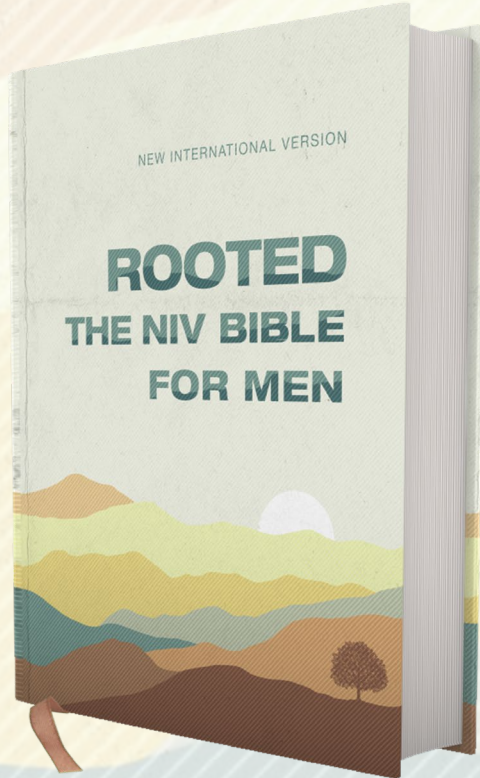


**ROOTED**  
**THE NIV BIBLE**  
**FOR MEN**

7 Days of Myths & Truths

# Rooted: The NIV Bible for Men

## 7 Days of Myths & Truths



This 7-day reading plan features Myth articles from *Rooted: The NIV Bible for Men*. Myths articles expose commonly accepted myths of our culture that many men believe. Each article opens with the first-person story of a man who believes a particular myth and how that affects his life. Then, principles from the Bible refute the myth and offer practical guidance and help.

All content is drawn from *Rooted: The NIV Bible for Men*.

# The Myth: “I don’t have a Christian calling because I have a regular job”

For the past few weeks, my pastor has been preaching about “finding your calling.” He’s been giving lots of examples of ways that people can serve God, such as through leading Bible studies or teaching Sunday School. He talks about how everyone has a calling from God. He’s talked a lot about his own “call story” to ministry, and he has been using lots of different “call stories” from the Bible for his messages: Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, Peter, etc.

The thing is, I don’t think any of this really applies to me. I’m a pharmacist, and that’s pretty much it. It’s a decent occupation, but I don’t have the kind of vocation or Christian calling that my pastor keeps talking about. In my opinion, that’s fine. There are some people who are called to ministry vocations, like pastors. There are also people called in smaller ways, like lay elders and deacons. Those are people who have normal jobs but also still have time for a Christian calling on the side. And then there are those people who can lead Bible studies or small groups. That’s all great, and I’m thankful for all those people in my church. I think of them as the ones that God has “called.” But the rest of us aren’t in that boat. We just have normal jobs.

I actually wish my pastor would stop talking about our calling and Christian vocation. For one thing, it seems kind of out of touch. Doesn’t he realize that those words don’t apply to the majority of us? It seems narrow-minded to me. And the other thing I don’t like about it is that after a while it makes us, the “normal” people, feel guilty for being who we are: folks with regular jobs who aren’t called to some kind of ministry role. Don’t get me wrong, I’m glad that God calls certain people to do ministry. But those people should focus on simply doing ministry rather than talking about how I need to find my own calling.

# The Truth

**The fact is, God calls all Christians to serve in his kingdom in all kinds of different ways. Indeed, one of the common Greek words in the New Testament for referring to Christians (kletos) literally means “those who are called.” God calls believers in all spheres of life to bring the message and truth of Christ into those places, whether that person is working in church ministry or at a pharmacy.**

- Read Ephesians 4:1–16. Notice the ways Paul emphasizes the calling of each individual. Remember, Paul is not writing to a group of pastors; he is writing to all Christians.
- Focus on just these verses: Ephesians 4:11–13. According to Paul, why does Christ give leaders to the church? How does this purpose connect to the calling and vocation of each church member?
- Consider how God might be calling you to serve him in your own life circumstances. This will look different for each person. God has put you in a certain place and given you a specific set of gifts and abilities. How can you serve God in your own context?
- Challenge yourself to think about your calling and vocation in broader ways. God calls people to many more things than preaching and leading Bible studies. Some people are gifted in serving, offering hospitality, spending time with the lonely, offering consulting, fixing things, providing childcare—and so many other ways. Broaden your idea of the ways God calls his children!
- Ask a pastor or trusted Christian friend what gifts or strengths they see in you. They might open your eyes to God-given gifts you don’t know you have yet! Knowing your gifts will help you discover your calling.
- It can be daunting to think about your calling. Remember, the same God who calls you is the God who equips you. Trust God, who has given you everything you need to bring him glory in the ways you serve him.

