

ENTRUST MEN

A HANDBOOK
FOR DEVELOPING
AN EFFECTIVE
MEN'S MINISTRY



WITH 12 MONTHLY
DEVOTIONS



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“We will see men who are excited and motivated to reach other men to follow Christ and see them disciplined.”

“We’re excited about how our Brotherhood Breakfast develops our men into more faithful disciples.”

I have a friend who genuinely believes that Bigfoot exists and is stealthily roaming the woods of East Tennessee, avoiding the eyes of all of mankind. I, on the other hand, along with most, understand Bigfoot to be an imaginary figure created in the minds of men. I feel the same way about Brotherhood Breakfasts. While a brotherhood breakfast may exist that is accomplishing a greater purpose than the Sunday morning aroma of bacon, in my experience, such breakfast times are more like Bigfoot—if they are working toward the development of disciples, we rarely see them.

How do we develop a men’s ministry that works and that will move the men in our church towards deeper discipleship? I hope this book will help you think through that question to view your men’s ministry as a discipleship tool rather than another church program. When church leadership makes this shift in thinking, we will, in time, see the Bigfoot of men’s ministry: We will see men who are excited and motivated to reach other men to follow Christ and see them disciplined.

I want to share some foundational ideas for an effective men’s ministry in the next few pages. These are not instructions; rather, they are action steps. These concepts will help ensure that churches are building the ministry correctly and avoiding common pitfalls of starting a ministry that targets the discipleship of men.



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SESSION
1

LAYING A PROPER FOUNDATION

(Complete this session prior to reading pages 5-13.)

Discussion Starters

Before you begin reading the next section, answer the following questions as a Men’s Ministry Leadership Team:

What do you feel should be foundational elements of our Men’s Ministry?

What are the top three foundational elements that we must include in our Men’s Ministry?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Prayer Time

Pray for your church and the men that are in your congregation. Pray for men by name that you want to see involved in this ministry.

LAYING A PROPER FOUNDATION

Biblical Masculinity

The conversation surrounding biblical masculinity has become more popular over the past few years because of complementarianism in the church. Talking about the proper roles of men and women in the church requires us to ask new questions about both genders. As we lay an appropriate foundation for ministry to men, we must understand not only the roles of men and women but the entirety of biblical anthropology. What do the Scriptures teach regarding manhood?

While we can approach this question in several ways, I prefer author Eric Mason's viewpoint. In *Manhood Restored*, Mason writes, "Jesus is the prototype for men. All of us men are only as manly as it relates to the standard set by Jesus." Mason is encouraging us to develop our model of masculinity from the example Jesus provided in His life and ministry.

How do we describe the masculinity of Jesus? I find it helpful to look at a passage of Scripture that Matthew records in his Gospel. In this account, Jesus asks Peter this vital question, "But Who do you say that I am?" Jesus' question required Peter to answer who Jesus was for himself.

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

In this passage, Jesus asked a pointed question: "Who do people say that I am?" The people of Jesus' day were trying to figure out who He was, what He had come to accomplish, and whether or not He was the Savior He claimed to be. Notice how people described Jesus: "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah." People looked at Jesus' life, actions, and attitudes and thought He was one of these three men. Why? What in Jesus' life caused people to think this? Answering that question will help us to better define masculinity.

What were the similarities between Jesus and those whom others thought His character and actions represented? I would propose that those answers are examples of biblical manhood. If this is true, then we can look at the character and lives of these three men for examples of how we should approach biblical masculinity.

First, let us consider John the Baptist. I know that some of you are immediately thinking that we might consider John the Baptist in our pursuit to define biblical masculinity because John was an outdoorsman. He wore a garment of "camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey." (Matthew 3:4, NKJV) Matthew portrays John the Baptist as a "man's man," a real outdoorsman that knew how to live off the land. While these characteristics are manly, Jesus was not mistaken for John because of them. Also, the church shouldn't define masculinity by these traits. While John would have been more of an outdoorsman than today's man, being an outdoorsman is not the defining mark of his life that caused people to confuse him with Jesus. It was the message

of John's heart rather than his outward attributes.

John was the "forerunner" for Jesus. He came with the message, "the kingdom of the Lord is at hand, repent!" (Matthew 3:2) John was a man who called for people far from God to come close to Him through repentance. He was a messenger of God who spoke into the lives of others on God's behalf. When people saw Jesus and wondered who He was, they said, "He is like John. He speaks for God!" Biblical masculinity must include men being spokesmen for God. Being spokesmen should be true of us as men, as fathers, as husbands—all are called to be spokesmen for God.

God's original plan for the family and society is that men be the spokesmen in their homes and communities. I recognize that some may not like the complementarian understanding of God's created order. But, the truth remains that God commissions men with this responsibility. Let us consider when the Lord gives Adam the command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam carried the responsibility to speak the commands from God to Eve. Adam was the spokesman for God. Men have the unique call in the church to be preachers of the Word—the ones who declare the words of God to the people of God for the worship of God. Men have a special and unique call on their lives to be the spokesmen of God. As men who desire to develop other men, encouragement to follow the example of the prototypical man should be a part of our ministry. As leaders, we must press the men in our church to be spokesmen of the Lord in their families, communities, and the world!

Not only did the world look to Jesus and declare that He was like John the Baptist, but Peter recognized that others also said He resembled Elijah. Elijah, like John, could be understood as a spokesman for God, but Elijah also is a strongman. The account of Elijah is one of our favorite Old Testament accounts to tell. Elijah demonstrates to us that he was a man who stood up for what was right, strong in his faith, and bold for the things of God. This, being a strongman, should be understood as a second marker of biblical masculinity.

The problem with the statement, "strongman is a mark of biblical masculinity" is finding a definition of strongman. The world communicates that a strongman has certain physical attributes, but that's not what we mean, nor is it what people meant when they said Jesus reminded them of Elijah. The world also tells us that a strongman would be prohibited from displaying emotions and feelings and would have no need for others in his life. They believe a strongman can do life by himself. But Elijah proves just the opposite as a strongman.

Notice that Elijah calls out the prophets of Baal to face him on the mountain and prove that their god is alive. The prophets of Baal do come and beg their nonexistent god to bring fire down upon the altar...but nothing happens. Then Elijah, strong in the Lord, covers the altar with water and prays for God to prove Himself. God sends down fire down to consume the altar. Then, the strongman kills each of the prophets of Baal with the sword. Admittedly, the strength needed to decapitate with a sword is quite the physical feat and an interesting rabbit to chase, but that is not the point of this discussion.) Elijah serves as an example of a strongman in both faith and trust in the Lord.

Still, there is more to the account of Elijah. The strongman runs in fear. He runs because he is afraid of Jezebel, who has threatened to kill him. He hides and seeks for God to take his life. After such a marvelous victory over the prophets of Baal, he feels like such a failure that he wants God to take his life. How could this strongman go from the mountain with God's power to the broom tree by himself? Is he a strongman after all? When Elijah finds himself under that broom tree, he does something that further proves that he is a strongman. He asks for help!

Seeking help from others is often seen by our world today as a weakness. But this strongman, under a broom tree, asks God to help him. True biblical masculinity is being strong enough to know when you need to ask for help. First, we ask for help from the most obvious source—the Lord. But, we also all come to a point where we need to ask each other for help. Recognizing that we can't live the Christian life alone is true strength. We all need help. Most men want to live like an island, disconnected from true accountability and help; however, we need to be reminded of the words of Steve Sonderman in *Mobilizing Men for One-on-One Ministry*: "Isolation isn't masculinity; it's stupidity!"

Jesus, as the prototypical man, also asked for help. Remember His prayer in John 17:13–19: "But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." Or do you remember Jesus crying out to God in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." The strongest men—Elijah

and even Jesus—knew that their strength was found in asking for help from another. Asking for help displays strength!

People thought Jesus was Elijah, a strongman; they thought he was John the Baptist, a spokesman for God. Finally, I want you to see that the crowds thought Jesus was Jeremiah or one of the prophets, a Servant. We know Jeremiah as the weeping prophet who served in a time of great difficulty for the people of God, calling them to hope in repentance. Jeremiah had the appointment that no one wanted, but he knew he must fulfill it in obedience to the Lord.

JEREMIAH 1:4-10

*Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak,
for I am only a youth.” But the Lord said to me,
“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
declares the Lord.”
Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth.
And the Lord said to me,
“Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.
See, I have set you this day over nations and kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”*

We do not have to look very far to see the servant heart of Jesus—our model for masculinity. We are reminded of the countercultural picture of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, serving them by humbling Himself.

We could, of course, talk about the cross, which is the ultimate picture of Jesus serving all of mankind. You can’t see the life of Jesus without seeing the servant Jesus, as we see in Jeremiah. Yet, Jesus’ masculinity runs counter to the picture of masculinity the world paints for us.

Masculinity involves servanthood. For this reason, the greatest of the men in the church of Jesus Christ are called deacons—diakonos—servants of the church. The biblical model is clear: biblical masculinity requires service to the kingdom, and Jeremiah is an example for us.

When the people of Jesus' day saw how He lived His life, they thought He was John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah because he lived as a spokesman, a strongman, and a servant. All of these are characteristics of the men we must become if we desire to live with a proper understanding of masculinity. All of these characteristics are possible for us to obtain and fair expectations of the men we are leading in our churches. We should include these three characteristics as we think about the men we want to “produce” from our ministries. Men's ministry leaders should plan and design a strategy that helps the church produce men who are spokesmen, strongmen, and servants.

Jesus possesses one characteristic that you and I must consider, yet we cannot emulate it. Jesus is our Savior. We can't emulate that; we can't copy that. We must trust fully in Him to be saved, and the truth is that we can't be real men unless we first trust in Jesus for our salvation.

