



PILLAR THREE: GEVURAH

FORGE YOUR STRENGTH GUIDE

Honor God with Your Body, Build Unbreakable Discipline,
and Become the Man Your Family Needs You to Be

*"I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching
to others I myself should be disqualified."*

-- 1 Corinthians 9:27

THE VERTICAL MAN

theverticalman.com

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01 WHY STRENGTH MATTERS

Every man faces temptation, conflict, and crisis. The question is not whether the battle will come -- it is whether you will be ready when it does. Too many Christian men are spiritually asleep, physically neglected, mentally scattered, and sexually compromised. They know the right answers on Sunday but collapse under pressure by Wednesday.

The statistics are sobering. Among Christians who attended services in the last month, **more than half view pornography at least occasionally**. Nearly 50% of Christian men ages 18-29 acknowledge ongoing use. Among pastors specifically, 67% report a personal history with pornography. The consequences devastate marriages, ministries, and families.

"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God. You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." -- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

This is the third pillar of The Vertical Man framework: **GEVURAH** -- the Hebrew word for *power or strength*. It encompasses three dimensions: **Chayil** (Valor), **Oz** (Strength), and **Netzach** (Enduring Victory). Together, they form the operational intelligence that governs how you fight.

The aim is clear: **Spiritual authority combined with a disciplined body and spirit -- prayer, Scripture, warfare, and resilience under pressure.**

"There's no such thing as spiritual health, emotional health, and physical health. There's only health. It's all connected."

-- Matthew Gay, Fit Church

Paul understood this connection perfectly. He compared the Christian life to an athlete training for a prize. The discipline required to train consistently, eat well, and push through discomfort builds character that transfers directly to spiritual resilience. A man who cannot govern his body cannot govern his household, his ministry, or his legacy.

02 THE TEMPLE ASSESSMENT

Where You Stand Today

Your body is God's property. It is the vehicle He has given you to do His work. Before you can build strength, you need an honest inventory of where you are right now. No pretending. No rounding up. Just truth.

STEP 1: HONEST SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rate each area below on a scale of 1 (critical) to 10 (excellent). Circle your number.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

How consistently do you exercise? (Strength, cardio, flexibility)

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

SLEEP QUALITY

Are you getting 7-8 hours of restful, consistent sleep?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

NUTRITION

Are you eating whole foods, staying hydrated, and practicing moderation?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

ENERGY LEVEL

Do you have sustained energy throughout the day, or do you crash?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

MENTAL CLARITY

Can you focus, think clearly, and make decisions without fog?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Can you manage anger, anxiety, and stress without destructive outlets?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

SEXUAL INTEGRITY

Are you free from pornography, lust, and sexual compromise?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

SUBSTANCE USE

Are you free from dependence on alcohol, drugs, caffeine, or food as coping?

[1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10]

10 WARNING SIGNS YOU ARE NEGLECTING YOUR TEMPLE

Chronic fatigue -- you are always tired regardless of how much you sleep

- Poor sleep -- you cannot fall asleep, stay asleep, or wake rested
- Dependence on substances -- caffeine to start, alcohol to stop, food to cope
- No regular exercise -- it has been weeks or months since you broke a sweat intentionally
- Emotional eating -- you eat to numb, not to nourish
- Brain fog -- you struggle to focus, remember, or make clear decisions
- Physical pain you are ignoring -- back, joints, headaches you have normalized
- Weight gain you have stopped acknowledging -- the mirror tells a truth you avoid
- Zero margin -- you have no time for rest, recovery, or renewal
- Sexual compromise -- pornography, fantasy, or acting out has become a pattern

JOURNAL PROMPT:

"What has my relationship with my body been? Have I been a faithful steward of the temple God gave me?"

03 THE DISCIPLINE OF THE BODY

Training as Worship, Not Punishment

Physical discipline is not vanity. It is not about aesthetics, ego, or looking good at the beach. It is about **stewardship**. Paul's athletic metaphor in 1 Corinthians 9 frames discipline as training -- purposeful, sacrificial, and aimed at a prize that does not fade. You train your body so it serves your mission, not the other way around.

