

# EQUIPPING THE **MAN IN THE MIRROR**

TOOLS TO HELP MEN GROW TODAY

DO YOU HAVE  
**WHAT IT  
TAKES?**

## **MEN WANTED**

**FOR HAZARDOUS JOURNEY**

👉 **SMALL WAGES – BITTER COLD** 👈

**Long Months of Complete Darkness**

**CONSTANT DANGER**

**SAFE RETURN DOUBTFUL**



**Honour and  
Recognition in  
Case of Success!**



**6 Cs of Great Leaders** page 10  
**Long Term, Low Pressure** page 30  
**Your Greatest Christmas Ever** page 8  
**Daily Devotions** page 15

**JOIN**  
**The Team**  
**Issue**

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

**WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW.**

**MIMFIELDTEAM.ORG**



# 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](http://oneyearbibleonline.com).



Check out Man in the Mirror's new donation website—[mimdonate.org](http://mimdonate.org).

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**journeytobiblicalmanhood.org**

by Brett Clemmer,  
President, Man in the Mirror

Beth A. Comner

These were ten tough street kids—boys and girls—mischievous, defiant and stubbornly self-reliant. Authentic emotions were rare, and they would often “shut down” as a means of self-protection. And then Thanksgiving came.

It was my first holiday in the home. I talked to the staff and we all agreed to bring in a dish for the kids and have a big Thanksgiving dinner, including those who weren't on duty.

The big day came. We made a turkey in the house and covered the table with homemade dishes. It was my first Thanksgiving with macaroni and cheese and collard greens, and most everyone else's first Thanksgiving with sauerkraut, a Clemmer family Thanksgiving tradition. ("Where are the hot dogs?" asked one kid.)

For many of the kids, this was the most peaceful and complete holiday meal they had ever enjoyed. As we sat around the large picnic style table in the dining room, I witnessed something I'll never forget: One by one, each child realized that the staff had brought them something from their family traditions. Most of them were off duty, so they were sacrificing time with their own family to be there.

The table got very quiet. One of the older kids looked around the table and caught my eye. “Will you pray for the meal?” he asked. Immediately, everyone folded their hands, bowed their heads and closed their eyes, waiting expectantly.

My voice caught in my throat, and one of the older staff members said, “I’d like to do it.” She prayed a prayer like she was in her black gospel church. When the “Amen” (finally) came, it was as if the weight of the world had been lifted off of these kids’ shoulders.

Suddenly they were laughing and teasing, oohing and aahing over the food, and acting like, well, normal kids. The generosity and kindness of the staff had broken through their hard protective shells of indifference, and they could let down their guard.

Jesus' love and sacrifice does that for us, too. It softens our hearts and allows us to be vulnerable. When we help men make Jesus the Lord of their lives, we are bringing God's Kingdom to bear here "on earth, as it is in heaven."

So enjoy your Thanksgiving in the Kingdom of God. And may His love and sacrifice be ever present in your mind this holiday season.

# DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

by Brett Clemmer, President



**Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness. Constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.**

Legend has it that when Ernest Shackleton was recruiting men for his trans-Antarctic expedition, he ran an ad like this in a London newspaper, and 5,000 responded.

The famous story of resilience and leadership is well-chronicled in books like *Endurance*. Why would so many men respond to such a daunting task?

Since 2011, Man in the Mirror has been running our own recruiting strategy. We haven't run an ad like this, but if we did, it would probably say:



We started a recruiting website to call men to vocational ministry to men. Obviously, we've hit a nerve: over 100,000 people have visited the website to check it out! Out of those thousands of inquiries, we received hundreds of applications and built an elite team of 78 men. Man in the Mirror Area Directors are distributed from Washington to Maine, from San Diego to Orlando and dozens of places in between. They are coaching leaders, consulting with pastors and building local ministries dedicated to helping every church reach every man. But we need more.

Do you have what it takes? Looking at our team, there are some common hallmarks of the men who are making an impact for men's discipleship in the local church.

## **Called, Equipped and Sent**

Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

The themes of this passage outline that a disciple is: called (*wise for salvation*), equipped (*teaching, reproof, correction, training...equipped*) and sent (*for every good work*). Just as these themes describe a disciple, they also describe a successful Area Director here at Man in the Mirror.

Every member of our team is **called** to work with churches and leaders to help disciple men. Our Area Directors tend to be veterans of men's discipleship. Whether they have experience planning monthly breakfasts and annual retreats, leading a men's small group, or even being a pastor with a heart for men, God has called and prepared them for ministry.

They go through a thorough screening process, including interviewing with existing Area Directors. At the end of that process, they are formally offered—called to—a position on the team.

Once called, all of our team members receive extensive training to be **equipped** for two primary functions. First, to establish a local *Coalition for Men's Discipleship*, with an Advisory Council, target area, budget and funding. Using proven principles, our Area Directors build a team of partners to provide prayer, financial support and counsel to their ministry efforts.

Second, they are equipped to work with church leaders to implement a proven system for men's discipleship, *No Man Left Behind* (NMLB). The NMLB model has been shown to increase the number of men in church and the number of men engaged in discipleship by 48% and 84% respectively!

Armed with this support, knowledge and skill, our Area Directors are then **sent** out into the field. In 2016, this group of dedicated men reported working 1,416 churches, who would then disciple 21,240 new men, impacting their marriages,

families, neighborhoods, workplaces and churches. Imagine the influence this will have on our culture!

## **F.A.T. Men**

The next hallmark of a Man in the Mirror Area Director is that he is a F.A.T. man: *faithful, available, and teachable*.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul admonishes Timothy, *what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*.

Man in the Mirror Area Directors are **faithful** men. They work diligently to nurture relationships with their ministry partners, communicating with them as they pray and underwrite the ministry. They are faithful to connect with team members in their region for encouragement, learning and prayer. And they maintain relationships with as many church leaders as they can, helping them learn and grow personally as those men lead their church's men's discipleship efforts.

