligation. What a great day to celebrate Mary, the very first Christian. So, what is this prayer to Mary all about? How does it work with the rosary? Why do we need to pray to Mary when we can also go directly to God? How can her intercession help us complete that "Hail Mary"? And how can building a relationship with Mary also bring us closer to Christ?	Luke 1:28
December	The Beacon	This time of the year, it's dark when I wake up, dark when I drive to work, dark when I drive home, and dark when I go to bed. And with this all enveloping darkness comes the cold. It seems like we're all in search for that light to guide us towards the warmth. In keeping with the spirit of this Advent season, this week I thought we could talk about the coming of Christ in our lives today. In these dark and cold days, Christ is our beacon calling us toward His light and warmth. Where can we find Christ in our lives today? In what ways is Christ your beacon? How has He helped guide you through the darkest and coldest days of your life?	John 8:12
December	It's a Wonderful Life	As we head down the homestretch into to what is truly "the most wonderful time of the year," I thought this would be a great opportunity for us to talk about what is arguably the greatest Christmas movie of all time... "It's a Wonderful Life." Some of you may never have seen it. However, if you're like me, you have watched it over and over again, year after year. So what makes this movie so special? What does it say about being a "rich" person? What message does it have about our faith in ourselves and our faith in God?	Luke 12:34
December	The Perfect Gift	If you're like me, and I'm hoping you're not, you haven't even started your Christmas shopping yet. It seems like each year around this time we're faced with that challenge of finding the "perfect" gift. You can probably think back to your own childhood about the best Christmas present that you ever received. Maybe it was a Hot Wheels track, or a Big Wheel, or a brand new 2-wheeler, or a new "fort." If you follow recent commercials, the best present for us now-a-days is a brand new luxury car with a big red bow on it. So what makes a gift special? Has God provided us with an example of giving? What can we do to celebrate God's greatest gift and live out His example for our own giving?	John 3:16

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December	Let Us Re-Present Him Well	It's the time of the year for giving. If you're like me, you might be tempted to take that present from last year that wasn't exactly on the top of your list or even on your list, and "re-gift" it to someone else to deal with. On that first Christmas, God gave us a gift with the birth of His only son. This is one gift that we definitely want to hang onto, but we also should pass it on to others. So what exactly was that present that God gave us so long ago and how does it continue to impact our lives today? And how can we re-present Christ to others so that they also might be able to benefit from His presence?	Matthew 2:7
December	No Room at the Inn	It's hard to believe that Christmas Eve is already upon us. As we celebrate the coming of God to dwell among us as a little baby, I continue to be amazed by many aspects of the Nativity story. For example, I find it quite symbolic that Mary and Joseph were not able to find a room. In today's fast paced world, our lives sometimes seem to become so packed that there is no room for Christ to come and dwell within us. In what ways do you find that Christ is being crowded out of our lives? How can we find ways to make more room for Him? Do you have any other aspects of the Nativity story that you would like to discuss? Feel free to bring your ideas.	Luke 2:7
December	Redemption	This week, I was hoping we could tie together the many meanings of the word "redemption." I'm sure many of us have gift cards that need to be "redeemed" at various merchants. When we talk about someone who has fallen from grace, we often try to find their "redeeming" qualities. When we do something utterly stupid and selfish, we often look for ways to "redeem" ourselves. And of course, over 2000 years ago a babe was born into our world to be our "redeemer." In what ways has "redemption" made an impact in your life?	Hebrews 9:12
December	Renewal	And as we look forward to another new year, I thought we could discuss all of the things in our lives that we would like to renew... our health, our careers, our finances, our relationships, and our faith. It seems like every year at this time we're looking for ways to make the things in our lives fresh. What are those things that are weighing most heavily on your minds and hearts as we take our first steps into the new year?	1 John 3:11