Masculinity is difficult to define. If we depend on the world to define it for us, we will find ourselves confused. We must look instead to Jesus to discover the true meaning of masculinity. In Jesus, we find that a biblical man is a spokesman for God, a strongman in God, and a servant for God! The local church must disciple men to emulate these traits if we desire to have an authentic ministry to men.

Biblical Discipleship

We will discuss the practical application of discipleship in more detail in subsequent chapters, but a foundational understanding of discipleship is beneficial at this point. Defining discipleship can be a difficult task. While the biblical model is our blueprint, the language used to describe it is often changed and adapted for particular contexts. I want to offer some definitions that may be helpful to you as you consider discipling the men of your church:

“Discipleship is an intentional journey of equipping a believer to become more like Jesus Christ through the study and application of biblical teaching, resulting in transforming values and behavior and authentic community with other disciples.”

—Dwayne Parker, MBCB

“[I]ntentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit to replicate faithful followers of Christ.’ In other words, a disciple learns what Jesus said and lives out what Jesus did.”

—Robby Gallaty, Replicate Ministries

“A disciple is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do. A disciple is not a person who has things under control or knows a lot of things. Disciples are simply people who are constantly revising their affairs to carry through on their decision to follow Jesus.”

—Dallas Willard, Author/Teacher

These definitions are helpful, but three critical values should be a part of the DNA when considering men’s discipleship. First, you must be intentional. Men like to know they are spending their time well. You must be intentional in each meeting while also using methods that are intentional as well. Considering the meetings, it is vitally important to avoid wasted time. I know that men like to fellowship by talking college football and bragging about their latest kill or catch, but a biblical discipleship meeting should not be spent this way. When you have meetings for fellowship, be intentional about discussing football or the latest hunt—but discipleship meetings should focus on discipleship. Men want to know what they are attending, and they want to leave knowing they accomplished the purpose of their time. Remember to keep your discipleship intentional.

Second, discipleship to men must be relational. Many people believe that men are not relational, but this could not be further from the truth. Admittedly, the relationships that men desire among other men are different from those relationships that women desire with other women. But that does not negate the fact that men desire relationships. Someone once said, “Men stand shoulder to shoulder, not face to face.” This is the type of relationship that men desire, shoulder to shoulder. Part of the reason why Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has been male-dominated in the past is that men like to work with other men for the sake of the gospel. Men need other men in their lives if they are to experience true discipleship in their lives. “The Word of God does not teach an educationally focused model. It teaches a relationally focused model.”¹ We will explore this idea in more detail later.

Finally, discipleship to men must become a part of the culture of your church. I often receive phone calls from people asking me for help with

¹ (Top 10 – discipleship.org)

their men's ministry. I have learned that many of them aren't prepared to talk about men's discipleship as a culture or even strategy. Rather, what many want is for me to offer the latest and greatest "program" or "material" that they can give their men and then claim they have a men's ministry. Creating a discipleship culture means changing our conversations, what we celebrate, and how we measure success in men's ministry. Creating a discipleship culture is our goal, not producing a new program or offering a new study opportunity. Admittedly, building a culture requires time, which is why we need to be reminded of biblical endurance.

Biblical Endurance

On a recent podcast, I heard author John Mark Comer say, "Anything worth doing will take time to do." This has never been more true than when we talk about ministry to men. We live in an instant world with expectations of change that cannot be accomplished as rapidly as we would prefer. As a result, one of the most difficult parts of a men's ministry to overcome is the fact that it takes time. Impatience is not unique to men's ministry; it is true of the whole of discipleship. But, gaining that initial "buy-in" is more difficult with a men's ministry, and I think that struggle occurs for many reasons. First, men have all seen the failure of some attempt at a silver bullet solution before and are not interested in signing up for the next "best thing" only to see it become a repeat failure. Second, men have often seen previous leadership fade away; without consistent leadership, men tend to believe this next attempt at men's ministry will simply fall away again. Third, I think men are fearful of what might be expected of them and also not being able to meet those expectations. The issue of staying power (or endurance) in a men's ministry should be acknowledged, and the ministry should be built to avoid these pitfalls.

Not only do men fade away in most men's ministries because of the reasons above, but also because results are often slow to happen and difficult to measure. The journey of discipleship is just that—a journey. It isn't a sprint; it is a marathon that lasts a lifetime. Biblically speaking, it is the process of sanctification, which is a never-ending journey towards Christlikeness that begins at salvation and continues until the point of our glorification. The expectation of immediate results hinders men's endurance. A healthy men's ministry must teach the sanctification expectations and limitations of the discipleship journey.

The disciples of Jesus are great examples of this principle of sanctification. Jesus spent three years with these men, teaching them to obey

and modeling how they should carry their cross. Yet, we know that they still had struggles; they even failed Him at times, and one even betrayed Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. We must consistently communicate this honest consideration of sanctification as a journey so our men know the goal is not perfection tomorrow but sanctification today. Appropriate communication will help men endure.

Paul is also a great model for us concerning biblical endurance. We read his testimony as recorded in Acts 9 as if Paul's conversion was somehow special or unique from the rest of the men. We often preach it that way, "From Persecutor to Preacher," as if Paul never struggled with sin, failed his Lord, or was frustrated with his sanctification process. However, we know that this is not true. Paul struggled in his journey just as all men do; we see evidence of this in his letters to the churches.

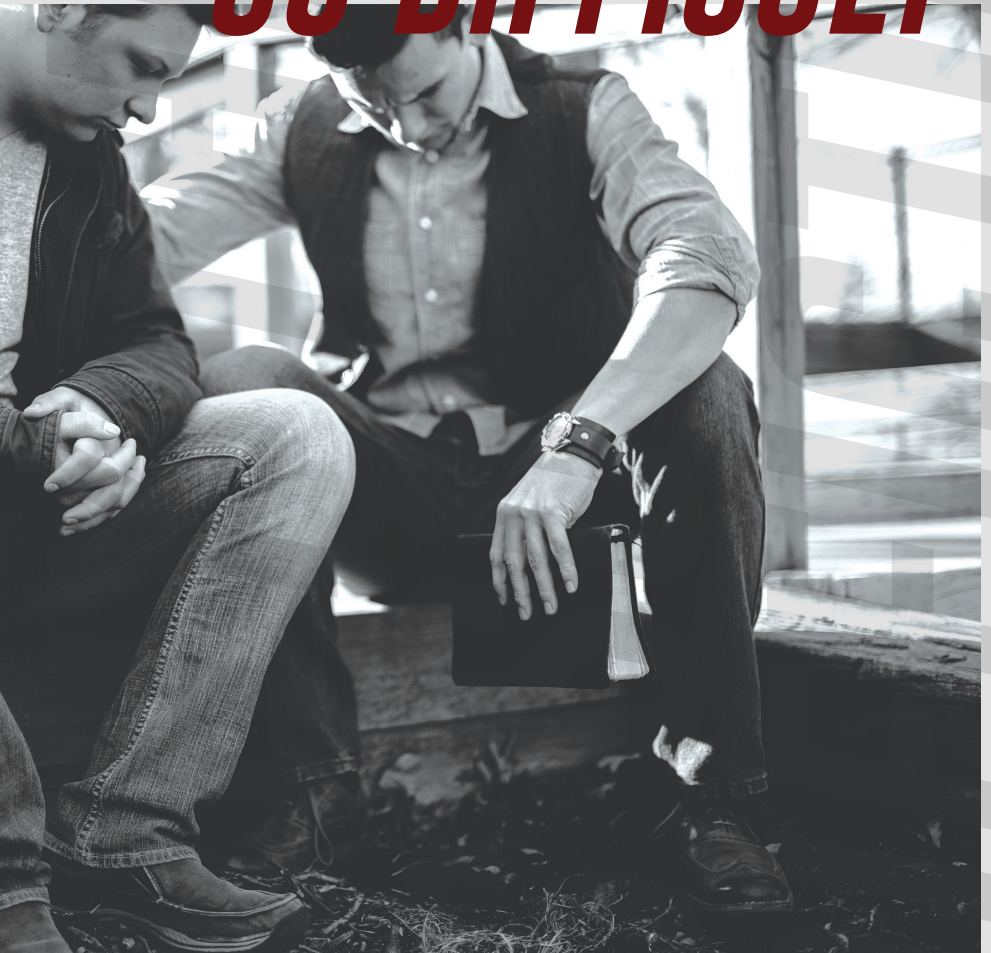
ROMANS 7:15-20

"For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me."

Paul, like all men, should recognize that the journey that we are on is lifelong, with some victories and even some failures.

This theology of biblical endurance must become part of the DNA of your men's ministry. We must clearly communicate that the expectation is for the men in our churches to become more like Jesus, not become Jesus Himself. We must take the discipleship journey slowly, without having more expectations of our men than Jesus had for His disciples; we cannot be in such a hurry to see results that it causes men to give up on the work of sanctification. Dallas Willard says, "Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day." Don't be in a hurry; slow down, enjoy the small victories and allow the Lord to change the men in your church in His time.

WHY THIS IS SO DIFFICULT



(Complete this session prior to reading pages 17-20.)

Discussion Starters

Before you begin reading the next section, answer the following questions as a Men’s Ministry Leadership Team:

Why do you feel that Men’s Ministry has been so difficult in the past?

What are some illegitimate (excuses) reasons this ministry is difficult?

What are some legitimate reasons this ministry is difficult?

How can you structure your ministry to overcome some of these reasons that a ministry to men is difficult?