They must make themselves **available** as well. Being an Area Director is usually a full time job (though some do it part time or occasionally on a volunteer basis). Many men's discipleship activities happen outside of normal work hours. The benefit of this is often daytime hours to spend with family, so that they can then spend an evening with a leadership team or a weekend helping a church run a men's conference.

Finally, Area Directors are constantly learning best practices from our extensive training programs, their team leaders and even church leaders. Every man must be **teachable**, or he will miss out on opportunities to maximize his impact for the Kingdom. Some have never run their own "business" before, and so they must learn to manage a home office, submit reports and expenses, and correspond with donors and leaders

**Do You Have What It Takes?** continues on page 60 ►



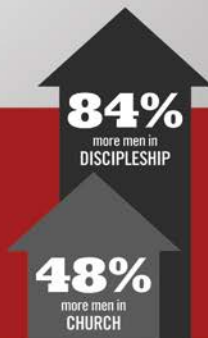


# 1 REASONS

to equip your men's leaders through the  
**NO MAN LEFT BEHIND**  **COURSEWARE**

1. **QUALIFIED:** Four experienced trainers on hi-def DVDs
2. **ORGANIZED:** A Facilitator's Guide to equip any leader
3. **INTERACTIVE:** Workbooks with discussion questions
4. **HANDS-ON:** Planning exercises to apply concepts
5. **COMPLETE:** Textbooks to supplement the video content
6. **FLEXIBLE:** At your team's pace on your team's schedule
7. **CONVENIENT:** The complete conference without anyone missing work or traveling
8. **MOBILE:** Train anyone anywhere
9. **ENDURING:** The Facilitator's Set allows you to train new men for years to come
10. **PROVEN:** Training that transforms!\*

\*When a church implements the concepts of the No Man Left Behind Model, the backbone of the training, they see significant gains. In a recent survey, after an average time of 2 ½ years, the average number of **men involved in church increased by 48%**. And the average number of **men actively being discipled increased by 84%**!



To order training, or to download your free session,  
visit us at [maninthemirror.org/courseware](http://maninthemirror.org/courseware)  
or call 800.929.2536.



## QUOTES ON CHRISTMAS

*“Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.”*

—C.S. Lewis

*“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

—Luke 2:10-11

*“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern.”*

—Mother Teresa

*“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

—Matthew 1:21

*“And when the Lord Jesus has become your peace, remember, there is another thing: good will towards men. Do not try to keep Christmas without good will towards men.”*

—Charles Spurgeon

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

—Isaiah 9:6

*“Peace with God, peace with others, and peace in your own heart.”*

—Rick Warren

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

—John 1:14

*“The very purpose of Christ's coming into the world was that he might offer up his life as a sacrifice for the sins of men. He came to die. This is the heart of Christmas.”*

—Rev. Billy Graham

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”*

—Isaiah 7:14



# YOUR GREATEST CHRISTMAS EVER!

by David Delk

**Christmas is a wonderful time for men and families, but it can also be extremely stressful.**

Not only do you have the demands of finishing the year at work, there are also presents to buy, decorating, “honey-dos” to take care of, holiday parties, and vacation plans. No wonder a recent American Psychological Association poll said that 69% of people are stressed by lack of time, lack of money, or the pressure to give or get gifts.

Too many men just end up letting the Christmas season happen instead of having a plan and working the plan. So, here is some help in developing a fool-proof plan to make this the greatest Christmas ever for your family.

**1 Be Intentional.** Reading this article is a great start. Now grab some paper or open a document on your computer and convert what you read in this article into an actual plan that you will execute. If possible, nail down some dates and times for the things you decide to do; if necessary, get the other information you need as soon as possible (consult with your wife about the family calendar) and then block off the time that you need.

**2 Have Fun.** Don’t allow everyone to drift through your time together

playing with their devices or watching football. Set aside some scheduled time as a group to do some fun things together. Get out and do an activity, such as putt-putt, ice skating, a visit to one of the “escape the room” places, etc. Set aside some times to play group games as a family as well. Try “Tribes” (10 to 20 people), “4 On a Couch” (8 to 15 people), or “Heads Up” on a smartphone (6 to 16 people). (Search the internet for descriptions and rules.)

**3 Write Notes.** Write a hand-written note to your wife and to each of your children. It doesn’t have to be long and involved; just describe something specific you appreciate about them and let them know how grateful you are to have them in your life. Consider writing a note also to your parents, mentors, former teachers, or friends. This may become a habit you want to extend throughout the year.

**4 Spend Time Individually.** Spend time one-on-one with your wife and each child during the holiday season. With busy schedules, it can be tough to make this happen spontaneously, so

put it on the calendar. Take each child out for a meal and sneak a 15-minute walk with your wife. Get a babysitter and go on a special date. Choose a fun activity and take each child out individually to spend time with you alone. During this time, present them with the note or letter that you wrote.


**5 Use a Devotional.** If you are a person of faith, consider using a devotional guide to help you and your family experience the full meaning of the season. You can find short readings for each day of Advent in books, in many places online, and in a Bible app on your phone. You could also use a devotional with visual aids, such as the Jesse Tree, which tells the story of Jesus, starting with the creation. Our kids loved getting a chance to hang an ornament on the miniature tree. (Learn more by searching for “Jesse Tree” online).

**6 Read a Book.** There are a number of wonderful books that you can read with and to your family during Advent. Our family treasured *Jotham’s Journey* (and its companions) by Arnold Ytreeide. Find a book that has short sections and begin the tradition of reading it together at night. It’s okay if you miss a few nights; just make the commitment to catch up and stay on track so you can finish by Christmas day.

