



Faithful & True

The Recovery Report February 2017

Mark & Debbie Laaser
Founders of Faithful & True

Welcome to the February 2017 issue of *The Recovery Report*, Faithful & True's monthly e-newsletter. We hope you are enjoying the winter weather, (no matter what part of the country you live in!) and that you and your family are avoiding the seasonal illnesses that seem to attack us all. We've learned the importance of eating right, getting plenty of rest and taking our vitamin supplements to try and stay ahead of the usual "bugs". So far, we have been pretty fortunate.

February is a busy month for us as we just hosted our Women's Journey 3-Day Intensive Workshop for a wonderful group of women from around the country and we are preparing for our February 16-18th Men of Valor 3-Day Intensive Workshop. We currently have just a few spots open if you, or someone you know, is interested in registering for the workshop. Visit our Men of Valor workshop page on our website at faithfulandtrue.com for more information or to register. If you are struggling with pornography or other sexual purity issues, WE CAN HELP. This month, our Feature Article is ***The Power of "And"***, written by Debbie Laaser.

The Power of "And"

by
Mark & Debbie
Laaser



Feature Article: The Power of "And"

By Debbie Laaser, MA, LMFT
Author of *Shattered Vows*

If you live in black-and-white thinking, there is absolutely no way to make sense of sexual betrayal and words that confess, "Even though I'm looking at pornography or I've had an affair, I have always loved you." The problem is that most of the world does live in an all-or-nothing mindset. You are either good or bad, right or

wrong, truthful or untruthful, faithful or unfaithful. There is one-right way and there is one-right answer with no room for complexity. Black-and-white thinking is a confining way to live and it leads to judgments about people and situations that simply are not true.

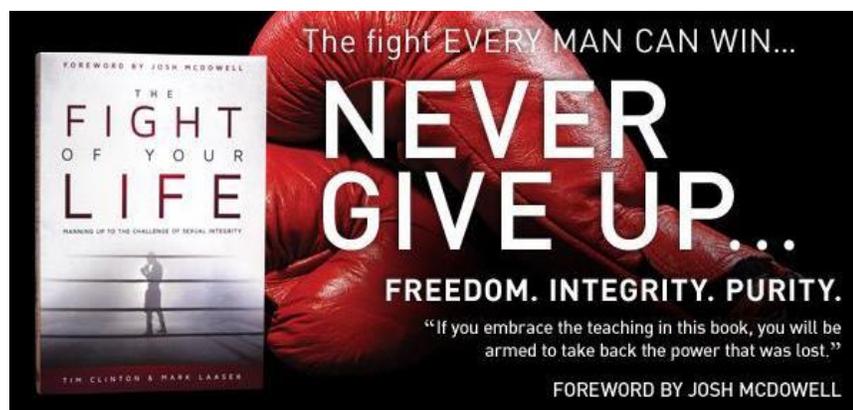
Living in the both/and—or ‘ampersand truth’—allows us to accept the paradox of several truths that appear to be contradictory. The Bible is full of ampersand situations: Nehemiah was sad and scared AND with the support of King Artaxerxes, courageously traveled to his homeland; the woman at the well lived a promiscuous life AND was chosen to deliver the first declaration of Jesus’ presence; the Jewish people sought the Promise Land with great gratitude AND were frustrated and angry with struggles of their new life; Jesus himself was both divine AND human. The both/and theology permeates the lives of Biblical characters as it does our lives.

