

 MAN IN THE MIRROR

# THE STATE OF YOUNG MEN

IN AMERICA 2025





# ROOTED & RISING

## **YOUNG MEN TODAY ARE TRYING TO BUILD MEANINGFUL LIVES.**

A man finishes his education and moves into adulthood. He starts his career, gets married, starts a family, establishes his community. We call men in this phase of life BUILDERS, because they are building their lives.

They do so in a world that is challenging them at every level. Our culture redefines truth, degrades masculinity, belittles Christianity. How can men in their 20s and 30s build meaningful lives?

Man in the Mirror is rising to meet this challenge, to reach a broken generation and point it toward the healing of the gospel and a flourishing life.

We remain Rooted in our original mission: To bring God's message of love to a broken generation. These were God's "marching orders" to Patrick Morley at the outset of the ministry, and they remain ours today. Times have changed, but the need remains.

We've learned many lessons over the years. In our 40th year of ministry, we stand firmly on our history, while innovating to respond to the unique challenges of today's man. Will you join us in this cause?







# THE STATE OF YOUNG MEN IN 2025

JEREMY SCHURKE, DIRECTOR OF MIRROR LABS

In a word: precarious.

At Mirror Labs, our research over the past several years has illuminated an unsettling reality about the challenges young men face in today's world. The data through 2024 paints a stark and deeply troubling picture of the state of Millennial and Gen Z men in America.

While we can find a few glimmers of hope and moments of slight progress, they are far surpassed by trends that reveal a significant, multifaceted decline in the overall well-being of young adult men in this country. This analysis isn't just about compiling facts and figures; it's a call to action for everyone invested in the future of young men to step up and reverse these alarming trends.

The statistics that follow tell a story of crisis. Young men today are grappling with a perfect storm of mental health struggles, deteriorating physical fitness, weakening social connections, and growing economic instability. Compared to earlier generations, the rise in mental health disorders, loneliness, and job insecurity is shocking.

What was once a manageable set of challenges has snowballed into a critical situation, impacting every dimension of men's lives. The time to act is now, before these trends deepen further, leaving young men adrift in a society that seems to be failing them.

This analysis is a call to action for everyone invested in the future of young men.







# 01 MENTAL HEALTH

## • MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

**67%** of men aged 18-29 believe that seeking help for mental health issues is a sign of weakness.<sup>1</sup>

## • MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Only **25%** of men aged 18-34 with depression received treatment in 2024.<sup>2</sup>

## • MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINES

There has been a **40%** increase in calls to crisis hotlines by men aged 18-34 since 2020.<sup>3</sup>

## • DIGITAL ADDICTION

**60%** of men aged 18-29 spend more than 5 hours per day on social media, correlating with higher rates of anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders.<sup>4</sup>



## SUICIDE RATES

Suicide remains the **second leading cause of death** for men aged 15-34 in 2024, with a rate **15%** higher than it was a decade ago.<sup>5</sup>



## SOCIAL ISOLATION

**50%** of men aged 18-24 report feeling lonely "frequently or always," up from **30%** a decade earlier.<sup>6</sup>





## SPIRITUAL IMPACT

Imagine walking into a church, a place meant to be a sanctuary, yet finding yourself uncomfortable speaking the truth about what's really going on inside you. This is the reality for countless young men today.

In a world where vulnerability is seen as weakness, men silently carry burdens that crush them from the inside out. The rising mental health crisis among men isn't just a social issue—it's a spiritual one.

As Christians, we have clear directives to "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Yet, the data suggests that many men feel overburdened and overwhelmed by the suffocating silence of isolation. We need to ask ourselves why our communities of faith, which claim to be a refuge, are being passed over by men who instead choose withdrawal, fearing judgment and misunderstanding.

How can we truly see these men who are actively choosing to be unseen? What will it take to offer a haven where broken and weary men can bring their pain—without judgment, without shame?

I believe it must start with breaking down the walls of stigma and opening the doors wider to mental health conversations. Spiritual well-being and mental health are not separate issues. As Jesus ministered to the whole person—body, mind, and soul—we are called to do the same.

