



# Faithful & True

## The Recovery Report December 2016

*Mark & Debbie Laaser, Directors of Faithful & True*



Greetings and many wishes for a blessed holiday season to all of you. May the true meaning of what God did for us in sending his only son to be with us in human form be especially present in all of your activities. We pray for connecting times with your friends and families. We also send you prayers for a joyous new year. We, for sure, are looking forward to this year being behind us. As most of you know it has been a time of health challenges for Mark. We are happy to say that at this time all of the medical reports are quite positive and Mark is feeling better than he has

in many months. God has been good and provided great doctors, great healing, and a great optimism for the future. We have a vision for the work that God still has for us to do. Vision is one of the central spiritual truths that we try to teach all of the people we work with. In this newsletter, we have excerpted a very brief taste of our article on vision that we wrote for our new *Toolkit for Individuals & Couples*. We hope that it inspires you to think more about your vision for yourselves and your families.

Many blessings,

Mark and Debbie

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## FEATURE ARTICLE: VISION

An excerpt from *The Toolkit for Individuals & Couples*

by Mark & Debbie Laaser

Simply defined, a vision is a mental image of what the future will or could be like. We like to think of vision as a picture in the mind. The mind has the ability to “cut and paste” images that have actually been historically seen and stored in the “archives” of the brain. The associative abilities of the brain can take these pictures or images and use them as components of a new image that has not been actually seen. We often use the term “imagination” to describe this. We say to each other, “Imagine the possibilities.” Another word for vision is dream. We dare to dream dreams about what life could be like.

We go through this cutting and pasting process all the time. People who struggle with anxiety often “project” into the future and imagine negative scenes of terrible events happening.

Sometimes we create an imagined future that we think will solve or heal some of our problems in life. We can imagine winning the lottery and the resulting money will take care of all of our financial difficulties. We can imagine becoming a famous athlete or movie star and the resulting adulation from our fans heals our sense of being unloved or unchosen.

Sex addicts should be very aware of this mental process. We call it fantasy. Addicts take old pictures of actual sexual experiences and images seen in pornography and cut and paste them into an imagined new sexual experience. We refer to this as lust, a desire for some sexual outcome. Addicts may also think that such sexual experiences are a way of healing some perceived wound in one's self. An addict who never felt that he was attractive can imagine being sexual with the most popular girl in school. Now, he thinks in his fantasy, that he is attractive.

We believe that a healthy vision, rather, is a picture of the future that is not driven or inspired by anxiety, lust, or unmet needs and desires. Rather, a vision is a picture of the future that we are called to by God. We mean that the source of the vision is God and His direction for our life. How might we live so that we become the person he has designed us to be? How might we be intentional about our life choices so as to serve him and his world best? Discerning this direction is one of life's great spiritual challenges. We believe that prayer, scripture study, and meditation are all tools of this discernment. We also believe that God provides us with what our pastor calls God Promptings (GPs for short). GPs can be a word from a friend who affirms our talents. They could be an inspirational thought triggered by a movie or a song. It could, and often is a feeling of intuition of what is “right.” It is the Spirit within us that directs us to the next right step—even about very small changes in our life. We like this definition. Prayer is the way we talk to God; intuition is the way God talks to us through the Holy Spirit.

Vision

Faithful & True

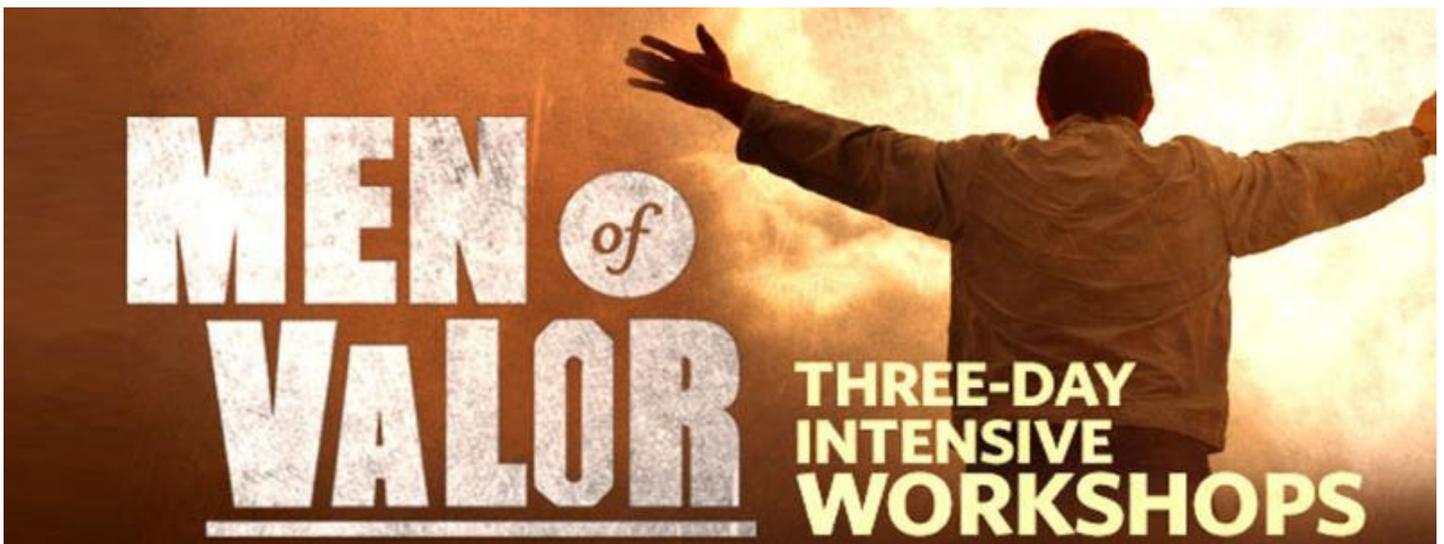
Vision is a mental image of what the future will or could be like. Often we see couples live their lives reactively - meaning, they respond and make decisions for a current situation as it happens. In the journey of growing, we encourage individuals and couples to be more proactive. Being proactive about creating vision involves not only dreaming about what life could be like, but actually being intentional about developing a plan according to God's purpose for us. We believe that sharing in the creation of vision creates great passion in marriage!

