

A Step by Step Guide to Hosting

FIGHT CLUB

v1.3

BEING
SONS



"You are the equipment."

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge:

"Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.

*"Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. **You are the equipment**, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light."*

-Jesus, Matthew 10:5-10 MSG

What is Fight Club?

For millennia men have come in from a day of work or war and huddled around campfires to share stories, laughter and the wisdom needed to craft boys into men.

Where are those fires today?

They have never been more needed. The seismic shifts in culture have crushed the souls of men by driving them into isolation. We've been offered a lie that we can make life work out on our own, but a man's heart requires community, a trusted fellowship to be forged and sharpened by. We need a place to learn God's ancient path to become good kings. We need to hear true stories of other men's trials, failures and successes, first hand and face to face.

Like the masses of men today, I found myself weak and floundering for lack of masculine fellowship. In 25 years of walking with Jesus I've met with men in restaurants, coffee shops, and living rooms. I've done Bible studies and accountability groups, but was always relieved when those seasons ended. After years of this cycle I considered one day how my favorite place to congregating with men and share deep heart conversations was always around fires. It was being with men I knew loved me and learning from those who had some miles on their boots.

With God's prompting I took a risk, built a fire and invited some men to my house to see if we could rediscover the potential of this ancient setting. We met and with no agenda dove into the conversations we were all desperate to have. When it was over we felt like we had discovered buried treasure.

No expression of God's Kingdom has felt more organic and powerful as this simple, low-pressure model for masculine fellowship. Since our first campfire on March 11, 2015 we have learned a few things to make the experience even richer. Simply by

attending a once-a-month gathering, men are growing faster and stronger. Fight Club is a place where like-hearted men can step off the front-lines and share stories that matter around a good warm fire. It's a place where men can learn to trust Jesus' leadership and together, practice being sons.

There are no requirements or prerequisites. It's not an organization and there is no curriculum. Men can come and go without pressure. Fight Club can be held almost anywhere and hosted easily by almost anyone who is walking as a son in deepening connection with God. If you can thoughtfully press into your personal story to showcase Jesus as the Guide and Hero, He will use you to bring fathering to other men. Other than your heart there is little to prepare.

At Fight Club God always shows up to lead and He is generous enough to give every man a piece to share.

Men who search for heart transformation in books or even a profound encounter with God never find it because what their souls actually need is to discover their true identity and be in a community they feel safe practicing that identity in.