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# SOCIAL IMPACT

When a man's mental health is left untreated, the ripple effect doesn't stop with him. It spreads. Broken relationships, rising violence, spiraling substance abuse, and the gradual erosion of the very fabric that holds communities together are just some of the consequences. These statistics are more than just numbers; each data point represents a fractured life, a disconnected family, and a community stretched thin by a crisis.

Mental health struggles create invisible scars that eventually become visible in the form of social decay. Workplaces lose productivity, families strain under the pressure of untreated issues, and communities find themselves wrestling with the aftershocks of violence and addiction. We cannot afford to let this continue unchecked.

We need to keep fighting by destigmatizing mental health services, providing accessible resources, and offering proactive, preventative support to young men. These aren't luxuries of a spoiled generation; they're lifelines to meaningful living. If we continue to ignore the growing mental health crisis among men, we are allowing the very foundation of our communities to continue to weaken.







# 02 PHYSICAL HEALTH

## • DIABETES PREVALENCE

10% of men aged 20-39 have diabetes in 2024, a 50% increase from 2000.<sup>1</sup>

## • CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

28% of men aged 25-44 have hypertension in 2024, up from 18% in 2000.<sup>2</sup>

## • CANCER SCREENING

Only 45% of men aged 25-39 have received recommended cancer screenings in 2024, despite rising rates of testicular and colorectal cancer.<sup>3</sup>

## • LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy for men in the U.S. has stagnated at 76 years, with younger men potentially facing shorter lifespans due to rising chronic health conditions.<sup>4</sup>

## • DECLINING PHYSICAL FITNESS

Only 23% of men aged 18-34 meet the recommended physical activity guidelines in 2024, down from 40% in 2010.<sup>5</sup>



## OBESITY RATES

42% of men aged 20-39 are obese in 2024, a 20% increase since 2010.<sup>6</sup>



## SLEEP DISORDERS

35% of men aged 18-34 report chronic sleep problems in 2024, up from 20% a decade earlier.<sup>7</sup>





## SPIRITUAL IMPACT

The sacred Scriptures inform us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This is not just a poetic metaphor; it's a definitive statement declaring that we honor and care for the physical vessels that God has entrusted to us. Yet, as rates of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic conditions rise among young men, we see a growing disconnect between this sacred responsibility and how we live.

This isn't just about health statistics, it's about spiritual stewardship. Our physical well-being is intertwined with our spiritual health. When men neglect their bodies, they're not just harming themselves physically; they're signaling deeper wounds—emotional or spiritual crises that have gone unaddressed.

The church must embrace and promote a theology that honors our bodies without idolizing them. It's a delicate balance—one that recognizes the body as a sacred gift without making it the center of our worship. Just as spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting shape our hearts and minds, physical discipline shapes us holistically. When we honor the body, we honor the God who created it, and,

in doing so, we become more in tune with our emotional, mental, and spiritual health.

If "the body keeps the score," as trauma experts remind us, then we need to keep count and play to win. Neglecting the body has spiritual consequences, just as caring for it can lead to spiritual renewal. The church's mission is not just to save souls but to help people live fully integrated lives—lives where the care of the body is inseparable from the care of the soul. In this way, we help men engage in true spiritual stewardship, where every aspect of their being—physical, emotional, and spiritual—reflects the image of God.

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## SOCIAL IMPACT

When a man's health deteriorates, so does his ability to contribute—whether to his family, his workplace, or his broader community. Rising rates of chronic illness lead to ballooning healthcare costs, and we begin to see families stretched thin.

