

EQUIPPING THE **MAN IN THE MIRROR**

TOOLS TO HELP MEN GROW TODAY

LEADING MEN IS
TEAM WORK



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Change the World page 10
Field Staff Speaks Out page 32
Daily Devotions page 15

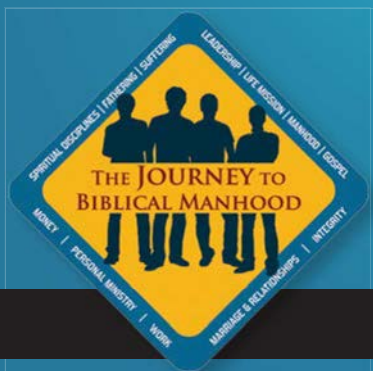
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church's journey?

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EQUIPPING THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

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Follow the One-Year Bible reading plan by reading the daily Scripture at the end of each devotion. To see the complete reading plan, go to oneyearbibleonline.com.



Check out Man in the Mirror's new donation website—mimdonate.org.

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**IF YOU COULD
HELP CHURCHES CREATE AN
ENVIRONMENT WHERE
THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES
MEN TO ENGAGE IN
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WOULD YOU?**

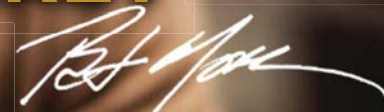
WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW.

MIMFIELDTEAM.ORG



FIRST THINGS FIRST THE BIG SECRET

by Patrick Morley,
Executive Chairman, Man in the Mirror



I want to let you in on the big secret for discipling men well and building a thriving ministry to men.

The big secret in discipleship is that men end up feeling, “Someone really cares about me, personally.” If anything good is going to happen, it won’t happen until a man feels like he’s not just a piece of meat to meet a quota.

If your church or community is not involved in making disciples, you can start discipleship without any programs. Keep it simple.

Our mission is to help churches create an environment where the Holy Spirit inspires men to engage in life-on-life discipleship. We suggest you do the same.

Start taking men out for coffee or a meal, then listen to their stories. Discipleship begins with a friendship that grows into a deeper relationship that can lead to spiritual growth with God.

Let’s say you’ve done that, and now you have four, five, or more men who really do sense that you care about them personally. Now what? Now you have enough to start building a ministry to men. Here’s a few ideas:

Jesus got involved in their lives and work.

1. Find a small group resource or short Bible study series that will last about six weeks. We have several books at maninthemirror.org or you can also look under “Bible Studies” at Amazon.com and find something that interests you.

2. Invite a few men to join you once a week at a coffee shop, or coworkers at lunch to go through the study or resource.

3. Love them. Get involved in their lives. Learn about their wives and kids. Make room for everyone to talk and participate in the small group.

4. From the beginning, plant the vision that, in time, they will become “disciple-making disciples” and that you will be passing the baton to them to carry on.

5. At the end of the study, ask them to try it again for six weeks—or longer.

Watch as God grows those men and more men are attracted to your church by imitating the discipleship plan of Jesus. Jesus asked people to follow Him. He got involved in their lives and work. Their lives were changed and they, in turn, reached others.

LEADERSHIP TEAM: ROADBLOCK OR ACCELERATOR

by Brett Clemmer, President of Man in the Mirror

It happened again. You're not really sure how. Your men's discipleship activities seemed to be trending up.

Several new men's groups had sprouted up over the same time period. And your first ever men's disaster response trip had come back with stories of lives impacted—both the served and the servers.

But then you found out half the groups had stopped for the summer and never started back up again. Retreat sign-ups were disappointing. You missed the last leadership team meeting, so you're getting all the information second hand. You call a couple of the guys on the team, and they're frustrated.

This scenario is all too familiar. Without doing a lot of investigating, we can predict the cause of this with about 90% certainty. The problem, most likely, is leadership.

Men's ministry leadership is too often built around one or two zealous guys who are passionate and committed to men. Out of sheer will and effort, they coax a ministry to life, pulling guys into activities with their enthusiasm.

But if you don't build a leadership team, you're limiting the resilience and longevity of your ministry to men. Worse, you're dooming it to failure in the long run. You need a team.

As men made in the image of God, it isn't good for us to be alone. We can't adequately express the image of God in us outside of authentic relationships. To be fully human is to connect with people in real ways.

David Delk, Man in the Mirror board member and former president and CEO, offers four reasons you need a team (and four reasons why a team needs you).

"When you are part of a leadership team, you are expressing this relational aspect of God. You also can fulfill several biblical mandates that enrich your life.

- **Encourage One Another (1 Thessalonians 5:11).** We need to encourage and be encouraged. What seems insurmountable when we are in the dark by ourselves can be overcome when we have men standing with us in the light. If you will gather around other men they can help you do things you never thought you would be able to do.
- **Learn to Not Always Have to Get Your Way (1 Peter 3:8).** Nothing brings humility like working with a team, giving in to allow another idea

to win, and then finding out someone else's idea actually worked. Becoming a team player means considering others more important than yourself. And God uses humble men in powerful ways.

- **Grow Together (Romans 15:14).** There are some lessons you can't learn from a textbook. And unfortunately, you won't ever learn them if you don't try to do something great with a group of leaders. Don't come to the end of your life and realize you are only 80% of the man you could have been simply because you refused to join up with a team and advance the kingdom of God.
- **Love Others (Ephesians 4:2).** I find that guys are easy to get along with as long as I don't actually try to accomplish something with them. When we have to work together on a calling from God, then we learn to love people for their gifts and in spite of their shortcomings. And we learn that a biblical friendship is the most powerful force in the world."

A Practical Case for Building a Leadership Team

Besides the biblical case, there are several practical reasons why you need a team.

- 1 **Different skill sets.** If you want to reach a broad range of men in the church, your team needs to reflect that. And to build an effective ministry, you'll need men with different skills and interests. Not everyone is a Bible teacher. Some guys love sports or the outdoors. Some are married, but many are single or divorced. Some guys have a heart for the lost, or for missions or disaster response, or for

businessmen or blue collar guys. Build a diverse group of men, and then think about this: **Don't build your leadership team around your ministry; build your ministry around the interests and skills of the leaders God calls to your team.**

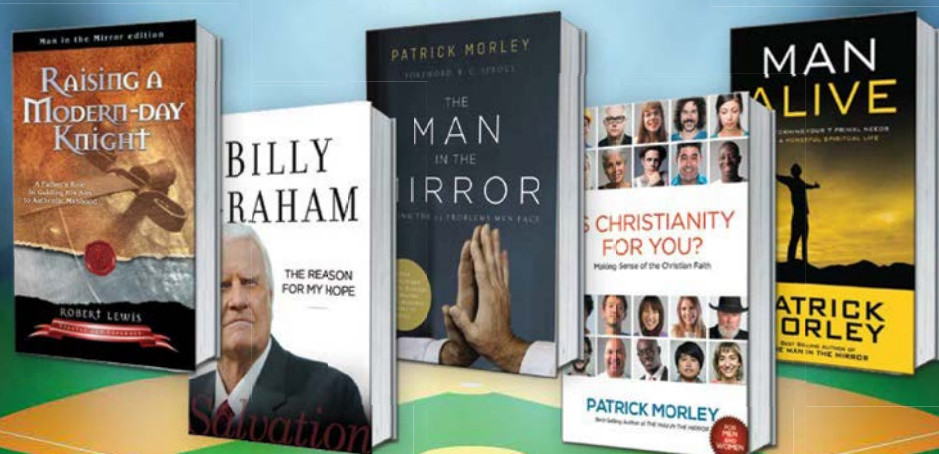
- 2 **An example for other men.** The leadership team is the place where you "practice what you preach." As it says in *No Man Left Behind*, the men on the leadership team should **become to each other what they want the men of the church to become.** So you should study the Scriptures, pray, support each other spiritually and emotionally—in short, you should model Christian brotherhood. The men of the church will follow your example.

- 3 **Avoiding burnout.** Building an effective ministry to men is too important to leave in the hands of one or two guys. Pastors, pay attention that the super committed, passionate guy doesn't try to do it all on his own. You need **to recruit enough men that no man is so heavily burdened with ministry work that he's not fulfilling his first responsibilities** to his own walk, his family, and his employer.

- 4 **A pipeline for allies.** In addition, each leadership team member should be engaged in discipleship relationships with a few other men. He should be involved in a small group (a couples group is perfect) or mentoring another guy or two. Why? So that when he's working on that next men's activity, he has some brothers who are NOT on the leadership team to call on for help.

THESE SMALL GROUP RESOURCES ARE A HOME RUN!

Choose one and start a small group this spring!



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QUOTES ON TEAMWORK

“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.”
—1 Corinthians 14:26 ESV

“Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.”
—Michael Jordan

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
—Hebrews 10:24–25 ESV

“Great things in business are never done by one person; they’re done by a team of people.”
—Steve Jobs

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”
—1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV

“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”
—Mother Teresa

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!”
—Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 ESV

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”
—Andrew Carnegie

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”
—Proverbs 27:17 ESV

“No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if you’re playing a solo game, you’ll always lose out to a team.”
—Reid Hoffman

“From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”
—Ephesians 4:16 ESV



BE PART OF THE JOURNEY

Journey to Biblical Manhood

America has a “men problem” that has overwhelmed families, divorce courts, schools, and the criminal justice system. It has also made Dr. Phil a very rich man.

Christians are not immune. Many Christian men lead lukewarm, often defeated, lives—and they hate it. Unfortunately, research continues to show that churches have not been able to figure out how to engage these men in a successful discipleship process. Most churches are pulled in too many directions and don’t have the resources to focus on discipling their men. They typically don’t have the systematic procedures to meet men right where they are and take them to the next level in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

We believe this gives us an opportunity to train and equip receptive churches in a proven discipleship process that will help men lead lives transformed by Christ.

The Solution

Based on 30 years of experience working with more than 25,000 churches, we have created **The Journey to Biblical Manhood**, a comprehensive and flexible system that equips church leaders to reach and disciple *all* the men in their church. It is an intentional discipleship process that:

- Equips and trains leaders in the No Man Left Behind Model for church men’s discipleship, so they can build a sustainable ministry to men.
- Ministers to men’s most deeply felt needs.
- Equips men to understand who God created them to be.
- Trains men as godly husbands, fathers, and sons.
- Infuses men with the confidence and courage they need to complete their mission in life.

When a church engages in **The Journey**, its leaders receive step-by-step instructions for implementing any or all of the following 12 Challenges with all their men:

1. **Master the Essentials of Biblical Manhood**
2. **Build a Firm Foundation in the Gospel**
3. **Build Godly Relationships and Marriages**
4. **Father the Hearts of Our Children/Grandchildren**
5. **Become a Spiritually Disciplined Man**
6. **Serve God in Our Work**

7. **Commit to a Personal Ministry**
8. **Use Money for God’s Glory**
9. **Live as a Man of Integrity and Character**
10. **Be Shaped by Sacrifice and Suffering**
11. **Grow in Leadership**
12. **Share Jesus’ Story**

Each challenge consists of Faith & Life Objectives (to be given to all the men in the church), a pre- and post-assessment, suggestions for curriculum options to use in the challenge, suggested service projects and activities to engage men in the challenge, email templates, graphics files, planning timelines, and more. Although small groups are the backbone of each challenge, discipleship content can also be communicated through individual study and one-on-one discipleship.

The Audience

The target audience for **The Journey** is all men who attend church or who are open to spiritual ideas. Even a very effective “men’s ministry” will only engage 10-30% of the men in a church. The tools provided by **The Journey** are designed to help leaders go beyond a traditional “men’s ministry” to reach every man in the church—especially men on the fringe—and those who would not normally attend a men’s Bible study or small group. We call this the “all-inclusive ministry to men” concept.

Strategic Principles

The Journey employs the following five strategic principles:

1. **Church-based.** It reaches men by targeting those already attending churches and, through them, men in the community.
2. **Supported by a field team.** Churches implementing it will be supported by

either a local Area Director or Field Representative. Churches without a local Field Team member will be supported by Man in the Mirror headquarters.

3. **Flexible design.** It allows churches of various sizes and various levels of men’s ministry experience to customize the challenges to fit their needs.

4. **Comprehensive.** The 12 challenges of **The Journey** address the key issues with which men tend to struggle and, if addressed, can lead to transformation.


5. **Online, subscription-based resources.** It is web-based, with implementation materials provided online to church leaders who have subscribed.

Man in the Mirror has statistical evidence that our process of men’s discipleship works. In a 2010 independently verified survey, leaders who implemented the principles behind **The Journey** over the previous 2.5 years had an average 48% increase in the number of men attending their church and an 84% increase in the number of men involved in discipleship.

We also have proven concepts for reaching men. Of the men who have attended MIM’s 1,400 events since 1996, (on average) 33% have surrendered or resurrendered their lives to Christ and more than 67% have joined a follow-up small group.

The Next Step

The Journey has been designed for three phases of rollout, four challenges at a time. Currently, Challenges 1-8 are ready and 9-12 are in development.

Are you ready to see God do something great in the lives of men? To find out how the men of your church can go through **The Journey**, visit www.journeytobiblicalmanhood.org. 

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LEADERS WORK TOGETHER?

by Patrick Morley

To illustrate the potential power of leaders working together in community, I would like to tell you about one of history's most astonishing transformations.

In the sixteenth century and in just 40 years, half of all the churches in Europe converted to Protestantism. This time has come to be known as The Protestant Reformation.

How did the Reformation happen so quickly? What were the factors that led to transformation? What lessons can we learn for our ministries today?

The Reformation had many different important leaders. On my office wall I have 18th century drawings of nine of the most important Reformation leaders: Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Martyr, and Henry VIII. I have each of them matted in a different color of the rainbow to illustrate the broad spectrum of thinking present in the Reformation.

Beginning on the left, in purple, is Erasmus who laid the foundations. Next, in shades of blue are Luther and Melancthon who spearheaded the Lutheran branch in Germany. The Reformed branch included Bucer in Strasburg; Calvin and Beza in Geneva and Zwingli, Bullinger and Martyr in Zurich. The Radical Reformation was led by the Anabaptists. And the English

Reformation was piloted by Henry VIII and his son, Edward VI.

Let's recount some highlights from the Reformation. While reading along, see if you can pick out some of the factors that led to the Reformers' success.