# Related Scripture

## ***Ephesians 4:1-16***

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:*

*“When he ascended on high,  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”*

*(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

# The Myth: “Nobody needs to know I struggle with

\_\_\_\_\_.”

Okay, I realize it. I have some pretty serious issues with envy. I’m not proud of it. But I do.

One of my friends at church is an attorney. He’s a great guy, but seriously, he’s no smarter than I am. And yet he makes an enormous salary and lives in a huge house.

Another guy in my small group comes from a large and wealthy family. His family is so prominent in the community that he has all kinds of connections. So his real estate business is booming.

I could go on and on about people I know who enjoy all these advantages I don’t have. I try to be happy for them. And I try not to let it bother me. But I can’t lie; it does. Why did I have to grow up in a family without many resources? Why do I struggle to find a job that is fulfilling but also covers my bills?

I’m trying to deal with it, and I pray about it a lot. But the problem never goes away. In a sermon recently, my pastor talked about how important it is for us to admit our struggles. For me, that is never going to happen. Would I really admit being jealous of half the guys at church? Nobody needs to know I struggle with envy. That’s between me and God.

# The Truth

**If you live in the United States, you likely have been influenced by the idealization of the “rugged individual.” This notion, popularized in media and pervasive in the modern church, is the idea that people don’t really need others; people should do things themselves without the assistance of anyone else; anyone who admits a weakness is a failure; being in need is seen as a character flaw. But if we’re honest, we know that everyone has a unique set of struggles. Stuff. Issues. Call it whatever you wish. The point isn’t so much what specific problems you happen to be dealing with. The issue is whether you should be trying to handle those struggles by yourself.**

- Rugged individualism may be a prevalent view, but it’s harmful to both individuals and society. Humans were created to function in community (see 1 Corinthians 12:12–31). God created the church for a reason. We do need others. And they need us. Every man needs a community.
- Take the risk of being open and authentic. There is great freedom and healing in naming and admitting our weaknesses and failures (see James 5:16).
- The great enemy of our souls—liar that he is—whispers into our hearts the scary pronouncement that if we admit our secret problems to others, they will abandon us, betray us or regard us as sick and twisted. However, honest strugglers will find unexpected support and gain new strength.
- Replace your envious thoughts with grateful ones. When you find yourself envying another person, thank God for something he’s given you.
- Create a list of things you have that others might envy. While it’s easy to focus on what you don’t have, you likely have blessings that others envy.
- Don’t fight your battles alone. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12. There is undeniable power in numbers.
- Meet with a trusted friend regularly. Don’t put up a facade. Be real. Open up about what you’re struggling with and commit to praying for each other.
- There is no shame in asking for help, and it’s not unmanly to be scared. Remember Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? Even Christ saw the need and the value of struggling in community rather than going it alone (Mark 14:32–34).

# Related Scripture

## ***James 5:16***

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

## ***Ecclesiastes 4:9–12***

*Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their labor:  
If either of them falls down,  
one can help the other up.  
But pity anyone who falls  
and has no one to help them up.  
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

## ***Mark 14:32-34***

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”*



# The Myth: “The purpose of church is to meet my needs.”

I’ll admit it. I’m a little bit disgruntled. I’ve been going to my church for four years, and I’ve actually been regular in my attendance. I’ve participated in some of the activities—men’s fellowship group and the sports leagues. It’s okay, I guess, but honestly—I don’t get much out of it.

Now I hear that there’s a new church being built about two miles from our house. It’s huge. The auditorium looks like it will seat about 4,000 with state-of-the-art audio/video. And they’re building a family life center that’s going to rival the best health clubs in town.