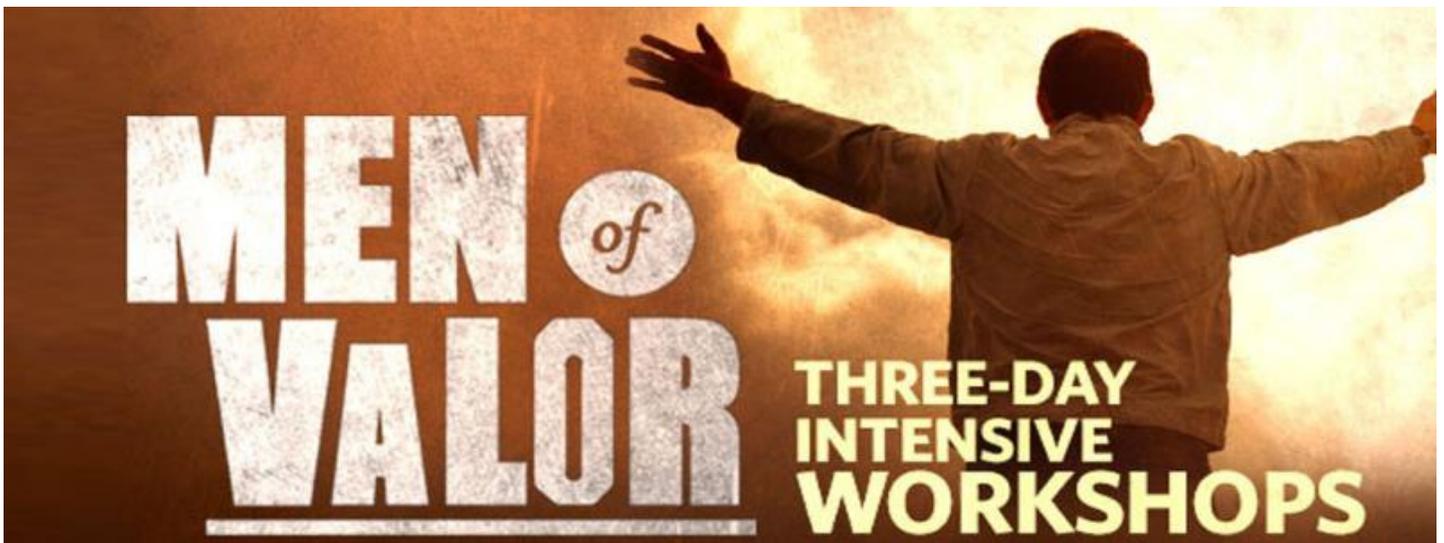
It is in embracing the ampersand that it is possible to accept the truth that your husband has betrayed you AND he has loved you, too. This was a most difficult concept for me to embrace in the early days of discovery of my husband’s betrayal. I simply could not make sense of this concept. I did not have the capacity to compartmentalize these two diametrically opposed behaviors.

With greater education about trauma and addiction, I learned how the brain can literally ‘dissociate’ and close off certain memories or behaviors while others take over. I learned that pain, fear, and anger can distract one temporarily from healthy behaviors to choose behaviors to comfort and survive. I slowly began to believe that a life of betrayal is complicated—not black-and-white. When my worldview expanded to include other possibilities to my simple and legalistic thinking of the past, I could take in the both/and truths of Mark’s behaviors: he did love me AND he was medicating some extraordinary pain with some very unhealthy, sinful behaviors.

I don’t believe we have the capacity to change our thinking patterns by ourselves. Too often I counsel women who want to figure out all of this pain and lead better lives by reading numerous books, studying Scripture and praying alone, or finding one best friend to talk to. I don’t see much change in their lives. What I do observe is that women who find safe women on similar journeys and commit to professional help slowly begin to broaden their worldview of black-and-white thinking. They explore other possibilities and practice talking about their conflicting thoughts and emotions. They experience the acceptance of others even when they share their confusion.

I also know that embracing ampersand thinking was what led me to stay with my husband. What I knew was that I was in tremendous pain from Mark’s infidelity AND I truly loved him. Speaking up about that pain and getting support allowed me to hold the tension of both truths—and to choose to stay and work toward a new life of faithfulness with Mark. I pray for any of you who are living in the tension of two truths that you will find safe people who will help you explore the “both/and”—the ampersand. Choose the opportunity to live in deeper truth and relationship with others by living an ‘ampersand’ life!