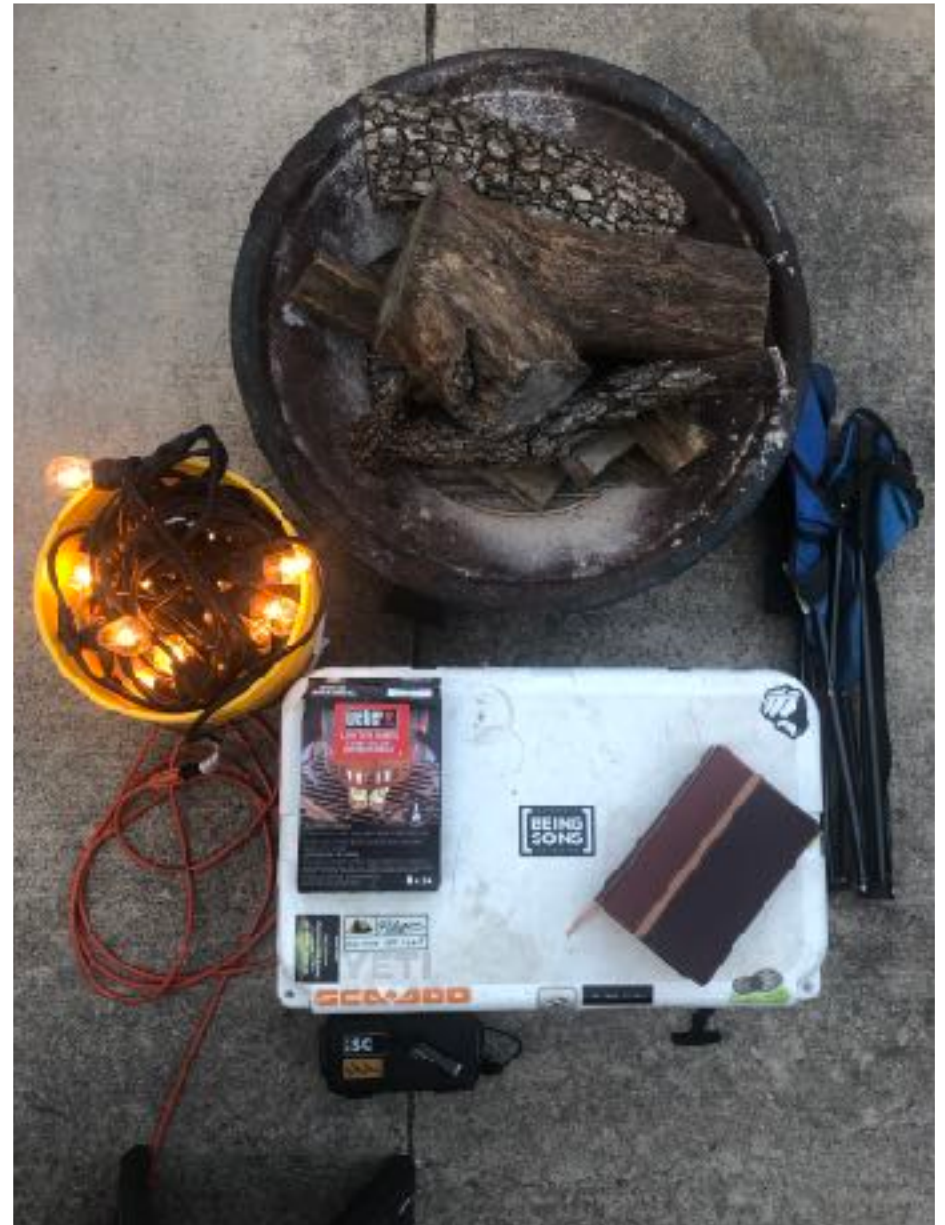
Fight Club has become that safe place.



GEAR LIST

- ✓ Fire Pit
- ✓ Firewood
- ✓ Firestarter
- ✓ Water (to douse fire)
- ✓ Drinks (optional)
- ✓ Cigars (optional)
- ✓ Snacks (optional)
- ✓ Lights and extension cord (optional)
- ✓ Your authenticity and vulnerability (not optional)
- ✓ Dependence on God to lead (not optional)
- ✓ Men can bring their own chair, pen and journals

"From the start Jesus let me know this was not about me, my gifting, my experience or my preparation. More and more it is about me choosing to lay down my false self and every strategy I'm tempted to use to seek validation apart from Him. Hosting a fire has helped me learn to trust Him more fully in every area of my life. Having now hosted nearly 100 of these it's clear to me the most blessed participant has always been me." - Jay Heck



CRAFT THE SETTING

- 1. Create a man's environment.** The average American spends 93% of their life indoors now, according to a 2020 study by the EPA. Contrast that to the habitat God gave Adam. Now consider the world we lived in only 100 years ago. We were made to be in union with the natural world. When you host a gathering outside, men will be more comfortable. Unlike being stuck in someone's living room or at a restaurant, in the outdoors men can bring their own chair, set up camp (literally), take their shoes off and craft their own environment. You are giving them the opportunity to invest in the setting. That's a fantastic thing! Once, when it was raining we were too many to fit in my garage so we tried meeting inside my house. It was not the same and we will likely never do that again. *Outside. Every time.*
- 2. Have a fire.** I don't really know why, but it's an ancient way of bringing men together. Fire gives men a focal point and typically allows them to talk, think and listen more freely with the indirect distraction of the flames. And it smells and feels great. In a pinch you can use a lantern or a candle, but for God's sake, let there be fire!
- 3. Lead the way in being real.** If you're reading this I trust you've spent some time with God learning to recognize when your false self shows up. Hosting will give you an opportunity to do more work in this area, and help other men do the same. When your false self shows up, call it out, expose yourself in kindness and be curious about it together.



If men can be men, they'll be comfortable and keep coming.

- 4. Establish the setting with a code... some simple rules of engagement.** Without a code all the men agree on, all conversation will likely be driven and dominated by a few individuals who will eventually be the only ones left talking. In a new environment, I personally will never talk until I've listened for a while to determine if it's "safe". If I feel there is someone who is going to respond to me by counseling, teaching, preaching, minimizing or one-upping me, I will generally keep myself to myself. So to help minimize this (it can't be eliminated) we found that creating a code with a few simple rules really helps men start sharing more generously. I've had men come up to me afterwards and thank me for enforcing the rules. With consistency you will create a context men feel safe returning to time and again.



THE CODE

1. STORY

Leave your religious and professional credentials at home. Around the fire we are all sons, equals, men in a circle learning to be curious as we tell our stories, because God is always in the stories.

2. HONOR

We listen intently to each other and walk in love. We are not here to “get it right” or fix one another. No teaching, preaching, counseling or interrupting. And what is shared around the fire stays at the fire.

3. COURAGE

We need each other. Risk being seen and known. As God’s sons we have nothing to hide and nothing to prove. The fire is a safe place to share our stories, questions, struggles and hopes.

**BEING
SONS**

THE CODE (CONT'D)

1. **Story** - Around the fire we don't bring our credentials.

In fact, we practice being equals. We are all "chimney sweeps".

When we began Fight Club our first rule used to be "*It's not about you*", but instead about *God's work in you*.

Nothing compares to the power of a man's personal story when we are able to feature God as the guide and hero.

That's why Jesus used stories. That's how truths are most powerfully passed along to future generations. The pull for most men will be to fall back on their experiences and head knowledge. What is needed to really help men consider their own stories is to hear another man telling and processing his. A man's story is meant to be the most faithful witness of God's glory. (Rev 12:11) Around the fire one man can tell one story at a time and we get to learn how to tell our stories well.

2. **Honor** - "Love one another with brotherly affection.

Outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:10).

When men share their stories, we can be tempted to react in a way that is dishonoring and minimizing even though our hearts might be in the right place. To protect the hearts of men sharing their stories, our code includes "No counseling, teaching, preaching, one-upping or interrupting (unless it is to get clarification). And of course, what's said at Fight Club stays at Fight Club."



The primary gift of the host is to create a safe space for God to prompt the questions and men to share.

- ### 3. **Courage** - Many men will need practice with being authentic and vulnerable. You will get to model it. Most men feel broken in some way and are looking for someone to fix them. All are in need of love and attention and they will bring those needs to this fire. It's good to be up front about this natural tendency, using yourself as an example, and explicitly give men permission to share the good, bad and the ugly. Celebrate authenticity over perfection or men will naturally fall back in to their false selves (their pose) which stands in the way of the connection we all crave. Everyone will benefit when you reinforce the gift of their authenticity time and again "*No posing or trying to impress. Use this space to learn how to be yourself.*" Many have confided this is their favorite rule of Fight Club.

THE FLOW

It's really helps to have a starting place and to not reinvent the wheel each month. While I display some times here, they're fiction and used only to help paint the picture. Fight Club has been generally held the 1st Wednesday night of each month in the green belt beside my yard from 7-10pm.

6:15 - 7:00 - I begin to set up and consecrate myself and every aspect of the evening. (See a sample consecration on the last page.) My son helps me light the fire, string the lights, and draw a bucket of water. My daughter or wife usually bakes something fresh.

7-7:30 - Men roll in and we just enjoy each other. I take the opportunity to focus on the men as they arrive and make sure new guys get introduced around. If I feel a mounting pressure to "come through", I surrender all the pressure putting it squarely on Jesus.

7:30 - 7:45 - One of us welcomes all the men. We succinctly restate the history and purpose of Fight Club, which is to share a fire and learn alongside other men what it means to walk with Jesus and be a son. We also explain the **Code of Fight Club** every time and welcome any questions or comments on the Code based on past experiences.

7:45 - Open in prayer. (Optional) Have someone pray as you feel led in alignment with the vision for the fire. This could be a simple short prayer acknowledging the space and time as holy ground, as the very Kingdom of God, a place where heaven and earth meet. Consecrate the entire event: the fire, men, drinks, smokes, stories, worldviews, expectations, etc... by bringing it all under His rule and reign, care and protection. Declare the Spirit of Sonship from Jesus over the fire and ask God to Father every man and bring you all into a deeper revelation of Him and our true identities as His sons. Ask for God's courage for each man to trust and "come as we are" without faking it. And finally thank God for His loving and faithful pursuit of us over the entire course of our lives, bringing every man here into this moment together.

Sample prayer: "God, we consecrate this Fire and bring every aspect and dimension of this sacred space under your protection and care. We pray that each man's soul will be safe here, as a man. We ask for courage to show up as our authentic selves. We bring your love and your life around us. We enforce the love and life of Christ here and now. We stand against darkness and ask that your light and life would shine deeply in and through the hearts of every man. We say yes to you, Father, yes to you, Jesus, and yes to you, Holy Spirit. We give you full permission and access to do what only you can do. We are your sons. Through this Fire, help us become even more your sons and your kings."

8:00 - Introductions - I will pose an introductory question that gives the men a few minutes to slow down, recover their breathe and become present to the state of their heart, mind and body. Example questions could be:

- Using only 3 words, or a single sentence, describe what your current story feels like
- Do a "FAB", which means this: "I **F**eel _____ **A**bout _____ **B**ecause _____."



THE FLOW (cont'd)

I often play an instrumental soundtrack for about 5 minutes to give men time to breathe, relax and take the question to Jesus. When men have had some time to get quiet and sit with the question we will go around the circle inviting them to share **only their name, whether they've been to a fire before, and in one word or sentence, answer the question posed.**

(FYI - This is not story time. That's later. This introduction and check-in must be done fast. I suggest you or someone familiar with the exercise answer first to model how to answer briefly. You are helping men be present to their functional reality before inviting God to reorient them into His reality. Honestly, many men don't even know how they're doing until you give them permission and space to consider it. The reason this has become a great practice is because if we ask the same question again later that night, the answer has usually changed.)

8:30 - Take a short break of 5 - 10 minutes to refill and refresh.

(The night has already been rich, but it's about to get better as men feel safe and are now ready to talk. All that's needed is for one man to set the table by simply sharing a piece of his story as it relates to his learning to walk with Jesus and be a son. This is usually, but not always me. I share something I am currently learning and being stretched by. I will always use a scripture or two as God prompts. Reveal God as hero and Guide.)

8:40 - Ask the men one question and let them freely share a story that reflects their struggles or victories. Here are a few great prompts:

- What comes up for you as you listen to the initial comments from other men?
- Where do you feel behind?
- What's one good thing you have co-created with God?
- Where have you felt alive as a man in recent days or months?
- What is your most difficult relationship to navigate?
- What is a current dilemma you are facing as a man?
- Where are you being invited to risk?
- What is standing in the way?
- Where do you feel impotent as a man?
- What moment do you want to celebrate how you have lived and loved as a man this month?

Stories will build. DO NOT FEAR SILENCE. God will lead the discussion and prompt men to share, which they will do if the space feels safe. We often invite men to conclude their story with the confession, "God is revealing to me that He is my _____."

9:55 - Close in prayer. Teach men to bring the full work of Christ between themselves and the other men. Share when the next fire will be. Usually men will linger a while and often this is where the deepest discussions take place.



FAQ's

1. **What do I do as a host?** Your job is to set the stage for God to lead and then get out of the way.
2. **How did Fight Club get started?** The invitation came when a former attendee to a boot camp I'd helped host challenged me that men needed a place to flesh out the new life God had invited them into over that life-changing weekend. That meant being around other men who understood them and were reaching for the same new life in God themselves. While I had a band of brothers, other men were predominantly isolated and lonely and simply needed a place to connect with other men going in the same direction.
3. **Who is Fight Club for? Who should we invite?** We welcome any man curious enough to come. Men of all faith backgrounds and levels of maturity join us and we encourage men who attend to bring others. Our hope is that when they see authentic men sharing authentic community they will be moved by the Holy Spirit to remain curious and want more.
4. **Why allow alcohol and tobacco?** God gave men free will and trusts us to use it wisely. We have found that when men are treated like men, they make good healthy decisions. This environment carries trust, dignity, freedom and positive peer pressure.



5. **But some men are recovering addicts and alcoholics. Won't that be a stumbling block?** That's such a great point. I'd like to point out another stumbling block that likely gets in more men's way trying to find Jesus, and that's religion and rule-keeping. Personally I think God had already thought that issue through when He turned water into 180 gallons of amazing wine, and that AFTER the guests had already been drinking awhile. I have discovered there is more to learn by practicing freedom in God's wise counsel than rule keeping out of fear. In the consecration portion of our prayer, we consecrate everything, including tobacco and alcohol. And as the host I normally won't have a beer until after FC is over, but I do this so I can stay sharp and follow the Spirit's leading more closely. "Do not be drunk on wine, but be drunk on the Spirit."

FAQ's (cont'd)

6. **What do you do when men break "The Code"?** Sure, men will start teaching, preaching, and counseling. Even I do it sometimes. This is common. We are just wired to share our fix-its and stories, so don't be surprised when it happens. Men simply need practice with this. Over time they will begin to adjust and enjoy the freedom it brings. But this is a reason it's wise to always share the code/rules + the spirit behind them. It's great to have the code printed out and passed around as a bookmark, and read aloud at each fight club by someone other than the leader, before the stories start rolling. But if it happens mid-stream, don't be afraid to gently remind men of the rules of engagement.
7. **What is Fight Club not?** While we relish the holy scriptures and mine them for their gold, this is not a Bible study. Though we do honor each other by listening to each other's stories and prayerfully respond, this is not an accountability group. And while all these have a proper and needed place, this space around the fire is not for preaching, deep healing or counseling. This is not your band of brothers, though it could give birth to one or more bands. It's more like a huddle around the hot coffee pot on a cold night after a day of adventure, work, or war. It's a place where you as a host get the privilege to serve these men by loving, honoring and being vulnerable to encourage them to do the same.

Trust and friendships will be birthed through this "No B.S." environment.



8. **Can Fight Club be adapted for groups besides men?** Yes! Absolutely. This is a great blueprint for gathering fathers and sons or fathers and daughters to share and impart a vision for their shared journeys of initiation. Adapting the stories to be more relevant for younger crowd will be appropriate. And we recommend beginning the evening with something fun like a game or physical challenge. And of course food. Teach the boys to cut the wood, build the fire and let them manage it. Bring them in to the set up and tear down. Let them feel like men in training.

Sample Consecration Prayer

(Consecration is a powerful practice. Here is a sample summarized version. Feel free to make it your own and walk with God as you uniquely consecrate your fire. It can of course be done alone by you, but it's better if done with allies. And I also recommend you pray something like this with all the men every once in a while if not every time because it informs us all of our authority in Christ.)

Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, we consecrate this fire and this gathering of men to you. We bring every man, every household, and every story of this fire under the authority of Jesus. We bring every aspect of this gathering into your Kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven, here and now. We stand in your authority against every foul spirit, including religious spirits, spirits of shame, discouragement, and failure, and everything that would be set against the hearts of the men in this place. We ask that the blood of Jesus would wash every man as he enters this sacred space. We bring a canopy of your love, your blood, your life and your Holy Spirit fire around us. We enforce the rule and reign of Jesus Christ of Nazareth Who came in the flesh here and now and we invoke your Holy Spirit fire to sweep away and fully defeat all darkness. We break every agreement that has been made with lies, and we come into full agreement with the truth. We agree with who you are Jesus, we agree with what you are doing, and we agree with how you are doing it. We say yes to you, Father, yes to you, Jesus, and yes to you, Holy Spirit. We give you full permission and access to do what only you can. Amen.

The Lord bless you and lead you as you work beside Him to bring His Kingdom here to earth and create a space for men to feel the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We welcome your feedback so if you have questions or comments, please email us at info@beingsons.com.

*As Sons,
Jay*