The foundations for the Protestant Reformation were laid by the humanist Erasmus. Erasmus is remembered as the scholar who opened the door that allowed Luther and more radical reformers to challenge the church. Ironically, Erasmus opened the way, but then spent the rest of his career distancing himself from Luther and Melancthon. He really belonged more to the world of the fifteenth century than to the Reformation. Erasmus wanted to reform the morals of the church. Luther wanted to change the doctrine of the church.

At the beginning of his career, Luther was reading Augustine and Erasmus—the world's first best-selling author. Erasmus and Luther had a positive relationship between 1519 and 1526.

Luther's chief lieutenant was Philip Melancthon, who systematized Luther.

EQUIPPING YOUR MEN'S SMALL GROUP

What Your Men Can Accomplish

Get all your men engaged in the regular study of God's Word

by using this magazine as a small group tool. At the end of each week's devotions, you'll see a box containing discussion questions and exercises. These can form the basis of your time together. These pages supplement those questions with additional steps. If you use this magazine with your men this quarter you will have:

- { } Summarized the principle of spiritual multiplication.
- { } Defined discipleship in relational terms.
- { } Shared the gift of Jesus that has been shared with you.
- { } Planned a service event for your church or community.
- { } Highlighted specific strategies for building intentional spiritual friendships.
- { } Understood the importance of the wide-to-deep continuum.
- { } Shifted your paradigm in the way you handle difficult people or situations.
- { } Dealt with the reality that not everyone will respond favorably to your efforts to share your faith.
- { } Realized the importance of relying on God's plan for your life.
- { } Attempted to reach out to a friend or colleague in a new way.
- { } Analyzed whether you are living a dependent or independent life.
- { } Prepared a three-minute testimony that can be shared with others.
- { } Prayed for one another regarding the impact of your reputations on your ability to share your faith.
- { } Committed to lift up one another in prayer on a daily basis.



EQUIPPING YOUR MEN'S SMALL GROUP

Suggested Applications Steps

July 1-9

These devotions focus on **faithfulness and trust**. **SAS:** Think of someone you would describe as “faithful.” Come next week prepared to share three things you’ve seen in that person that support your description. How can you emulate that person’s example?

July 10-16

This week you will define **discipleship**. **SAS:** Read aloud the devotional titled “One Cup of Coffee Can Change the World” on page 21. Give an example of someone who touched your life through informal conversation. What would it look like if you invited someone to go out for a potentially life-changing cup of coffee? Who will you ask? From last week, tell us the three things about that supportive person.

July 17-23

The devotions from this week talk about **the gift of Jesus’ presence and attention** in our hearts and lives. **SAS:** If that gift is precious to you, is there someone you know who needs to know about that gift. In this next week, commit to talking to someone in your life about the gift that God has given you.

July 24-30

You will learn **what it means to serve rather than be served** throughout this week’s devotions. **SAS:** Has your group served the church or community in a tangible way (service project, dinner, outreach, etc.)? Discuss and decide on a way for the group to serve. Plan a game day, hand out a free cookie on Sunday morning, plan a breakfast for the women, or something else.

July 31-August 6

This week highlights principles related to building **intentional spiritual friendships**. **SAS:** Come prepared to describe a time when another man served you, gave you something you didn’t expect, or prayed for you. How did that impact your life? How can you apply that experience to how you reach out to others?

August 7-13

In reading these devotionals, your group will be introduced to **the wide-to-deep continuum**. **SAS:** Describe this concept in your own words. Discuss together some ways to effectively determine where a person is on that continuum.

August 14-20

This week will prepare your group to deal **with difficult people or unresolved issues in a positive, godly way**. **SAS:** Ask each man to consider a person or issue that is difficult for them. With Jesus as your example, would you continue handling it/them in the same way. List some ways to positively handle the person or situation,

August 21-27

From reading this week’s devotion, you will come to a better **understanding of God’s plan for you**. **SAS:** Ask each man in the group to share an event or project that will take some planning. Ask everyone if they asked God for help in that planning. In pairs, pray together for those plans that each member is making for an event or project.

August 28-September 3

This week, we read about Zaccheus and **how Jesus was willing to meet him** on his own turf in order to reach him. **SAS:** In the weekly questions, you named a “Zaccheus” in your own life. Try one of the possibilities discussed to reach him and come back next week ready to share how that attempt to reach him went for you.

September 4-10

We all have a choice to **live our lives dependent on God or live independent from Him**. **SAS:** On a large white board or piece of paper, draw a scale with “dependent” on one end and “independent” at the other. Ask the guys to make a mark where they think they fit on the scale. Discuss why those choices are easy or hard.

September 11-17

This week your group will be challenged to **prepare a three-minute testimony**. **SAS:** Spend some time doing that, based on the guidelines described in the devotional. Come prepared next week to share your testimony with the group.

September 18-24

Prayerfully consider **your reputation at work** or in a social group to which you belong. **SAS:** Does your reputation attract or repel people? How does it affect your ability to share your faith among people in those environments? Pray together for God to help you enhance your reputations and use them for His glory.

September 25-30

Describe **a time when prayer has impacted your life**. **SAS:** The discipline of prayer is essential to your journey of faith. Would you be willing to pray daily for each member of this group? Spend a few minutes sharing prayer requests that members can commit to praying for.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

July • August • September 2017

To make the most of Equipping the Man in the Mirror, we suggest you take the 5-minute, 10-minute or 15-minute devotional route each day:

- 5-minute:** Read the Scripture verse and daily devotional.
10-minute: Read the Scripture verse, daily devotional and reflect on the daily question(s).
15-minute: Read the Scripture verse, daily devotional, reflect on the daily question(s) and read the daily Bible reading. If you read those daily Bible readings, you can read the complete Bible in one year.

Scripture Verse

Daily Devotional

Daily Question

Daily Bible Reading

Wednesday—July 26 • Greatness Defined

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:33-35)

Once a man gets past his desire to "be somebody," he can contribute greatly to God's Kingdom. But the reality is no one completely loses the desire for position and prestige. I know this from experience.

I just recently finished writing a book for all the right reasons. I wrote that book as a servant of Christ, wanting to do something really great for God. And yet, every single day while I was working on that manuscript, I'd have a thought like, "Oh, this is good! People are going to love me!" Or I might catch myself thinking, "This book is so good, I just might make enough money with it to take my wife on a really nice vacation." The way of the world is to seek a type of "greatness" that enlists people to serve me.

In Christ's Kingdom, though, true greatness is defined in terms of service. Today's Scripture passage asks a simple question: Are you willing to humble yourself to serve, rather than expecting to be served? **MIMBS 3**

How do you answer today's question: Are you willing to humble yourself to serve, rather than expecting to be served? Describe a recent experience that supports your answer.

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 17:1-18:34, Romans 9:25-10:13, Psalm 20:1-9, Proverbs 20:2-3

At the end of many of the devotionals you will find an abbreviation for a resource that expands on the devotional material. For more information about the Man in the Mirror Bible Study (MIMBS) go to maninthemirror.org/archives/categories.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| MIMBS 1—A Cup of Coffee | MIMBS 7—Disappointment |
| MIMBS 2—Great for God | MIMBS 8—Desire To Be Independent |
| MIMBS 3—Do Something Good | MIMBS 9—Nudge |
| MIMBS 4—Triple Threat | MIMBS 10—Say Yes |
| MIMBS 5—People | MIMBS 11—Is It Okay to Pray? |
| MIMBS 6—Planning | |

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Psalm 42:1-2)

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God "with *all* your heart and with *all* your soul and with *all* your mind" (Matthew 22:37, emphases added). We see this intensity in David's "thirst for the living God." When Jeremiah suffered for delivering a message of judgment, he cried out to the Lord, saying, "But if I say, 'I will not mention Him [the Lord] or speak any more in his name,' his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." (Jeremiah 20:9).

Or consider Job. He lost his children in a terrorist attack. His business empire was stripped from him. His body was stricken by disease. And his wife said, "Why don't you just curse God and die?" (See Job 2:9.) But Job said, "Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him" (Job 13:15).

What do you get when you yearn to love God with all your heart, soul and mind? You get Jeremiah-like boldness, Job-like devotion. This is what every man is looking for.

On a scale of 0-10, with 0 indicating indifference and 10 indicating consuming passion, how intensely do you love God? Are you satisfied with your score? Why or why not?


Daily Reading: 2 Kings 18:13-22:2, Acts 21:1-36, Psalm 149:1-150:6, Proverbs 18:8-10



From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16, NLT

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:1)

The apostle Paul was nearing the end of his life when he wrote this letter to his young friend Timothy. History says this pair met about a decade previously. Paul mentored Timothy, teaching him how to live and minister in accordance with his faith in Jesus. At this point, Timothy had been a disciple maker in the city of Ephesus for about four years. Paul was writing from prison in Rome. Nero had burned down half the city. Some said he used human torches, setting them ablaze all over Rome. This was a time of great tribulation.

In the midst of that, Paul encourages his young friend to be strong. Later in the chapter, he will call Timothy to be “a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (vs. 3). In context, he’s reminding his young friend to have a soldier’s focus, refusing to be distracted from his main purpose of growing God’s kingdom through discipling others. Amid all kinds of circumstances, that’s the main task Jesus wants all of us to work on. He wants us to make disciples.  MIMBS 1

What distracts you from the main task to which God has called you?

Daily Reading: 2 Kings 22:3–23:30, Acts 21:37–22:16, Psalm 1:1–6, Proverbs 18:11–12

For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:3–4)

Today’s passage talks about being “approved by God to be *entrusted* with the gospel.” The message of salvation is a gift from God that deserves our respect. It purifies our motives and influences the way we pass on the gospel to others. In a similar vein, 2 Timothy 2:2 encourages believers to “*entrust* to reliable people” the godly principles we’ve discovered and the ways we’ve learned to live out our faith on a daily basis.

This word *entrust* does not imply that we should force people to respond to our message. It literally means “to set before.” It’s like setting a table and then asking people to come and eat. It’s an invitation rather than a requirement. And the passage in Timothy also defines the people we should invite. It says “reliable people.” Some translations say “faithful” people.

God does not call us to produce specific outcomes. Rather, He calls us to be faithful and even intentional in giving the invitation, and then trust Him to bring about the desired results.

 MIMBS 1


2 Timothy 2:2 says, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” If you were explaining this to a new believer, how would you define the words entrust and reliable?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 1:1–2:17, Acts 23:11–35, Psalm 3:1–8, Proverbs 18:14–15

Tuesday—July 4 • Spiritual Multiplication

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Acts 16 tells of young Timothy’s first meeting with the apostle Paul. At that point, local believers already spoke highly of this young man. Paul apparently also was impressed, for he opted to make Timothy part of his mission team. Paul mentions Timothy repeatedly in his various letters, calling him a “co-worker” (Romans 16:21), and at one point even identifying his young friend as “my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 4:17).

Now Paul is nearing the end of his life, so he writes some final encouragements to his mentee. In essence, he says, “You know how I’ve invested my life. You know the message you’ve heard come from my lips. Now invest that in other people, and encourage them to invest it in still more people.” In just a few words, the apostle Paul spells out the essential principle of spiritual multiplication, through which believers reproduce themselves by discipling others, and then they unite as a team to pursue God’s principles and to promote the growth of His kingdom.  MIMBS 1

How are you reproducing your faith in Jesus in the lives of other people?


Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 1:1–2:17, 2 Kings 23:31–25:30, Acts 22:17–23, Psalm 2:1–12, Proverbs 18:13

Thursday—July 6 • God Values Faithfulness

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Based on four decades of experience in business and ministry, the most unpredictable aspect of my career has been discerning who would finish what they started. Sometimes people make promises, even with tears in their eyes, but then I never see them again. Most of us can define what a faithful person looks like, because we know it’s the opposite of what we’ve experienced.

God tells us He values faithfulness over ability. Dwight L. Moody was a great evangelist in the 1800s. Moody once heard a man say, “The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to him.” Moody decided to be “that man.”


He didn’t aspire to be a great man, or an educated man, or a rich man, or a wise man or an eloquent man. He was just a man, willing to be consecrated. Moody committed himself to be faithful to the trust he received through Jesus. As a result, he became one of the strongest evangelistic voices of the 19th century, not just in the United States, but around the world.  MIMBS 1

Think of someone you would describe as “faithful.” List three actions you’ve seen that person do to support that description.

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 2:18–4:4, Acts 24:1–27, Psalm 4:1–8, Proverbs 18:16–18

Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:4–6)

In his final letter to his spiritual son Timothy, the apostle Paul encouraged the younger disciple maker to pass on the gospel “to reliable people who will also be *qualified* to teach others” (see 2 Timothy 2:2). For years, that word *qualified* threw me for a loop. Our culture defines that word in terms of an official recognition for a person’s education, like passing a test and receiving a diploma. Or it applies that term to training that prepares a person to perform a specific task. The Greek wording in this passage has a very different meaning. That word translated *qualified* simply means *able* or *sufficient*.

The passage written above explains that concept in a different way. It describes a confidence in ministry that comes from knowing that our competence doesn’t come from human skill, but rather it grows from our relationship with God. That means every man who is willing to be faithful and committed to God and to His Word can be competent and qualified in ministry. Ask any athletic coach—would you rather have a highly skilled player who’s unpredictable, or an average skilled, competent player that you know you can count on? I guarantee, any coach will tell you, “Give me the average guy who’s dependable.” That’s the kind of guy that God qualifies. He’s looking for ordinary men who will pursue Him faithfully, allowing Him to make them competent ministers of His covenant.  MIMBS 1


In your own words, how would you explain the difference between our cultural view of the term qualified, and God’s view as revealed in today’s Scripture passages?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 4:5–8:40, Acts 25:1–27:20, Psalm 5:1–7:17, Proverbs 18:19–22

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings... (2 Timothy 3:10–11)

Anyone who faithfully cares for other people can follow in the footsteps of the apostle Paul to become a disciple maker. This great biblical hero passed on to Timothy an oral record of the things Jesus had accomplished in him, and he also passed on a written record that we still have today, in the form of most of the epistles in the New Testament.