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." -- 1 Corinthians 9:24

STEP 2: DESIGN YOUR TRAINING RULE

A "Training Rule" is your weekly physical discipline plan. It is not a gym bro program -- it is a framework for honoring God with your body. Design yours across four areas:

DAY	FOCUS	DURATION	EXAMPLE
Monday	Strength (Upper Body)	30-45 min	Push-ups, pull-ups, overhead press, rows
Tuesday	Cardiovascular	20-30 min	Brisk walk, jog, cycling, jump rope
Wednesday	Active Recovery	15-20 min	Stretching, yoga, light walk, prayer walk
Thursday	Strength (Lower Body)	30-45 min	Squats, lunges, deadlifts, calf raises
Friday	Cardiovascular	20-30 min	HIIT intervals, swimming, sports
Saturday	Flexibility + Service	30 min	Full stretch routine, then serve someone physically
Sunday	Sabbath Rest	—	Walk with family, gentle movement, no training

Key principles: This template requires no gym -- every exercise can be done with bodyweight at home. Start where you are, not where you think you should be. Consistency beats intensity. Showing up five days at 70% effort beats one heroic day followed by six days of nothing.

JOURNAL PROMPT:

"What have I been avoiding because it is uncomfortable? How can I seek voluntary hardship to build resilience?"

04 FUEL FOR THE FIGHT

Nutrition as Stewardship

What you put into your body is a stewardship decision. You would not pour contaminated fuel into an engine you depend on. Yet most men treat their bodies with less care than they treat their vehicles.

"Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags." -- Proverbs 23:20-21

STEP 3: THE TEMPLE NUTRITION GUIDELINES

Eat whole foods. If God made it, eat it. If a factory made it, question it. Vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, whole grains, nuts, and seeds should form the foundation of your diet.

Hydrate relentlessly. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily. Most men are chronically dehydrated and mistake thirst for hunger, fatigue, or brain fog.

Practice moderation. The biblical principle is not deprivation -- it is self-control. Enjoy food. Give thanks. But do not let your appetite govern you.

Gratitude before meals. Every meal is a gift. Praying before eating is not a ritual -- it is a recalibration. It reminds you that God provides and you receive.

Fast intentionally. Fasting is a spiritual discipline, not a diet trend. Practice a regular fast -- whether weekly or monthly -- to train your body to submit to your spirit.

STEP 4: 7-DAY FOOD JOURNAL

For the next seven days, track everything you eat and how it makes you feel. Awareness is the first step to change.

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	HOW I FELT
Mon					
Tue					
Wed					
Thu					

Fri					
Sat					
Sun					

30-DAY CHALLENGE: Eliminate one harmful food or drink habit for 30 days. Not everything at once -- just one. Excessive sugar, alcohol, fast food, late-night eating. Pick the one that has the most control over you and break its grip.

05 MENTAL FORTITUDE

Building the Inner Citadel

The fiercest battles a man fights are not external. They are waged inside his own mind -- in the recurring thought patterns, the anxious spirals, the shame narratives, and the lies he rehearses every day without realizing it. Mental fortitude is not about suppressing emotion. It is about taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ.

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." -- 2 Corinthians 10:5

STEP 5: THE DAILY MENTAL TRAINING PROTOCOL

Every morning for 30 days, complete this 15-minute protocol before you look at a screen, check email, or engage with the world:

MINUTES	PRACTICE	PURPOSE
0-5	Silence and Prayer	Still your mind. Surrender the day to God. Do not ask for anything -- just be present.
5-10	Scripture Reading	Read one passage slowly. Do not rush. Let one verse land. Write down the phrase that speaks to you.
10-15	Physical Movement	Walk, stretch, do push-ups, or simply stand and breathe deeply. Move your body to release tension.

THOUGHT REPLACEMENT CARDS

Identify your three most destructive recurring thought patterns. Write the lie on one side and the biblical truth on the other. Carry these cards. When the lie surfaces, read the truth aloud.

THE LIE I REHEARSE	THE TRUTH THAT REPLACES IT
"I will never be free from this."	"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind."
"I am too far gone to change."	"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." -- Philippians 1:6
"Nobody would respect me if they knew the real me."	"There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." -- Romans 8:1
"I have to handle everything alone."	"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." -- 1 Peter 5:7

"I am weak and always will be."	"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"
[Write your own]	[Find the Scripture that answers it]

JOURNAL PROMPT:

"What recurring negative thought pattern do I need to take captive? What is the truth that replaces it?"