**7 Serve Someone in Need.** Our culture is consistently telling you and your children that Christmas is all about you. *Yeah, you should buy people presents, but really you need to be thinking*

*about what you want for yourself.* Of course, this is a dead end. The presents are never as good as we hoped they would be, and half of the toys end up broken or unused by February. Give your family a lasting memory of what Christmas is all about by serving someone during this holiday season. Volunteer at a rescue mission, serve as a secret Santa for a family that won’t be able to buy gifts, help a widow or single mom with household tasks and decorating for Christmas, etc. There are a lot of ways to serve; find one and make a memory with your family.

**8 Connect to a Church.** Ultimately, Christmas is about the God of the universe coming as a man to save His people from their sins. People, not one person. We were never meant to experience life alone. Your Christmas traditions will be much richer if you live them out with friends and fellow members of your church. Attend the special worship services at your church. Join a small group and go to their Christmas get-together. Invite a few people from your church to join you for lunch after church

one Sunday in Advent. These relationships will deepen the joy of the season for you and your family for years to come. 

**Merry Christmas! We hope this is a great holiday for you and your family!**

*David Delk is a member of the Board of Directors and former CEO of Man in the Mirror. He and his wife, Ruthie live in Greenville, South Carolina where David is the Executive Pastor of Grace Church.*



# THE 6 CS FOR PICKING GREAT LEADERS

By Patrick Morley


**Bill Bright, Founder of Campus Crusade, often said, “Everything boils down to leadership.”**

Nothing will deflate our ministries quicker than not having the right leaders. If you ran a business, you would never promote someone because they said, “I’d like to be the vice-president of this company.” You would promote people because you appreciated their work ethic, their personality, their character, etc. Why, then, would we give key leadership positions in the church to someone “just because they want it” or “just because they are available.”

One of the least strategic things we can do is to let people self-select themselves for leadership. Here are six characteristics developed over the last 30 years that we use for employment interviews, recruiting and selecting faculty, annual staff reviews, Bible study leader selection and more.

- 1 Charisma:** They make a good impression and they are likable. Ask yourself this question, *Do I simply enjoy being around this person?*
- 2 Chemistry:** They have an ability to get along with people. Does this person have good people skills? How do they deal with conflicts or difficult people?

- 3 Character:** They act with integrity. Does this person have a reputation for keeping their word no matter what?
- 4 Competence:** They have an ability to get things done. Does this person have the skill set for the job?
- 5 Contribution:** They can create results or better performance. It’s one thing to have competence but an altogether different thing to actually produce. Does this person have a track record for getting things done?
- 6 Calling:** They are passionate about the mission of the church or organization. Does this person have a strong sense that God has gifted and directed them to pursue your vision and mission?

Are you looking for a person to lead your small group leaders or a congregational care service or any other leadership position at your church? If you find a leader who passes these six tests you probably have a winner. Don’t wait for leaders like this to approach you (someone else may see the same attributes you do and ask first! ☺). Recruit them to your leadership team. 

# 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:

- { } Seen that God wants men to experience the sense of satisfaction that comes through understanding and achieving the purpose He has written into our lives.
- { } Determined whether we are prioritizing God’s way or our own way.
- { } Prayed together regarding the challenges of following Jesus’s example as we express our manhood in a Biblical way.
- { } Performed an act of generous giving to a person or organization.
- { } Received feedback from others about the priorities of my life.
- { } Built confidence in your relationship with Jesus by understanding His faithfulness to His friends.
- { } Thanked a person who has been integral in your faith journey.
- { } Discovered habits that will help you experience robust and on-going joy.
- { } Given God praise for the ways He has used your group for His purposes.
- { } Established a plan to avoid drifting in your relationship with Jesus.
- { } Understood God’s plan for restoration of those who have “fallen away” in their relationship with Jesus.
- { } Discussed how the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance can ignite skills learned through repetitive training to enhance the effect of evangelism and discipleship.
- { } Given glory to God for the birth of the Jesus Christ!



# EQUIPPING YOUR MEN'S SMALL GROUP

## Suggested Applications Steps

### October 1-8

Many men live with a general sense of futility. Yet these devotionals propose that **biblical manhood includes a sense of satisfaction** that comes through understanding and achieving our God-given purpose. **SAS:** Discuss areas where you have influence as individuals and as a group. How can you support one another, so you can activate your witness in those arenas?

### October 9-15

This week's devotionals continue to examine **the principles and habits that lead to fruitfulness in a man's life**. **SAS:** Explain how discipline and determination work together to increase fruitfulness. Discuss the ways you prioritize time and money. How are your priorities revealed in your words and actions? Are you prioritizing God's way or man's way? Explain your answer.

### October 16-22

This week challenges men to **follow Jesus's example in pursuing and initiating relationships**, in shielding others from various types of danger, and in producing fruit for God's kingdom. **SAS:** Which of these devotionals was most challenging to you? Why? Take some time to pray together, asking God to turn your weaknesses into strengths through His power working in you.

### October 23-29

In these devotionals, you will see **the difference between letting God handle your finances and trying to handle your finances on your own**. **SAS:** Has your group considered making a financial gift to someone in need or to a nonprofit organization that serves your community? Discuss those options and decide on a way for your group to be generous in that way.

### October 30-November 5

This week, you will see that **God desires for us to treasure Him and others more than possessions**. **SAS:** In the next week, sit down with a couple of people (close friends or family) and ask this question of them, "From what you see in my life, what are the most important things or people to me?" Come back next week ready to share their replies.

### November 6-12

These devotionals will help your group see **Jesus's faithfulness to His friend Thomas**, even in the face of Thomas's doubts and fears. **SAS:** During the week, think of a person

you see as a true follower of Jesus. Ask that person to share how he kept his faith during a difficult time. Next week, come prepared to share that example and to describe how it builds your faith.