In these writings, he spelled out the gospel and explained in detail how being in relationship with Jesus should change the way we think, and how those changes should affect the way we live every-day life. But Timothy also witnessed how Paul’s beliefs and his worldview molded his daily attitudes and his choices. That’s the essence of a disciple maker, regardless of where you fit on history’s timeline.

Discipleship is simply one man caring enough about another man to help him build a relationship with God, develop a biblical worldview, and live a lifestyle that is worthy of Christ.  MIMBS 1


That last sentence says discipleship is simply caring about another person enough to help him do three things. List them here, and then consider how those three elements influence one another.

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 9:1–10:14, Acts 27:21–44, Psalm 8:1–9, Proverbs 18:23–24

Tuesday—July 11 • A Disciple Must Have a Relationship with God

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (John 15:5, 17)

Formal Christianity tends to present the idea that if we give men the right information, their lives will change. Let’s think about that. If just having the right information could make us the men we want to be, then we’d all be perfect. Most of us have already heard all the information we need, a thousand times squared. Many ministries probably spend about 80 percent of their time and energy inundating men with information. “Do this... don’t do this... follow this rule... we have this tradition...”

This presents a view that information will help men clean up their behavior and fix their lives. In reality, Jesus wants to change us from the inside out. The evidence comes when we take on His nature and depend on Him in the same way that branches depend on the vine or the trunk. Jesus said true discipleship happens as we remain in Him, and as His words remain in us. All true discipleship begins with a faith relationship with God, established through accepting the grace offered by Jesus.  MIMBS 1

Jesus used the image of a vine and branches to describe the relationship He wants to have with His disciples. Does that image currently reflect your relationship with Him? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 11:1–12:18, Acts 28:1–31, Psalm 9:1–12, Proverbs 19:1–3

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



July 1–9


Outline the principle of spiritual multiplication revealed in 2 Timothy 2:2.

- If you were explaining this to a new believer, how would you define the words *entrust* and *reliable* (in the NIV—synonyms like *commit* and *faithful* in other versions)?

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” (Matthew 4:18–19)

When Americans encounter problems, we tend to seek strategies that address pertinent issues. Other cultures pursue relationships with people who can solve the problem. In a similar way, Jesus pursued people. He gathered a few men, and He taught them by His words and by His example. Then He instructed them to go and do what they had seen Him model. His whole plan for growing His kingdom was anchored in relationship.

Jesus told us the most important commandment of Scripture was to love God, and the second was to love people. Our relationship with God ignites the passion that propels true ministry. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah complained that he was being insulted and persecuted for calling those around him to repentance. But if he tried to stop sharing God’s messages, he said, “his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot” (Jeremiah 20:9).

Information won’t produce that level of passion. That kind of fire only comes from a life-changing relationship with God.  MIMBS 1


Think of someone you know who is passionate about what he believes God has asked him to do. Ask that person what produces that level of passion in him. How can you apply that to your own life?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 12:19–14:17, Romans 1:1–17, Psalm 9:13–20, Proverbs 19:4–5

Thursday—July 13 • A Disciple Pursues a Biblical Worldview

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14–17)

We all have philosophies, values and beliefs. But true discipleship calls us to make sure our worldviews align with Scripture. There are certain doctrines that are non-negotiable, like the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus, salvation through grace rather than personal effort, the reality that our inner choices will affect our outward behavior.

The Bible clearly teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us and trains us in right thinking. On the issues that are clearly spelled out, we cannot negotiate. However, many of us look at God’s Word through specific lenses, so that issues that aren’t spelled out precisely may become non-negotiables in our own minds. Theologians have disagreed on many issues and still remained within the context of orthodoxy. It’s not wrong to form an opinion on those issues, but when you’re discipling another man, please make sure you’re helping him develop a worldview that’s truly biblical, rather than one that’s based on some sort of cultural expectation or your own tradition. Concentrate on the issues that are clearly addressed in Scripture.  MIMBS 1


Today’s Scripture reminds us that Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. How have you found that to be true in your own life?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 15:1–16:36, Romans 1:18–32, Psalm 10:1–15, Proverbs 19:6–7

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:4–7)

Today’s passage gives us a window to see an informal meeting Jesus had with a woman at a well. If you read the remainder of that story, you’ll find that Jesus’ simple request for a drink of water opened a conversation that eventually influenced a whole region to accept Him as Messiah.

In a similar way, a cup of coffee is a metaphor in our culture for getting together to chat. I can tell you that my life changed because one man invited me to go with him and have a cup of coffee. That one event put in motion a series of other events that led me to where I am today, in relationship with God and in discipling others.

I challenge you, before this week is out, take someone out for coffee. Ask them how their kids are doing. Ask them how things are going at work. During that conversation, ask something like, “Where are you on your spiritual journey?” Don’t follow an agenda—just enjoy a natural, authentic conversation. Ask them about their relationship with God, and see what happens.  MIMBS 1

Who will you invite to go out for a potentially life-changing cup of coffee?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 16:37–23:32, Romans 2:1–3:31, Psalm 10:16–12:8, Proverbs 19:8–14

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

July 10–16

Discipleship is simply one man caring enough about another man to help him do three things.

- List those three things and explain them.
- How do those three things rest on developing relationships rather than transferring information?



Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. (Psalm 84:10)

In our once-each-week Bible study, we've been working our way through a series called "Hanging Out with Jesus." We're going through the gospel stories in chronological order. We've taken a few short breaks to focus briefly on other topics, but earlier this year I realized we were about 70 percent finished with this particular series. I calculated that we were approaching installment number 142 in a series that had held our attention for about five years. I titled that lesson, "Why are we *still* talking about Jesus after all this time?" The simplest answer is that we're still talking about Him because of who He is.

I've been following Jesus for a few decades now, and I am still infinitely amazed that the Creator and Sustainer of the universe invites me to hang out with Him. He blesses me in so many ways, yet His presence and attention are the very best gifts that I've ever received. After so many years, I can honestly say that my worst day with Jesus has been infinitely better than my best day without Him.

 MIMBS 2


Can you honestly say that Jesus' presence and attention are the best gifts you've ever received? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 24:1–26:11, Romans 4:1–12, Psalm 13:1–6, Proverbs 19:15–16

Tuesday—July 18 • He Confides in Us

Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" (Matthew 20:17–19)

Today's text says Jesus took His disciples aside to confide in them. Jesus still confides in His followers today. Every day we can hang out with God by reading His Word and finding the applications that He intends for our own lives. We also can pray and submit to other disciplines that help us focus on our relationship with Him.

But I've also experienced His presence in other ways, like in admiring His created world. I remember sitting in my backyard at 4 a.m. one morning. My neighborhood was hushed. I live on a lake, and that particular morning, it was smooth like glass. I could hear owls hooting, and I could see chameleons running around. Suddenly, I experienced the heavy reality of Jesus' presence, and I just enjoyed hanging out with Him. Another time, I was looking across the lake in the early morning, seeing lights coming on in different houses. Suddenly God opened for me a strategy for reaching my entire city with His gospel. If we're paying attention, Jesus demonstrates on a regular basis that He wants to confide in us.  MIMBS 2


What has Jesus confided to you recently through Scripture? What has He confided to you through personal interaction? Share your thoughts with another man.

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 26:12–27:34, Romans 4:13–5:5, Psalm 14:1–7, Proverbs 19:17

Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again." (Luke 18:31–33)

Jesus predicted His own brutal death and victorious resurrection. Apologist Josh McDowell writes from a statistical perspective, noting the possibility of just eight prophecies being fulfilled in the same person would be around 1×10¹⁷.

To describe the magnitude of that number, let's suppose you cover Texas with silver dollars to a height of two feet. Then you blindfold someone and send him into that pile with instructions to find a specific silver dollar. McDowell tells us the probability of one person fulfilling just eight prophecies amounts to the possibility of that blindfolded person finding that coin. And Jesus didn't just fulfill eight prophecies, but somewhere around 300.

Jesus is the suffering Servant (see Isaiah 53) who gave His life so we could inherit eternal life. Whether we are reading the Old or New Testament, it all points to Him. If you are in Christ, you have eternal life. No matter what else happens, you can be assured you'll spend eternity with God. What an amazing gift!  MIMBS 2

How could you use the information in today's devotional to share Jesus with someone who doesn't already know Him?

Daily Reading: 1 Chronicles 28:1–29:30, Romans 5:6–21, Psalm 15:1–5, Proverbs 19:18–19


Thursday—July 20 • Jesus Wants Us to Understand

But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. (Luke 9:44)

The gospels describe several times when Jesus explained something to His disciples, but they just couldn't "get it." Sometimes the Bible even says the meaning was hidden from them. I see several reasons for this dilemma.

First, prophecies describing Jesus are sometimes cryptic. Many are not obvious, except in hindsight. Second, Jesus often explained things through parables, which were somewhat difficult to interpret. Third, Jesus didn't come in the expected way, as a conqueror, but as a servant.

And finally, despite the entirety of Scripture being about Him, in reality, the record of His own words is relatively small.

The red-letter portions in our Bibles, attributed to Christ Himself, amount to only about 34,500 words. You would only need about five hours to read aloud all the words in Scripture attributed to Jesus. Yet, within those relatively few words, there is tremendous consistency. Jesus' disciples were sometimes afraid to ask Him to further explain what He meant. Yet Jesus clearly wants His followers to understand, and Scripture shows Him to be infinitely patient and willing to help us grasp God's plan.  MIMBS 2

How have you found Jesus to be "infinitely patient and willing to help us grasp God's plan?" Ask another man his thoughts.

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 1:1–3:17, Romans 6:1–23, Psalm 16:1–11, Proverbs 19:20–21:9

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

We've talked this week about the disciples' failure to understand Jesus' words. Jesus told them how He would suffer, but they simply couldn't grasp what He was saying. It's easy to look at Jesus' explanations, which seem to be very clear, and wonder in hindsight what blocked His disciples' ability to understand. Yet many of us don't really grasp Jesus' words either. You see, it's hard to completely understand when Jesus offers us something different than what we think we are looking for. If your primary goal is worldly success or temporal happiness, then frankly, you're probably not going to understand Jesus.

If you feel you can't comprehend Jesus, start by asking yourself why. Is He your highest thought in every situation? Or are you just trying to figure out how to use Him to get something else you really want? Today's scripture says don't allow yourself to be squashed into the world's mold; instead be transformed from the inside-out, by allowing Jesus to renew your mind. Then, it says, you will be able to understand God's plan.

As Jesus renews our minds, we learn to view life through the lenses of His principles and purposes. Things that seemed difficult to understand become very clear. And on the issues that are still a little blurry, we learn to trust Him, even without having all the information ahead of time.

 MIMBS 2


Paraphrase today's Scripture verse, putting Romans 12:2 into your own words. Ask another man how he has seen this work out in his life.

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 4:1-2 Chronicles 10:19, Romans 7:1-8:25, Psalm 18:1-19:36, Proverbs 19:22-26

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." (Mark 10:37)

I usually awaken with a joyful ambition to do something great for God. I'm guessing you do, too, or you probably wouldn't be reading this devotional. So perhaps you'll also understand this—I'm amazed at how quickly the godly desire to do something great for God can morph into something more like a godless ambition and a desire to improve my reputation.

James and John were among Jesus' closest friends, yet today's passage seems to reveal a self-centered motivation driving their request. One of the hallmarks of my ministry is the saying, "There is a God we want and a God who is. They're not always the same God."

I believe this is one incident where James and John sought the God they wanted, blatantly asking Jesus to do whatever they requested. Jesus answered with patient explanation, revealing the nature of the God who is. The turning point for all of us comes when we stop seeking the god or gods we want, and we start seeking the God who is.  MIMBS 3

Describe a situation in your workplace that made you angry. Did your reaction demonstrate that you are serving the god you want, or the God who is? Explain your answer.


Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 11:1-13:22, Romans 8:26-39, Psalm 18:37-50, Proverbs 19:27-29

Tuesday—July 25 • Desiring Position and Prestige

And whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:44, 45)

Jesus' close friends, James and John, asked to be seated at His right and left hands when He took His place in glory. The other 10 disciples were "indignant" when they heard about the request. These men had all confessed Christ as their master. They had repented of their sins. They were growing in their faith. They protected the integrity of the gospel. Yet they ended up in a squabble because of a little misdirected ambition.

Jesus recognized that they wanted to lead lives of significance. Most men have this same desire to do something that will outlive them. God has hard-wired us to want to make a difference. But He also wants us to achieve that through His calling rather than our ambition.

Ambition drives a person to seek prominence and prestige. Calling ignites a man working in any field to serve others from the overflow of his own relationship with God. Jesus' response to His disciples demonstrates that a man can make a real contribution in God's Kingdom, once he gets over wanting to be somebody.  MIMBS 3

Consider three recent interactions with people, one from home, one from work, and one from church. In each situation, did your response demonstrate ambition or calling? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14, Romans 9:1-24, Psalm 19:1-14, Proverbs 20:1

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



July 17-23


What is the best gift you have ever received for a birthday or Christmas?

- Did that gift make you feel happy or loved or excited or what?
- How do you feel about the gift you have received from God?

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:33–35)

Once a man gets past his desire to “be somebody,” he can contribute greatly to God’s Kingdom. But the reality is no one completely loses the desire for position and prestige. I know this from experience.

I just recently finished writing a book for all the right reasons. I wrote that book as a servant of Christ, wanting to do something really great for God. And yet, every single day while I was working on that manuscript, I’d have a thought like, “Oh, this is good! People are going to love me!” Or I might catch myself thinking, “This book is so good, I just might make enough money with it to take my wife on a really nice vacation.” The way of the world is to seek a type of “greatness” that enlists people to serve me.

In Christ’s Kingdom, though, true greatness is defined in terms of service. Today’s Scripture passage asks a simple question: Are you willing to humble yourself to serve, rather than expecting to be served?  MIMBS 3

How do you answer today’s question: Are you willing to humble yourself to serve, rather than expecting to be served? Describe a recent experience that supports your answer.


Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 17:1–18:34, Romans 9:25–10:13, Psalm 20:1–9, Proverbs 20:2–3

Thursday—July 27 • Evil is Right There

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. (Romans 7:21–23)

I remember hearing a highly esteemed Christian counselor and popular author, who described a tearful visit to the beach. He was weeping, heavily under conviction and on his knees repenting in the sand. In the midst of that humbling experience, he found himself thinking, *Oh, this is good!* I can’t wait to write about this. Suddenly he was distracted, considering how he could describe this experience in a way that would elevate his prestige in the Christian community.