06 SEXUAL PURITY

The Hardest Battle -- Fought with Honesty

This is the section most men will want to skip. That instinct -- the urge to turn the page and pretend this does not apply to you -- is itself evidence of how deep this battle runs. We are not going to approach this topic with shame. Shame is the enemy's weapon. We are going to approach it with **honesty, Scripture, and a practical plan.**

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." -- 1 Corinthians 10:13

The data demands we face this honestly: 61% of Americans view pornography at least occasionally. Among Christian men who attend church, the numbers are not much better. Many are so overwhelmed they simply give up for a season -- they stop reading their Bibles, stop sharing the gospel, stop attending worship. Some come back. Many do not.

The long-term answer is not willpower. It is **restoring God to the place He desires to have in your life, and seeing Jesus as the only source of true satisfaction.** But the immediate answer is a battle plan.

JOURNAL PROMPT:

"What wounds or unmet needs am I trying to medicate through sexual sin? What does God offer instead?"

07 THE PURITY BATTLE PLAN

Triggers, Replacements, and Victory

STEP 6: BUILD YOUR BATTLE PLAN

Complete each section below. This is your personal purity protocol -- specific, practical, and ready to deploy the moment temptation strikes.

A. IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS

Temptation does not come from nowhere. It follows patterns. Check every trigger that applies to you:

- Being alone late at night with a screen
- Stress, anxiety, or overwhelming pressure at work
- Conflict with my wife or loneliness in my marriage
- Travel -- hotels, airports, being away from home
- Boredom or lack of purpose on weekends
- Social media scrolling that leads to compromising content
- Alcohol or substance use that lowers my guard
- Emotional pain, rejection, or feelings of inadequacy

B. REPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS

For every trigger, you need a pre-decided alternative. When the urge hits, you will not have the clarity to think -- so decide **now** what you will do instead:

- Leave the room. Physically move to a different space.
- Call your accountability partner. Have his number saved as a speed dial.
- Drop to your knees and pray -- out loud if possible.
- Open Scripture. Read Psalm 51 or 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- Do 50 push-ups or go for a walk around the block.
- Write in your journal -- name the trigger, the feeling, and the truth.
- Put your phone in another room and set a timer for 30 minutes.
- Text your wife or call a friend -- break the isolation.

C. ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

- Install accountability software on all devices (Covenant Eyes, Bark, or similar)
- Identify one man you trust completely as your accountability partner
- Schedule a weekly check-in -- same day, same time, every week
- Give your accountability partner permission to ask you the hard questions
- Establish a household device policy -- no screens behind closed doors

D. VICTORY DECLARATIONS

Speak these truths over yourself when the battle is fiercest:

I am not a slave to my appetites. I am a son of the Most High God.

My body is a temple. I will not defile what God has made holy.

No temptation has overtaken me that God has not already provided a way out.

I choose obedience today. Tomorrow is not my concern. Just today.

I was bought at a price. I am not my own. I belong to Christ.

08 THE STRENGTH SCORECARD

Complete Self-Assessment Tool

Rate yourself honestly. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. Total your score.

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE

- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I exercise at least 3-4 times per week consistently.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I eat whole foods and practice moderation in my diet.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I get 7-8 hours of quality sleep most nights.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I drink adequate water daily and limit harmful substances.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I have a physical training plan and follow it.

MENTAL FORTITUDE

- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I can identify and challenge my negative thought patterns.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I begin my day with prayer and Scripture before screens.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I manage stress without destructive coping mechanisms.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I can focus on important tasks without constant distraction.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I regularly practice silence, meditation, or contemplative prayer.

SEXUAL INTEGRITY

- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I am free from pornography and sexually compromising content.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I have an accountability partner who asks me hard questions.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I guard my eyes, my thoughts, and my digital habits intentionally.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I pursue intimacy with my wife rather than substitutes.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I have a specific plan for when temptation strikes.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I put on the full armor of God daily through prayer.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I fast regularly as a spiritual discipline.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I recognize spiritual attack and respond with Scripture.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I stand firm under pressure rather than retreating or compromising.
- [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5] I am growing in courage, not comfort.