If you, or your clients, are struggling with pornography or other sexual purity issues, we want you to know that **WE CAN HELP**. Led by Dr. Mark Laaser, a leading Christian authority on sex addiction, Faithful & True hosts **The Men of Valor 3-Day Intensive Workshops** for men every month and registration is available online at faithfulandtrue.com.

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

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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 faithfulandtrue.com for more information or call us at **952-746-3880**.

Here is the 2017 schedule for our **Women's Journey 3-Day Intensive Workshops**:

June 1-3, 2017

October 5-7, 2017

Faithful & True's 2017 **Couples' 3-Day Intensive Workshops** will be held

March 2-4, 2017 (This workshop is already full.)

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 or call us at 952-746-3880.

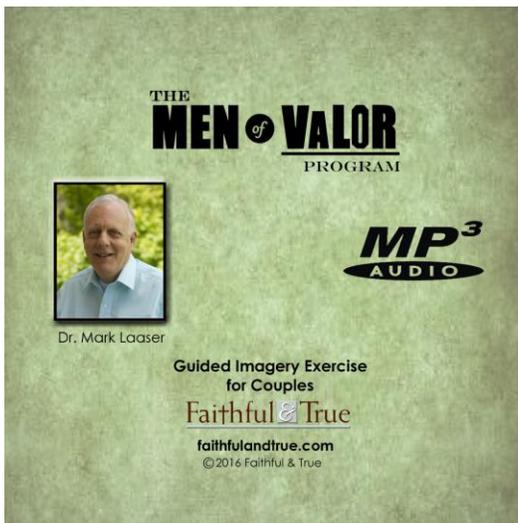


Listen to THE MEN OF VALOR PODCASTS

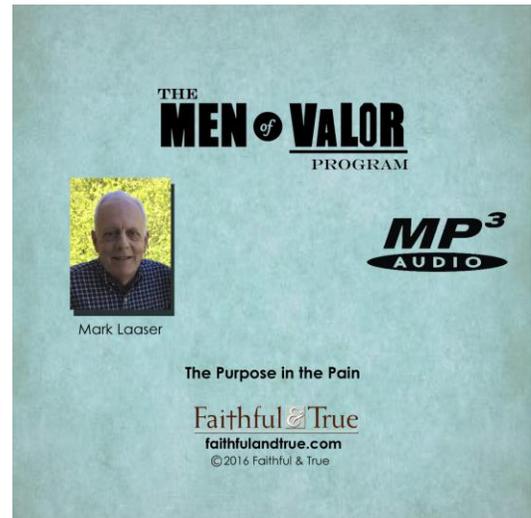
One of the most popular resources offered by Faithful & True is our Men of Valor Program, a weekly podcast found on our website and on iTunes. Hosted by Mark Laaser and Randy Evert, the Men of Valor podcasts offer direction and guidance to men who have struggled with sexual purity issues, and their spouses.

Visit faithfulandtrue.com

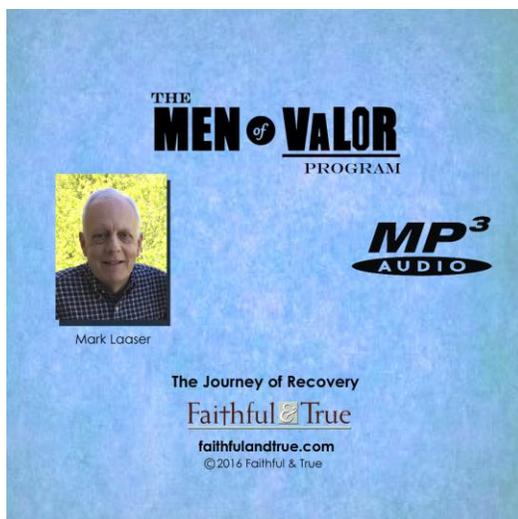
Some of our most popular Men of Valor podcasts have been converted into CDs and MP3 Audio products. We invite you to check out our collection of available titles in our online bookstore at faithfulandtrue.com



Guided Imagery Exercise for Couples



The Purpose in the Pain



The Journey of Recovery



The Top 12 Things Couples Do Who Do Well