### November 13-19

As you will see this week, **the foundations of your faith are vital to the strength of your faith**. **SAS:** Ask each man to make a list of the people who have played an integral part in his spiritual life. Pick up the phone this week and call one or more of those people and thank them for the role they have played in your walk with God.

### November 20-26

From these devotionals you will learn that **God truly wants to produce in you an attitude of robust, ongoing joy**. **SAS:** Consider a scale of 0-10, with 0 meaning you have no joy and 10 meaning you experience robust joy on a regular basis. Where would you place yourself on that continuum? What daily habits would help you move closer to "10" on the continuum?

### November 26-December 3

This week's devotionals remind us that **God created you with a passion that He wants you to use for His purpose**. **SAS:** On a whiteboard or a large piece of paper, list the ways that God has used each of the men in your group for His purpose. End in prayer by giving God the glory for the many ways He has used the men in your group.

### December 4-10

This week you will **consider the issues that tend to pull a man away from faith in Jesus**. **SAS:** Consider the various examples given. How do they apply to your life? Come prepared to share steps you are taking to protect yourself from drifting in your relationship with Jesus. Pray together about how the members of this small group can help each other in that process.

### December 11-17

This week's focus offers **advice for the person who wants to avoid drifting away from his relationship with Jesus**, and also for the person who has drifted away and wants to return. **SAS:** Read Psalm 51:1-13 together. Note that verses 1-9 describe contrition and forgiveness, verses 10-12 relate to a restoration of relationship, and verse 13 refers to an outward focus for others. As a group, how would you rewrite that Psalm in contemporary language?

### December 18-24

This week we talk about **the power source that energizes our efforts to evangelize and disciple others**. **SAS:** As you read these devotionals, consider how the Holy Spirit's power and guidance can fuel skills learned through repetitive training to enhance the effect of evangelism and discipleship. Come prepared to share your insights and, if possible, give personal examples.

### December 25-31

This week **we celebrate Christmas because of the birth of Christ**. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). **Glory to God in the Highest!**



# DAILY DEVOTIONS

October • November • December 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

**Monday—October 2 • A Sense of Purpose**

*Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors... (Acts 13:36)*

I run into lots of men whose general sense of dissatisfaction bleeds over into many areas of life. Maybe a man's wife is out of sorts, and he starts wondering, "Is she mad at me? Is she feeling okay?" But he doesn't ask, so his stress and sense of futility begins to build. In another situation, recently a guy told me, "I just don't want to go to church anymore. I feel like I've heard all the same messages for years and years." And on yet another front, I talk to men all the time who feel unfulfilled in their work. "I don't feel like my job really matters. I'm just checking things off a to-do list."

All of these kinds of dissatisfaction are rooted in one common factor. Men want to make a difference in the environment around them. They want to know their purpose so they can engage in meaningful activity rather than just "going through the motions." I believe that's a very godly desire, placed in men by the Creator as one factor that actually defines manhood. MIMBS 1

*Prayerfully consider one area of your life where you feel a sense of dissatisfaction. If you could understand and act on your purpose in that situation, how do you think that would change the way you feel about it?*

**Daily Reading:** Isaiah 66:1-24, Philippians 3:4-21, Psalm 74:1-23, Proverbs 24:15-16

Each week of devotionals is based on a theme or themes. If you are interested in learning more about those themes, please go to our website, [maninthemirror.org](http://maninthemirror.org) and search the following theme words.

- Week 1: Manhood, Satisfaction, Purpose
- Week 2: Habits, Disciplines, Fruitfulness
- Week 3: Finances, Trust, Generosity
- Week 4: Money, Treasures, Possessions
- Week 5: Faithfulness, Doubt, Fears
- Week 6: Foundation, Bible, Basics

- Week 7: Joy, Gratefulness, Abundance
- Week 8: Friends, Brothers, Accountability
- Week 9: Helping Others, Love, Unconditional
- Week 10: Evangelism, Discipleship, Others
- Week 11: Jesus, Christmas, Salvation

*But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. (Jeremiah 17:7 NLT)*

October is one of those months that Floridians greet with great enthusiasm. After our long, hot summers and high-priced energy bills, we are ready for the cooler temperatures that allow us to spend lots of time outside. Of course, we don't get the beautiful fall colors of the northeast, but it is a great time of year to enjoy Florida. Each year we are ready for the change.

Life is filled with change. Switching from July in Florida to October in Florida is a great and welcome change. And sometimes we have change like this in our lives—a new job, a big raise, a new child or grandchild. But there are also other changes that aren't so welcome: caring for an aging parent, sending our last child off to college, facing unemployment or bankruptcy, and losing our health or our spouse. These kinds of changes are much more difficult to embrace.

And yet who is the Lord of change? Dealing with change requires trust. We trust that the blessing or the challenge of change is for our good and comes from God who loves us and will see us through. God can be trusted with all the changes your life brings.

*How well do you handle changes in your life? Do you view them as an opportunity or a curse? What determines your perspective?*


**Daily Reading:** Isaiah 62:6-66:24, Philippians 2:19-3:21, Psalm 73:1-74:23, Proverbs 24:13-16

**BE WATCHFUL,  
STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH,  
ACT LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.  
LET ALL THAT YOU DO  
BE DONE IN LOVE.**

—1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (ESV)

*Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors... (Acts 13:36)*

I run into lots of men whose general sense of dissatisfaction bleeds over into many areas of life. Maybe a man's wife is out of sorts, and he starts wondering, "Is she mad at me? Is she feeling okay?" But he doesn't ask, so his stress and sense of futility begins to build. In another situation, recently a guy told me, "I just don't want to go to church anymore. I feel like I've heard all the same messages for years and years." And on yet another front, I talk to men all the time who feel unfulfilled in their work. "I don't feel like my job really matters. I'm just checking things off a to-do list."