I was over there with my son the other day, just walking through the construction site, checking it out, and one of the staff members came by. We struck up a conversation, and he told me about the different programs they already have going on at their other location. It was pretty impressive. The new building will have a bookstore, coffee shop and fitness classes (with childcare). Anyway, I thought it was providential that he happened to come by right then. Maybe God is trying to tell me something.

I’m wondering if that church would be a better fit for me and my family.

# The Truth

**We live in a consumer-oriented society. Merchants are clamoring to get our attention, impress us, and earn our patronage by offering us the “best deal” for our money. So it’s hard not to approach our church experience in the same way. Like a kind of religious shopping mall, individual churches advertise their “goods and services,” subtly (or not so subtly) spelling out all the ways they are superior to the competition. Is this healthy? Is the church’s purpose to impress us and meet our needs?**

- The great emphasis of the New Testament is that we have been saved to serve. Look at Jesus: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Think about how that mindset could change your approach to life.
- Jesus taught, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). When it comes to being involved in your church, do you live as if you really believe that?
- We all have a part to play in the body of Christ. “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).
- As we care for others, they care for us. When everybody serves, everybody gets served.
- God has made each of us for a unique purpose. Ephesians 2:10 tells us God has a tailor-made life plan for us. Serving is the path to personal fulfillment.
- Make it your goal to understand God’s purpose for the church. Use a Bible concordance (you can purchase one or there are free ones online) and look up passages in the Bible that refer to the church.
- Church isn’t about you and your needs; it’s about God and his glory. The sooner you realize that, the sooner you’ll start serving and giving and the sooner you’ll find the deep fulfillment you crave.

# Related Scripture

## ***Mark 10:45***

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

## ***Acts 20:35***

*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

## ***1 Peter 4:10***

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

# The Myth: “Christians don’t need to care about social justice.”

The person with the sign was standing at the corner on my way to work again today. It’s not always the same person, but the signs are basically the same: “Unemployed vet. Please help.” Or “Children need food. Any amount will help!” I ignore them. They are probably just out to scam the gullible people driving by.

I know the Bible talks about helping the poor, but I don’t think that applies to these people with the signs or the homeless people I see wandering downtown. Those people just need to take a shower and go get a job. Or get off their drugs.

I don’t actually say that out loud, but I think it. And yeah, I know there are some pretty desperate cases out there. People with legitimate needs. Mentally ill or disabled people who can’t work. They do need help. And even though I’m not a big believer in the idea that the government is supposed to solve every problem in society, that is what our taxes should go toward. And they do. I know that there are lots of ways that poor people get help. There are food pantries and government payments for rent. So most of the poor people don’t need my money.

I recently read about a new inner-city ministry that is trying to reach out to needy people. I’m glad somebody wants to do that. It’s not something I feel called to do.

# The Truth

**When the heavenly kingdom comes, the Bible teaches that everyone will have plenty, and life will be good for all. Until then, in our fallen world that has rejected God's rule, people will suffer from the effects of sin. What is our responsibility to those in need? Can the people of God look the other way when we see real needs?**

- Read Leviticus 19:9–10. Why do you think God included this among the laws for the nation of Israel?
- Jesus told his followers to give to the poor (Luke 12:33). What are some practical ways you can live out this command?
- God allowed the people of Israel and Judah to go into captivity because they turned away from him and mistreated the vulnerable in their midst (Eze 22:23–31). When you think about justice, can you identify what structures are in place in your society that oppress the poor? How can you educate yourself about poverty in your community? Talk to someone who works with under-resourced people and get some book or blog recommendations so you can learn more about helping others.
- Read and ponder advice from the book of Proverbs (19:17; 28:27; 29:7).
- God has special concern for three groups of people: foreigners, widows, and orphans (Ex 22:21–24). Use a concordance or online concordance to find all the places in the Bible where God tells his people to care for these groups. Now ask yourself how you can show your care for foreigners, widows, and orphans in your community.
- Volunteer your time. Does your church or community have any ongoing outreach to under-resourced people in your area? Why not commit to helping for a certain amount of time?
- Carefully consider your financial support for trusted organizations; do your research before you give. Make sure you are helping and not hurting those most vulnerable.