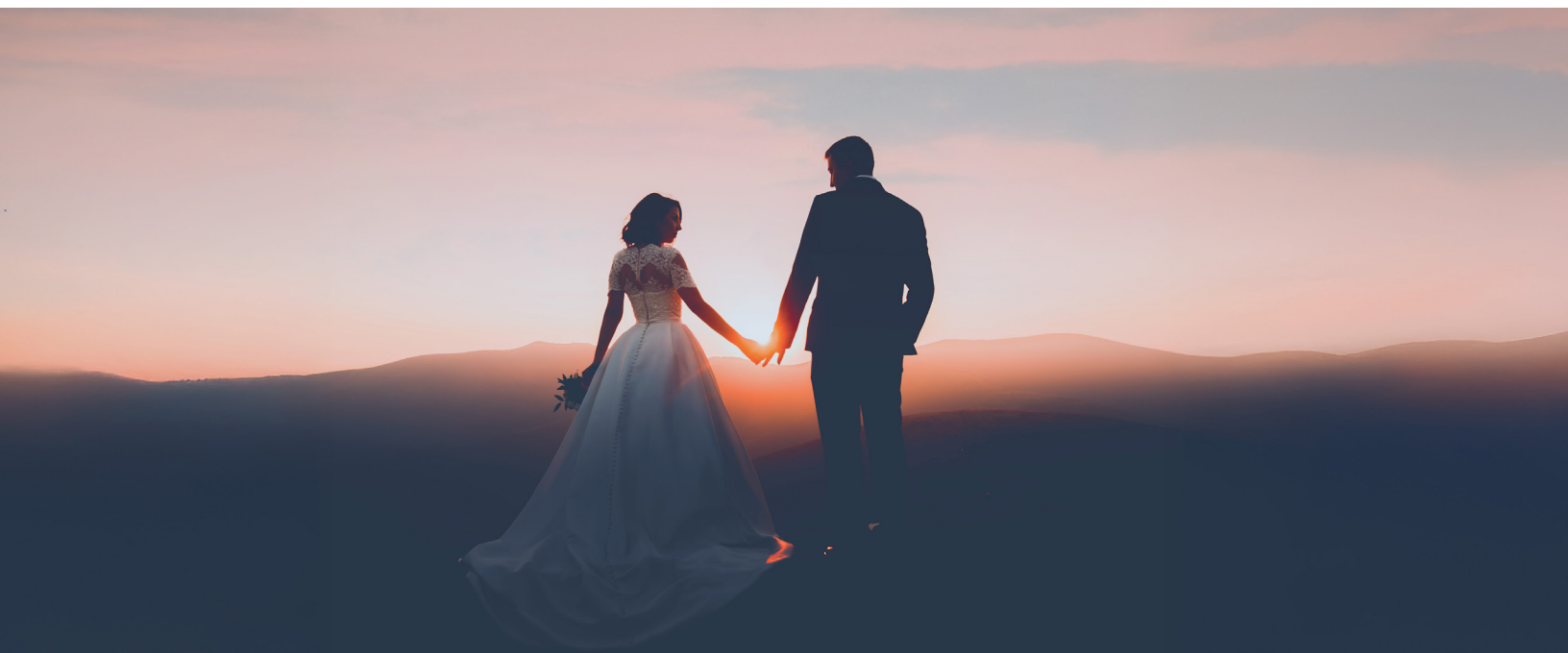
As a society, we literally cannot afford to turn a blind eye to these trends. If we continue down this path without intervention, the future will be burdened by increasing healthcare costs, shorter lifespans, and generations of men who are unable to thrive.

Communities, organizations, and leaders must rally around solutions that prioritize health—not just through reactive treatments but through proactive care. Active lifestyles, healthy eating, and preventive measures need to become the norm, not the exception. This isn't just about saving lives; it's about creating a future where families, communities, and economies flourish, supported by healthy, vibrant men who are empowered to live full lives.





# 03 SOCIAL ISOLATION AND RELATIONSHIPS



## • FATHERHOOD TRENDS

**35%** of Millennial men aged 30-39 are fathers, compared to **50%** of Gen X men at the same age.<sup>1</sup>

## • SOCIAL ISOLATION

**50%** of men aged 18-24 report feeling lonely "frequently or always," up from **30%** a decade earlier.<sup>2</sup>

## • GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES

**45%** of men aged 18-29 believe traditional gender roles are outdated, compared to **20%** in 2000.<sup>3</sup>

## **31% MARRIAGE RATE**

Only **31%** of Millennial men are married in 2024, compared to **42%** of Gen X men when they were the same age.<sup>4</sup>

## **25% RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

Only **25%** of men aged 18-34 regularly attend religious services in 2024, down from **40%** in 2000.<sup>5</sup>





## SPIRITUAL IMPACT

The center of society is found in the family, the community, and the Church as the body of Christ. These aren't merely human inventions; they are divinely ordained institutions where individuals find identity, belonging, and spiritual growth.