All of these kinds of dissatisfaction are rooted in one common factor: Men want to make a difference in the environment around them. They want to know their purpose so they can engage in meaningful activity rather than just "going through the motions." I believe that's a very godly desire, placed in men by the Creator as one factor that actually defines manhood.  Week 1


*Prayerfully consider one area of your life where you feel a sense of dissatisfaction. If you could understand and act on your purpose in that situation, how do you think that would change the way you feel about it?*

**Daily Reading:** Isaiah 66:1–24, Philippians 3:4–21, Psalm 74:1–23, Proverbs 24:15–16

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 8:10)*

All the way back to Adam, God created men with a desire for purpose. He planned that we would participate in His plan to grow His kingdom. Where are the areas of responsibility in your life?

Some of those areas will be obvious. For instance, if you are married, then you have responsibility for your marriage and your family. You also have responsibility in your workplace and in your church.

Beyond the obvious, where do you most see the sting of the absence of God's good news of abundant life through Jesus? It might be in your son's fifth grade class, or with a group of young ball players, or a scouting troop. It might be your neighbors or coworkers or customers. God might call you to play a particular role when you see people suffering because they haven't yet been impacted by the gospel. I challenge you to prayerfully list the areas where you have influence. Then ask God if that is your area of responsibility? Has He prepared you in advance to do good works in that arena?  Week 1

*Are you willing to accept the challenge at the conclusion of today's devotional? Why or why not? If you do accept it, list the areas where you believe God has uniquely prepared you to accept responsibility for growing His kingdom.*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 2:31–4:18, Colossians 1:1–17, Psalm 76:1–12, Proverbs 24:21–22

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15)*

From the very beginning of the world, God gave man responsibility to cultivate creation. Genesis 2 shows that God created the world and everything in it. Then He planted a garden which had potential but was not fruitful on its own. He placed Adam there to tend it. He intended for Adam to cultivate it, making and maintaining its fruitfulness. He also gave Adam a helper in the form of Eve.

So, God gave Adam a garden and a wife as his first two responsibilities. Then the serpent showed up. (See Genesis 3.) According to the scriptural account, the serpent only addressed Eve. But Adam stood right beside her, and he didn't speak up as the serpent deceived Eve. He allowed both spheres of responsibility given to him by God to be violated. He was supposed to be a blessing to the earth, but by his failure to fulfill his God-given responsibility, Adam instead participated in cursing the earth. Now we struggle to bring fruitfulness in the areas where we hold responsibility.

 Week 1


*Genesis 2 explains that God made the heavens and the earth. Verse 5 says, "Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground" (emphasis added). What does that last phrase indicate regarding the importance of Adam's responsibility in God's plan for the world? If you need help, please read Genesis 2:4–17 to discover the context of verse 5.*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 1:1–2:30, Philippians 4:1–23, Psalm 75:1–10, Proverbs 24:17–20

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"* "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. (Genesis 3:1–4)

God created men for purpose and responsibility. He also intended for men to be active rather than passive. In today's passage, the serpent talked directly to Eve, but Scripture implies that Adam stood with her. (See verse 6.) Adam did nothing to resist the serpent. He didn't step in front of Eve. He heard both the serpent and Eve misquote God's requirements (described in Genesis 2:15–17), yet he didn't correct them.

We all face a temptation to passivity. We want to avoid conflict. Instead of stepping up, many men step back. As a result, they feel impotent in some of the most important areas of life. If we aren't willing to confront and talk through issues in our most precious relationships, then we just float through life, following whatever current life has us in at the moment.

God made us for more. He made us to be men who create, produce, shape and transform. That can only happen as we work in the areas where God has called us to be responsible. Passivity will not contribute to fruitfulness.  Week 1


*Like Adam, men often are susceptible to the temptation to be passive rather than active. Describe a time when you faced that temptation. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 4:19–6:15, Colossians 1:18–2:7, Psalm 77:1–20, Proverbs 24:23–25



*For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! (Romans 5:17)*

God's desire to redeem what has been unfruitful and turn it to abundance resonates throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, for instance, we see Joseph. He rose to prominence in Egypt as God gave him skills and opportunity to create and maintain fruitfulness, thus saving God's people in a time of famine.

Then we can look at the beginning of the monarchy. An unfruitful King Saul was replaced by David, who became the iconic king whose royal line eventually gave birth to the Messiah. In another time of desperation and futility, God gave Nehemiah abundant resources and abilities to rebuild a broken city. Jesus was the ultimate example. Luke 4 tells us He gave His mission statement, proclaimed prophetically in the book of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18–19, see also Isaiah 61:1–2). Jesus reversed the curse brought on by Adam's failure, and He brought life and abundance in place of death and destruction. Those of us who claim to follow Jesus have a similar calling. God wants us to bring to others the blessings He intended.  Week 1


*Scripture tells us, "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). In context, this verse relates to generosity in giving. But in context of the repeating theme of God's desire to redeem what has been unfruitful, do you believe this verse is limited to financial generosity? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 6:16–11:23, Colossians 2:8–4:18, Psalm 78:1–72, Proverbs 24:26–29

*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance... (Luke 3:8)*

All of Scripture reveals that God invites men to partner with Him in His plan to redeem areas of our world rendered unfruitful. It's easy to succumb to the overwhelming scriptural evidence of this principle. It's not always easy to live it out on a daily basis.

Yet if we truly intend to follow Jesus' example, we must become intentional about pursuing the same calling that He did. That begins with repentance—not just feeling sorrow, but actually changing our behavior. Today's Scripture, for instance, calls us to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Those words came from John the Baptist, who then suggested some very specific lifestyle changes that would demonstrate heart changes. You can read about that in Luke 3:7–14.

