

Podcast Summary:
Conversations in Focus, with Bryan Hudson
Guest: L. Irving Robb

Skills of an Unskilled Laborer – The Journey Into Manhood

In this episode of **Conversations in Focus**, host **Bryan Hudson, D.Min.** welcomes **Pastor Lee Robb**, Senior Pastor of Hope of Glory Church in Indianapolis, to discuss his newly published book *Skills of an Unskilled Laborer: The Journey Into Manhood*. The conversation centers on the meaning of authentic manhood, the personal journey that shaped the book, and the urgent challenges facing men and boys today.

Pastor Hudson opens by framing the purpose of *Conversations in Focus*: highlighting individuals who are making a positive impact in God's kingdom and in the community. He introduces Pastor Robb as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, pastor, and author whose life reflects consistency, service, and commitment. Pastor Hudson describes the book not merely as a personal memoir, but as a **handbook for transformation**, guiding men from immaturity toward the kind of character-driven manhood God intends.

Motivation Behind the Book

Pastor Robb shares that the book was placed in his heart in **2011**, emerging from years of having to “reconstruct” his understanding of manhood. After repeated life transitions, disappointments, and unmet expectations—in education, career, family roles, and personal identity—he began asking why manhood seemed so difficult to define and live out. God revealed to him a framework for manhood rooted not in cultural expectations, performance, or self-made success, but in **God's standards, grace, and purpose**.

A key inspiration for the book comes from a scene in the movie *Gladiator*, where a son reads a list of ideal masculine traits and realizes he does not see himself reflected in them. That moment mirrored Pastor Robb's own experience of looking at society's definitions of manhood and finding himself disconnected from them. This realization became the catalyst for developing a new, biblical framework for growth.

Manhood as a Journey, Not a Performance

The book challenges the idea that manhood is something to be mastered or proven. Instead, Pastor Robb emphasizes that **manhood is something men grow into over time**. Many men, he explains, are exhausted—emotionally, mentally, and spiritually—because they are trying to figure life out alone, repeatedly starting over after losses, failures, and broken expectations. The book speaks directly to that exhaustion, offering hope, clarity, and direction.

Personal Experiences That Shaped the Message

Pastor Robb discusses how his upbringing deeply influenced his understanding of manhood. Raised by a teenage mother, surrounded by men who were present but not engaged, he grew up with a fragmented and confusing picture of male identity. He describes carrying the name of one man, being raised by another, and having the blood of another—creating an identity struggle that many men silently share today.

These experiences, combined with career setbacks and the pressures of being a husband and father, pushed him to seek a more stable, God-centered definition of manhood.

The Writing Process

Although the book took over a decade to complete, Pastor Robb explains that once he truly started writing, the process flowed. The greatest challenge was beginning. He focused on honesty rather than perfection—writing from the heart, refining later, and resisting the temptation to make the book overly technical or academic. His goal was clarity, relatability, and authenticity so readers could see their own lives reflected in the pages.

The book is intentionally accessible, readable, and practical, aimed initially at men ages **13 to 33**, but ultimately written for men of all ages.

The Four Stages of Manhood

A central focus of the conversation is the **four-stage framework of manhood** outlined in the book:

Dependent – Learning to trust, especially trusting God. Pastor Robb emphasizes that many men struggle with trust due to betrayal, broken systems, and disappointment. Healing begins with trusting God and learning to forgive quickly when trust is violated.

Independent – A stage where many men remain stuck. Independence, he explains, is something to be stewarded, not owned. When mishandled, independence can lead to pride, isolation, and self-destruction. True independence operates under responsibility and accountability to God.

Dependable – The stage where character becomes visible. A dependable man does what he says, shows up consistently, and becomes trustworthy to family, church, and community. Pastor Robb and Pastor Hudson both emphasize that dependability—not age or achievement—is a true measure of manhood.

Loving – The final and ongoing stage, where a man lives beyond self-interest and serves others sacrificially. Love is expressed not just in words, but in actions, presence, and truth. Mature manhood reflects Christ's example of love in deed and faithfulness.

Challenges Facing Today's Young Men

Pastor Robb identifies **distraction** as one of the greatest challenges facing young men today. Social media, easy access to information, and constant stimulation have replaced skill-building, problem-solving, and hands-on learning. While young people are highly intelligent, distraction often prevents them from applying that intelligence meaningfully.

He notes that previous generations faced fewer competing influences, allowing more focus on developing responsibility and craftsmanship. Today's challenge is helping young men move from passive consumption to active engagement in life.

The Role of Grace and Scripture

Grace plays a vital role throughout the discussion. Pastor Robb explains that grace meets men at their failures—not only forgiving the past but empowering the future. He shares a personal story of receiving a second chance through football and later through career opportunities, illustrating how God redirects rather than discards men when they fall short.

Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and grace together provide the foundation for men to discover purpose, recover from setbacks, and grow into maturity.

Beyond the Book: Mentorship and Training

The conversation concludes with Pastor Robb introducing **The Gym Project: The Journey Into Manhood**, a mentoring initiative built around the book. The program is designed to guide boys and men of all ages through shared experiences, accountability, and structured growth toward maturity.

Final Encouragement

Pastor Robb emphasizes that the book is not only for men, but also for women who want to better understand the men in their lives—sons, husbands, fathers, and relatives. He encourages readers to engage the book prayerfully, ask questions, and commit to the journey of manhood by God's grace.

Pastor Hudson closes by affirming Pastor Robb's impact, encouraging listeners to purchase the book, and reminding viewers that *Conversations in Focus* exists to spotlight people who are making a meaningful difference in the community and the Kingdom of God.

Link to purchase the book at Pastor Robb's website: <https://www.thehopeofgloryindy.org>

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