Regardless of whether you’ve walked with Jesus for six months or six years or sixty years, you will always find that, when you want to do good, evil is right there with you. That doesn’t make you a bad Christian. But you do need to be aware that your motives will never be entirely pure.

Jesus told us that, in His Kingdom, a person who wants to be great must become a servant. That doesn’t come naturally, so it requires that we intentionally choose the humble lifestyle of a servant over an exalted position that demands attention.  MIMBS 3

How have you seen that when you want to do good evil is right there with you? Share your thoughts with your group.


Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 19:1–20:37, Romans 10:14–11:12, Psalm 21:1–13, Proverbs 20:4–6

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. (Philippians 2:19–22)

Paul noted that his young friend Timothy had proved himself in ministry, for he was not like others who put their own interests ahead of Christ’s plan. Natural ambition causes us to seek prestige and admiration from people. But through the course of this week’s journey, we’ve seen Jesus calling His followers to pursue lives of service. Our ability to respond like Timothy, putting Jesus’ interests ahead of our own, will show up in every area of life.

What does a servant’s attitude look like if I’m a boss? Am I willing to take responsibility to ensure that my employees earn a fair wage and have proper healthcare? If I’m an employee, will I stop second-guessing my boss, assuming that I’m smarter and have a better solution than he or she does? Do I bad mouth my employer? Benjamin Franklin once said, “I will speak ill of no man, and speak all the good I know of everybody.” That’s a good rule to follow.

In my family, do I insist on having my own way, or do I put my wife’s and children’s interests ahead of my own? In my church, do I sit with crossed arms, expecting the pastor to amaze me each week with his sermon, or do I roll up my sleeves to encourage and serve others?

Every part of a man’s life is affected by whether he expects to be served, or he chooses to serve. A man can make a valuable contribution to God’s Kingdom, if he is willing to release his desire to “be somebody,” instead making Christ’s purpose his priority.  MIMBS 3

Today’s devotional talked about serving in various areas of our lives. Which area presents the greatest challenge for your choice to live as a servant? Why?

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 21:1–28:27, Romans 11:13–13:14, Psalm 22:1–23:6, Proverbs 20:7–11

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

July 24–30

Explain the difference between calling and ambition.


- Which of these has ruled your work life in the past?
- Which of these is ruling your daily life now?



A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

Discipleship can be defined as one man caring enough about another man to help him build: 1) a relationship with God; 2) a biblical worldview; 3) a lifestyle worthy of Christ.

That's a pretty big mouthful, and it can even seem a bit overwhelming and complicated. But if you've been around Man in the Mirror for any length of time, you know our calling is to disciple men. A young pastor once told me he was trying to "demystify" the concept of discipleship for the young men he was mentoring. "I tell my guys that I want them to all be engaged in an intentional, spiritual friendship."

I think that's a great starting place. So, what does that look like? Well, sometimes it means simply inviting another man to go out for coffee, and then engaging him naturally in conversation that includes spiritual issues. The goal is to start at our friend's comfort level and then invite them to come along with us on a journey that draws them closer and closer to Jesus.  MIMBS 4

Who in your life developed an intentional spiritual friendship with you? How has that relationship impacted your life?


Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 29:1–36, Romans 14:1–23, Psalm 24:1–10, Proverbs 20:12

Tuesday—August 1 • Integrating Our “Boxes”

And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

In our culture, many guys compartmentalize their lives. Even a man who is “religious” may have his life categorized in “boxes.” There's the work box and the marriage box and the kid box and maybe the Little League box, and then perhaps there's the church box or the faith box.

That kind of life view leaves us with fragmented lives, and it doesn't support the wholehearted and willing devotion to God described in today's Scripture passage. When we are developing a friendship with someone, and we have a desire to help them know Jesus better, one of the goals is to help that man integrate his various boxes, so that his relationship with Jesus influences all those other factors in his life.


The gospel should influence the way we relate to our wives and children, the way we coach Little League, the way we work as an insurance agent or an attorney or a bulldozer operator. The way we engage in intentional, spiritual friendships will vary, based on where the man is on that continuum, in his spiritual journey.  MIMBS 4

Briefly explain how your faith affects your relationships, your work, and your hobbies. How does that reflect your success in integrating your various “boxes”?

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 30:1–31:21, Romans 15:1–22, Psalm 25:1–15, Proverbs 20:13–15

... To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:20–23)

Tim Tebow became famous in college football for running the “read option.” He would “read” the opposing players and respond accordingly with a play designed to counter the defensive strategy. If the defense was spread out, Tebow might hand off to the running back, who would run straight up the middle. If the defense was bunched up in the middle, he might fake a hand-off to the running back and then pass to a receiver down the field. His choice of play depended on what he saw on the field.

As we interact with men, we need to do something similar. We try to determine any barriers to the gospel. We don't target areas where our friends show they are defensive. We look for ways to engage them in places where they demonstrate openness. I believe we always have at least three options. We can look for opportunities to pray for a friend (or with him, if he seems willing). We can seek ways to serve a friend. And we can offer a meaningful gift.  MIMBS 4

Re-read today's Scripture from 1 Corinthians 9:20–23. In your own words, explain how that equates to a spiritual equivalent of Tebow's “read option.”


Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 32:1–33:13, Romans 15:23–16:9, Psalm 25:16–22, Proverbs 20:16–18

Thursday—August 3 • Intentional Spiritual Friendships

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34–35)

Suppose you've initiated taking a friend out for coffee. Conversation came easily, and you were even able to introduce some spiritual topics. In the midst of all that, keep in mind the motivation for pursuing intentional spiritual friendships. We aren't trying to manipulate men into God's Kingdom.

Rather, we pursue interaction because we don't want him to miss Jesus. We don't want him to spend eternity in hell. And so, we engage with him. Love is the key. At one point in His ministry, a religious leader asked Jesus, “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus said the first priority is to love God, and the second is to love people (see Matthew 22:36–40). That's a general command. But going on a little further, Jesus made it personal.

John 13 records the events in the Upper Room, just before Jesus was betrayed. In that context, Jesus said he was giving a new commandment: “Love one another.” He said this would be the evidence of our relationship with Him. And so, you see a progression from general to personal. Jesus said love must be our motivation.  MIMBS 4

How can you tell if someone is reaching out to you with a desire to manipulate, or with a desire to express genuine care? How can you apply that understanding to the way you reach out to others?

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 33:14–34:33, Romans 16:10–27, Psalm 26:1–12, Proverbs 20:19

THE “MARKETING MESSAGE” OF MEN’S DISCIPLESHIP

It’s Tricky



I am often struck with the difficulty of messaging “men’s discipleship.” What does it look like?

If I were to ask you to support children in poverty, I could easily show you a picture of a poor child. If I were to ask you to help dig wells for clean water, I could show you village women gathered around a pump with fresh, clear water pouring into their pots. There would be happy smiles and palpable joy. We need to address all those social issues. I’m all in. But here’s the thing: **The best way to address every social, physical and spiritual ill in the world is to disciple men.**

Sounds a little self-serving coming from a ministry focused on men, right? It’s really not. Here’s why. A few years before I came to Man in the Mirror, I ran the daily operations for a 700-bed homeless shelter in Orlando. Yes, seven *hundred*. We had capacity for 500 men in a large open pavilion with a heated concrete floor and 200 beds in dorms and bedrooms for families.

In dealing with the thousands of people during my tenure there was one common theme: men were failing. It was rare that an intact family came into the shelter. Often, frightened women were coming to us escaping domestic violence. Many men were exiting the county jail system and entering our shelter. Chronic joblessness,

poor education and preventable diseases like diabetes were rampant.

Almost every difficulty faced—with the exception of mental illness—could be traced back to one thing: a man had failed. He had failed himself, his wife, his kids and everyone else who had ever relied on him.

We live in the richest country on earth, with more accumulated wealth than at any other time or place in history. Yet people are living in homeless shelters, suffering in poverty and dying of preventable diseases.

Here is the answer: When you disciple a man you affect three things: his happiness, his family and his wallet.

Discipling a man affects his happiness. When a man knows and is following Christ, he is becoming the man he was created to be. The more deeply his relationship with God, the better he understands and can apply Scripture, the more fulfilled his life will be. Even a man who is suffering can be happy when his hope is found in Christ. *Discipled men are happy men.* (Psalm 28:7)

Discipling a man affects his family. When a man understands what Christ did for him, he begins to live sacrificially for his family. His own good takes second place to his

family’s needs for love, provision and protection. *Discipled men are better husbands and fathers.* (Matthew 19; Ephesians 5:25, 26, 33; 6:4)

Discipling a man affects his wallet. As a man’s heart softens and he sees things as God does, he will respond with generosity. As he understands stewardship and desires to store treasures in heaven, he will invest his earthly treasures into the Kingdom. *Discipled men are generous men.* (Matthew 6:19-20)

Looking at how discipling a man affects his wallet, consider this very practical possibility:

In 2016, our Field Team members interacted with over 3,000 churches, and engaged at a strategic level with 1,416 of those churches. That means we helped them at least begin to implement “No Man Left Behind Model” principles. Based on three different surveys church leaders we’ve worked with, we know that on average, 15 new disciples were made in each of those churches. That’s 21,240 *new disciples* in churches we worked with last year.

Here’s where it gets fun (and a little “mathy”). The median household income in America is \$51,939 per year (according to the 2014 Census Bureau report). Across those 21,240 new disciples, that’s a total household earning power of \$1.103 *billion*. Is it reasonable to think that a new disciple would see that he needs to start giving to the church? So let’s be conservative.

If the average new disciple in a “No Man Left Behind church” increases his giving by just 5% of his household income this year, the potential Kingdom financial impact of discipling 21,240 new men is \$55,159,218. Not just once, but every year going forward!

How many wells could we dig, children could we sponsor, hospitals could we build,

outreach programs could we run, counseling programs could we provide if we just keep discipling men to believe, lead their families and give generously the way the Bible calls them to?


Would you like to see the “face” of men’s discipleship? It *is* the starving child. It *is* the refugee fleeing violence or the single mom with 3 kids in a homeless shelter.

Make an Investment

Many of you receiving this magazine are already investors in the ministry. You’re making an impact through your donation to the national ministry or one of our local field team members. Thank you!

Can I ask you to consider making an additional investment this summer? If you’re a monthly giver, perhaps you could add an extra month’s donation. Or perhaps you have some money set aside you’ve been looking to invest in Kingdom work.

This issue of the magazine was made possible by just such a man. He had set some money aside and wasn’t really sure what he would do with it. But a phone call from one of our board members prompted him to make a substantial contribution and completely underwrite the printing and postage of this issue!

I’m inviting you to make a donation today to build more wells, sponsor more children and build more hospitals. Do it strategically by investing in discipling men to become generous, happy and faithful husbands and fathers. Go to mimdonate.org today and see the projects you can invest in to continue to build God’s Kingdom here and now, and store up treasures in heaven for the life to come. 

Thank you,

Brett Clemmer, President

FIELD STAFF SPEAKS OUT SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY TO MEN

What Does It Take?

In just a sentence or two, what are some important attributes of a successful ministry to men?

A strong and compelling vision to reach and **disciple all the men** of their church and community.

—Dave Armstrong, Pennsylvania

Effective ministry is not an activity, but a **commitment to build stronger disciples**, husbands, fathers, brothers and engaged citizenship in the church and the community.

—David Ruhman, Missouri

A compelling, unshakable and deeply-seated commitment to following Jesus as a disciple who makes disciples thru the power of the Holy Spirit and **becoming Christ-like** in the process.

—Larry Niggli, Idaho

Pastor support and a **strong leadership team** who takes the time to pray and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Leadership Team should be the example of a Life on Life Discipleship small group they want the rest of the men in the church to experience.

—Damon Hawkins, Florida

A strong men's leader whether staff or volunteer with **vision and commitment** to the process. Of course, Senior Pastor support.

—Bob Ryan, Arkansas

Persistent intentionality and **diligence**.

—Tim Smith, Alabama

I think the most important thing is a combination of a leader who cares about his people and who is **authentic**. If I say I am for you, I need to show it. Guys know when you are slinging bull!

—Jamison Brown, Colorado

Strong **relationships**.

—Ronn Read, Illinois

Successful men's ministry involves guiding and leading men as fierce individuals who maintain commitments toward families and one another. Ministry practices include lifting burdens, reinforcing interpersonal responsibility and **being able to go in "the cave"** when men entrap themselves to pull a brother to safety.


—David Ruhman, Missouri

A focus on the primary **ministry in the home**. The women and children have to be respected and honored in the process. If they feel neglected, they can begin to see the ministry to men as an enemy. If you lose them, you will lose the men.

—Travis Harrison, South Carolina

So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." (Genesis 13:8–9)

Genesis tells us the story of Abram, who encountered God personally, so that his whole life changed. When Abram was 75 years old, God asked him to leave his home and everything he was used to. God didn't even reveal the final destination. He kind of said, "I'll tell you when you get there." Abram gathered his household, including his nephew Lot, and he obeyed God. Eventually the two families, along with all their herds and possessions, grew to the point that one area couldn't support them all. Abram became proactive, suggesting that the two households split. He even gave his mentee Lot the privilege of choosing the property that he wanted.

Later in Genesis, Lot and his family were taken hostage, and Abram rallied his household to rescue his nephew's family and belongings. A few chapters later, God changed Abram's name to Abraham. Then God told Abraham He intended to judge the area where Lot lived. Abraham interceded. Scripture tells us God did not spare the city, but "he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived" (Genesis 19:29). Abraham's prayers saved Lot. Abraham's example of proactive mentoring shows a pattern for anyone who has a heart to mentor others: He served, as when he rescued his nephew; he gave, as when he allowed him to select what appeared to be the best real estate; and he prayed, as when he interceded on Lot's behalf.  MIMBS 4

Describe a time when another man served you, gave you something you didn't expect, or prayed for you. What was the result of that, in your own life?

Daily Reading: 2 Chronicles 35:1–36:23, Ezra 1:1–4:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1–3:4, Psalm 27:1–28:9, Proverbs 20:20–25

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

July 31–August 6


Read 1 Corinthians
9:20–23.