I challenge you to prayerfully ask God what is distracting you or hindering you from fulfilling His purpose. I challenge you to ask God to write His desires on your heart. Ask Him to give you a new love for Him, and new vision for what He wants to see in your life.  Week 1


*Read Luke 3:7–14. What do you notice about the suggestions that John the Baptist gives to those around him? How do his suggestions reflect fruitfulness? What suggestions do you think John the Baptist would give to you?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 12:1–14:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:1–2:8, Psalm 79:1–13, Proverbs 24:30–34

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12–13)*

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul noted that God works to change us from the inside out. But Paul also called Christians to "work out your salvation." This requires effort and discipline. My son was a really good athlete. When he was a kid playing baseball, he'd tell me something he wanted to accomplish. "I'm going to hit five home runs this year." Or perhaps, "I'm going to make that specific team." So I'd say, "That's great! How are you going to prepare so you can see it happen?"

He didn't practice any more diligently. He wanted to enjoy the rewards of advanced skill without expending advanced effort. That's understandable in a 12-year-old boy, but not so much in a 35-year-old man. We need to discipline ourselves to put aside our distractions and concentrate on the things to which God has called us.

If we're not spending time in Scripture or praying or spending adequate time with our families, or whatever is the issue, we need to quit offering excuses and start disciplining ourselves for fruitfulness.  Week 1

*Name one area of your life that could increase in fruitfulness if you applied more discipline. What disciplines are needed? How will you apply them? What result do you anticipate?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 14:11–16:15, 1 Thessalonians 2:9–3:13, Psalm 80:1–19, Proverbs 25:1–5

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



### October 1–8


In what areas of life do you have the ability to influence others?

- Please look beyond the obvious answers of marriage and family, workplace and church. Then consider what responsibility God has given you in those areas.
- How are you responding to His desire to grow His kingdom in that arena?

... let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.  
And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes  
on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Discipline causes us to train and to “throw off everything that hinders” our forward movement. That includes our sin, but it also includes seemingly harmless habits or desires that compete with God’s plan for our lives.

But Hebrews 12 tells us our effort won’t simply require discipline. It will also require determination. Think about the obstacles encountered by the Old Testament patriarch Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery. Then he was accused of rape and imprisoned. Joseph persevered in spite of his setbacks, and even in prison he became a fruitful administrator. He was determined. He was faithful. By the end of his story, he ascended to a high level of authority in Egypt, he reconnected with his family, and he saved them all from starvation because of famine.

Ultimately, we need to be determined to do whatever is necessary to keep our eyes on Jesus, so we can fight through any circumstances that tempt us to give up on God’s plan for us.  Week 1


*How is determination different from discipline?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 16:16-18:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:3, Psalm 81:1-16, Proverbs 25:6-8

## Thursday—October 12 • Priorities

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

A man can’t invest his time and energy, his hopes and dreams in the wrong things and then look to God to bring fruitfulness. A man who attends college football games and embarks on hunting trips with “the guys” 26 weekends a year shouldn’t wonder in five years why his wife and kids don’t want much to do with him.


Our culture will try to blind us to the things God values. I met a man who is an entrepreneur. He works from home, so he’s decided to adjust his schedule so he can exercise with his three young boys every morning. “The thing I really want them to know,” he said, “is that I’m going to be with them, and that I care for them.” He’s communicating his priorities with his words, but also with his actions. Obviously, some of us have jobs that won’t allow this specific application. But we can ask for God’s wisdom to align our priorities with His, and for His creativity in how to apply those priorities within the context of our own lives.  Week 1

*Take some time to consider the way you prioritize your time and money. How are you communicating your priorities both in words and in actions? Does your list reflect that you are prioritizing God’s way or man’s way?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 19:1-21:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-28, Psalm 82:1-8, Proverbs 25:9-10

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.  
So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but  
only God, who makes things grow. (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

From the very beginning of our Bible, we see a partnership between God and man in producing fruitfulness. Genesis 2 tells us, “Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground...” (verses 8-9). God tasked Adam to tend the garden. But the Bible clearly reminds us that God’s the one making everything grow. Adam was responsible for cultivating in a way that encouraged fruitfulness, but ultimately God’s power produced the fruit.

I can’t give you a formula, like, “Do A, B, C, and D, and you’ll have a perfect marriage and perfect children, or a great career.” Life just doesn’t work that way. Fruitfulness requires God’s power. This affects all of life. I’ve learned to pray for spiritual power, for instance, when I must deal with a conflict at work. “God, would you give me the power to step into this? Would you help me bring resolution, because this is going to be very unfruitful if somebody doesn’t figure out how to bring fruitfulness from it. I’m willing to be Your man in making that happen.” A fruitful life doesn’t just come from repentance, or from personal discipline and determination, or even from correct priorities. Those things are all important, but without God’s power, they don’t bring true fruitfulness.  Week 1

*The passage from 1 Corinthians 3 quoted above uses the same concepts of fruitfulness revealed in Genesis 2 and applies them to the spiritual actions that grow God’s Kingdom. In what areas has God given you responsibility? In your own words, describe the potential partnership in that area between you and God. How are you “planting and watering” in that situation? And how are you seeking God’s power to bring lasting change?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 22:1-27:22, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-3:18, Psalm 83:1-85:13, Proverbs 25:11-16

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

October 9-15

Name one area of your life that could increase in fruitfulness if you applied more discipline.

- What disciplines are needed?
- How will you apply them?
- What result do you anticipate?






*Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:9–10)*

The disciple Peter wrote that Jesus left us an example so we could “follow in his steps.” (See 1 Peter 2:21.) As we consider how God wants men to be fruitful in their areas of responsibility, we could very naturally look at Jesus’ life on earth.

Jesus communicated by His words and actions that He had a mission to pursue people. He made the effort to “seek and to save the lost.” He told stories about a woman who lost a coin, a shepherd who lost a sheep, and a father who lost a son. He described how they pursued and/or welcomed what was lost, setting that as a standard for His kingdom.