Prayer Time

Pray for your leadership team as you begin to think about building a structure that helps overcome some of the obstacles to an effective Men’s Ministry.

WHY THIS IS SO DIFFICULT

If you have ever attempted to organize, establish or facilitate a men's ministry in your church, you understand that it is a difficult task. I often hear men's ministry leaders lamenting the difficulty of organizing a solid ministry. Some issues do cause a men's ministry to be more difficult than others to start and maintain, but many of the reasons I hear are illegitimate.

First, many people believe men are more difficult to disciple because they are less spiritual than women. This mindset comes from anecdotal data that suggests fewer men than women are involved in spiritual endeavors. However, this anecdotal data is simply untrue. According to Pew Research, 49% of Southern Baptists are male. According to U.S. Census Data, 49% of the United States population is male. The data reveals no more females than males are associated with Southern Baptist life. Combine that data with your anecdotal data of "seeing" more women than men, and you may assume less maturity in men than women. But that is the very reason why we need intentional discipleship. Men are just as capable of spirituality as women. Nowhere does Scripture even hint that a distinction exists between the spiritual abilities of men and women. (Galatians 3:28)

We give a second illegitimate reason that men are somehow less intelligent than women. Men and women learn differently, and even among men, there are different styles of learning. However, learning differently is not the same as not being able to learn at all. I would encourage you to consider the studies that prove this. The bottom line is this: men and women have equal intelligence and capacity to learn. However, the differences in their learning styles mean that the methods that we use to teach, and thus disciple, should be varied.

A third illegitimate reason we give for the difficulty of men's ministry is that men are somehow less relational than women. If we consider those first disciples, we will see that their relationships were a critical part of their development. Just as with intelligence, it is true that men and women are different when it comes to relationships. As discussed earlier, women like relationships that involve a lot of face-to-face conversations. Men, however, prefer relationships that are shoulder to shoulder. This is why men can legitimately build relationships with other men by cutting down a tree, sitting around a fire, and other relational settings that we often discount. Men like to have friends and buddies, thus proving that they need other men in their lives to encourage their faith.

You have probably heard and maybe even believed at least one of these illegitimate reasons why men's ministry is so hard to organize and implement. I would encourage you to set those reasons against the Word; you will see that while reasons do exist for why ministry to men is legitimately difficult, the reasons above are not among them. Rather, the reasons are of a more spiritual nature.

First, the enemy of men's ministry is among us and desires to see no such ministry be effective. That enemy is Satan. Generally speaking, Satan does not desire any biblical ministry of the church to be successful. An effective men's ministry is not a unique target for Satan's schemes, but I do believe that Satan desires for us to neglect an effective ministry to men. Men play a unique role in the church and the family. Thus, Satan knows that if he can prevent the spiritual development of men, then he can inhibit the growth and strength of these two most foundational institutions.

The reality of Satan as a distractor in the work of the church should not be a surprise to those of us who serve the church. We know that Scripture teaches us that Satan desires to "kill, steal and destroy." (John 10:10) While this applies to the individual lives of the men in our churches, it also applies to the greater work of the church. Satan knows that disruption by difficulty can be as detrimental to the work of the church as any other hindrance. For this reason, we must take into consideration the battle to

which we are called. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:12–13). Indeed, our battle is spiritual, and we must be prepared to fight against our enemy as he puts stumbling blocks of difficulty before us.

A second great hindrance in a ministry to men is the simple and prevalent sin of pride. This may be one of the greatest difficulties faced by the church today. When the gospel is proclaimed, we know it does not go away empty, and yet men sit petrified and unmoving. Pride prohibits the work of the Spirit in the lives of men. This has significant implications, particularly in the ideas of community and accountability for men. When men are outside of community and accountability, they open themselves up to distractions and temptations to sin. It is, again, pride of heart that prohibits us from building and participating in authentic relationships.

This difficulty is a struggle to overcome, and the answer is using similar ammunition to what we are given for fighting Satan. We must also, with biblical endurance, facilitate the breaking down of pride to build authentic relationships between men. I would encourage you to consider strategies, methods, and opportunities that allow men to be vulnerable with other men to help overcome this hindrance. A movement is happening now among some Christian men that intentionally calls men to vulnerability and authenticity. These ministry opportunities go by titles like “Deer Camp.” It is a closed circle of guys who come together on a given weekend to intentionally be vulnerable among one another. This may work for your context. Regardless, you should have a strategy to bring men together in an authentic community. If you don’t, this difficulty of pride will continue to hinder good spiritual conversation.

Finally, another difficulty for ministry to men is a theological misunderstanding that hinders many men’s pursuit of discipleship and maturity in our churches. This theological misunderstanding has to do with both our soteriology as well as the Christian life and the processes of sanctification. This theological struggle may be more prominent in the South, the Bible Belt, than in any other section of the country. Some have the mistaken idea that “good ole boy” Christianity is sufficient for the life of the follower of Jesus. And yet, we see throughout the Word that this is not sufficient. Be sure to hear me; I am not suggesting that we are saved by works or that works somehow put us in a preferred position before our Lord. Rather, I will simply declare that the Word is clear that we will be

known by our works and that those who abide in Christ will be productive in fruit. The unfortunate misconception that causes difficulty is this: “My proclaimed salvation is sufficient; growth and sanctification are not only unnecessary for my salvation but also not something I am interested in pursuing.” Admittedly, most men would not vocalize that in the way I have here, but their actions and dedication levels communicate it weekly.

This failure to continue sanctification beyond a profession of faith hinders the ministry to men. Men must be found faithful and growing. Therefore, part of the process of developing a men’s ministry must include a biblical convincing that we are on this journey of faith and must be consistently pursuing that sanctification. This means that we must communicate to men, even those who are not willing to be in discipleship relationships, that they need to consider how they should grow and mature. The church has long used the pulpit to communicate the great need for the continued growth of the believer, and we must be sure to communicate this message there. We should also consider the relational element of communicating with men. We should enter into discipleship relationships with men so that we might slowly and intentionally convince them that spiritual growth is a part of who they are as followers of Jesus. Many times, we are looking for “Hungry FAT” men to invest in (Hungry for Change, Faithful, Available, and Teachable). These are the ones who are ready and willing to spend time learning and being discipled. This is the ideal. Many of our men may be faithful, available, and teachable, yet they aren’t or don’t seem to be hungry for the Word to change their lives. These men need to be spurred on towards Christlikeness.

In the end, we can’t let the difficulties of ministry prevent us from doing what we have been called to do. Most people have one of two responses to stressors or difficulty: some shut down and are unable to function under stress, while others thrive under that same stress. No matter how you respond, too much difficulty will often exhaust us and cause us to want to stop. Whatever you do, do not stop! You cannot quit! An effective discipleship ministry to men is too valuable to let difficulty prohibit the work. Instead, pray for strength, gather with like-minded men to encourage one another, and press on for the sake of the gospel!



SOME STRUCTURE

(Complete this session prior to reading pages 23-30.)

Discussion Starters

Before you begin reading the next section, answer the following questions as a Men’s Ministry Leadership Team:

What ministry structures have you attempted in the past that haven’t been effective in working with the men in your congregation?

What are some new structural ideas you have that you think will work as you move forward?

As you consider the structure of your Men’s Ministry, who should be involved in the planning and implementation of the ministry?

Prayer Time

Pray about the additional people that should be involved in the Men’s Ministry. Pray that God will give you wisdom as you begin to build some structure for the ministry.

SOME STRUCTURE

When people start or restart a ministry to men, they often want to begin with some structure. I find that more often than not, they are looking for a program, an existing structure, or some previously successful model to use for guidance. Unfortunately, that is not the place to begin. You need the foundation of all we have already addressed before you begin to develop the structure, but that is not all you need. Remember, the failure rate of a men's ministry is high, and the work can be frustrating. For those reasons, prayer must be our first, primary means of structure development.

Prayer is the most powerful tool we possess as the people of God but often the most ignored or practiced. I would encourage you to spend intentional time praying specifically for this ministry. If you are a pastor, include this in your pastoral prayers during a morning worship service. If you are a lay leader, with your pastor's approval, you could develop a 30-, 40-, or 60-day prayer guide praying specifically for the development, implementation, and leadership of the ministry to men. (See sample prayer guides in the Appendix.)

As you begin to pray through the development of some structure for your ministry, it is always good to consider the current condition of the

men's ministry in your church. By this, I mean you should thoroughly evaluate all the places where your men are already being disciplined. We should never discount the ordinary means of grace the Lord gives us that play a role in the spiritual development of men. It may be that men are being disciplined in current intentional Sunday school classes, weekly prayer meeting times, and even during a discipleship hour on Sunday or another day of the week. Often, we discount these already existing places of discipleship because they don't sit under an intentional model. Rather than discount or delete these existing ministries, consider how you might include them in the ministry to men that you will be developing.

It is a good idea to consider not only those places where the Lord and your church may be discipling men but also your current demographic. As you begin to think about when and where you might offer additional discipleship opportunities, it is good to know the age, marital status, work schedules, and even type and location of work of the men in your church. In the last context in which I served, it worked best for us to have a weekly prayer time and Bible study at six o'clock on Tuesday mornings because most of our men either worked out of town or were teachers, coaches or principals. They needed to be finished and on the way to work by seven o'clock. This may not be the best idea if all of your men work locally or if most of them are retired. Regardless, the point remains the same. You need to know about the lives of your men so you can know how to best reach them.