- Explain how that passage equates to the "read option" used by quarterback Tim Tebow.
- How does that apply to the process of pursuing intentional spiritual friendships?



Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you . . . (Acts 17:22–23)

We all encounter men every day who need Jesus. But because they are all different, and they’re at different places in their spiritual journeys, we can’t approach them all in the same way. In the verses preceding today’s passage, we find that Paul spent some time in Athens and tried to understand the best way to approach the people who lived there. He found a place to engage them in conversation about Jesus.

Suppose you have a co-worker in the cubicle beside yours. He’s an acquaintance, and from conversation, you’ve determined he’s not really involved in spiritual matters. It’s probably not the best idea to immediately invite him to an in-depth Bible study that goes heavily into the Greek meanings of various words. But you might choose to follow the example of one of the guys in our office. He invites men to go with him to the dirt track races. That’s a casual, non-threatening environment that allows him to build relationship. He engages in intentional friendship, which opens doors later for deeper conversations about spiritual matters.  MIMBS 4


Name one man you can intentionally engage in a spiritual friendship.

Brainstorm a bit about the best way to pursue a relationship that may eventually pave the way for deeper conversations about spiritual matters.

Daily Reading: Ezra 4:24–6:22, 1 Corinthians 3:5–23, Psalm 29:1–11, Proverbs 20:26–27

Tuesday—August 8 • The Wide-to-Deep Continuum

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” (John 3:1–3)

When you consider how to engage a man in an intentional spiritual friendship, you must consider where he is spiritually so you can creatively determine how to reach him. At Man in the Mirror, we call this the wide-to-deep continuum. When a man is early in his journey, you cast the net widely. You pursue casual conversations and build relationship to the point that you can naturally talk about Jesus. But suppose you’re engaged with a man who’s been in church for a while. He’s trying to figure out how to raise his kids in a godly way, or how to navigate business decisions with integrity. That’s the kind of guy Jesus was talking to in the passage written above. Nicodemus was a religious leader, and Jesus went right to the spiritual issue at hand. “You can’t see God’s kingdom unless you’re born again.” Jesus cast a deep net when He talked with Nicodemus. Figuring out where your guy is on the wide-to-deep continuum will help you determine how to most effectively reach him.  MIMBS 4

Describe some ways you can effectively determine where someone is on the wide-to-deep continuum?

Daily Reading: Ezra 7:1–8:20, 1 Corinthians 4:1–21, Psalm 30:1–12, Proverbs 20:28–30

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. (Colossians 4:12)

It might seem strange to pray for a friend, but it really isn’t. Actually, prayer is one of the most powerful things you can do for a guy. A man who is early in his spiritual journey may share something he’s dealing with. You could respond, “Would you mind if I pray about that?” He may look around and say, “Right here? Right now?” And you can say, “No, but I’m just letting you know I’ll pray for you about that.” Now, if you say that and just walk away, you’ve minimized the impact in that man’s life. I encourage you to follow up a few days later. “Hey, man, I’m wondering what happened with that situation you mentioned. I’ve been praying about it.”

For a guy who’s a little further along in his spiritual journey, you may feel led to pray *with* him rather than just *for* him. Ask God to give comfort or direction or wisdom, or whatever is needed. That brings your friendship another step forward, and it actually brings both of you closer to Christ.

 MIMBS 4

Who among your friends are you praying for? Who are you praying with? How are you following that up in conversation?


Daily Reading: Ezra 8:21–9:15, 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, Psalm 31:1–8, Proverbs 21:1–2

Thursday—August 10 • Reach Out Through Giving

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Sometimes you really catch a man’s attention when you offer a gift. Man in the Mirror offers books at our website at very low cost. They were designed to help men move forward in their spiritual journeys.

If you have a friend who is still trying to figure out Christianity, consider giving him a copy of *Is Christianity for You?* If he’s struggling and trying to figure out why things aren’t working out, consider giving him a copy of *Man Alive*. If he’s been doing Christianity for a while, but it’s not really clicking, consider giving him a copy of *The Man in the Mirror*.

How do you do it? Just say, “I was thinking about you this morning, and about some of the stuff we’ve talked about. I’d like to give you this book. All I ask is that you read the first chapter. Let’s get together and talk about it next week. If you like the book, you can keep reading it, and if you don’t, you can pass it on to someone else.” Then pray and see what God will do.  MIMBS 4


Who among your acquaintances and friends could benefit from receiving a gift designed to help him move forward on his spiritual journey?

Daily Reading: Ezra 10:1–44, 1 Corinthians 6:1–20, Psalm 31:9–18, Proverbs 21:3

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Romans 12:9–13)

I encourage you to be practical and prepared to “share with the Lord’s people who are in need” and to “practice hospitality.” You have things that other people need. It might be your time, or your energy, or your pick-up truck for hauling mulch. Be ready to serve.

Several years ago, I found one of my employees still sitting in the office at about 5:30. Everyone else was gone, so I kidded him a bit. “When are you going to go home?” He replied, “My car is broken down, and I missed the 5 o’clock bus, so I figured I’d wait here and catch the one that comes at 6.” He resisted when I offered a ride, but finally he agreed. For two weeks I provided transportation each evening, till he got his car fixed.

The first week was stiff. I was his boss, after all. He knew about my faith, and he was very open that his lifestyle didn’t honor Christ. But he learned he could trust me. He discovered I wouldn’t beat him over the head with my Bible. And in that second week, when he started really opening up to me, I found that all the barriers between us had collapsed. An act of service created an opportunity for this man to encounter God’s grace in a new way.  MIMBS 4


Who among your acquaintances and friends could really use an act of service?

Daily Reading: Nehemiah 1:1–7:73, 1 Corinthians 7:1–8:13, Psalm 31:19–33:11, Proverbs 21:4–10

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

The Bible clearly teaches that a person’s relationship with Jesus should affect all other relationships. Often we think of that primarily in terms of our closest relationships—like family and friends. But what about work relationships?

Every person has the same allotment of time—168 hours per week. If you sleep eight hours per night, that means you’ll be awake about 112 hours each week. The activities associated with work—getting ready for work, commuting to and from work, and actually working—will absorb about half that time. So if you are like most of us, a block of about 56 hours each week is already committed to work.

Most people spend much of their day working with people. You may spend more time with the people at your job than you do with any other group. Workplace relationships are opportunities given to us by God. Scripture gives clear direction about how we are to treat people so we can be God’s instrument to transform lives.  MIMBS 5

Re-read today’s Scripture. Is it hardest for you to apply that at home, at church, or at work? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: Nehemiah 7:74–9:21, 1 Corinthians 9:1–18, Psalm 33:12–22, Proverbs 21:11–12

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



August 7–13


Who are you serving in an intentional effort to mentor them in their relationship with Jesus?

- Who are you giving to in an intentional effort to mentor them in their relationship with Jesus?
- Who are you praying for in an intentional effort to mentor them in their relationship with Jesus?

Tuesday—August 15 • Dealing With Difficult People

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. . . . You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:38,39, 43–45a)

Researchers have concluded that the top reason why CEOs fail in their positions has to do with their people skills. They can be tremendously talented in other areas, but if they lack people skills, they face a limitation that is very difficult to overcome. Basically, on any given day, every person you meet is a confluence of complexity and an amalgam of inconsistencies. And in business, we must deal with people in so many different categories. We have dissatisfied, unappreciative customers. We have non-performing employees. We have over-reaching, controlling bosses. In that context, how does faith affect our relationships?

Jesus calls us to live with an attitude of non-retaliation and tolerance. He calls us to be thermostats in the world around us, rather than simply being thermometers. He doesn’t want us to simply record and mirror emotions around us. He wants us to live so that people identify us as disciples, altering our environment by demonstrating love and respect, even when it seems to be undeserved.  MIMBS 5


Think of one person at work who is easy to get along with, and one who is difficult. How do you treat them differently? Does that difference reflect the attitude recommended by today’s Scripture? Get input from men in your group.

Daily Reading: Nehemiah 9:22–10:39, 1 Corinthians 9:19–10:13, Psalm 34:1–10, Proverbs 21:13

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:46–48)

There are situations in our workplace that are out of our control. We may have to work with bosses or clients who are difficult. We may work alongside people who don't like us or coworkers with whom we've had conflicts.

This passage reminds us of a Christian's duty in the workplace. Don't get the mistaken idea that Jesus intended us to grin and bear difficult situations. A lot of Christians succumb to that mentality as it relates to their circumstances, but then they hold grudges against the people involved. Those grudges affect how they see all customers, or all employees, or all bosses. They assume that *all* customers will take advantage of them, or *all* employees will not perform well, or *all* bosses will behave like jerks.

Jesus didn't call us to ignore conflicts. He called us to be agents of grace in difficult situations, so we can bring about change. With every person you meet, you can extend grace or you can hold a grudge. You cannot do both.  MIMBS 5

Describe the most difficult situation you faced with people within the last week. Did your external and internal responses extend grace, or did they expose a grudge? Explain your answer.


Daily Reading: Nehemiah 11:1–12:26, 1 Corinthians 10:14–33, Psalm 34:11–22, Proverbs 21:14–16

Thursday—August 17 • Honest Communication in Business

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over." (Matthew 18:15)

Businesses depend on customers, yet dealing with those customers can be difficult. Sometimes they hold a deal open indefinitely without actually committing to anything. Sometimes they refuse to pay. We can wrongly assume that Christian forbearance requires us to ignore those types of issues. In contrast, Scripture actually calls us to approach even those relationships with honest communication.

I once had to call a customer who had been negotiating a deal with me for six months. I said, "We've been at this for a long time. I think it would be smart for both of us if we bring this to a conclusion, unless there is some compelling reason that I don't know about." I chose words that invited a legitimate response. Each situation requires a different action, but without honest communication, you won't know how to proceed.

At some point, every person in your life will irritate you. You must choose whether you will have the courage to live by grace, pursuing honest communication. If you choose instead to ignore difficult issues, you'll have a hard time avoiding bitterness.  MIMBS 5

Describe a "worst case scenario" for you, as far as an unresolved issue with a customer or client. Now write what you would say to introduce an honest discussion about that issue. Share your thoughts with another man.


Daily Reading: Nehemiah 12:27–13:31, 1 Corinthians 11:1–16, Psalm 35:1–16, Proverbs 21:17–18

Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning... If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you. (Proverbs 9:9, 12)

Peter Drucker, the foremost management consultant of the 20th century, said that about one-third of their employees will be excellent. Another third will be average, and a third will fail. Clearly, if you are a Christian leader, you will need to graciously confront those who simply aren't meeting expected standards. Sometimes honest communication will correct the situation.

A friend approached me for advice. He had hired a young man fresh out of college. "He has a terrible work ethic," my friend said. "He comes to work late at least once a week, and he takes long lunch breaks. He takes personal calls at work." I asked three questions: Did you give this young man a written job description? Have you established a written policy for your entire workplace, related to these types of issues? Did you communicate to this employee the method in which you prefer to receive performance reports?

At the most basic level, a good boss mentors employees to understand expectations. Only rarely can an employee hit a bullseye if he doesn't even know where the target is.

On the other side of the coin, a good boss recognizes the efforts of good employees. Several years ago I sought out our warehouseman. He had been in charge of a staff of 120 in the corporate world before coming to our ministry. I had never heard of any warehouse problems since he came on staff. I stopped by one day to thank him, and I believe I saw a tear in his eye. A simple "thank you" means a lot. Whether we are dealing with performing or non-performing employees, as Christians we should extend grace.  MIMBS 5

If you are a boss, have you done an effective job of communicating expectations to your staff members? If you are not a boss, can you recall a time when you benefited from someone mentoring you?

Daily Reading: Esther 1:1–10:3, 1 Corinthians 11:17–13:13, Psalm 35:17–37:11, Proverbs 21:19–21:24

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

August 14–20

Think of a time when you carried a grudge against someone.


- What evidence shows you are carrying a grudge?
- Were you able to love that person? Why or why not?



Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)

When Tom Watson was CEO of IBM, he elevated a young man to lead a major project. That young man promptly lost \$10 million. Watson summoned him to the corporate office. The young executive walked in and said, "I guess you'll want my resignation." Watson replied, "You have to be kidding! We just invested \$10 million in your education. You're not going anywhere!"

Perhaps you haven't experienced a loss of this magnitude, but I'll bet you'd agree with this young man, based on your own experiences, that life can take an unexpected turn. Yet Scripture indicates we can rest on the 100 percent certainty that, regardless of the circumstances, God's plan will prevail.

That doesn't excuse us from planning and preparation. But it does offer great comfort and even freedom in the process of strategizing, because we know we can never thwart God's plan. We can set our course, knowing that even if our plans seem to lead to ruin, God will take care of us by His grace and mercy. Our plans always are under the protection of His plans.  MIMBS 6


When have you found God's overarching plan protecting you in a difficult time? Share your experience with another man.

Daily Reading: Job 1:1–3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1–17, Psalm 37:12–29, Proverbs 21:25–26

The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps. (Proverbs 14:15)

Brad Bloom was approached to become the CEO of Olive Garden at a time when the business had experienced a 12 percent sales drop the previous year. Before accepting the position, he went "undercover," working in different capacities at several Olive Garden restaurants. He accepted the CEO position saying, "I want Olive Garden to be a fine dining experience." He kept a list of things he would change, based on his observations in the restaurants he had visited.

Brad began working toward his overall goal. He increased training for all employees by about 500 percent. He empowered managers at the local level. In short, he planned, and then he followed through. The results were phenomenal. Olive Garden experienced 33 quarters of consecutive growth, and profits rose 600 percent. Credit that success to Brad's determination, which was directed by careful planning.

Some Christians live like walking by faith means you must forsake planning and determination. But God asks us to faithfully serve Him, and that faithfulness often includes careful planning. Faith coupled with determination and planning can mesh together to achieve great goals.  MIMBS 6


Who in your life best shows the combination of faith, determination, and planning? What successes have you seen as a result?

Daily Reading: Job 8:1–11:20, 1 Corinthians 15:1–28, Psalm 38:1–22, Proverbs 21:28–29

Tuesday—August 22 • Planning and Faith

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:31–34)

Today's passage encourages Jesus' followers to live without worry, trusting God to provide the necessities of life. I've run into some Christians who seem to believe passages like this require a Christian not to plan. In context, though, this passage simply points out the danger of obsessing over worldly needs and desires. It doesn't warn about planning for the future, but rather, it warns about following a plan that leads to an unworthy goal.