YOUR SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS
80-100	Warrior-class discipline. You are forged and ready. Keep sharpening -- complacency is the new enemy.
60-79	Strong but inconsistent. The foundation is there but gaps remain. Identify your weakest domain and attack it.
40-59	Vulnerable. You have the desire but lack the systems. This guide is your turning point. Start the 30-Day Challenge to
20-39	Under siege. You are in the fight of your life and you need reinforcements. Find a brother. Start with one practice. D

09 THE 30-DAY FORGE CHALLENGE

Daily Tracker for Body, Mind, and Spirit

Every day for 30 days, check off each discipline as you complete it. At the end of each week, report to your accountability partner. The goal is not perfection -- it is **consistency**.

DAILY DISCIPLINES (CHECK EACH DAY)

- Workout completed (minimum 20 minutes of intentional physical training)
- Scripture read (minimum one chapter, with one verse written down)
- Prayer offered (minimum 5 minutes of focused, undistracted prayer)
- Journaling done (write one paragraph about what God is showing you)
- Purity maintained (no pornography, no compromise, eyes and mind guarded)
- One act of service performed (serve someone -- wife, child, coworker, stranger)

30-DAY TRACKING GRID

DAYS 1-15

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Workout															
Scripture															
Prayer															
Journal															
Purity															
Service															

DAYS 16-30

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Workout															
Scripture															
Prayer															
Journal															
Purity															
Service															

WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK-IN

At the end of each week, meet or call your accountability partner and answer these questions:

1. How many days did I complete all six disciplines this week?
2. Where did I fall short, and what caused it?
3. Was there a moment of temptation? How did I respond?
4. What is God teaching me through this discipline?
5. What is my commitment for the coming week?

COMPLETION: After 30 days, retake the Temple Assessment from Section 02 and the Strength Scorecard from Section 08. The change will be measurable. You will not be the same man. Share your results with your brotherhood.

10 YOUR NEXT STEP

Continue the Journey

This guide equipped you for the fight. You have assessed your temple, built a training plan, confronted your nutrition, fortified your mind, and created a battle plan for sexual purity. But none of this works on paper. It works in the trenches -- in the 5 AM alarm, the cold water, the open Bible, the honest confession, the daily choice to stand.

Every man faces temptation, conflict, and crisis. GEVURAH forges resilience, discipline, and spiritual authority to stand firm.

Strength is **Pillar Three** of the Vertical Man framework. One final pillar remains:

PILLAR FOUR: NACHALAH (LEGACY)

What You Leave

Build a covenant legacy -- spiritual, relational, and financial -- that blesses your children and their children after them. Covenant faith and wisdom passed to the next generation through name, discipleship, stewardship, and generational impact.

TAKE ACTION NOW

- 1 **Complete the Temple Assessment**
Score every area of your physical, mental, and spiritual life honestly.
- 2 **Design your Training Rule**
Build your weekly workout plan and start this week -- not next Monday, this week.
- 3 **Start the 7-Day Food Journal**
Track everything you eat for one week. Awareness precedes change.
- 4 **Begin the Daily Mental Training Protocol**
15 minutes every morning: silence, Scripture, movement. For 30 days straight.
- 5 **Build your Purity Battle Plan**
Complete every section. Install accountability software today, not tomorrow.
- 6 **Start the 30-Day Forge Challenge**
Six disciplines, every day, for 30 days. Check the boxes. Share with a brother.

7

Visit theverticalman.com

Access the full Vertical Man program, join the brotherhood, and keep forging.

READY TO FORGE YOUR STRENGTH?

Visit us at theverticalman.com

Email Sean McDonald directly: sean@theverticalman.com

Join the brotherhood. Enter the forge. Stand vertical.

THE VERTICAL MAN

I am not a man of the world.

I am a man under God.

I seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

I know whose I am. I know who I am.

I lead my household with order and grace.

I forge my strength in discipline and prayer.

I secure a legacy that outlives me.

I die daily to the horizontal.

I rise to stand vertical.

I AM A VERTICAL MAN.

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