If you find that your men are not in the town in which you minister, you will need to consider how to make in-person discipleship happen in their lives. I know this is the case for a lot of rural Mississippi. Pastors in rural settings often are not able to have lunch with the men in their church; they have to find other times to connect. I would suggest that you consider how to connect to those men between the days already set for physically meeting together. For example, you may have a group of men that you include in a group text. You might even find some guys willing to do a Zoom meeting with you during lunch when they can't be together in person. Remember from our previous discussion that discipleship for men is relational. Learn about your men so that you can find the most effective ways to reach them.

As you seek to reach the men in your church, another huge consideration is those in your church who are not being reached. I would encourage you to look around your men's Sunday school classes, your brotherhood breakfast meetings, and other men-only events and take notes of who isn't present. To be clear, I don't think it is healthy to sit at every meeting and

lament over who isn't there. This is not what I am recommending. Rather, intentionally look to see who is absent and consider how you might better reach them. For example, it may be that when you look around your meetings, you see no men between the ages of twenty and thirty. Talk to these men and ask why they are not at the men's meetings. It may be that the meetings are held at a time of day when they can't participate without putting an extra burden on their wives. You will change the time if you want to see them disciplined. You should be prepared for answers that you may not want to hear. These men may respond with something like, "I don't come because it adds no value." Statements like this may seem offensive, but if you want to reach those men, you will be willing to take an honest look at your current ministry and evaluate the effectiveness of your meetings.

To what lengths are you willing to go to reach the "unreached men" in your church and community? This is a difficult question, but it is an area that you must pray through and ask the Lord to strengthen you. I like to consider myself a change agent. I like change, and I am often the one pushing toward change. In my last church, I would intentionally change things to build a culture of change among our people. I also recognize that most people do not like change. So, as you make changes and adaptations to your ministry to men, remember that not everyone is quick to adapt. This speaks yet again to the concept of biblical endurance. Be patient, but be intentional and concerned about the men in your church who need to be reached and disciplined.

A couple of different considerations will help us develop more structure for our men's ministry. First, we need to consider the various life stages of our men and how our structure might better reach them. As we have acknowledged, the life stage of a man will determine the most convenient place and time for meetings. I find that the busiest men are often more likely to be able to meet at times when the church is already meeting. They most likely already set aside the Lord's Day on their calendar for worship and discipleship. Getting them on a Tuesday or Friday night for a Bible study is nearly impossible. I am not suggesting that you can't ever have events on weeknights other than already scheduled services, but it should not be the norm. If you consider life stages, you will probably have a pretty good idea of who will attend your event.

Tribes

Keith Burkhart, in his text *Advanced Men's Ministry Training*, introduces the idea of tribal culture within a men's ministry, which is very

helpful in the discussion concerning structure. As you consider the structure of your ministry, you need to consider those groups of men you want to target, those you need to reach, and those who are already fellowshiping together. These are tribes.

According to Burkhart, a tribe is a “group of people drawn together by common interests, experiences, and/or ambitions.” These interests can be hunting, sports, antique cars, reading, etc. Regardless of the focus of the tribe, all men relate to other men at some level based on their interests, experiences, and ambitions. The tribalism concept is seen in many churches as they host wild game suppers and outdoor and hunting events. Their common interest in hunting draws men with similar interests. When churches have such events, they are creating a tribe of men who relate to one another because of an affinity. Creating and supporting tribes create an “opportunity for your church to meet the spiritual needs of the men in your community in a powerful and effective way.”

Consider these thoughts on how to best incorporate tribalism into your ministry to men.

First, Embrace Tribalism — We often want to fight against small groups of church people who gather together. We call those groups “cliques” and see them as a negative in the family of God. Clique or tribe, however, can be a very useful group experience for church members. We all need a small group of believers to whom we can relate, a group with whom we can share a common experience so that we can have a group to also hold us accountable and help us in our discipleship. In men’s groups, we should embrace tribes and welcome them to use our facilities to join together around that common interest, then use it as an opportunity to reach and disciple men.

Second, Mobilize Tribes — We ought to use our men’s ministry to mobilize men to be on mission as they interact with and share in their unique tribe. For leaders, Burkhart recommends that we “build a men’s ministry that works with instead of against tribal culture.” If we consider the potential impact of mobilizing into tribes, we will be pressed to train and equip our men to be sent out, and we will see men impacted for the kingdom of God. This is similar to J.D. Greear’s call for churches to measure their success by their “sending capacity, not their seating capacity.”

We must embrace the tribes that exist and mobilize our men into their tribes to make a gospel impact. Will you consider some of your men’s common interests and experiences and how you might mobilize them into their tribe? What are some ways that you can equip them to live on mission in their tribe?

Life Stage

As you consider structure, it is helpful to consider your men's life stages as well as their tribes. Life stages refer to the different phases that all individuals pass through in a normal lifetime. These stages (interests, actions, behaviors) are common and uniform throughout the human race: infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, mid-life and old age.

Men can be single, married, married with children, empty nesters, retired, or even widowed. Don't ignore those various life stages of the men you want to reach. Offer various times and spaces for their discipleship. Retired men are available for discipleship at times that are different from those men who are married with small children. As you build your men's ministries, consider the structure that best fits the target group, then set the schedule accordingly.

Considering the life stages of the men you are targeting has its benefits. For example, cross-generational mentoring occurs between men at different stages of their lives, and it is a great need in our churches. Younger men need the example and wisdom of older men, while older men need to connect with the younger generation to gain a better perspective on their challenges. A man who has successfully raised a teenage son can speak truth and wisdom into the life of the father who is just beginning to take the training wheels off his son's bike. At the same time, a younger man raised in a different time and circumstance can equally teach an older man. Before you can create these opportunities for learning and discipleship, you must identify the life stages of the men you desire to reach.

Secondly, life stage considerations allow for like-minded encouragement. As important as having men relate to men in different life stages is the need for peer-to-peer encouragement. Early in my pastoral ministry, I remember feeling that no other men and families were like mine. I thought no other men had the same desires in raising their families. One day, I met Andy and Courtney, who lived across the street from us. They had kids a little younger than my own. I quickly learned that Andy and I shared the same desires for our families. It was a life-changing friendship for me because I realized that I was not the only twenty-something-year-old who wanted to raise my family in a Christian home. This gave me the encouragement to press on.

Men who can find other men in a common life stage can find the encouragement they need to continue raising their families, making decisions, and being faithful. It is important to know that we aren't alone. It is encouraging for men in a common life stage to be discipled together to become the men of God they were created to be.

Staff Led

You have probably heard it said that a pastor's support of a ministry is important to its success. You may have also heard people say that a church will take on the personality of its pastor. Because both of these statements are true, you need to ensure you have the prayers, support, and involvement of both the pastor and the church staff. This can be a sensitive issue to navigate.

The ideal situation is that you are the pastor and that you realize the great need for spiritual men in the church. However, you may be a layperson with the desire to reach and disciple men. One position is not more important than the other; however, a layperson most definitely needs the pastor's support.

As I understand it, the role of the elder in the New Testament is similar to the position of our "pastor" today. Therefore, the pastor is one of the men in the church that sets the vision and values based on the mission Jesus gave the church. Since this is the case, begin by praying with the pastor concerning the formation, continuation, or strengthening of the role of a ministry to men. While it may be tempting to move ahead of your church leadership, and while you may have a legitimate reason to do so, it is not wise. This may require you to be more patient than you want to be, but in the end, it will be worth walking this path together with your staff rather than without them.

You and your pastor/staff can take several steps to begin this ministry to men. First, ask your pastor to pray and provide guidance in selecting a team leader. Asking for his help will be valuable in garnering his support for the ministry as well as providing insight into the lives of men in the church. Second, ask him to pray specifically for the men's ministry from the pulpit for several Sundays. This will allow your church to know that the ministry is being developed and allow him an opportunity to lead in the ministry through the act of corporate prayer.

Above all, allow your staff team to lead the way in this ministry. Asking them to play a role in the development and implementation will pay great dividends. Don't forget that your ministry will be more successful with your staff leadership onboard.

Team Developed

A pastor's appreciation of a ministry to men is an absolute necessity. You must have his support if the church is going to value the ministry. However, it is not only the pastor who should value the ministry. Several men should be involved in the ministry's development, planning, and implementation. You should consider at least five team members as you begin to structure your ministry to men. Each of these is outlined below.

Team Leader

The team leader is the man the Lord has called for this time to lead the ministry to men. This man may be easy to find because of his zeal and energy. I have met many men like this who see the great need for a men's ministry. They have been affected by such a ministry and want to see others grow and be discipled. If such a man is in your church, harness his energy to launch your ministry to men as soon as possible. Don't let the energy fade away; don't let his flame be extinguished by procrastination. Act now by asking him to serve as the team leader, then pray that God will lead you to the other team members that you need to complete the team.

I will add one warning here: Energy is not the same as spiritual maturity. The man who will serve as the team leader must be both energized and spiritually mature. He is a critical part of the success of the ministry in your church. Beyond energy and maturity, the team leader must also be relational. I have seen ministry to men fail simply because the group leader didn't relate well with other men. Whether he was overly critical, pushy, difficult to talk to, or simply wanted everyone to think like him, any of these characteristics are detrimental to the ministry. Use wisdom and discernment as you select this man.

Tribe Leader(s)

Tribe leaders are those men that relate to a specific segment of men in your church and community. There can be as few or as many of these leaders as there are tribes in your church and community. These men serve as a liaison and a connection. These men are servants to the team and will help as the team develops and implements events and discipleship strategies. They will provide assistance, even for events and strategies that do not necessarily affect their tribe.

Outreach leader

The man in the church that is gifted in evangelism is perfect for your outreach leader. This man will dream about how your church might better reach your community. He will develop a strategy and design opportunities for reaching the lost men. This leader will also serve as an encourager to the other men in your church. He may also be the one who can train those who are fearful or unsure of how to effectively share the gospel.