Planning and faith are not mutually exclusive. In fact, Scripture quotes God as saying, "My purpose will stand... What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do" (Isaiah 46:10–11). God is not haphazard. He's a planner. The secret to success, then, is to figure out how to bring our plans into alignment with God's. Everything we desire and plan to do hinges on alignment with God's plan, because as the world's wisest man Solomon reminds us, "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans" (Proverbs 16:3).  MIMBS 6

Describe one goal for which you are planning. According to today's Scripture, is that a worthy goal? Explain your answer.

Daily Reading: Job 4:1–7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18–40, Psalm 37:30–40, Proverbs 21:27

Thursday—August 24 • Reporting to the General

The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD. (Proverbs 21:31)

The first part of today's verse recalls the importance of preparing before going into battle. The second part reminds us that even the best battle plan can fail, unless God ordains otherwise. You could say we are like lieutenants and God is a very good General. He gives lots of leeway to plan our own battles. But He ultimately calls the shots. I don't see that as a limitation of freedom. I see it as a comforting assurance of God's ongoing grace, covering our lives.

When our plans bring success, we must stay humble, recognizing God as the author of all victory. When plans don't lead to the success we expected, we can trust God's protection. We can trust that He will not allow us to destroy ourselves.

When our strategies fail, we can trust that God is working things for our good, rather than our harm. And He also is working to bring our plans into alignment with His. We need to seek His insight for our long-term thinking, setting our minds to pursue His glory in every plan we make.

 MIMBS 6

Think of a situation you are facing that requires planning. Rewrite today's Scripture passage so it applies directly to that situation.


Daily Reading: Job 12:1–15:35, 1 Corinthians 15:29–58, Psalm 39:1–13, Proverbs 21:30–31

A person's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand their own way? (Proverbs 20:24)

I had pestered my wife for about 10 years because I really wanted to live on the water. At one point, we agreed we would wait about two more years, allowing our children to finish high school, and then we could move. About the time we made that agreement, I was taking a shortcut to my house when I saw a sign: "Lake Front Property for Sale." I wasn't considering buying it, but I mentioned it to Patsy that evening, and we looked at it together. My usually deliberate wife said, "Let's buy it."

I made an agreement with the seller, and we shook hands on it. A couple of hours later, my phone rang. "Pat," the seller said, "this man asked if I ever wanted to sell the lot, would I see if he could buy it. After I left you, I called him, and he wants the lot. I feel duty bound to you, so if you give me \$10,000 more than he will give me, it's yours."

I knew my plans were protected by God's plans. If the sale fell through, it was because this wasn't the best plan for me. And if we did purchase the property, it would mean my plan was aligned with God's. After chatting with the seller for a while, I said, "If this is God's sovereign plan for us to have this lot, then there is nothing you or I can do to prevent that from happening. If it's not His plan, then no amount of my begging will make a difference. So do what you need to do." The man paused about 20 seconds, and he said, "Okay—since you put it that way, you can have the lot."

Not all circumstances work out that way. But if we hold tightly to God and loosely to stuff, we can trust God to align our plans with His, so that He is directing our steps.  MIMBS 6


Are you confident that your steps are directed by God? How does that trust (or lack of trust) affect you when your plans succeed? How does it affect you when your plans fail?

Daily Reading: Job 16:1-27:23, 1 Corinthians 16:1-24, 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:21, Psalm 40:1-41:13, Proverbs 22:1-6

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9-10)

Years ago, I spoke at a men's retreat. Before my first session, a gentleman addressed the crowd. "Guys, the mission trip is coming up. We're planning to help this community rebuild houses and rebuild their church. Three guys have signed up, and we need fifteen. That should be easy in a church the size of ours. Basically, I am concerned about the state of our church when I see such a lack of commitment."

His speech didn't bring the desired response, because frankly, no one wants to be around a guy who's bitter and angry. Yet we all can be susceptible to a similar attitude if we don't deal with discouragement.

Disappointment often results from unmet expectations. Interacting with a guy requires time and effort. We all want that guy to appreciate it and to respond. We want him to consider making some different life choices. If he doesn't respond in the way we desire, we have to guard against disappointment. If we don't handle that in a faith-filled way, we're susceptible to negative attitudes, and we may simply quit trying.  MIMBS 7


How does today's featured Scripture passage prepare you to deal with the discouragement of unmet expectations?

Daily Reading: Job 28:1-30:31, 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 22:7

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

When a building is burning, you don't expect firemen to stand around their truck. You'd ask, "Aren't you going inside?" You wouldn't be impressed if they replied, "No, visibility is limited because of the smoke, and we might get trapped by hazards. But we brought the right equipment. We're ready to care for people, once they come out on their own."

That scenario seems ridiculous, yet many of us approach people that way when it comes to their spiritual health. "I'm here for you if you will accompany me to Bible study. I'm here for you if you're ready for a deep conversation about your marriage. I'm here for you if you want to stop drinking so much. As soon as you come out of that burning building, I'm here to help."

Jesus stated His mission like this: "I came to seek and to save the lost." If we want to follow His example, we can't just care for people who come out on their own. We must be willing to go into their environment to find them.  MIMBS 7

Which scenario comes closest to describing the way you reach out to other men. Are you like the firemen who are only willing to treat people who come out of the burning building on their own? Or are you going into their environment to find them? Give an example that supports your answer.

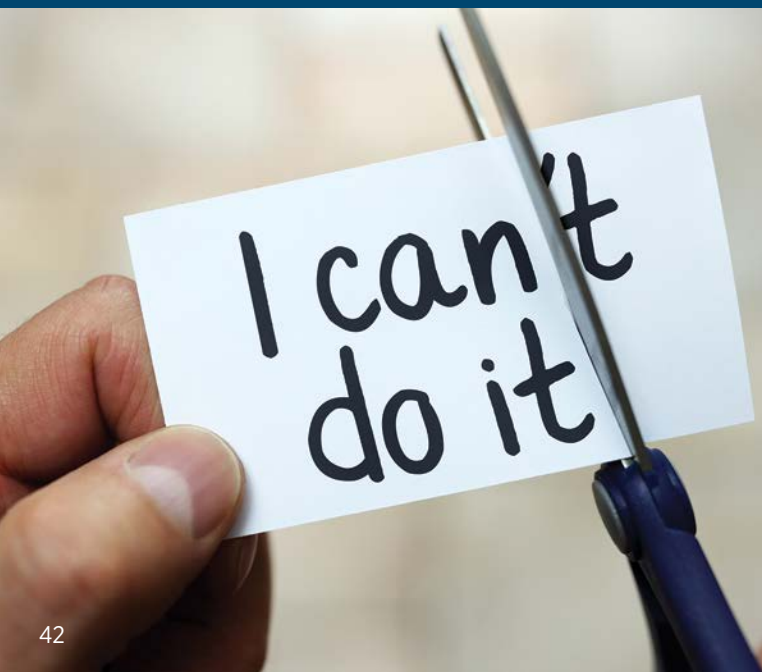
Daily Reading: Job 31:1-33:33, 2 Corinthians 3:1-18, Psalm 43:1-5, Proverbs 22:8-9

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

August 21-28

Make a list of men who display faith, determination and planning.

- How are those attributes displayed?
- How do those attributes affect their lives?



When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. (Luke 19:5-6)

When Jesus' called His disciples to "follow," He basically invited them to come onto His turf. But Zacchaeus wasn't one of Jesus' disciples. In fact, he was a hated tax collector. Luke 19 tells us Zacchaeus climbed a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus over top the crowd. Noticing him, Jesus beckoned and said, "Come on down, because I want to accompany you to your house!" Jesus communicated this: *I love you enough to meet you on your own turf, because I want you to know the truth about who I am.*

We need to imitate that attitude, and be willing to get on another guy's turf, even if it's inconvenient. Part of that happens when we begin to look past the façade that men present to the world, to see instead that they are lost.

They might not admit it right away, but many are angry or fearful or overwhelmed or disillusioned, and they won't reach out to Jesus till someone comes to them and demonstrates God's love in a way that invites a positive response. 🖨 MIMBS 7

Name one man in your life who might be your "Zacchaeus." List three ways you might be able to meet him in the environment where he is comfortable. Which one of those three possibilities will you try first?

Daily Reading: Job 34:1-36:33, 2 Corinthians 4:1-12, Psalm 44:1-8, Proverbs 22:10-12

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38)

In today's Scripture passage, Jesus used an agricultural metaphor to describe how things happen in His kingdom. He calls people to go out into the harvest field, not to wait for the harvest to come in on its own. But how does that happen? Is it the result of simple willpower? Does it happen simply because we convince men that they need to do more? No, because Jesus said we should pray that the Lord would send out workers. It must come from a heart change in us.

No amount of human persuasion or pressure will bring about the desired result. When I don't care about men, or I'm apathetic towards my neighbors, I have a heart issue. Something in my heart has grown hard and cold, so that I don't see people the way Jesus sees them. That stiffness blinds me to the origin of my own faith, causing me to ignore the fact that once upon a time, Jesus rescued me. Jesus can address that issue and transform my heart as the Holy Spirit works in my life. The Lord sends out the workers into His harvest field. If you're still waiting for the harvest to come to you, then I challenge you to spend some time praying that God will send out workers into the harvest field. And ask Him to change your heart, so you can be part of the answer to that prayer.

🖨 MIMBS 7

Let's pray: Lord, I trust that You can do in me what I could never do for myself. That's the promise and the hope of the gospel. I pray that You would change my heart. Convince me how much You love me, and how Your power changes me from the inside out. Then inspire me to overcome discouragement, so I would not look at the results of what I do with other men, but I would ask, "Am I loving men the way that Jesus loves them?" Lord, I pray that more and more You would make the answer to that be yes. For Your glory, we pray in Jesus's name, Amen.

Daily Reading: Job 40:1-42:17, Ecclesiastes 1:1-6:12, 2 Corinthians 5:11-7:7, Psalm 45:1-47:9 Proverbs 22:14-16

Thursday—August 31 • Like Sheep Without a Shepherd

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)

Our culture emphasizes personal responsibility, especially with men. We tell guys, "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Take care of your own stuff." Cultures certainly don't work very well if a whole bunch of people aren't willing to take care of their own stuff and everybody else has to clean up the resulting economic, social, legal or political mess.

Life is better when everyone obeys traffic laws and pays their own bills, right? But when we take that ideal of personal responsibility into the spiritual world, we create disaster, because that's not the gospel of grace.

We need to see people the way Jesus does. He says they are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He responded with compassion. That's what drove Him to seek and save the lost. Jesus told a story illustrating how a true shepherd responds when just one of his hundred sheep is lost (see Luke 15:1-7). The shepherd leaves the 99 and goes after that wandering sheep. When he finds him, he throws that sheep on his back and returns him to the flock. 🖨 MIMBS 7

When you see people as Jesus did, as sheep floundering without a shepherd, how does that impact your desire to reach out to them?

Daily Reading: Job 37:1-39:30, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10, Psalm 44:9-26, Proverbs 22:13

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

August 28-
September 3

Summarize the story of Zacchaeus as described in Luke 19.

- Name one man who might be your "Zacchaeus."
- List three ways you might be able to meet him in the environment where he is comfortable.
- Which of those three possibilities will you try first?




But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. (Jeremiah 17:7)

There are two kinds of men: independent and dependent. Here are definitions for those two words:

Independent—to not be influenced or controlled by others, in matters of opinion or conduct. The independent man thinks he is the master of his fate. He believes he is in charge and doesn't need to rely on God. He tries to make a plan for himself and works hard to carry it out.

Dependent—to rely on or trust in someone or something for support, favor etc. This man is relying on God and looking for His favor. He is not irresponsible but rather trusts God for his work, marriage, children and life. He asks God for direction in his life and trusts that God will lead Him. He believes God's plan is best for him.

The world tells men that we are supposed to be independent, self-sufficient and autonomous. The Bible tells us that we are to be subjects of a most High, most Good, most Powerful God. Which one makes sense in the long run?  MIMBS 8

How would a friend or colleague describe your life—dependent or independent? Why?

Daily Reading: Ecclesiastes 7:1–9:18, 2 Corinthians 7:8–16, Psalm 48:1–14, Proverbs 22:17–19

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. (Jeremiah 17:8)

Tim lived in New Orleans and went through Hurricane Katrina. He and his family huddled together and waited for the storm to pass. After the storm, he checked out his house and property for damage. In his backyard, there were two big trees—an oak tree and a hackberry tree. Tim found the big hackberry knocked over the fence. With the entire tree out of the ground, he could see that there were no roots to the tree. But the oak tree was still standing, majestic. It withstood this 50-year storm. The root system of this hardy oak was deep and strong.

On the outside, independent and dependent men can both look strong and healthy. But the independent man doesn't have any roots while the dependent man has the roots that go deep. The independent man tries to stand alone, but the dependent man holds on to God and his friends for support. And when the storms come—and they always do—we can see what a man is holding on to.

 MIMBS 8


How have you weathered life's storms such as illness, financial crisis, death or others? Were you dependent or independent?

Daily Reading: Song of Solomon 1:1–4:16, 2 Corinthians 8:16–24, Psalm 50:1–23, Proverbs 22:22–23

This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the LORD." (Jeremiah 17:5)

I went to lunch with a man to talk about the work of Man in the Mirror. He lived in Orlando when Disney started in the 1970s. He was involved in real estate and it made him a very wealthy man. He no longer needed to work. I asked him, "What do you do with your time?" He looked at me and said, "Pat, I pretty much do whatever I want to do."

A few years later, he died suddenly while sitting in his recliner. It was a place where he sat for many hours over the last few years of life. He spent his days in front of the television all alone. I don't think that's how he wanted to live life or spend his time. But that's what he ended up doing.

He was an independent man—an independent, Christian man. He trusted in himself and in his money. That determined everything about his life—even how he died.  MIMBS 8


Why do you think a man would choose this way to spend his life and his money? What would you say to a man like that if you had the chance?