# Related Scripture

## ***Leviticus 19:9–10***

*When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.*

## ***Luke 12:33***

*Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.*

## ***Exodus 22:21–24***

*Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.*

*Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.*

# The Myth: “I honestly don’t have time for serious spiritual commitments right now.”

There’s this guy at our church named Barry. He’s a really great guy. I admire him because he’s always helping out at church, volunteering for things. This morning he calls to ask me to consider joining his Tuesday morning discipleship group. It sounds like a good group of guys, but they meet super early—like 5:45 a.m. at the church. Barry brings breakfast, and then they all go through some book discussion and pray together, and they’re done by 7:15. It gives everybody time to get to work.

I think this is probably the third time he’s called in the last year or so, asking me to help with something or join some group. And while I know I should get more involved, I keep putting him off. I feel that my life is just crazy right now. Work is stressful. I get home late a lot of nights and feel just whipped. Plus my house is old, and something always needs to be fixed; I’m constantly doing home improvement projects. But what really holds me back is that I’m divorced, and I get my kids half the time. That’s hard because when they are with me, I feel like I have to drop everything else.

So, I think I have to tell him I just can’t commit to it right now. Maybe I’ll have more time in a few months. The start of the school year is always so busy. I do want something like this, I just don’t know how to fit it in.

# The Truth

**Life is crazy and busy for most guys. Often it's hard to know what to prioritize, which options are good and which are best. One very dangerous excuse about cultivating a deeper relationship with God is that "one day I'll get around to it." Don't bet on it. It's not likely to just happen without effort on your part. "Urgent" responsibilities and "good" opportunities expand to fill all your available time. They have a tendency to crowd out the important and the best ones. It's imperative to establish your priorities and then ruthlessly make time to pursue them. Here's some practical help:**

- Look at how you spent your time over the last six months. Review your personal calendar. What would an objective person observe and conclude about your priorities in life from your schedule?
- Browse through your most recent credit card statement. What do your expenditures reveal about your spiritual commitment?
- Realize that nobody stumbles or wanders into a healthy spiritual state. A life that honors God is chosen, carefully monitored and pursued. You will never get there if you don't make the decision and then take the necessary steps.
- Contemplate some Bible verses that speak about the brevity of life. For example: Psalm 39:4–6; 90:10,12; James 4:14.
- If you're not in some kind of small group, Bible study, or accountability group, find one and get involved. We all need the healthy accountability of other believers, a fellowship of strugglers. Such a group is like a safety net—a reminder of what matters most.
- Some of the hardest decisions we make in life are not between good and evil—they are between good and the very best. Are you using your time in the very best way?



# Related Scripture

## ***Psalm 39:4–6***

*“Show me, Lord, my life’s end  
and the number of my days;  
let me know how fleeting my life is.  
You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
the span of my years is as nothing before you.  
Everyone is but a breath,  
even those who seem secure.*

*“Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;  
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth  
without knowing whose it will finally be.*

## ***James 4:14***

*Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.  
What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little  
while and then vanishes.*

## ***Psalm 90:10***

*Our days may come to seventy years,  
or eighty, if our strength endures;  
yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,  
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*

## ***Psalm 90:12***

*Teach us to number our days,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

# The Myth: “I don’t have time for my kids because I have to work to provide for them.”

It’s got to be the oldest cliché in the world: Your kids will be grown and gone before you know it. I can’t tell you how many times people told me that right after my son Carter’s birth.

And, what can I say? They were absolutely right. All of a sudden, he’s eleven. And my baby girl is six.

Every now and then there’s a lull. Things slow down. Not for long, just for a minute. But I wonder if maybe during those times God is giving us a chance to catch our breath. During those times, all of a sudden I start to notice things. I look at my kids and think, Wow, how did we get here so fast? Where did the time go?

And then I feel guilty. I know I need to stop fixing cars in the evenings and on weekends. It takes up just about all my free time. But then I think, Are you nuts? That extra income is paying for things we need. If I didn’t take on side jobs as a mechanic, there’s no way Carter could go to baseball camp in the summers or we could take vacations every year.

Am I the only one who feels this pressure? I don’t have time for my kids because I’m so busy working to provide for them.