by  
Mark Laaser, M.Div., Ph.D.  
& Debbie Laaser, MA, LMFT

When we are not inspired or directed by vision, our lives can be very “reactive.” We react to life as it happens and then plan or act accordingly. We find that reactivity describes the majority of people. When we are motivated by vision, however, we become proactive, planning and making intentional decisions that allow our vision to direct us.

In our Toolkit for Individuals & Couples, we teach you about many components or categories of vision—or ‘slices’, as we say. In breaking up the enormous task of making decisions for the kind of life you want to live, we have developed a vision wheel with 14 separate slices of vision. As we work to be intentional about growing vision as an individual and as a couple, energy, excitement, and passion grow, too. We find that the talking, planning, orchestrating and living out our vision is life-giving. It brings great joy to a marriage.

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### **WORKSHOPS UPDATE**

If you, or your clients, are struggling with pornography or other sexual purity issues, we want you to know that **WE CAN HELP**. Faithful & True hosts The Men of Valor 3-Day Intensive Workshops for men every month and registration is available online at [faithfulandtrue.com](http://faithfulandtrue.com).

Here is the upcoming 2017 schedule of Men of Valor Workshops:

**January 12-14, 2017**

**February 16-18, 2017**

**March 16-18, 2017**

**April 20-22, 2017**

**May 18-20, 2017**

**June 15-17, 2017**

**July 13-15, 2017**

**August 17-19, 2017**

**September 14-16, 2017**

**October 12-14, 2017**

**November 9-11, 2017**

**December 7-9, 2017**

Visit our website for more information or call us at **952-746-3880**.

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Here is the 2017 schedule for our **Women's Journey 3-Day Intensive Workshops:**  
**February 2-4, 2017**  
**June 1-3, 2017**  
**October 5-7, 2017**

**Faithful & True's 2017 Couples' 3-Day Intensive Workshops** will be held  
**March 2-4, 2017**  
**August 3-5, 2017**  
**November 2-4, 2017**

For more information on any of our 3-Day Intensive Workshops, visit our workshop pages at [faithfulandtrue.com](http://faithfulandtrue.com) or call us at **952-746-3880**.

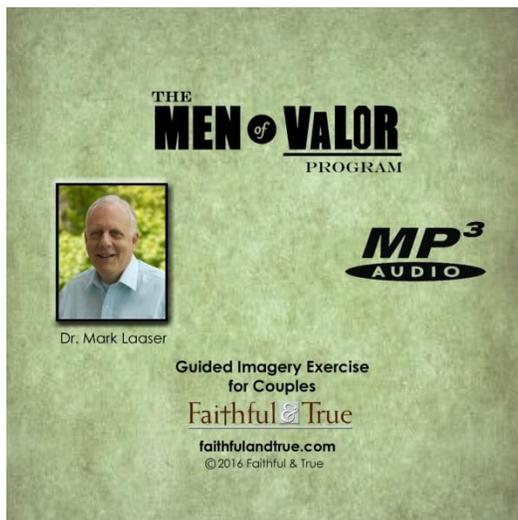


## Listen to THE MEN OF VALOR PODCASTS

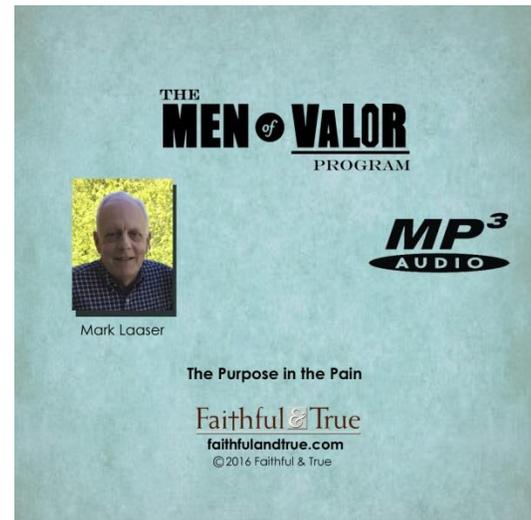
One of the most popular resources offered by Faithful & True is our Men of Valor Program, a weekly podcast found on our website and on iTunes. Hosted by Mark Laaser and Randy Evert, the Men of Valor podcasts offer direction and guidance to men who have struggled with sexual purity issues, and their spouses.

Visit [faithfulandtrue.com](http://faithfulandtrue.com)

Some of our most popular Men of Valor podcasts have been converted into CDs and MP3 Audio products. We invite you to check out our collection of available titles in our online bookstore at [faithfulandtrue.com](http://faithfulandtrue.com)



**Guided Imagery Exercise for Couples**



**The Purpose in the Pain**