Daily Reading: Ecclesiastes 10:1–12:14, 2 Corinthians 8:1–15, Psalm 49:1–20, Proverbs 22:20–21

How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:14–15 NLT)

Christian men struggle with independency. We create a plan and then hope God will bless it. We may try to make the Bible fit our way of thinking.

The dependent man is holding the Bible tightly in his hands, praying and seeking God's will, allowing God to lead him. He doesn't do it perfectly and God doesn't always work things out like he would hope, so he adjusts along the way, but continues to trust in the Lord. He understands that he will be like a tree planted by waters and sends out roots to the stream. Drought and heat will come, but he does not fear and he never fails to bear fruit. It's all about who is in charge—trusting in man or trusting in the Lord.

The dependent man understands that he lives, serves, worships and is blessed at the pleasure of God.  MIMBS 8


Is there one area of your life that's particularly difficult to entrust to the Lord? Share your thoughts with another man.

Daily Reading: Song of Solomon 5:1–8:14, 2 Corinthians 9:1–15, Psalm 51:1–19, Proverbs 22:24–25

For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. (Colossians 1:16 MSG)

Johnny Cash grew up a poor, young country boy in Arkansas. He served in the military and when he returned home, he married and sold appliances for a living. He worked nights playing the guitar and eventually signed a record deal. When he hit stardom, he hit trouble. The more records he sold, the worse his personal life became. Johnny became a drug addict and once was arrested with over 1000 pills on his person. Along the way, he lost his wife, friends and business associates.

On May 9, 1971, Johnny Cash sat in a small church in his hometown and listened to the preacher. At the end of the sermon, the preacher invited all to come forward and make things right with God. Johnny got out of his seat, went forward, took a deep breath and put his faith in Jesus Christ. In the midst of tremendous success and fame, he found a lot of pain and made a terrible mess of his life. He was rich and famous and miserable. He had tried to be independent. He had made extreme choices and he hit bottom. His salvation experience and new dependency on God made an outward, dramatic, visible change in his life.

Our lives may not be as exciting or extreme. But we've all tried to be independent and make things happen our way. When life is not going our way, we work harder, earn more money, change jobs, divorce, remarry and make other changes in life. We hope those alterations will make a difference, but those changes don't transform our hearts. As Johnny Cash found out, God is the only change that matters. Only He can transform our hearts and lives.  MIMBS 8


Are you trying to live life your way or His way? Have you come to the same place that Johnny came to on that Sunday morning in church? How are you able to live that out every day?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 1:1-7:25, 2 Corinthians 10:1-11:33, Psalm 52:1-55:23, Proverbs 22:26-23:3

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Jesus articulated the mission He intended for His followers. He said, "Be my witnesses everywhere you go." That can be intimidating to anyone. What is the source for energy and power to accomplish such a huge task? Is this like expending my own effort to work my muscles so I can gain more power for the task at hand? Absolutely not.

The Bible clearly tells us that God is the source of our power. He pours Himself into me. This passage is about being God's vessel, so His power can flow through me.

The apostle Paul told us that God's power is shown to be perfect in our weakness (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). If you feel weak and timid when you think about being a witness for Jesus, that simply means God's power can flow through you. The worst thing is having so much confidence, thinking you can "fix" that other guy. Don't go there. Go to the Holy Spirit. Trust your weakness. Present yourself. Let the power of the Holy Spirit work in and through you.  MIMBS 9


Describe a time when you felt God's power working in you to touch another person. If you've never experienced that, spend some time asking God to reveal Himself through you to other people.

Daily Reading: Isaiah 8:1-9:21, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 23:4-5

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

Many of us have read this verse and thought we could reduce "the reason for our hope" to an informative explanation. We thought if we could just bombard men with information about God and about His principles, then we had done everything possible to influence them toward Christ.

The reality is, if that could work, we'd already be done with the task God gave us. Everybody in our sphere of influence would already be disciplined, because information about God is already out there. We live in a culture where the gospel is still readily available; so clearly, something else needs to happen.

We need Christians who will offer their answers in the context of relationships. That's the only way to truly communicate that we desperately want men to have exactly what they so desperately desire: meaning and purpose in their lives. We know that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus. How do we pass on this reality? Step one is to just be a friend.  MIMBS 9

Are you prepared to give an answer for your hope? And if so, are you doing that in the context of relationship?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 10:1-11:16, 2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Psalm 56:1-13, Proverbs 23:6-8

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



September 4-10


Read aloud the devotional titled, "Dependent or Independent" on page 46.

- What is the main difference between the two?
- What mixed messages do we get about dependence and independence?

I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the LORD... (Psalm 77:1-2)

In your daily life, watch for God to open opportunities for you to converse about Him. They may happen at work, or somewhere that you are shopping for hardware, or at the bowling alley or racetrack. Opportunities are everywhere, but we often miss them, because we're not watching.

I remember one guy I met at the gym. We were acquaintances for about a year, and then one day I noticed he looked a little down. Men are often open to spiritual conversations when they face crisis or pain or trouble. So, I asked, "What's up?" He told me his story. This woman broke up with him, and she took some of his possessions. He discovered she had done this to several men, and he was going to have to sue her for the return of his property. I just listened and stayed available.

Eventually he accepted my gift of a spiritual book that spoke to his situation. I could have missed that opportunity to share Jesus, but because I was intentionally watching, I had the joy of investing in another man's life.  MIMBS 9

Re-read Psalm 77:1-2, recorded above. How do those verses encourage you to stay alert to opportunities to share Jesus with those around you?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 12:1-14:32, 2 Corinthians 13:1-14, Psalm 57:1-11, Proverbs 23:9-11


Thursday—September 14 • A Three-Minute Testimony

Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe... (Psalm 107:2)

Scripture calls those of us who have been redeemed to tell our faith story to others. We can be a lot more comfortable doing that if we've prepared ahead of time. I'm going to ask you to prepare a three-minute testimony. What was your life like before Christ? Did you feel empty and confused? Were you lonely, disillusioned, successful but still not happy?

Write that down and then edit it so you have about 150 words. If possible, use an actual example rather than simply relating abstract concepts.

Then write about 150 words about how you came to Christ, and another 150 words about how your life is different since you came into relationship with Christ. Again, if you have a real-life illustration, it will add power to your story.

Once you've written it, practice saying it. If you've stayed within the word limits, this should take about three minutes—150 words per minute. Once you're prepared, watch for God to open the opportunity for you to share your story with another man.  MIMBS 9

Go ahead and prepare your three-minute testimony. Then find someone who will listen, so you can practice. Be prepared to share your story when God opens the opportunity.

Daily Reading: Isaiah 15:1-18:7, Galatians 1:1-24, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 23:12

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am..." (Acts 26:28-29)


Our goal in spiritual conversation is simply to help a man go as far as he wants to go toward Jesus at that moment. I'm so glad for the five men, plus my praying wife, who did this for me. I can barely imagine where I'd be if they hadn't intervened.

One of those men was a preacher. He wasn't eloquent, but he understood the gospel and prepared himself to present it simply.

Two other men invited me to go with them for coffee. They invested time and energy in becoming my friend, and they began to ask me questions.

Another man in my Sunday school class walked me through my first experience of being convicted of my sin.

After I accepted Jesus' invitation to enter into relationship with Him, another man invited my wife and me to join a couples Bible study. That man saw something in me that I didn't know was there. He gave me a vision for biblical manhood that just kind of unchained something inside me. I've never been the same.

I'm one example, but the reality is that innumerable men in this world long for someone to care enough to help them move toward Jesus. They might not be able to articulate that desire, but it's the overwhelming need of their lives. They need men who are ready to respond by nudging them in the right direction. I challenge you to be or become one of those responders.  MIMBS 9

I named five men who helped nudge me toward Jesus. List the men who helped you on your spiritual journey. What can you learn from their examples?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 19:1-28:13, Galatians 2:1-3:22, Psalm 59:1-61:8, Proverbs 23:13-18

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

September 11-17

How are you preparing to give an answer for the hope you have in Jesus?

- How are you sharing that in the context of relationship?
- How are you staying alert to opportunities to describe your hope to those around you?



Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. (1 Thessalonians 4:11–12)

My dad was involved in the financial world. He told me once he had dinner with several financial movers and shakers. Near the end of the meal, the waitress came and asked, “Can I get anyone an after-dinner drink?” Dad told me he was thinking how nice it would be to have a glass of wine. But then one of the other guys said, “He won’t order any alcohol, he’s a Christian.” Dad said he wondered for a second, “Do they think I’m legalistic?” Then another guy said, “I don’t need anything, either.” A couple of the guys canceled their orders.

They were just ordering to be like the rest of the group, and suddenly they understood they didn’t have to do that. Dad realized he had a reputation for living his life a certain way. He wasn’t legalistic, nor was he a jerk about his convictions. But he honored God, and he had a winsome reputation that invited men to approach him for advice. Does your reputation invite people or repel them?

 MIMBS 10


What is your reputation in the workplace? Does it invite people or repel them? How do you know that?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 28:14–30:11, Galatians 3:23–4:31, Psalm 62:1–12, Proverbs 23:19–21

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)

Men go through a very specific process of developing relationships. First, we become acquaintances. Then we become friends. Sometimes when a guy walks into a church, we tell him right away, “Before I even know you, you’re supposed to be my brother.” But that’s not how guys work.

Guys require a process that builds relational trust in increments. So, we start at level one: accept one another (some translations say “welcome one another.”) This is a transactional relationship, where we concentrate on one-shot deals like going for coffee, or helping someone move. You must invest time at this level in order to advance to the relational level of friendship, where we can begin to do life-on-life discipleship.


At that point, you have to care enough about a guy that when he shares something with you, it stays in your head. You have to remember, for instance, to call him the morning of his mother-in-law’s surgery. You do that because you’ve developed a friendship, and you love him. A life-on-life discipleship relationship requires a long-term view.  MIMBS 10

Have you experienced a time when someone tried to push you to a level of relationship you weren’t prepared for? What did you learn from that?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 33:10–36:22, Galatians 5:13–26, Psalm 64:1–10, Proverbs 23:23

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18–20)

Sometimes, I think we get the impression that Jesus walked up to Peter and Andrew as a complete stranger and said, “Come with me.” We think they followed like zombies, like a spell was cast over them. But the verse immediately preceding this passage says, “From that time, Jesus began to preach...” That came after Jesus’ very public baptism, and after he returned from 40 days of being tempted in the wilderness.

Luke’s version of this story gives more detail, noting that Simon Peter took Jesus out in his boat to give Him a forum to speak to the burgeoning crowd. So, when Jesus approached Peter and Andrew, or any of the other people He invited to follow Him, they knew exactly who he was. Nobody was more intentional in forming spiritual friendships than Jesus, and people wanted to go with him, because they knew His reputation.  MIMBS 10


Read Luke 4:38–5:11. How does this change your view of the passage quoted above? How does it solidify your understanding of the power of a strong and positive reputation?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 30:12–33:9, Galatians 5:1–12, Psalm 63:1–11, Proverbs 23:22

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Encouraging and strengthening each other indicates we are moving toward true friendship. That often happens through crisis or conflict. As president of my college fraternity, I found it difficult to get along with my vice president, Brian. I talk fast. To get under my skin, Brian would talk very slowly. It worked. But we had to figure out how to work together, because we served on the same executive committee. As we navigated that conflict, Brian became my best friend.

Without that conflict, I don’t think we would have developed that relationship. Friendship sometimes forms the foundation for covenants. If somebody you don’t know very well wants to be your accountability partner, beware of his intentions. He may simply want to know all of your “dirt.” Accountability is an invitation built on a foundation of trust. If you’ve already gone through conflict together, you know if that guy has your back.

When I know a friend is trustworthy and committed to me, I’m willing to invite him into some dangerous parts of my life that I don’t want anybody else to know.  MIMBS 10

Have you ever trusted someone and then regretted it? What did you learn from that experience?


Daily Reading: Isaiah 37:1–38:22, Galatians 6:1–18, Psalm 65:1–13, Proverbs 23:24

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Jesus was nearing His death when He made the statement quoted above. He had pursued relationship with these men for about three years. Now He says, “We’re moving to a new level of relationship.”

The reality is, true friendships require time. To move from being acquaintances to being friends requires a personal investment. What does that look like in our contemporary culture? Well, you can get involved in a one-to-one relationship with a guy, where you mentor him or you mentor each other. You could get in a small group, like a Bible study or a discussion group, where you read or discuss a book together. You might join a service team or go on a mission trip together. Or you could find a shared interest group, like a softball team. The opportunities are endless.

So, imagine that you’ve invited a friend to go bowling. You throw the ball twice, and you sit there together for a while. You make fun of each other. “Seriously, dude, you’ve got to get some more spin on that ball.” If you invest time, those conversations can become deeper and deeper and deeper. Eventually you’ll talk about things that matter.

Any activity can provide the opportunity to develop a spiritual friendship, if you’re willing to invest time and energy to develop that relationship.  MIMBS 10


List some activities you’re already involved in that could provide a forum for developing deeper spiritual friendships with other men. Ask God to direct you in that endeavor.

Daily Reading: Isaiah 39:1–45:10, Ephesians 1:1–3:21, Psalm 66:1–68:18, Proverbs 23:25–24:2

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. (Ephesians 6:18)

My business includes speaking in various venues. I recall a particularly packed schedule. Friday morning I led a Bible study. Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning I spoke in another state.

I flew back home to speak Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in other venues, then back to the Bible study on Friday. I prayed, “Lord, please protect me from getting sick during those days.” I finished the engagements and was feeling super. Then I went to breakfast with a ministry leader and noticed my throat getting scratchy. I thought, “What a knuckle head! Why didn’t I just pray that I wouldn’t get sick for a whole year?” And yet, I wasn’t miserable, because I was rejoicing that God had so clearly answered my prayer.

Wanting to be successful in our work is a healthy part of life. When we see disasters and famines, or we know people whose circumstances are worse than ours, we might feel guilty about praying for success. Scripture invites us to pray for those who suffer. But it also says we should pray on all occasions, including when we truly need and desire to succeed.  MIMBS 11

Have you been neglecting to pray for something, because you felt it wasn’t important enough? How will you correct that?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 45:11–48:11, Ephesians 4:1–16, Psalm 68:19–35, Proverbs 24:3–4

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



September 18–24

What is your reputation in the workplace?