The decline in marriage rates, increasing loneliness, and lack of religious engagement are not just societal shifts, they again point to a deeper spiritual crisis. When men are disconnected from the traditional anchors of family and faith, they lose access to the vital relationships and spiritual nourishment that allow them to flourish.

The Church must do a better job of actively cultivating spaces that foster meaningful community, intentional relationships, and deep spiritual connection. Men who feel isolated need more than sermons—they need mentors, spiritual fathers, and soul friends.

**THE DECLINE IN MARRIAGE RATES, INCREASING LONELINESS, AND LACK OF RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT ARE NOT JUST SOCIETAL SHIFTS—THEY POINT TO A DEEPER SPIRITUAL CRISIS.**







## SOCIAL IMPACT

The breakdown of these traditional social structures has far-reaching consequences for society. Social isolation is closely tied to worsening mental health, reduced emotional support, and even economic instability.

When young men disengage from religious services and community-building activities, they lose not only spiritual direction but also the social support that can keep them grounded during times of struggle.

As traditional family structures weaken and engagement in communal activities declines, society becomes more fragmented and vulnerable

to a host of problems: loneliness, addiction, violence, and mental health crises.

How do we make reconnect men with meaningful social structures? Churches, community organizations, and leaders must offer mentorship, spaces for authentic fellowship, and community-centered solutions to combat isolation. The solution to the social and mental health crises facing young men lies in rebuilding these support systems as well as empowering an army of men to go out and engage those stuck in isolation.



# 04 ECONOMIC STABILITY AND CAREER



## • WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

Only **37%** of men aged 25-34 are satisfied with their jobs, a significant drop from **55%** in 2000.<sup>1</sup>

## • ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

The top **10%** of male earners have seen income increase by **20%** since 2010, while the bottom **50%** have experienced stagnation or decline.<sup>2</sup>

## • HOUSING INSTABILITY

There has been a **25%** increase in homelessness among men aged 18-30 over the past decade.<sup>3</sup>

## • MILITARY SERVICE

Less than **0.5%** of the eligible male population is serving in the military in 2024, compared to **1.5%** in 1980.<sup>4</sup>

## LABOR FORCE



Labor Force: Labor force participation among men aged 25-34 has dropped from 89% in 2000 to **81%** in 2024, largely due to economic shifts and increased automation.<sup>5</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION



Only **40%** of men aged 25-34 have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to **48%** of women.<sup>6</sup>



## SPIRITUAL IMPACT

Economic instability strikes at the very core of a man's identity and sense of worth. For many, work isn't just about earning a paycheck; it's about finding purpose, dignity, and meaning in life. The Bible reinforces this idea, reminding us that finding satisfaction in our work is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 3:13). But as inequality rises, job dissatisfaction spreads, and homelessness increases, many men are left feeling purposeless and disconnected from the value that meaningful work provides.

We have a profound responsibility to minister to those who are struggling financially—those who are unemployed, underemployed, or battling economic insecurity. We are called to act justly

and show mercy for the poor and the marginalized. What would that look like to the young men in your life and in your church?

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## SOCIAL IMPACT

When men struggle to find stable jobs or fulfilling work, the impact is felt far beyond their wallets. Families are strained, mental health deteriorates, and homelessness rises. The growing gap between rich and poor only adds fuel to the fire, creating more tension and fewer opportunities for upward mobility.

To tackle these issues at their core, we need more than temporary solutions. Communities must push for long-term, systemic change; providing better job training, financial literacy education, and affordable housing options. These are essential tools that will allow men to rebuild their lives and regain stability.

This goes beyond economics; it's about restoring dignity, strengthening families, and fostering healthier, safer communities. When men are equipped to overcome financial obstacles, they can contribute more meaningfully to their families and society, ultimately building stronger, more unified communities for everyone.