If you want to imitate Jesus, you’ll initiate relationships or reconciliation. We can grow weary when we pursue and get no response. But when we follow Jesus’ example, we need to understand that God places certain relationships and situations in our lives as our responsibilities. He wants us to be proactive rather than reactive. He wants us to move toward those people and situations, rather than running away.  Week 2


*What relationships or situations have tempted you to run away rather than moving forward? Do you think that has been the right choice? Why or why not?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 28:1–29:32, 1 Timothy 1:1–20, Psalm 86:1–17, Proverbs 25:17

*I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. (John 17:4)*

The night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed to His Father, “I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.” Jesus lived according to His mission, and He produced results that pleased God. Because He persevered, His life was fruitful.

When my youngest son was small, he liked to imitate his older siblings. He got into building blocks before his hands were really even big enough to hold onto them. At 3 and 4 years old, he would sit for hours, creating with building blocks. When he finished, he brought his creation to his mom and me. His eyes shone with his enjoyment in what he produced.

He learned a valuable lesson very early. Fruitfulness doesn’t come from throwing a little momentary effort at something and then walking away. I know guys who volunteer one day at church for a big event, and they think they’ve done something incredible. In reality, true fruitfulness requires effort and perseverance. It doesn’t happen in a single afternoon. It happens as we finish the work God gives us.  Week 2


*What have you started and then given up? Where have you persevered till you completed something? Compare the two experiences. What did you learn, and how can you apply it to future choices?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 31:27–32:44, 1 Timothy 3:1–16, Psalm 88:1–18, Proverbs 25:20–22

*“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.” (John 17:11–12)*

Jesus protected His disciples while He was on earth, and then He prayed for their ongoing protection just before He endured crucifixion. A man who wants to lead a fruitful and fulfilling life will protect those around him.

I ride bicycles, and I can tell you, the best group rides happen when the strongest riders lead. They shield the riders behind them from the wind. If you’re back in the pack, and you’re riding with 20 people, you can go about 20–25 percent faster than you would at the front.

God places people in your life who need you to be their “front rider.” If you are willing to clear the way, you can help them do things faster and better than they would on their own. That kind of effort requires sacrifice. You’ll work harder than others. You may even take some arrows the enemy meant for others. But the reality is, fruitful people are willing to sacrifice. They don’t let others suffer, simply because they were too cowardly to lead.  Week 2


*The responsibility to protect may require a man to be a father to his children rather than a best friend. It may require a businessman to give up a bonus so his employees can benefit. What people or situations around you need your protection? What do you think that will look like?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 30:1–31:26, 1 Timothy 2:1–15, Psalm 87:1–7, Proverbs 25:18–19

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23–24)*

Most of us are productive at work. That’s how we pay the mortgage and clothe our kids. But we may not concentrate on perseverance and productivity in other areas.

When my kids were little, I’d come home from the office, and my wife would tell me about one of our children. “I just don’t know what to do with him. Blah, blah, blah.” In my mind I’d be saying, “Do you have any idea how many decisions I had to make today? I don’t care how you handle this. Just do it.” I wanted to come home and relax.

In reality, we aren’t made to work at our jobs, and then just lay back and float down some river while people wave palm fronds over us and feed us grapes. We are meant to invest time and energy in our marriages, our children, our neighborhoods and our churches. We need to find the places where God has given us an opportunity to grow His kingdom. Then we need to faithfully cultivate the areas He’s given for our responsibility.  Week 2


*How are you investing time and energy in your relationships? In your neighborhood? In your church?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 33:1–34:22, 1 Timothy 4:1–16, Psalm 89:1–13, Proverbs 25:23–24

*"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." (John 15:5)*

As Christian men, we all can set goals to pursue relationships, protect those around us, and produce godly results. But we can't accomplish those things in our own strength. Our power comes solely from our relationship with Jesus.

We can pursue, protect and produce because Jesus pursued, protected and produced for us. Jesus pursued us in our sin, in our rebelliousness and laziness, in our lack of understanding His identity. He has protected us and promised that nothing will ever separate us from His love. He has produced all kinds of blessings because of our relationship with Him. He gave us the gift of life itself, and He created possibilities for us to be instruments perfectly designed to produce in the areas of responsibility where He has placed us.


Because of what Jesus has done in and for us, we can respond to Him in love. We can trust Him to change us from the inside out, empowering us to follow His example. As we experience Jesus' love, and come to terms with how much He has done for us, we will find ourselves energized to initiate and persevere in producing growth in His kingdom. As we learn how to abide in Jesus, and in His Word, we'll discover the secrets to living a fruitful life.  Week 2

*How have you grown in your relationship with Jesus in the past year? Have you found any links between a deepening relationship with Jesus and your desire to bear fruit for His kingdom?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 35:1-41:18, 1 Timothy 5:1-2 Timothy 1:18, Psalm 89:14-91:16, Proverbs 25:25-26:2

*Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'" (Luke 16:1-2)*

Luke 16 records Jesus' parable about a man who should have ended up in prison. Jesus instructed his followers, implying that a disciple should handle money differently than the world does. Immediately as Jesus begins the story, He clearly indicates this character was managing money that didn't really belong to him. The rich man in this story represents God, and the manager represents those of us who claim to follow Jesus. Our ability to understand and apply this parable rests on the principle that our financial resources actually belong to God. He generously gives money and other resources to us, with the expectation that we will manage those resources according to His plan and purpose.

Clearly, according to this story, we will eventually be required to account for how we have managed His money. We don't earn God's favor through financial honesty. But we do accept that financial integrity is an elemental part of what it means to be a disciple. Absolute loyalty to Jesus requires us to be faithful, honest stewards of the resources He gives us.  Week 3

*List three ways you can discern whether you are handling your money as if it belongs to you, or as if it belongs to God.*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 42:1-44:23, 2 Timothy 2:1-21, Psalm 92:1-93:5, Proverbs 26:3-5

# FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



## October 16-22

How have you grown in your relationship with Jesus in the past year?