Connection Leader

Making a connection between events and discipleship is an absolute necessity for a successful ministry to men. How many of us have attended large events, like a wild game supper, and left with knowledge but no real understanding of how to move forward?

The role of the connection leader is to be prepared at each event to point men towards a “next step.” That next step may be small groups that will begin within the following month or a challenge to lead their families in a family Bible study. Whatever that next step is, it is the role of the connection leader to know the next step, make resources available, communicate the challenge, and determine the follow-up. This man assures that events—instead of being just events—become the next steps to push men further along in their discipleship and missional living.

Pastor

The need for the pastor to be involved has already been detailed above. The pastor should meet with the team as they pray and plan events. He should be the connection between your planning and the schedule and calendar of the church. He will also serve as a connection between the team and the mission and strategy of the church. The pastor can help the team align its ministry objectives and outcomes with the church’s.

Church-Implemented

Church support for a men’s ministry will greatly encourage and energize the ministry. In a supporting role, the church can be the difference between the ministry being simply successful versus greatly successful.

Below are a few helpful suggestions for including the church in the implementation of the ministry to men:

- Allow the church to prepare food for events and meetings that include meals. Allow your church members to use their cooking talent to bless your men and relieve this stress from your leadership team.
- Allow the church to celebrate the ministry. Ensure that you include what you want to celebrate in announcements, worship guides, websites, social media, testimonies, etc. Robby Gallaty says, “Churches replicate what they celebrate.”
- Allow the church to pray strategically before and during events and for the discipleship of the men. You might prepare a Men’s Ministry 30-Day Prayer Guide, listing specific prayer needs of this ministry.

PARTS OF A SYSTEM



(Complete this session prior to reading pages 33-37.)

Discussion Starters

Before you begin reading the next section, answer the following questions as a Men’s Ministry Leadership Team:

What are some key values that should be a part of the Men’s Ministry?
(Ex. Being Relational)

Why do most men struggle with the idea of accountability?

How can our Men’s Ministry include accountability?

Prayer Time

Pray for the men that will be a part of the Men’s Ministry. Pray that we will be intentional, relational, and purposeful. Pray that men will be open to accountability.

PARTS OF A SYSTEM

Systems are important. You should spend a great amount of prayer, time, and energy determining the right system for your specific context. While it is impossible for me to offer and for you to consider an exhaustive list of essential men's ministry systems, I would like to offer parts of a system that you should consider as you develop your ministry. Applying these parts in your strategy will encourage the discipleship of the men in your church.

Be Intentional

The first vital part of a system is intentionality. I often talk with men's ministry leaders who want to see men discipled. However, as I listen to them, I realize that most have not thought intentionally about the audience they desire to reach. Instead, many leaders allow tradition, convenience, or laziness to cause them to implement the same methods and activities they have always used, hoping that the next month's meeting or the next event will be the one in which everyone participates. It just doesn't work that way.

Instead, you must intentionally organize, plan, and develop a strategy to reach the goal the Lord has given you. Do you want to reach men that are in their twenties and thirties? If so, you need to organize, plan, and develop a strategy that intentionally targets those men. This may mean you must change everything you are currently doing. It will most likely mean that you need to adjust your meeting day/time. It will certainly mean that you will need to ask them questions such as the day and time they can meet, the type of Bible study they are most likely to attend, and how your ministry can most likely reach your target group.

Being intentional in reaching and discipling men applies not only to reaching and discipling those within your congregation but also to reaching men outside of the church.

I was recently asked to speak at a men's event planned during the same time as a televised major sporting event that most men in the southern part of the United States would be watching. While I enjoy speaking at events for men, I clearly understood that this would not likely be well attended. It seemed that there was no intentional consideration when planning this event.

Some leaders plan events at inconvenient times (like during the Super Bowl or World Series) in an effort to expose what they perceive as a lack of spiritual maturity in others. While they may well prove their point, they have alienated men who need to be brought along instead of left behind. We must be intentional in scheduling and reaching men, not simply planning and executing. A good rule of thumb is always "aim then fire." The "fire then aim" approach doesn't produce much fruit.

Be Relational

The point has already been made that men are relational, regardless of what you might have thought in the past. Since this is true, we need to allow for some relational aspects in our men's ministry. Being relational is a critical part of a ministry for several reasons. For me, the major reason is that discipleship happens best in relational situations. If our end goal is to make disciples, we must create spaces to build relationships. A call to build relationships with other men for the purpose of being able to disciple other men can happen in as many different ways as there are men. Their likes, hobbies, and personalities are just a few means for building relationships.

I want to point out a few ways that you might begin to intentionally build relationships. I have found that sharing a meal is a fantastic way to get to know other people. Serving as a pastor gave me opportunities to

have lunch with men. I can tell you that those lunch meetings were much more valuable than simply speaking in the halls of the church or greeting them at the door of the sanctuary. When we place our feet under the table with another person, a closeness develops that is hard to replicate. Making time to have lunch with other men will open the door to building a relationship, allowing you to speak into their lives.

Participating in outdoor activities is another opportunity to build relationships with men. The fad activity at the moment is throwing axes. You have probably seen this and perhaps even participated. Whether throwing axes, skeet shooting, shooting a bow, watching a ballgame, playing a ballgame, running, or any other physical activity that you can imagine, men enjoy being outside together. Be careful not to discredit activities like this. Sometimes, people say, “All they did was throw axes.” Nothing could be farther from the truth. When men get together for outdoor activities they enjoy, conversations and discussions take place that can lead to future discipleship opportunities.

A final and important idea for making your ministry to men relational is mission opportunities. Many ministries for men build wheelchair ramps, do small renovations, and some even travel in North America and around the world to serve together. Men serving God while serving together may be the most beneficial idea of all. Something happens between men when they serve the Lord together. It seems to expedite the discipleship relationship that we want to build. All men can't or won't serve when an opportunity arises, but those who do will begin to build relationships that will strengthen your ministry to the men in your church.

Include Accountability

Establishing a discipleship-focused ministry to men must include the desire to see men involved in accountability at some point in their journey. To be clear, finding men involved in accountability relationships is rare these days. However, I believe that all men need other men in their lives to hold them accountable in their sanctification process. A word of caution here: Be careful about pushing men into accountability too quickly. While we all need accountability, pushing men into it too soon will often not yield the desired result.

Men must be spiritually mature and emotionally healthy to be in a real accountability relationship. When you find mature and healthy men, be sure you provide avenues for them to hold one another accountable. The key to true accountability is vulnerability, which requires a certain level of

maturity and health. I appreciate accountability in my own life, but I am most accountable to those in my life that have invested the most in me. In other words, this idea of accountability results from healthy relationships that develop over time. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the importance of spending time with brothers. But, remember: You will not have healthy accountability until you first have healthy relationships among your men.

The accountability process is a vast and difficult subject to navigate. As you consider implementing accountability in your ministry to men, consider that it can happen digitally. A quick text or phone call to ask a brother how he is doing in a particular area of struggle can be just the encouragement he needs at that moment. A daily text asking what he read in God's Word today may be the encouragement a man needs to pick up his Bible. Don't dismiss the power of technology in accountability.

Second, accountability needs to cover several areas of a man's life. We all know that pornography and sexual temptation are serious struggles for many men, and we need to hold one another accountable in that area. While it is important, it is not the only area where men need to be asked questions in their life. A good starting point is daily disciplines, both spiritual and physical. Beyond that, ask questions about how they are loving their wives, raising their kids, and even spending their money. Real accountability in a man's life addresses every possible area of temptation.

Again, at some point, all spiritual men should be accountable. It is a worthy goal of your ministry to see men get to that place in their lives. Remember that accountability takes time and a measure of spiritual maturity. As you are vulnerable and lead others by example, I believe you will see other men doing likewise.

Consider Differences

Something I hear quite often is that men do not get as excited over long-term, detailed Bible studies. Generally speaking, I think this is true and needs to be recognized and considered as we are adding structure to our men's ministry. Knowing the men you are attempting to reach and minister to will help you better understand what type of Bible study is best. Admittedly, some men enjoy daily homework and deep study. Some of the men in the churches I have pastored enjoy reading systematic theology books and discussing nuances of theological ideas and concepts. But, this is not most of the men in any church, and it is probably not true of the men you are attempting to reach.

Because men learn differently than women, consider these differences

as you develop your ministry. The easiest way to discover how to disciple the men in your church is to simply ask them what they are interested in learning and the approach they believe would be most effective. Some men may only be willing to take small steps initially. You must be patient on the discipleship journey with your men. Some men will give you only a little time and effort initially. Remain persistent in intentional discipleship, and the Holy Spirit will work with them to develop a deeper commitment.



SENDING

(Complete this session prior to reading pages 41-43.)

Discussion Starters

Before you begin reading the next section, answer the following questions as a Men’s Ministry Leadership Team:

What should be the “win” for our Men’s Ministry?

How should we celebrate the victories that we will see as we begin an effective ministry to men?

How can we encourage men with the end goal in mind?

Prayer Time

Pray that the Lord will give you clear and definite goals and visions for the men that will be reached and discipled in your ministry to men. Pray that God will allow you to see fruitfulness from this ministry.

SENDING

Ultimately, the purpose of all ministry done in the church is to see more disciples made. This is the great commission that we have been given by our Lord. This has to be true of an effective ministry to men as well. We don't have a ministry to men for the sake of the men alone; it is for the world who needs to hear the gospel and then be disciplined. Your ministry might choose several methods for sending your men out to make more disciples.