# 05 SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTION

## • SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Binge drinking among men aged 18-25 has decreased by **10%** over the past decade, but marijuana use has increased by **45%**.<sup>1</sup>

## • SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT

Only **20%** of men aged 18-34 with substance use disorders received treatment in 2024.<sup>2</sup>

## • SEXUAL HEALTH

Rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among men aged 18-24 have increased by **30%** since 2015.<sup>3</sup>



## DIGITAL ADDICTION



**60%** of men aged 18-29 spend more than 5 hours per day on social media, correlating with higher rates of anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders.<sup>4</sup>

## OPIOID CRISIS



Opioid overdose deaths among men aged 25-34 have surged by **30%** since 2019, now accounting for over **60%** of all opioid-related deaths in this age group.<sup>5</sup>



## SPIRITUAL IMPACT

Substance addiction isn't just a physical struggle; it's a profound spiritual battle. In today's society, where the pressures of life often leave men feeling isolated and disconnected, addiction becomes a way to numb the pain or fill the void. Scripture warns us against being mastered by anything other than God (1 Corinthians 6:12), yet addiction traps men in cycles of dependency, pulling them further from the freedom that Christ offers.

Addiction is not just a bad habit—it's a cry for help from those drowning in despair, isolation, and unmet emotional needs. How can the Church

better hear that cry and offer true healing over time? For starters, we have to address the spiritual roots of addiction, helping people confront their pain and brokenness and guiding them toward a restoration and purpose that only God can provide. It's about more than getting sober, it's about discovering a true freedom in Christ and rebuilding a life grounded in hope, love, and grace.

**ADDICTION IS NOT JUST A BAD HABIT—IT'S A CRY FOR HELP FROM THOSE DROWNING IN DESPAIR, ISOLATION, AND UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS.**







## SOCIAL IMPACT

As addiction rates rise and access to treatment remains limited, communities are left to pick up the pieces—dealing with increased crime, homelessness, and overwhelmed healthcare systems. The societal cost is staggering, but the personal toll is even greater, with families shattered, lives lost, and hope slipping away for so many men who are trapped in the cycle of addiction.

Communities and churches must work together to create environments where recovery is possible, where men are not only given the tools to overcome addiction but also a purpose to pursue. It's about reclaiming lives, restoring families, and rebuilding communities—one man at a time.

Addressing the addiction crisis requires more than just access to treatment—it demands a cultural shift. Prevention must begin early, especially for young men who often lack the emotional tools and support systems to cope with pain in healthy ways. Mentorship, open dialogue, and timely intervention can disrupt the cycle before it takes hold. Churches, schools, and community organizations must not only be places of healing, but also of formation. Spaces are needed where young men learn to process emotion, build resilience, and find identity outside of substances. If we want to stem the tide of addiction, we must build ecosystems of care where men are known, needed, and never left to fight alone.







# CONCLUSION: THE CALL TO ACTION FOR THE CHURCH

The majority of the data highlights worsening conditions in key areas of young men's lives, indicating a negative momentum that, if left unchecked, could have dire consequences for both the individuals affected and society as a whole.

At Man in the Mirror, we are committed to leveraging this data to guide our efforts in developing and implementing strategies that can effectively reverse these trends. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach—one that integrates mental health support, physical health promotion, social engagement, and economic stability initiatives. We firmly believe that with the right support through initiatives like Spiritual Fathers, young men can overcome these challenges and lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

This collection of data serves as a critical call to action for the church at large to engage the men in their communities. It is imperative that we prioritize the well-being of young men, ensuring they have the resources, relationships, and support needed to thrive. Otherwise, society will continue to spiral. These statistics only serve as a reinforcement to our felt realities, which begs the question:

How long must we report on the decline of men until we wake up to the magnitude of the problem and act on the urgency to pursue change?





**MAN IN THE MIRROR'S MISSION IS TO ENGAGE CHRISTIAN MEN AROUND THE WORLD IN  
MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS THAT CHANGE LIVES AND BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

Our Area Directors are ready to serve you and your church in communities around the country.  
For more information about Man in the Mirror or Mirror Labs, or to connect to our team, go to  
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