- Have you found any links between a deepening relationship with Jesus and your desire to bear fruit for His kingdom?
- Explain your answer.

## Tuesday—October 24 • Going Overboard in Financial Integrity

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

Our Father assigns to us the task of managing our God-given wealth in a way that will give Him pleasure. I believe a true disciple will go overboard to insure financial integrity. He won't cheat on his taxes or on his expense account. He'll be faithful to God's desires, even when it seems counterproductive.

When our daughter started college, she complained about being poor. Some girls in her sorority would take the quarters for the laundry machines, and they'd drop them into nylon stockings. After they plunked their money into the machines, they could retrieve the coins by pulling out the stockings. My daughter's sorority sisters suggested that perhaps she should try that, so she could spend less money. My wife responded with an incredibly wise statement. She simply said, "It will always cost you more to have integrity." But in the end, it's worth the expense. A true disciple's commitment isn't to making and saving money. His commitment is to demonstrating absolute loyalty to Christ. That commitment will show up in all aspects of life, including money management.

 Week 3


*How does your money management reveal the level of your loyalty to Jesus Christ?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 44:24-47:7, 2 Timothy 2:22-3:17, Psalm 94:1-23, Proverbs 26:6-8



*“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” (Luke 16:8-9)*

Jesus told a parable about a dishonest steward whose master confronted him about his money management practices. In response, the steward went to all the people who owed money, and he slashed the amount required for full payment. In Jesus’ story, the master commended the steward for using the opportunity to “gain friends” to help him in his dilemma of pending unemployment. The steward represents those of us who work for the ultimate Master, God. Jesus was suggesting that true disciples will be generous with the resources God entrusts to them.

I have a friend who is a faithful steward of the vast resources God has entrusted to him. His overarching commitment is to God’s Kingdom. I never have to explain why discipling every man in America is a good idea. He already understands that. And he also knows that ministries need money to support a God-given vision. In giving, he sees the opportunity for a joint ministry venture. He can provide resources, and we can provide labor. This friend understands his calling to be a faithful steward of the resources God has entrusted to him.  Week 3


*How does generosity reflect the principles that guide God’s Kingdom?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 48:1-49:22, 2 Timothy 4:1-22, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 26:9-12

## Thursday—October 26 • True Riches

*“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (Luke 16:10-12)*

When you see that someone has chosen a beautiful beach scene with azure water for their computer background, do you think that represents their ultimate goal? No, they don’t want the heat and the bugs and the sand in their shoes. What they really want is the feeling that scene represents. In a similar way, many of us think we want money, but in reality we really want the feelings associated with money. We think we want earthly possessions, but God’s Word calls us to look beyond the temporal world.


In today’s passage, Jesus simply asks, “If you will not be honest and trustworthy with earthly things, like money and possessions, then who would trust you with the things that really matter?” He clearly distinguishes between worldly wealth and true riches. Throughout Scripture, God promises to provide for us and meet our earthly needs. But a person who is truly rich in God’s eyes possesses the things that money cannot buy, like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. (See Galatians 5:22.)  Week 3

*In your own words, describe the distinction between temporal wealth and true riches.*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 49:23-50:46, Titus 1:1-16, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 26:13-16

*“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Luke 16:13)*

A congressman from Mississippi during the age of prohibition was asked about his attitude toward whiskey. He replied, “Well, if you mean that demon drink that poisons the mind, pollutes the body, desecrates family life and inflames sinners, then I’m against it. But if you mean the elixir of Christmas cheer, the shield against a cold winter chill, or that taxable potion that puts needed funds into the public funds to comfort little crippled children, then I’m for it. That is my position, and I will not compromise.” That man was sitting on the fence, so to speak. Jesus says his followers cannot sit on the fence. His statement doesn’t say it’s improbable or implausible for a man to serve both God and money. He says it’s impossible.

When I was young, I adopted a life credo saying money would solve all my problems and success would make me happy. Everyone thinks money will make them happy, till they realize it doesn’t. The hardest lessons are the ones we already know but don’t apply. My second error was in assuming I could have “the best of both worlds.” I thought I could have all the benefits of God’s true eternal riches, and also all the benefits of worldly wealth. I tried building God’s Kingdom on a shaky foundation of earthly wisdom, because I still wanted to serve both God and money. Over time I discovered the truth of God’s admonition that I should seek first His Kingdom, and trust Him for my provision. (See Matthew 6:33.) When I honor God with my finances, He honors me and provides for me.  Week 3

*In life, have you been “sitting on the fence,” and what are you going to do about it?*

**Daily Reading:** Jeremiah 51:1-52:34, Lamentations 1:1-2:22, Titus 2:1-3:15, Psalm 99:1-101:8, Proverbs 26:17-20

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

October  
23-29


List the ways you have been blessed with finances in your life.

- Talk with your family about how you could be generous with your finances.



*The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight. (Luke 16:14–15)*

About a hundred years ago, a humorist named Frank Hubbard noted, “When a fellow says, ‘It ain’t the money but the principle of the thing,’ it’s the money.” Well, that might be true about people, but it’s not true about God. When God talks about money, it’s because something deeper is going on. The Bible talks a lot about wealth and possessions, because they are so integral to the way we live on this earth.


Today’s Scripture passage connects two of Jesus’ parables about money. Jesus was talking to His disciples, but the Pharisees heard the conversation. They sneered at Jesus, because He was dismantling their theology justifying their use of money. In reality, money is an amoral tool, like a weapon. A gun in the hands of a policeman can be a tool for righteousness, but in the hands of a criminal, it can be an instrument of evil. Similarly, money is neither good nor evil. But the way we handle it reveals a lot about who or what rules our lives.  Week 4

*Suppose a person had no record of your activities other than a record of how you use your money. What would they assume about who or what rules your life?*

**Daily Reading:** