

CHAPTER



WHAT MAKES A TRAILMAN?

A TRAILMAN'S CHARACTER

A Trailman's body has a skeleton of bone. His soul has a skeleton of character. Both determine where and how far he will bend. Both cause pain when they are injured, and both need the right care to heal.

Character is a combination of strengths, weaknesses, and unique characteristics that make a Trailman who he is. A Trailman will strive to maximize his strengths and minimize his weaknesses. When he says the Trail Life motto, "Walk Worthy," it reminds him to build the best character he can and to use it to do the most good.

All of us build our character over time. Values, hardships, victories, education, and challenges build character. Character keeps its shape and form once it's built. It does not change easily.

Our society (culture) is unreliable in character as its values seem to change each day. We can't depend on society to help us build a strong character. But God's character does not change. **TRUTH 1a,b** He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; therefore, He can be trusted. His unchanging character helps us understand right from wrong. Morals and God's law are absolute and unchanging because God's nature and character are unchanging.





A Trailman is on a journey to be transformed by the renewing of his mind. He wants his character to be more like that of Jesus Christ, God’s Son Who came not only to save us but also to model the character we should pursue and the way we should live. This process of being transformed into His image rather than conforming to the image of our society (culture) is most evident in your years as a Navigator and Adventurer when you are transitioning from the boy you are to the man you will become.

The Boy You Are

Sometimes you see the exciting things adults do and the wonderful places they go and you feel impatient. You want to have those same freedoms and experiences.

As you grow up, God and those who serve Him bring order into your life through their instruction, example, and care. God uses this process to transform and build your character so you will be more like Jesus Christ. God uses everything for His glory—even the hard things we don’t understand. **PROVIDENCE 6b** Maturing is a wonderful process. You should be glad you are going through it, and you should enjoy every opportunity God brings into your life.



The Man You Will Become

Manhood is not something you will suddenly experience when you awaken on the morning of your eighteenth birthday. In fact, manhood is something you achieve by degrees in areas such as leadership skills, wisdom, and emotional maturity. As you mature, you also will experience the freedom of new rights and responsibilities.

Areas of your life will develop at different rates and, at each phase, a Trailman will grow to meet increasingly greater challenges.

Because no two Trailmen are alike, there is no checklist of things that make you a man. However, faithful Christians know there are certain things a man is, and certain things he isn't.

Many people are confused and deceived about the differences between men and women. God, by His design, created men and women uniquely for His purposes and—at the same time—different from one another. He is clear about their uniqueness and the way they complement one another as members of the created world that perfectly reflects His nature. **FAMILY 4a**



Our society (culture) also has many false, shallow ideas about what it means to be a man. Being a man is definitely not about drinking alcohol, experimenting with sex, abusing drugs, or smoking. Being a man is not even about the good activities some men enjoy such as playing sports, lifting weights, hunting, and working on cars. God's design is for men to be leaders, protectors, and providers. To be both brave and kind. To be both hard working and fun loving. To be strong but also gentle. To be confident but also humble. Real men love God, love their families, and love their neighbors. They treat others with respect in the same way they wish to be treated.



A TRAILMAN AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

God could have brought you into the world fully grown with the knowledge and experience you need to survive in the outdoors. Instead, He created you as an infant and gave you a world to explore. As a Trailman, you will share many of its wonders with your Trail Life

Outdoor adventure is the purest adventure because it happens in the environment God created for you and me.

family, and you will make memories that remain vivid and fresh throughout your life.

When experiencing outdoor adventure, you will face challenges you are unlikely to face anywhere else. Outdoor adventure is the purest adventure because it happens in the



environment God created for you and me. **CREATION 2a**

You will hike the same trails that generations of men hiked. Those men grew through overcoming the challenge of the outdoors. As a Trailman, you will be aware of the footsteps you follow and the footsteps you leave for others. You have been given an opportunity to impact generations of future courageous young men who will also become godly and responsible husbands, fathers, and citizens, then influence others to follow their example.

A Trailman understands his place in outdoor adventure and welcomes the challenge.



A TRAILMAN AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership skills are important because God calls men to lead their families, in the church, and in society. In the creation mandate given in Genesis 1:28, God made it clear that He expected us to lead by giving us dominion (the charge to rule or lead) over the earth and to be wise stewards of its many natural resources. **STEWARDSHIP 5a** Think about that ... to be in charge of the earth is such an important leadership role!



At first, you are a leader of yourself (something you learned back in Woodlands Trail). But as a Navigator, you will move into position to lead others.

A Trailman does his best to develop his leadership skills. He pays attention to leadership lessons and learns the secret of contentment through patiently following others in leadership while he looks and waits for opportunities to lead.

Your experience in Trail Life will give you many opportunities to lead and to see many examples of leadership, perhaps both good and bad. A Trailman can learn from every example he observes.

A TRAILMAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS

Your Relationship with God

Throughout life you will form many relationships. Some will be very important. Your relationship with your heavenly Father, God, is the most important.

God is a living, eternal, personal being who wants to maintain a close, meaningful relationship with you. One of the ways you build that relationship is through prayer. The leaders in your Troop and church can help you improve your prayer life and deepen your relationship with God as you follow Jesus Christ, His only Son.

The Trail Life USA program has many symbols with great meaning. The name "Trail Life" is symbolic of the two types of life journeys. The Trail in nature represents the path you walk as you search for outdoor adventure and as you experience the blessings and challenges of life. The Trail of faith is the most important course you will

set on your journey: following Jesus along the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

If you have not yet decided to follow Jesus Christ with all your heart, there is an emptiness inside you that only God can satisfy.



CREATION 2c To learn more about this decision and how you can walk closer to God, talk with your pastor, your parents, or your Troop leaders.



If you are unable to talk with a pastor, a parent, or a Troop leader about God, then you can begin a relationship with God by praying like this:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner because I’ve done many bad things. Please forgive me. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead, which proved that You are God. I trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. Guide me and help me to do Your will. In Your name, amen.”

Relationships with Family

A family is a group of people related to each other by marriage, blood, or adoption. Families come in many shapes and sizes. You may have brothers or sisters, older siblings or younger ones, or you



may be an only child. You may live with your birth parents or with one parent or with someone else who takes care of you. You may be adopted. Be grateful for the family God has given you, and try not to be envious of the family He gave to someone else.

Family relationships are often difficult. You may be upset if you must work harder around the house because of the loss of a parent or the presence of younger children. Your friends at school may have more free time because they have fewer chores, and you may feel this is unfair. You may be upset if you do not get the same privileges and freedom as an older brother or sister. You may think that your parents love a brother or sister more than they love you. These feelings are common, and you need to deal with them, but that does not mean they reflect reality. Facing challenges with determination, patience, and a sense of humor is a good sign that you are becoming a man.

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Some people are very happy with their family, while others may be very angry. If you are like most people, you fall somewhere between those extremes. Where you stand depends a lot on your attitude. A Trailman chooses to have a good attitude and works at being content wherever God places him.

Humility and forgiveness are two of the great secrets to spiritual success as a follower of Jesus Christ. The Trailman who finds and uses these tools will go far in life.

As you mature, your relationship with your parents will change. You will have new rights and new responsibilities. It is natural for you to feel pride in your newfound abilities, and it is natural that you will start questioning some decisions your parents make. At times, it will feel as if they are treating you like a younger child, and that can be frustrating. You may be

tempted to forget your special relationship with your parents and to treat them like any other people. You may even become disrespectful. A Trailman should always respect authority, especially the authority of his parents. **TRUTH 1b,c** This is true even when your parents make mistakes and even if they have bad habits. **HUMAN DIGNITY 3b**



That said, unless they ask you to do something that violates the laws of God or man, you should respect and obey your parents. This is part of your duty to respect authority, which is stated in the Trailman Oath. That respect extends to people your parents delegate to have authority over you, such as teachers, doctors, clergy, and Troop leaders. Respecting parental authority does not mean you cannot express your opinion. If you raise objections in a respectful manner, especially if you explain your line of reasoning, you will find that they respect your thoughts and feelings even if they do not always agree with them. As you grow older, you'll realize that humility and forgiveness are two of the best ways not only to honor your father and mother but also to maintain a successful Christian life. The Trailman who finds and uses these tools will go far in life.

Younger siblings can try your patience. Even so, you are more of

a role model to them than you may think. They pick up your habits and imitate your manners. In the Trailman Oath, we repeat the words “treat others as I want to be treated.” You should always treat your brothers and sisters the way you want your parents to treat you. You may find that the leadership skills you learn in your Troop also work quite well in your family—whether it is giving guidance with the right attitude or receiving it.



Relationships with Friends

Friends are some of your greatest treasures. And you will make some great friends in Trail Life.

Many people may recognize you and treat you well, but only some of them are true friends. So how do you know if you are truly a friend to someone or if that person is a real friend to you? Friends want what is best for each other—even if that means talking you out of making a bad decision. They are always willing to help, always willing to listen, and always willing to stick with you through good times and bad times.

A true friend stands with you and stands up for you—and you do the same for him. Friends rejoice with you in your successes and

achievements. Friends like you for who you are. It has been said that a true friend is a person that knows *everything* about you ... and is still your friend.

If God has given you good friends, make sure you are a good friend too. The best way to have a good friend is to be one.

Choose friends who truly like you and build you up; avoid people who use you and drag you down. Sometimes other people gain your trust just to get what they want. It may be something small and harmless, like borrowing a baseball bat or frisbee. We all have “friends” who only look for us when they want us to do them a favor. Some people may ask for bigger “favors”—things

that can get you in serious trouble, steal your innocence, or threaten your safety. Not many people are like that, but even one in your life is too many. The Bible teaches that “bad company ruins good morals.”¹

If God has given you good friends, make sure you are a good friend too. When they need to talk or they are scared or upset, you should listen to them and offer encouragement or help. If you don’t have friends like that yet, remember this time-tested advice: the best way to *have* a good friend is to *be* one.

Relationships with People who are Different

Our world is filled with all kinds of people. And, while each one is unique in some ways, every person is made in the image of God and has intrinsic value, worth, and dignity. **HUMAN DIGNITY 3ab**



A Trailman should show respect, understanding, and charity to others different from him, while maintaining firm Christian convictions. **TRUTH 1c**



Some people will be very different from us. Some have different values, lifestyles, and faiths (or no faith at all). A Trailman recognizes that we can have differences—and even strongly disagree—but we should still respect one another.

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:33

Because each human person is sacred and has intrinsic value, worth, and dignity, they should receive proper respect and protection regardless of age, disability, economic status, ethnicity, location, race, sex, or sinful tendencies. **HUMAN DIGNITY 3b**

While respecting people who live or believe differently can be a challenge, all Christians are called to be respectful and maintain firm Christian convictions. Proper respect is important because each person is made in the image of God.



Relationships with Strangers

The great American humorist Will Rogers once said that strangers are friends you have not met. While you may choose to limit the number of deep friendships you maintain, a Trailman will show all people the same consideration and courtesy he would show his family and friends, just as he would want them to show kindness to him and to those he loves. As Jesus said, “Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”² **TRUTH 1c**



We should be concerned with friends, neighbors, and even strangers. Some of these relationships can be risky, so always rely on your parent’s advice and permission when talking with or doing any activity with people outside your family.

² John 13:34

Dangerous Relationships

Ethan's Uncle Bob was smart and funny, and he always bought Ethan the best presents. Ethan's mother invited Bob over often because she was a widow and thought Bob was a good male role model. When Bob took Ethan to see football games or visit the zoo the way his father used to do, Ethan felt good inside. One day while they were boating alone on the lake, Bob took out his smartphone and showed Ethan some pictures of people with no clothes.

Ethan was shocked.

"I don't think I should be looking at those," Ethan said, because he had been told about inappropriate websites. So Bob put the phone away and did not mention it again. When Ethan got home, he wondered if he should tell his mother what happened, but he was afraid to say anything. After all, Uncle Bob was her brother, and the experience was embarrassing.

But he couldn't forget what happened. So, finally he told his

mother. She became upset, yet she knew her son would not lie to her. She reported the incident to the authorities. They discovered that the photos on the phone were of young girls who were being abused. Bob got the help he needed, and the pictures led the police to other people who were harming other kids.

Speaking up was the right thing for Ethan to do.

Sometimes even people we trust do wrong things. They can misuse our trust and hurt us. Any act that threatens to harm your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health



If someone asks you to see, read, or do something that makes you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to refuse.



is considered abuse and is wrong. Unfortunately, some adults, and even other youth, sexually abuse children. Any sexual contact with a youth—regardless of who the other person is—is wrong and must be reported. The following Trail Life USA guidelines can help to reduce the possibility of that happening to you or other youth:

- Everyone should respect your privacy—especially when it comes to using the bathroom, changing clothes, showering, and sleeping arrangements.
- You should never be alone with only one adult (unless it is your parent).
- You should never participate in secret ceremonies, activities, or meetings.
- Appropriate clothing should always be worn—especially for swimming activities.
- There should be no humiliating activities, bullying, or physical hitting.
- Cameras, video, cell phones, and other electronics should never be used in bathrooms, showers, changing areas, or in any other way that violates someone’s privacy or causes them harm.
- Trailmen should always use the buddy system of three buddies from your program level.

If someone fails to follow these guidelines, you should report that person to your leaders and to your parents. It is the right thing to do, and it can help to protect you and others from harm.

You have certain rights over your mind and your body that other people should not take away from you. For example, a doctor may need to examine you in a personal, private way, but if the experience makes you feel uncomfortable, tell your parents or ask one of them to be with you during the examination.

People may talk about strange ideas you don’t understand or with which you don’t agree. If they go beyond what you think or have been taught is reasonable, or if someone asks you to see, read, or do something that makes you feel uncomfortable—whether it’s a

physical act or a spiritual one—you have the right to refuse. And that is exactly what you should do. If they offer you alcohol or illegal



Any act that threatens to harm your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual health is abuse and is wrong.

drugs, or if they ask you to help them steal, or if they touch you or ask you to touch yourself or touch them in inappropriate ways, immediately find someone you trust and tell that person what happened. Tell that trusted person more than once if you must, or tell some other adult you trust. If you can't get through to them, find someone else—until you are believed.

How do you know if something is wrong? One way to find out is to ask a parent, pastor, or an official Trail Life adult leader. Adults should know better than

to ask young people to perform sexual acts, disobey the law, or violate their religious principles. It is never your fault if someone asks you to do something wrong, even if they say it is. **Say NO, then GO, and TELL.**

Relationships with Digital Technology

If you're like most people, the thought of going without digital technology for the rest of your life could seem as bad as having no indoor bathrooms. We use digital technology for everything—communicating, shopping, doing school assignments, and even playing games and watching movies.

Although you may realize that we are still discovering new ways to use digital technology for good, God-honoring purposes, the entrance of sin into the world has affected every part of creation such that it is now fallen and imperfect. **CREATION 2a** This includes all forms of digital technology. We are ever-discovering new dangers, risks, and harmful effects that these kinds of technologies pose.



Unfortunately, the digital world is also home to thieves, predators, character assassins, and organized crime. And worse, many people don't take that seriously until after they become victims themselves. This section is about how to AVOID that kind of trouble.

Exercise Caution

Digital technology is a labor-saving invention, like a hammer or a motor. But it can also be used against anyone without their knowledge. So many extra precautions are needed.

Recognize the Risks

One challenge with digital technology is that you may not notice damage when it happens. Here are examples, but you might come up with others. Trail Life USA encourages everyone to be aware of the risks and to learn to manage them.

Medical Risks

- ***Sleep.*** Before the days of phones and computers, the body's biological clock was set by sunlight, especially from its blue wavelengths. However, digital screens glow with a similar blue light, and that can disrupt sleep if you use them near bedtime. This is one reason why 70% of high school students have sleep deficits that can lower IQ and make you sick!



- **Addiction.** Experts say about 10% of video game fans are addicted to them as if they are hooked on a drug. If you have 30 friends who did a lot of video gaming, chances are that 3 of them are



addicted. With similar effects to drugs, using digital technology releases a chemical in the brain triggering the pleasure/reward cycle. This cycle can lead to future addictive choices with even worse consequences.

- **Passivity.** Trailmen thrive on being physically active. Digital technology primarily keeps Trailmen sedentary, playing games or watching videos. Prolonged sedentary behavior can change hormone levels and cause you to lose motivation. You become less aware of your

surroundings. This lifestyle is also linked to a higher percentage of depression, prediabetes, and early heart disease.

Moral Risks

- **Pornography/Inappropriate Content.** Pornography and other inappropriate content are pervasive throughout various online platforms. Pornography and inappropriate content are addictive and sinful.
- **Sense of Guilt.** Research shows that hurting virtual bystanders in video games leads to guilty feelings, even though the harm is imaginary.

Hacker Risks

- **Theft.** Classmates, scammers, and crime syndicates all hack accounts (phone, bank, schools, etc.) to steal identities and money. Even your friends might hack into each other's online accounts. You may not discover that you have been hacked until long after the theft.

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- **Sexual Predators.** Many sexual abusers are now seeking victims using various digital technology, allowing them to gain access to you directly. Many child sexual abusers are also hackers and know how to bypass various security features to access their victims.

Manage the Risks

- **Limit Temptation.** Follow your family's rules on when and how to use computers and phones. *ASK YOUR PARENTS.* Seek their advice about e-hazards and keeping your information secure.
- **Develop good habits** for digital security. The recommendations change over time. But for instance, use passwords, don't share them with friends, and also use two-factor authentication, etc.
- **Search the Scriptures. Seriously.** Try to find biblical principles for technology use. For instance, Matthew 10:16 basically tells us to understand what snakes are like, yet at the same time tells us to stay innocent as doves. Who are the snakes on the Internet? How can we protect ourselves from them?

Aim for Biblical Harmony

Not everyone agrees about online hazards and security measures. Yet in I Corinthians 8:10, Paul instructs us to do nothing that would cause a Christian peer to stumble even if we think they're mistaken. So, when you're with friends (in a video game or whatever) consider using technology only in the ways that the most cautious parents for your group would permit at home.

In accordance with our Core Values of Church-Owned and Operated and Program Flexibility, each Troop will make its own decisions as to what kinds of digital technology it allows as part of the Troop operations. Your Troop may ban digital devices at meetings and events completely! That may not be a bad idea and has the side effect of helping you more fully experience being with your friends. To learn about what measures your Troop is taking to protect against the dangers posed by digital technology, ask your leaders. Additionally, to

Each Troop will make its own decisions as to what kinds of digital technology it allows as part of the Troop operations.

learn about specific technological risks and safety recommendations for particular activities, review that particular activity in Trail Life’s Activities Risk Reference Guide with the Health and Safety Guide on Trail Life Connect. As your patrol plans events and activities, your Patrol Leaders should take appropriate measures to reduce the risks posed by digital technology just as they would with risks posed by weather, fire, camping, water, etc.

To educate yourself more on the dangers and risks associated with digital technology, scan the QR code to find a list of suggested resources that you can use to learn more.



Relationship Summary

Managing relationships is an art you can master. It can be hard, but it is worthwhile. Even good relationships have problems, and the best relationships take time and effort. With some help, you will regain confidence and reach out again.

A Trailman pays close attention to the health of his good relationships and is always aware of the possibility of bad relationships.

A TRAILMAN AND SERVICE

Part of the mission of Trail Life USA is for Trailmen to “serve others.” Many home schools and public schools require a certain number of volunteer service hours for each student.

Trail Life integrates service requirements into ranks and advancement because it’s so critical to our mission. It’s even in the Oath

“To serve God and my country ... ”

and Trail Life’s mission statement:

“Serve others, ...”

How and why we serve God

First, we serve God by devoting our whole lives to following His purposes and His plans. We’re not focused on doing what we want to do in life. Instead, in every decision, we serve God by asking, “Father,

is this the direction You want me to go?" We serve God by submitting every part of our lives to Him. **STEWARDSHIP 5b** Many adults speak of being in the military as being in "the service." In a sense, when we decide to follow Christ, we are also in service to His kingdom and His purposes for us.



Second, we serve God by serving our families. Service is one of highest forms of love. Love is not merely a feeling; love is an act of our will and, in many cases, a decision to serve. We serve our family because we love our family. In a sense, we are called to love and serve *all* people as Christians, but our duty to serve our family is one of the most important ways we serve.

When you are older, you will need to find a career or job so you can provide for yourself at first and then eventually maybe a family. This may sound ordinary, but the commitment to earn a living is important both to God and to the family He may give you one day.



Many men who can work don't want to work. They have not learned the value of hard work. They would rather have their wife, parents, or the government support them—and their family. The Bible says the man who does not take care of his own family is "worse than an unbeliever."³ As a Trailman, you can learn to enjoy the satisfaction of hard work by doing chores without being asked, keeping your room clean, or looking for other ways to help around your house.

Third, we serve God by serving the church. After our families, serving our local church is another way to serve God. God uses the people in churches to become the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. The church literally does what He would do if He was here. You can volunteer at church to serve as an usher, to move chairs, clean

³ 1 Timothy 5:8

rooms, or go on a mission trip—these are acts of service to God and to God’s people.

Finally, we serve God when we serve others in the Troop or community. Jesus said about Himself, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.”⁴ **TRUTH 1a** When we are quick to meet a need, do a good deed, or volunteer for a task, we are also serving God. Jesus said, “as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”⁵ In other words, when we serve other people who are weak, poor, or disadvantaged in some way, Jesus says that is the same as serving Him directly. Wow, that’s really something to think about!



How do we serve our country?

We can serve our country in many ways. Some of these forms of service will await you when you become an adult. Throughout

American history, untold thousands of young men have served our country by enlisting in the US Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, or Coast Guard. This is an option every young man should at least consider. Serving in the military offers the opportunity to live on your own, stretch and strengthen your physical abilities, learn discipline, and possibly earn special grants to pay for college after serving.



You can help serve your country right now as a Trailman simply by advancing through the ranks and awards of Trail Life USA.

Learn the story of America. Read history books and study our founding fathers. Develop an appreciation for those who have paid the high price to establish and protect our country and to provide

⁴ *Matthew 20:28*

⁵ *Matthew 25:40*

the freedoms we enjoy.

Show appreciation for your country and for all veterans. One simple way you can show respect for a person who served in the military is to shake his or her hand and say, "Thank you for serving our country." Also, always respect the American flag by standing when it is raised, or during the pledge, or singing the national anthem, and use other proper flag protocol.

Learn about civics and politics, then prepare to vote and become an active citizen. Have conversations with your parents and leaders about the major political parties and what they stand for. Take a trip to your city hall, state capitol, or Washington, DC. Take an interest in and understand the different levels of city, county, state, and federal government. Think about whether you would like to run for office one day as an elected public servant.

Make a commitment now, as a citizen, to fight for what is true, good, and beautiful in America. Many people show disrespect for America and don't think this country is special. Our country has made some mistakes, and we need to acknowledge them. But you can serve your country now by beginning to understand how uniquely religious, exceptional, and prosperous America is and why those qualities are so important. Decide now that throughout your life, you will respect and obey laws and be a good citizen. Decide that you will be a man of courage who will stand against what is evil, immoral, and corrupt.

It is God's design for men to be servants. **CREATION 2a** Men should serve God, their families, their church, and their community. Men also are called in varying ways to serve their country. Trailmen should serve with a good attitude. When we do this, we honor God.



A TRAILMAN'S WORLDVIEW

The Bible teaches that there are three enemies of our soul. Those enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil. The word "world" used in this way simply means the thinking, systems, or philosophies of this world. The "ways of the world" and the ways of God are usually very different. Many times, they are exact opposites. For instance, the world says to "love yourself," but God teaches us to "love others." The world says, "Live for today." God says, "Store up treasures in



heaven and not on this earth.” The world says there is no right or wrong. God says there is an absolute right and wrong that comes from who He is. **TRUTH 1a**



A Trailman should desire to think clearly and to understand God’s design and His truth about life and the world and how they were created to be. **CREATION 2b,c**



Have you ever thought about deception? If someone is deceived, he usually has no idea that he has been deceived. He doesn’t know that what he believes is wrong. Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible use this phrase repeatedly: “Do not be deceived.” Why? God wants us to be people of truth. He wants us to know the truth, believe the truth, and speak the truth. Truth is the only cure for the disease of deception.

The philosophies of this world lie to us about many important things. But as Trailmen, we don’t want to be deceived. We want to walk in the truth.

That’s why a Christian worldview is important. We don’t want to be lied to, and we want to be able to recognize when we are hearing a lie and when we are hearing the truth.

Have you ever tried to assemble something that seemed simple at first but ended up being complicated? Have you ever tried to put something together, such as a toy or a piece of furniture, without reading the manufacturer’s instructions or owner’s manual?

That’s what the world tries to do. Worldly people try to understand human relationships, science, morality, art, politics, and many other areas of life without reading the product instructions or the owner’s manual. The Bible is the ultimate owner’s manual. And when we study the Bible, it helps us understand how the world we live in operates according to God’s design. God is really like the ultimate manufacturer of the whole world! To know how the world was intended to work according to God’s design is a big part of having a



Christian worldview. **CREATION 2a**

If our hearts and minds are influenced by the lies and darkness of this world, then it’s as if our religion is polluted, defiled, and unclean.

James chapter 1, verse 27 is special because it is the only place in the Bible where God tells us what “pure religion” looks like. Think

about these powerful words:

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” HUMAN DIGNITY 3a,b



This verse may make you think about adoption or foster care or helping women whose husbands may have died. But the second part of this verse —“to keep oneself unstained from the world”—relates directly to the Christian worldview of a Trailman. TRUTH 1a,c



That kind of thought process, that whatever we do in life, big or small, God’s Word has something to say about it, is living with a Christian worldview. As Trailmen, we don’t want to be worldly in our thoughts and viewpoints. We want to be godly.

The challenge of being *in the world but not of the world*⁶ is a lifelong journey. By studying God’s Word, the Bible, and obeying His timeless principles that relate to each area of life, we can remain unstained by the world and think His thoughts about the way we ought to live.

Many Christians see their faith as something that is only applicable on Sunday inside a church building. But God’s truth applies to all areas of life, not just matters of religion. The Bible teaches that “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”⁷

So the worldview of the Trailman is to know, love, and walk in the truth. We never want to be known as people who are shallow or deceived. As Trailmen, we want to be wise and walk in the light of



As Trailmen, we don’t want to be deceived. We want to walk in the truth.

⁶ John 17:16

⁷ 1 Corinthians. 10:31

God's plan for our lives by committing to the Trail Life motto to "Walk Worthy" in every area of life.

Trail Life USA's Six Essential Concepts of a Christian Worldview



To assist Trailmen in thinking biblically about the lies of the world and the truths of God, Trail Life has developed Trail Life USA's Six Essential Concepts of a Christian Worldview that every Trailmen, both young and old, should learn. As you continue in Trail Life, you will notice that these concepts are integrated into every area of the Trail Life program. This intentionally serves to reinforce that God is part of everything we do.

1-TRUTH

- 1a There are absolute and unchanging truths about God and life.
- 1b Morality and moral law are absolute and unchanging because they proceed from and reflect God's unchanging nature and character.
- 1c A Trailman should show respect, understanding, and charity to others different from him, while maintaining firm Christian convictions.

2-CREATION

- 2a The eternal God created the universe for His purposes and according to His plan which is evident by the design, order and complexity found in all of creation.
- 2b All of God's creation is good. The entrance of sin into the world has affected every part of creation such that it is now fallen and imperfect.
- 2c Because man is sinful and imperfect, he is in need of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

3-HUMAN DIGNITY

- 3a Out of all of God's creation, human beings are uniquely made in His image and likeness, and therefore all human life, from



conception through natural death has unquestionable value, worth, and dignity.

3b Because each human person is sacred and has intrinsic value, worth, and dignity, they should receive proper respect and protection regardless of age, disability, economic status, ethnicity, location, race, sex or sinful tendencies.

4-FAMILY

4a By His design, God created men and women different from each other and uniquely for His purposes.

4b God's design for marriage and family is that one man and one woman be united in marriage, and from that union, the blessing of new life comes forth.

4c Natural marriage which unites one man and one woman before God is an earthly reflection of God's Triune nature. Marriage also depicts the loving relationship between Christ and His church.

5-STEWARDSHIP

5a God has given all human beings dominion over His earth and commanded us to use its natural resources.

5b Therefore, each human being must be a good steward of the resources God provides and responsibly cultivate and conserve them for His glory.

6-PROVIDENCE

6a God is sovereign over all history.

6b God actively intervenes in peoples' lives for His purposes. He mysteriously uses all things, good and bad, for His glory.

6c God is good and can be trusted in all things.

Walking Worthy

The Trail Life USA motto, “Walk Worthy,” sums up the worldview of a Trailman.

From Colossians 1:10, “so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God,” it reveals the daily integration of an ideal



lifestyle in a world that needs to see these principles in action. **TRUTH** **IC**

Walking Worthy is a commission not only to do our best but also to get the most out of this life by living close to God and walking in a manner that honors Him. The pursuit of God and a commitment to a biblical worldview will not only help you become a better husband, father, and citizen, but also it will enable you to enjoy the full, abundant life that Jesus Christ offers each of us.

And, for the same reason that your Trail Life Leaders expect you to cook your own meals on campouts, God desires that you investigate, gain insight, get involved, and integrate His truth in every part of your life.

God revealed truth to us through His Word. As we live by His character, lead by example, and serve others, we cultivate the image of God within us and know in the most intimate ways how much He truly loves us.