# The Truth

**Most people realize that time is fleeting, and they need to spend time with their kids now—before their kids are grown and gone. But often financial pressures make it difficult to juggle work and family commitments.**

- Take a few moments to read and ponder 1 Timothy 5:8, a verse that spells out our financial responsibility in crystal-clear terms.
- Review your budget (with your wife if you are married). Are there areas where you can adjust your spending, so you don't feel as much financial pressure? Try to come up with three things you could do to cut your spending so that you don't have to work so hard just to keep your head above the water.
- Think though this statement: "I have a tendency to confuse my wants with my needs."
- Is there a way to adjust your hours so you are available to spend time with your kids when they are still awake and home from school?
- Consider this: We really only have about an 18-year "window" with each of our kids. These are the premium years in which we will have the best chance to connect with them, to teach and guide them and to impart our values to them. Ignoring this reality is foolish; failure to seize this opportunity will one day fill us with regret.
- If your work requires long hours, prayerfully consider other employment options. Radical? No question. But be open to change.

# Related Scripture

***1 Timothy 5:8***

*Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*



# The Myth: “You must chase your dream.”

I finished three strokes off the pace in this year’s Illinois Amateur Open. Three strokes! Do you know what that means? I’m on the verge of breaking through! My swing coach says everything about my game is in balance right now. And he’s not a guy who gives compliments lightly. I’m so close to seeing my dream of becoming a golf pro a reality.

I just wish someone else around here shared my excitement. My father-in-law certainly doesn’t. Last week he told my wife that she’d married a bum. He’s very traditional, and he has trouble with the fact that his daughter has the stable job in our household. I work, too. It’s just that I can’t really pursue a career because my focus is on my sport. So I work a job that has a lot of flexibility. I do make money, but most of it goes toward swing coaches, equipment, tournament fees and things like that. Yes, it’s expensive, but those are the sacrifices you have to make if you want to live your dream.

My wife is on board—for two more years, at least. When we got married, I asked her for seven years to give me a chance to pursue my dream. (Actually, I asked her for ten, but she said she’d only give me seven.) I told her that if I didn’t make pro by then, I’d settle down and find a real job.

That was five years ago. And I’ve made incredible progress since then. I figure I’m so close now that my wife won’t mind giving me another year or two if I need it. After all, this is my dream.

# The Truth

**How about you? Do you have a dream—a passion that drives you, an interest that you pursue with all the time and resources available to you? It's not a bad thing—unless it becomes a god. Do you ever wonder whether your dream might be interfering with God's will for your life? Check out the following suggestions. You'll find that the ones at the top of the list are non-threatening, for the most part. The ones at the bottom, however, will require some tough decisions on your part.**

- Spend time thinking about Jesus' words of submission to God in Luke 22:42: "Not my will, but yours be done."
- Identify your real reasons for pursuing your dream. Be honest. Are you looking for personal fame, glory or riches? Are you being driven by an unhealthy competitive streak? Are you running from something or avoiding something?
- Make a list of things you've gained and things you've lost in your pursuit of your dream.
- Ask friends, family members and mature Christians whose opinions you value to evaluate your dream honestly. And listen to them.
- Read Isaiah 55:1–3. Is your dream centered around growing nearer to God? If not, do you really think that attaining your dream will bring genuine satisfaction?
- Ask God to give you wisdom, clarity and boldness in assessing your dream.
- If your dream is preventing you from serving the Lord to the best of your ability, give it up. Consider it a sacrifice to God.
- If your dream is not honoring to God, ask him to give you a new dream—not only one that honors him, but one you can pursue with the same passion you had when you pursued your previous dream.

# Related Scripture

## ***Luke 22:42***

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

## ***Isaiah 55:1–3***

*“Come, all you who are thirsty,*

*come to the waters;*

*and you who have no money,*

*come, buy and eat!*

*Come, buy wine and milk*

*without money and without cost.*

*Why spend money on what is not bread,*

*and your labor on what does not satisfy?*

*Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,*

*and you will delight in the richest of fare.*

*Give ear and come to me;*

*listen, that you may live.*

*I will make an everlasting covenant with you,*

*my faithful love promised to David.*