Multiplication

The simple act of multiplying your groups is one of the most strategic methods of “sending” your men. Once you have established men's discipleship groups, begin identifying equipped men whom the Lord might be leading to start a new small group. This could be a “co-leader” or someone who has leadership and the interpersonal relationship skills to lead another group.

“Sending” by multiplying your groups broadens your impact. It allows for more groups, thereby allowing more men to be involved. This will allow

your ministry to have a greater impact within your church and, hopefully, outside in your community. Once you are sure you have a man the Lord can use in another group, celebrate and commission him as one being sent to a new field of ministry. Being sent out by your group can be both encouraging and vital to the success of his new group.

Tribes

Earlier, I discussed the idea of tribes. It is important to identify tribes within your men's group as you also identify groups within the greater group of your church and community. This enables you to develop a more intentional outreach ministry.

Think of these tribes as "people groups." Most mission sending organizations are intentional in reaching specific people groups with the gospel. These people groups are sometimes related because of geography but more often because of a common language, heritage, or situation. The same could be said for the men in your church. You can intentionally reach groups that share a common language, heritage, or situation.

For example, disciple the avid sports fan to be intentionally sent to reach the sports guys in your church and community. Intentionally disciple the antique car enthusiast to reach other men who are also interested in cars. The men within these groups all speak and understand a certain "language" specific to their area of interest. To reach them, you need to send someone who speaks that language. Sending men to minister to specific tribes is a great way to disciple others.

One-to-One

David Helm wrote One-to-One Bible Reading, which has been a great encouragement to me in my ministry. It could be that some of your guys are comfortable starting a new group but may not have the giftedness to "be sent" to a specific people group. I am convinced that all men can find one other man with whom they can relate through reading the Bible and walking together through life. One-to-one Bible reading doesn't require a seminary degree or vast Bible knowledge. It only takes the preparation that men should already be doing; that is, daily reading the Word.

One-to-one Bible reading may be the less intimidating way to send your men to minister outside their current group. I would encourage you to press men to have at least one other man with whom they can have biblical conversations to see them disciplined. This is a great way to lead a man on

the journey of becoming a disciple who makes disciples.

Homes

A great deal has been written about the man's responsibility for the spiritual development of those in his home. If a man fails to reach those in his home, he has missed the mark of his first and primary calling. As we have ministries to men, we must consistently place this call in front of the men with whom we are walking. Consistently calling them to the daily practice of walking faithfully as the spiritual leader of their family is a calling that we cannot forsake.

As you meet with your men, remind them of this call. Beyond that, we need to equip men to fulfill this call as well. Model for them how to read the Bible as a family, conduct family altars, and live as an example. I have a great friend who has this goal in raising his family: "I want to be the same man at work, at church, and at home." This is a great goal for the men in our ministries. Keep this call of being sent into our homes always before the men you have been given the responsibility to disciple.

FINAL THINGS



(Complete this session after reading the booklet.)

Get Started

Now that you have read the entire book, use this session as a time for you and your leadership team to begin developing your ministry to men.

Prayer Time

Pray for the Men's Ministry in your congregation. Pray that the plans that you are developing will lead to effective ministry that will lead to men being reached and discipled.

FINAL THINGS

Measuring success in ministry is a difficult task. We are often told that we must measure by faithfulness and not results. While I do believe that ministry life has its winter seasons, I do not think we should ignore the certain fruitfulness that comes with faithful service to the Lord. What we need to know about men's ministry, in particular, is that success needs to be measured differently than by taking a simple count of attendance. True success is greater than that.

Trees

You may have heard the phrase, "Can't see the forest for the trees." This phrase means that sometimes we are so focused on the individual details that we miss seeing the whole picture. This is not the problem in men's ministry. Often in men's ministry, we are so busy looking at the forest that we miss the trees. Don't burden yourself with the big picture of success. Instead, you need to be considering the personal spiritual growth of those in your men's ministry. Celebrate the man who is convicted of his alcoholism and seeks help in his struggle. Celebrate the man who determines the

high-paying job isn't worth the stress and the extra time away from his family. Celebrate the man who determines that his family is worth fighting for. Do Not Miss The Trees! You will find the most encouragement by looking at the trees, for trees are the true scoreboard for men's ministry.

Generational Change

The second measure of success takes longer to see. Truthfully, we are not able to see success because of our short tenures in ministry settings. But, this one should be considered a motivation for ministry and a measure of ministry success. If we appropriately disciple a man, it will directly influence his immediate family. It will have an even greater influence beyond that one generation. It has the potential to change the lives of generations to come. Changing one man's life through the power of the gospel changes more than just that one man.

Measuring the changes in future generations can be difficult for us because the results are not immediate. They may not be seen or understood for years, and we may no longer even be an influencer in that man's life by the time these particular results come to fruition. This measure of success can be celebrated only after long-term and consistent connectivity. This type of ministry success should be the most gratifying for a minister of the gospel.

Measuring success in ministry can be difficult. If we aren't careful, we can get caught in the trap of counting noses without seeing true life change. When I began to think about success in the ways suggested above, it changed the way I thought about and programmed men's ministry. Men's ministry is about life change; it is about changing men with the gospel so that they can change their families for generations to come.

Left of Bang

Another measure of success that you might consider is what I will call "Left of Bang." I first heard this idea presented on the podcast "The Pursuit of Manliness" when the host presented the idea of "Left of Bang" from a book by that same title. The book focuses on Marine preparation and sensitivity to everything around him in any given set of circumstances. The hope is that by considering his surroundings and planning his response in a threatening situation, a Marine will be prepared to respond before tragedy happens. "Left of bang" simply refers to the mark on a timeline before a particular incident. What are your men doing today, "left of bang," that

will prepare them for what is coming tomorrow?

You can measure this in your men's lives by watching how they respond to life's difficulties and hard circumstances. Does a man react in a godly manner when stress comes his way? Does a man respond to tragedy with hope and assurance? The reactions and responses you see in men's lives as you walk with them will be a reflection of the success of your men's ministry. However, to see this type of success in ministry, you must have familiarity and involvement in your men's lives. You must be with men to see their preparedness and reactions to life when tough days come.

Conclusion

My hope is that this book serves as an encouragement to you. Reaching the men in our churches is critical to fulfilling the Great Commission given to us by Jesus. Men have an undisputedly huge influence in our society, churches, and families for good or for evil. We must intentionally reach and disciple them.

This task, while difficult at times, is worthy of your efforts. When you begin the process of placing a team together and bringing men on the journey with you, then you and those around you will be able to enjoy the fruits of spiritual development in the men under your spiritual care.

Press on!

DEVOTIONS



DEVOTIONS

*"All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer,
together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus,
and his brothers."*

ACTS 1:14

WITNESSES

Dustin Pierce | Student and Discipleship Pastor, First Baptist Church, Bay St. Louis

Many times in life we experience tremendous moments in our walk with Christ. We come home from a spiritual retreat and are excited to follow Jesus. We leave a great church service and immediately want to go serve God. Unfortunately, this is a pattern that happens over and over after Christians experience the incredible. For some reason, it's not long until they aren't excited anymore, and they never find the opportunity to be obedient to the amazing experience they had with God.

In this passage, the disciples see Jesus ascend into heaven. Before this, the disciples lived with Jesus for three years. He taught them, loved them, showed them many miracles, and gave them the power to work miracles in His name. Then they witnessed Him be crucified and rise from the grave.

Now they have observed their Lord and Savior ascend to heaven to sit at God's right hand and prepare a place for them. They had certainly experienced something tremendous, but, interestingly, they didn't come home and immediately get to work. Instead, Jesus's disciples were simply obedient to His command – they gathered together and prayed.

Great experiences in life are like putting lighter fluid on a fire. The flames rise higher, flicker intensely, burn bright, but then the experience is over. The fire that lasts is the fire that's fed with simple consistency. The Christian life is similar. The Lord lit a fire in us. To keep it consistently lit, we must fuel it by praying, gathering together, and learning from Jesus.

Dream big and follow God in incredible ways, but never forget to be faithful in little things like going to church, praying, and letting Jesus teach you by reading the Bible.

CONSIDER THIS

1. What is it called when Christians gather together?
2. If Jesus is in heaven, how can He teach you and how can you talk to Him?
3. Are you and your family currently going to church, reading the Bible, and praying? If not, what can you do to motivate yourself and your family to begin?

PRAY: Help me Lord to be on fire for You every day. Help me be faithful in reading the Bible and praying to You.

“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.”

HEBREWS 11:4

GOD IS WORTHY: ABEL'S FAITH

Jon Martin | Director of Men's Ministries, MBCB, Jackson, Mississippi

Hebrews 11 is known as the “Hall of Fame” of the faithful. Many of the names are easily recognizable such as Abraham, Enoch, and Sarah. Others you may not be too sure about. One familiar name may seem out of place in the Hall of Fame. Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, is listed in the Hall of Fame. As you know, Cain is the brother of Abel. In Genesis, Cain and Abel made sacrifices to the Lord. Genesis 4 records that Cain made an offering from the fruit of the ground. Abel, on the other hand, brought the firstborn of his flock and gave the best part to the Lord.

Abel's sacrifice to the Lord was considered worthy and accepted, while the sacrifice of Cain was not. There are a few reasons why most believe that the sacrifice of Abel was accepted. First, many believe that it was accepted because it was a sacrifice of blood; the shedding of the blood of the lamb, and thus acceptable. Second, some believe that the quality of the sacrifice made it worthy and acceptable. It seems that Cain brought “some” while Abel brought the “firstborn,” the difference being quality. Third, some believe that it was a matter of the heart. Abel was righteous in heart and brought an appropriate gift, while Cain was evil and did not bring a worth gift. (1 John 3:11-12)

Abel was listed in the Hall of Fame because he had a righteous heart and made a worthy sacrifice to God. It wasn't the gift that made him righteous, but his righteousness caused him to give a worthy gift.

Remember that, like Abel, our faith is often displayed in the gifts we give to our Lord because it overflows from the righteousness within our hearts.

CONSIDER THIS

1. Read Genesis 4:1-8; Hebrews 11:1-4
2. Do you offer to the Lord the best that you have?
3. How can you begin to offer to him a better portion of your life?
4. How is your faith displayed in the manner in which you live?

PRAY: God, help us display our faith through our worship of you; let us offer to you worthy gifts.

*"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
loving favor rather than silver and gold."*

PROVERBS 22:1

WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY?

Johnathan McLemore | Associate Pastor, Improve Baptist Church, Columbia

The legacy of Sir Nicholas Winton will live on for generations to come, especially in the families of those he saved. Sir Nicholas Winton was a stockbroker who quit his job in 1938. He began chartering trains to transport Jewish children from Czechoslovakia and Poland. During that time, he rescued 699 children from certain death at the hands of the Nazi army.

Vera Gissing, who was one of those children saved, said this about him. "He did not only save 699, he saved a generation. We have had children and grandchildren. Because of Him, there are about 7,000 of us alive." Wow, what a legacy!

Sir Nicholas Winton is a great example of Proverbs 22:1. Your testimony, your reputation, and your name will live on longer than anything else you accomplish in life. No one remembers whether or not Winton was a good stockbroker. No one remembers any of his professional successes. However, he will always be remembered for his efforts in saving those children.

You determine how you will be remembered. The choices you make today will help shape the legacy you leave behind. Determine how you want to be remembered. Then make choices that will reflect that decision.

Ask God to empower you to live a life with eternal impact and that your life will be pleasing to Him.

CONSIDER THIS

1. What is the most important thing you can leave to those who will follow you?
2. What impact are you having on the lives of the people God brings across your path?
3. How do you want to be remembered?

PRAY: Father, help me to be a faithful servant in the Kingdom and help me to lead others to serve You.

“Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

LUKE 17:7-10

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT

Alex Hastings | Program Director, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, West

Have you ever had an experience when someone went “above and beyond the call of duty?” Maybe it was someone in your community or your church. When someone does more than required, we view that as noble and extraordinary. However, this parable shows that there is no such thing as “above and beyond” in the Christian’s life. We have a nasty habit of labeling some Christians as “extraordinary,” people like pastors and event speakers. We label everyone else “normal Christians.”

In our Christian walk, we can get caught in this trap. We read our Bible or do a good deed and think we have gone “above and beyond.” In reality, when we read our Bible, pray, or do good deeds, we are doing what is required.

The parable of the unworthy servant should hit us at our core. The parable encourages us to put the Master ahead of ourselves and give our best effort. The servant does his work without recognition or reward. We are called to walk humbly as we go about the Kingdom work. Our pride doesn’t like the image of such a humble path.

When it comes to the work the Lord has given, there aren’t extraordinary and ordinary Christians. There are only Christians – those who are faithful to the work God has given them and those who are not faithful. The humbling truth is that I can be both on the same day. I manage one good deed only to pass by the second. The good news is that Jesus set the example for everything God asks of us. Jesus lived as a Servant, only concerned with pleasing the Father. Jesus asks us to walk the path that He walked first.

CONSIDER THIS

1. Why is it so hard for us to put others before ourselves?
2. What are some good deeds that we could be doing in our daily life?
3. In our walk, what have we not been doing that we know we should be?

PRAY: Lord, help me see the opportunities you have given me to do good for others.

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them..."

MATTHEW 9:36

JESUS PAYS ATTENTION

Landon Adams | Baptist Student Union Director, William Carey University, Hattiesburg

Have you ever been told that you have selective hearing? My mom always said my sister and I had selective hearing, meaning that we only heard what we wanted to hear.

My three-year-old daughter is a good example. I can tell her, "Anna, I need you to go wash your hands before we eat supper." She pretends not to hear what I am saying! She would rather keep playing than get ready for supper. But, if I say, "Anna, I need you to go wash your hands before I give you dessert," then she is very quick to obey!

We can all be guilty of only listening when we want to listen, but we can also be guilty of only seeing what we want to see with our eyes and comprehending what we want to with our minds. This is called, "Selective Attention."¹ Oftentimes, we can be so focused on what we think is important, that we miss out on something more important. Sometimes when God wants to use us, He has to first get our attention.

Read Matthew 9:35-38. Jesus went to different villages proclaiming the Good News of His arrival. To prove that His coming was good news, He was healing "every disease and every affliction." Jesus was One busy guy! He couldn't go anywhere without someone stopping or interrupting Him!

Yet, Jesus never got distracted from His purpose and His goal. He came into the world to save sinners like you and me. He paid attention to what was going on around Him and in people's lives. In this passage, Jesus looks at the crowds of people with "compassion," deep loving care. He could see that they were "harassed," troubled, or bothered. They were "helpless," with no way out of their struggles! What bad news!

Jesus, however, was the Good News Who had come to give them hope and set them free! He came to save people from their sins and give them hope and a future! He has done this for me! Has He done this for you? He wants to and can do the same for those around you who are harassed and helpless.

¹ To watch the "Selective Attention Test" video: <https://youtu.be/vJG698U2Mvo>

CONSIDER THIS

1. Has Jesus ever helped you when you felt harassed and helpless? If so, thank Him for what He has done.
2. When you are tempted to ignore people who look sad, hurt, or helpless, what can you do to act like Jesus? What encouragement can you give to someone without hope?

PRAY: Jesus, please help me to see people the way You see them and to love people the way that You love them.

“But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:25 (NASB)

THE EXAMPLE OF EPAPHRODITUS

Mark McArthur | Mission Strategist, Tri-County Baptist Association, Columbia

God used great men in the Bible to do tremendous things for the Kingdom. Often these men’s stories serve to inspire, convict, and teach us. One man who is hardly mentioned in scripture serves as an example for us. Epaphroditus may not have gotten a lot of notoriety for what he did, but Paul recognized his value. He described his friend first as a “brother.” As a child of God, relationships with our brothers in Christ can be of great value.

Secondly, Paul described him as a “fellow worker.” Epaphroditus was not afraid to work as a servant, doing whatever was necessary to bring glory to the Lord. Paul also referred to him as a “fellow soldier.” There is no doubt that Paul fought the good fight, and his life was all about serving Christ. To describe Epaphroditus as a “fellow-soldier” indicates that Epaphroditus had the same passion for sharing the Gospel.

In the strictest sense, Epaphroditus was a messenger sent from the church at Philippi to minister to Paul’s needs while he was in prison. Even though he had suffered a great sickness, Epaphroditus served faithfully, and Paul was grateful for his genuine faith and loyal service not only to the Lord but also to him personally.

Sometimes we may feel that the things we do are meaningless and insignificant. Though we may not be in the spotlight on center stage, our call is to be faithful to God in ALL things. Like Epaphroditus, we should serve willingly, without the expectation of receiving men’s applause. Just as Paul was thankful for the ministry of Epaphroditus, others in your life will benefit and find value in your faithful ministry. May we all be known as brothers, fellow workers, and fellow soldiers in our service to the Lord.

CONSIDER THIS

1. Think of a time when you felt as if your service was less significant than other men’s. How did that make you feel? Paul said in Colossians 3:23 (ASV), “Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men;”
2. In what ways can you help a fellow brother and soldier in his service to the Lord?
3. Who can you partner with to help advance the Kingdom of God?

PRAY: Help me, O Lord, to be faithful to you in all things and to seek to bring glory to You.

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

HEBREWS 4:16

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Carl Fortenberry | Member, Temple Baptist Church, Hattiesburg

“Sometimes when you’re in a dark place you think you’ve been buried, but you’ve actually been planted.”

— Christine Caine

It’s often hard to know if you’ve been buried or planted. None are immune to moments of darkness...those moments where we know light exists, but we just can’t see it at the time. Darkness abounds. I’ve been there, and I’m sure you have too.

In Numbers 13, twelve men were sent to survey the Promised Land. Of the 12, only Joshua and Caleb saw light in a dark moment. They were so close to God’s promise, but the hope spoken of for generations was seemingly over. As the reports came in, they could feel the dirt being dumped over their graves. Each description of giants in the land was another shovel of darkness drowning out the light.

The obedience of Joshua and Caleb is a beautiful reminder in times of need...in times of despair...in times of uncertainty. They watched as the other 10 men who “brought back a bad report of the land died by a plague before the Lord (v.37).” They could have easily fallen into a buried mindset, but rather embraced their confidence in what God promised and received the mercy and grace that can only be found in a time of need.

CONSIDER THIS

1. Read: Numbers 13 – 14:38
2. In what ways do you tend to accept a buried frame of mind rather than planted?
3. How can a follower of Christ obediently respond to “dark” periods in life?

PRAY: God, shine the light of who You are into the dark moments of my life.

"So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. I also said to the people at that time, 'Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.'"

NEHEMIAH 4:21-22

WATCHMEN, WORKERS, AND WARRIORS!

Mark Bowman | Pastor, West Carthage Baptist Church, Carthage

What are the most critical roles men need to fill in these turbulent times?