- Does it invite people or repel them?
- Why is it important to understand the continuum of acquaintance to friendship?
- How does time affect that process?

Tuesday—September 26 • Praying for Success of a Specific Idea

The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it...” And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. (Nehemiah 2:4–5, 8)

Nehemiah, who held a government position with access to the king of Persia, heard an unsettling report from his homeland. Jerusalem’s walls were broken down, and her people were disgraced. Immediately Nehemiah wept and fasted and prayed, concluding his petition like this: “Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man” (Nehemiah 1:11). You can see from today’s featured scripture that, indeed, God answered his prayer.

Nehemiah reminds us that the God who gives visions also will fulfill those visions. Usually He does that through men who pray in humble dependence on His power and might. If God has given you an idea, you definitely can pray for its success.


Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, once explained that most Christians estimate difficulties in light of their own resources, so they attempt very little, and they often fail in the things they do attempt. By contrast, he said, “All of God’s giants have been weak men who did great things for God, because they reckoned on His being with them.”  MIMBS 11

What has God given you a vision for? Have you asked Him to bless it?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 48:12–50:11, Ephesians 4:17–32, Psalm 69:1–18, Proverbs 24:5–6

Abraham... said to the senior servant in his household, "... I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac." (Genesis 24:1-4)

The servant commissioned in today's passage did fulfill his responsibility. When he got to his master's homeland, he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham" (Genesis 24:12). God honored that prayer and granted success. Perhaps you have a specific task: a project, a sale, starting a new business. God invites you to pray about anything, including success in your given task. In fact, not praying for success would seem to dishonor the God who invites you to ask.

Norm Miller, principal owner of Interstate Batteries, told me he started praying that God would multiply his company's marketing expenditures. A few weeks later, a couple in Wisconsin drove their car into a lake. Paul Harvey reported on national radio the next morning that, when the wrecker pulled the car out, the headlights and wipers were still working. He announced the car had an Interstate Battery. Suddenly, the brand rocketed onto the national scene. I see a link with Norm's prayer asking God to multiply his advertising dollars.  MIMBS 11

What are some specific needs or tasks in your work that you need to pray for? Share these with some brothers and pray for each other.


Daily Reading: Isaiah 51:1-53:12, Ephesians 5:1-33, Psalm 69:19-36, Proverbs 24:7

Thursday—September 28 • Praying Against a Specific Threat

Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?" The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands." (2 Samuel 5:18-19)

When David faced a threat, his first reaction was prayer. Most of us have faced or will face some sort of hazard. Like David, our response should be prayer. Pray when you don't know what to do, but pray also when you think you already know how to proceed. You want to be familiar with talking with the Lord, so you know what it's like when He answers.

The Bible says we should pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). I know two businessmen in my hometown who are very good friends. They talk on the phone several times a day. I've heard them chat, and I've noticed a familiarity and affection in their conversation. I'm good friends with both of them, but I only talk with them once a week or so. My relationship with them is very different than the relationship they have with each other.

It's the same with Jesus. If you only talk every now and then, you won't have the same relationship you could have if you're chatting throughout the day. As you talk to Jesus about things foremost in your mind, you'll find your relationship growing deeper.  MIMBS 11


Describe a time when you faced some sort of danger or hazard. What was your first response when you recognized the threat?

Daily Reading: Isaiah 54:1-57:14, Ephesians 6:1-24, Psalm 70:1-5, Proverbs 24:8

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

When you have an idea, or you're facing a difficult task, do you rely on your own experience and determination? In some sense, when it comes to business, I know what to do. But I've learned to pray about everything, especially when I think I already know the answer. If I refuse to pray, I dishonor the One who invites me to ask.

Norm Miller, principal owner of Interstate Batteries, told me his business was seeking to establish its brand. He and his staff decided to host a convention in Hawaii. He explained, "We wrote down all we thought was important, everything we wanted God to do, and we began meeting every morning at nine. We prayed through that list for 18 months." The people who attended the convention said the feeling was different from other similar events. One woman said, "I go to 15 conventions a year, and I've never been to anything like this." Someone came up with the term "Interstate Family," and it stuck. I believe that was a direct result of Norm Miller and his staff investing time and energy in prayer.

I challenge you to make a "Norm List." Name the areas where you want to see success. Then make a daily appointment with God to pray over your list. Commit to continue praying, even as your list evolves in keeping with your changing responsibilities. As you develop this discipline of prayer, expect it to be a conversation in which God will answer you. Your relationship with God will grow more and more precious, and you'll find that prayer actually is the most powerful and efficient investment of time.  MIMBS 11

Make a "Norm List" of areas in your work that you need to pray for. If appropriate, invite one or two co-workers to join you daily or weekly to pray about these things.

Daily Reading: Isaiah 57:15-62:5, Philippians 1:1-2:18, Psalm 71:1-72:20, Proverbs 24:9-12

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

September 25-30

- Describe what prayer means to you.
- Have you prayed and received answers to prayer?
- What areas of your life (home, work, health, relationships) do you need to pray about and release to God to work out as He will?



Melanchthon and Martin Bucer attended the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541 at which Contarini for the Catholics and Melanchthon for the Reformers thought they had reached an agreement on double predestination. Calvin accepted the outcome, but Luther and the Pope rejected it.

Melanchthon was a friend of John Calvin and, over time, he abandoned Luther's view of the Eucharist for the real presence view of Calvin. Later, Melanchthon's view of predestination started to shift, so Peter Martyr wrote him and asked what was happening to him. Calvin wrote and challenged Melanchthon too.

As a young man, John Calvin wanted to go to Strasberg but ended up in Geneva. There he tried to build a reformed city, but was banished from Geneva. So he did finally get to Strasberg—as an exile! There he worked with Martin Bucer. Bucer took Calvin under his wing and, among other things, found him a wife. It was from Bucer that Calvin learned how a reformed city and church should work.

Once a Dominican monk, Bucer went on to become the famous Reformer of Strasberg. Martin Bucer heard Luther speak and wrote to him. Later in his career, Edward VI, Henry VIII's son appointed Bucer the Regis Professor of Theology in Cambridge.

Meanwhile, Theodore Beza had become Calvin's right hand man after Calvin's return to Geneva. Beza began to systematize Calvin's work and ran The Genevan Academy to train pastors. Jacob Arminius (the father of Arminian theology) studied under Beza at The Genevan Academy.

Huldrych Zwingli started the reform movement in Zurich. Zwingli's hero was Erasmus whom he met in 1515. However, Zwingli, like Luther, split with Erasmus over justification by faith alone in 1520.

From 1520 on, Zwingli and Luther were reading each other's works. As a result, years into Zwingli's Reformation he became interested in theological reformation because of Luther's views. Zwingli, however, had an extreme view of double predestination. So Calvin wrote him a letter cautioning him that his view was extreme. Zwingli's protégé was Henrich Bullinger.

After Bullinger succeeded Zwingli, he created a Swiss Reformed tradition that became at least as far reaching as Calvin's. In 1549 Calvin took a trip to meet Bullinger to bring unity between German and Swiss believers on the matter of the Eucharist.

Meanwhile, over in England, Bloody Mary was persecuting the Puritans. Many fled to Zurich and Geneva where they studied under Martyr and Calvin, respectively. As you might expect, they became Calvinized, so returned to England with a Presbyterian orientation.

It was King Henry VIII who opened the door for Protestantism in England after being excommunicated for his attraction to Ann Bolin. Henry set himself up at the head of the new Church of England. There were at the time some 800 monasteries in England, and he suppressed them all. Henry never actually gave up his personal affirmation of Catholicism, but he did bring on men who were Protestants. And Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour—who died while delivering Henry a son, Edward—was Protestant.

Edward assumed the throne in 1547 at the fair age of nine or ten. His education was put entirely into the hands of the Seymour family who raised him as a Protestant. Edward was a born again Christian. With Thomas Cranmer's help, Edward publicly promoted Protestantism. Eventually,

Edward invited Martyr and Bucer to England to become the Regis professors of theology at Oxford and Cambridge, respectively. Together, they raised up a whole generation of English Protestants.

So what were the factors that led to half of Europe's churches becoming Protestant in just 40 years? And what are the lessons we can learn? As you can see in the account just presented, several human factors contributed to what the Reformers accomplished. Even though they each ministered in their own vineyards, they were:

- Reading each other
- Writing each other
- Visiting each other
- Attending conferences together
- Influencing each other
- Learning from each other
- Working together
- Holding each other accountable
- Challenging each other
- Correcting each other

The 16th century Reformation offers us one of the most encouraging examples of what can happen when Christians who agree on the essentials work together in community. The Reformers did not always agree, but they did keep working together to build Christ's kingdom. As a result, these men did together what none of them could have done alone. It is a good model for leaders today.



■ PATRICK MORLEY

The author of 20 books, Patrick Morley, PhD, is best known for writing *The Man in the Mirror*, with more than three million copies in print. He is Founder and Chairman of Man in the Mirror and has been teaching a weekly Bible Study to thousands of men for over 30 years. Pat and his wife, Patsy, live in Winter Park, Florida. www.maninthemirror.org

A Mandate for the Future

Let us be the Reformers of this generation. Let us read each other, write each other, visit each other, attend conferences together, influence each other, learn from each other, work together, hold each other accountable, and, when needed, challenge and correct each other. In other words, let's be in community. We don't have to agree

on everything to change the world. But, like the Reformers, we too build community.

If the only technology the Reformers had available to them was the Guttenberg press, imagine what we can do! Today the Internet and email give us opportunities to connect that were

unthinkable just 15 years ago. What is the ultimate purpose of technology? It is to complete the Great Commission.

One great idea can change the world. If just 10% of the churches in America made 15 new disciples every year, in just 20 years there would be 10,000,000 new disciples in our country. Imagine the impact those 10,000,000 disciples would have on the next 20 years. We will never know unless we try. Would you like to join us in the effort? Go to www.joinmim.org.

Let us be the Reformers of this generation. Let's be in community. We don't have to agree on everything to change the world.

5 Stuff happens. When a men's discipleship ministry is going well, only to suddenly begin to evaporate, often we can trace it back to the departure of one or two dynamic leaders. Their job changed or there was a family illness. Without a team of leaders around them there's no one to pick up the slack. **Building a strong and diverse leadership team builds resilience into your system to overcome the loss of a key man.** Plus, if this man is hurting, he has a team to surround and minister to him as well.

Building a Leadership Team

Recruiting a team of men to build and implement your men's discipleship strategy is not quickly done well. It takes time to identify and recruit men. You need to build trust and authentic relationships. You want to make sure you are finding men who can help understand the various kinds of men in the church.



The keys are prayer and time. If you don't have any kind of leadership team or focused men's discipleship ministry in your church, this could—and probably should—take a year.

First, pray that the Lord would give you a clear vision, a compelling case, and the wisdom to know who you should approach. Then start asking guys out for

coffee, share your vision, and see if God isn't working on their heart, too.


Next, start to meet regularly with the men you collect through your conversations. As your team grows, have them come with you or invite men on their own to coffee to do the same. And keep getting together.

Don't meet to plan and strategize. Meet to pray and study God's Word. Meet to have fun and enjoy each other. Get your families together a few times.

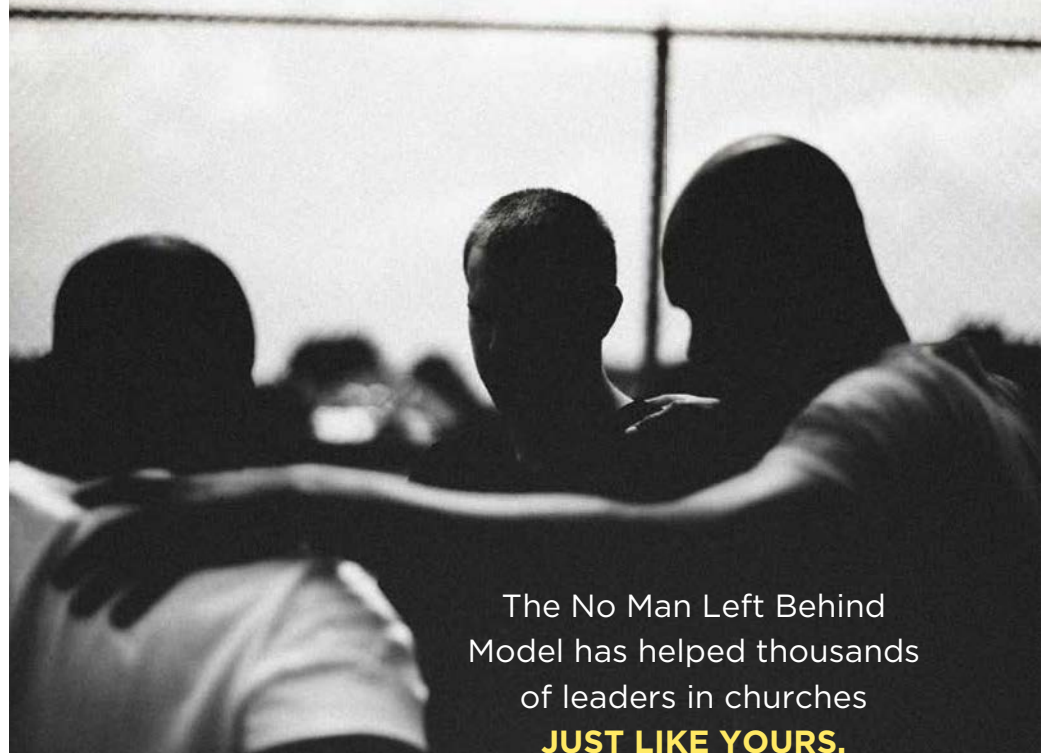
Start dreaming. Talk about your vision for discipling men in the church. What would it look like if every man in the church had an opportunity to grow in his faith? What would the impact be on families and marriages? On giving and serving? On outreach and missions?

Then, when you're ready, get trained. Come to a training or go to nomanleftbehind.org and use the online courseware. Find the closest Area Director or Field Representative and he will help your leadership team build a strategy based on

proven principles for engaging men in discipleship.

Do you want to break the "roller coaster" cycle of the typical men's ministry? To build a sustainable, effective, and impactful ministry that makes disciples, it all starts with a leadership team. Build a team of brothers. You'll change your life. You'll change your church. You might even change the world. 

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