In the book of Nehemiah, we see men rising to meet a challenge. The scene, initially set in Persia, transitioned to post-exile Israel. In chapters 1-3, Nehemiah learned the walls, which once protected Jerusalem, lay in ruins as Jews slowly began to return to their homeland. Nehemiah, the cupbearer for Persian King Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes, boldly asked permission from the king to go and survey the walls. When he saw the deplorable condition of the walls, Nehemiah presented a seemingly overwhelming challenge to the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. He then assessed what needed to be done, recognized the opposition threatening the restoration of the walls, and went to work!

Nehemiah was able to inspire, energize, and mobilize the men of Israel to begin work on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. In chapter 4, the enemies of Israel acted upon their verbal threat to interfere with the work. In verses 15-23 of chapter 4, Nehemiah issued a great challenge to those working for the protection of their city, their families, and their future with this imminent threat looming. He was careful to remind the men that the Lord was with them. The men rose to the challenge! Under Nehemiah's leadership, each man took on the responsibility of either doing the actual work of rebuilding the wall or watching over his countrymen as guards. They worked with their tools in one hand and swords in the other, even remaining armed as they bathed!

What a model of men working together, ready to defend and fight for one another!

CONSIDER THIS

1. Read Nehemiah 4:15-23
2. What threatens our families and our sanctification today?
3. How are you relying on God to provide discernment and courage to recognize and resist these threats?
4. Describe the relationships you have developed with godly and faithful watchmen and warriors.

PRAY: Father, help me to realize and recognize my value to my family, my friends and brothers in Christ, and to my church!

*"The name of the Lord is a strong tower:
the righteous run to it, and are safe."*

PROVERBS 18:10

THE TOWER THAT WILL NOT COME DOWN

Buddy Sheriff | Pastor, Journey Fellowship Church, Carriere

Some years back I heard Dr. Ronnie Floyd preach a sermon he titled "When Life Takes You to Ground Zero." The analogy was clear. He used the destruction at the World Trade Center as a picture of life when devastating circumstances hit. It may be a single event or a series of events that unfold. But there are those times when we feel like our life is a ground zero site. It is in these times that our faith receives a great test.

Ground zero may be devastating news from the doctor. It could be a marriage that is falling apart, no matter how hard you try to hold it together. Ground zero may be financial, vocational, or any number of other issues that bring our life down around us. Ground zero may reveal a flaw in thinking that we are safe from times like this since we are believers. But it is in these moments of life that our faith is crucial. God is a Tower that will never come down. He is our refuge and strength. His grace that redeemed us is the same grace that restores us. Storms come in life. With every storm, there is the aftermath.

Following Katrina, my wife and I took a ride along the Gulf Coast to view the destruction. I noticed homeowners pulling items out of the debris and placing them to the side. In that, I saw a truth. After the storm, the treasures of a lifetime lay buried in debris. With time and patience, they are uncovered to shine in the light of a new day.

Our Lord is our Tower of Strength and Mercy. We can run to Him and find peace and restoration.

CONSIDER THIS

1. How have life events shaped your faith?
2. What flaws in your thinking have difficult times revealed?
3. What did you learn after going through a hard time that you wouldn't have learned otherwise?

PRAY: Father, give me strength as I face Ground Zero events. Help me to trust that You will bring me through.

"Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

BELIEVERS BUILD TOGETHER

JJ Nelson | Youth Pastor, First Baptist Church, Collinsville

Have you ever tried to build or put something together? I will never forget my oldest son's first Christmas. Being a new dad, I had the privilege of putting together his bouncy seat. My initial thought was that I would throw a few pieces together, tighten the screws, and be done. I WAS SO WRONG. It took me three hours to finish, neither easy nor quick.

Have you ever spent time building up others; investing in other people, specifically other believers? If so, what type of investment have you made? Sadly, I think many times I approach the call to build up other believers as I did putting together the bouncy seat. I throw a few words at a person here and there, smile, and say, "I have done my duty."

When we read the word "therefore" in the Bible, we need to see what it is "there for." Read First Thessalonians 5:1-10. Do you find it interesting that Paul's explanation for encouraging other believers to live holy lives is connected to Christ's return?

One reason is that we need each other to remind us that this is NOT our home, and we need each other to live the way God has called us to live!

Have you ever been sidetracked while working on a project? You may notice if you work with others, it is much easier to stay on task simply because you have others to remind you of the work at hand. It is the same in our walk with God. If, as believers, we isolate ourselves, we forget our God-given design to live for His glory. When we walk with our sisters and brothers in Christ, we are reminded of the mission given to us by God! This is something all of us are called to do.

Paul ends by encouraging the church at Thessalonica to continue "just as you are doing." These believers were in the habit of encouraging and building up. It was not a "when I feel like it" practice; it was their lifestyle.

Scripture is clear that we were never meant to do life alone. First Thessalonians 5:11 is a commandment, not a suggestion.

CONSIDER THIS

Pick a member of your church, community, or family, to encourage for one month. Ask how you can pray and help him/her. Make it your goal to point them to Jesus.

1. When is the last time you encouraged or built up a sister or brother in Christ?
2. When is the last time you asked another believer how you could specifically pray for him/her?
3. How often do you practice this?

PRAY: God, help me be an encouragement to the people around me.

Place someone on my heart to pray for this week.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:18-20

NOVEMBER

A GOSPEL MAN

Israel Cox | Lead Pastor, Crosspoint Church, Gulfport

As morbid as it might sound, I have often wondered what my epitaph will be when my time on earth is over. The truth is, one day somebody is going to stand up at my funeral and say something about me – about my life.

One day somebody will stand and speak about you as well. What will they say? Will they have to paint a prettier picture of you than the reality?

My prayer is that whoever eulogizes me would simply describe me as a gospel man. The world needs more gospel men.

Here is what I mean: In one of the most famous and familiar passages of the Bible, Jesus laid out what it looks like to be a gospel man. If you and I could live out these three simple, yet important, verses on a daily basis, perhaps God would use us to change the world.

Three characteristics of a gospel man leap from this passage. First, a gospel man is one who is surrendered to the authority of Jesus. His authority is comprehensive, divine, and foundational to His call on our lives. Second, a gospel man is obedient to the command of Jesus. His command is to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing and teaching. Third, a gospel man relies on the presence of Jesus. Apart from the presence of Jesus, I am useless. When I have a keen awareness of His presence, I have confidence, peace, comfort, courage, accountability, motivation, and even power to surrender to His authority and obey His command.

May we be gospel men, driven and empowered by His presence to surrender and obey Him. Perhaps our Father will use us as He changes this world!

CONSIDER THIS

1. Read: Matthew 28:18-20
2. In what specific areas of your life have you not surrendered to the authority of Jesus? What have you not given to Him?
3. What are some ways that you can practically recognize and rely on the presence of Jesus in your daily life?

PRAY: Father, I surrender my will, wants, and desires to the authority of Jesus. Help me obey Your command to make disciples.

"But he went away sad for he had great possessions."

MARK 10:22

EARTHLY RICHES

Brin Jones | Member, First Baptist Church, Florence

Are you rich enough to go to Heaven?

Man has always been desirous of wealth. Before currency, wealth was land, cattle and possessions. When money came along as an exchange for goods and such, it didn't take long before someone determined it could be gained by less than ethical or honest means. While dishonest business practices existed, money raised it to a new level, and included the Gospel.

In our culture, we know those who preach a prosperity gospel. They could be called "profit preachers." This is not a new concept. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 2:17, refers to this practice as "peddling the Word of God." In essence, it is profiting by using God's word.

Today's "profit preachers" include some televangelists, who have no other message than you have to give money to be "blessed." "Give to my ministry and the Lord will give to you." A common theme, "send your prayer request, with a donation, and receive a blessing."

Most often, they claim that if you contribute to their church or ministry, you will be blessed financially, and the more you give, the more you will get. Again, they are referring to money.

Is money the only means of giving to the Lord? No. Giving can be expressed in many ways, labor, ministry, prayer and not the least, love, to name a few. God doesn't need our money, possessions, or time. Everything belongs to Him and He just allows us to use it for a while.

In this story, did Jesus really need the young ruler's possessions to be sold to help the poor? Of course not! Jesus was asking the young man for his commitment to His cause and for his dependence on God, through faith. In Luke 21: 2, the poor widow gave her two mites, which was a pittance. She gave all she had, in faith, and the rich young ruler gave NOTHING.

If we could ask the widow and the ruler who slept better that night, how do you imagine each would answer that question? A commitment to Jesus has nothing to do with riches and everything to do with faith. Believing, in faith, is the first thing you can give to the Lord. Do that and what, when, and how to give will follow.

CONSIDER THIS

1. Read: Mark 10:17-25
2. How can you encourage someone to give of their abilities rather than money?
3. How can you demonstrate giving in other ways?

PRAY: Lord, show me ways other than money in which I can give generously to You.

COMING IN 2023



THE GUILD

The purpose of The Guild is to allow those who work in Men's Ministry to share ideas and strategies that have worked in their contexts to reach, disciple, and mobilize men to be on mission.



THE GUILD

THE AUDIENCE

The Guild is designed for pastors, discipleship pastors, lay men's leaders, Royal Ambassador Leaders, Challenger Leaders and other men in the church who desire to hear fresh and strategic ideas that can be applied into their local church contexts.

THE PROGRAM

These meetings will last approximately 90 minutes on a week-day night (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday). During these times there should be three "TED Talk" like presentations of Men's Ministry practices. These practices will then be used as "Discussion Starters" for the tables to continue to share ideas and strategies for an effective Men's Ministry.

THE PLAN FOR OUTREACH

This will be the second year of The Guild. We will offer these round-table discussions in four strategic locations in the state. We will use Associational Mission Strategists to help communicate with the churches about the events, as well as social media and the MCBW Webpage. We will also use peer relationships and influence to encourage attendance.

2023

January

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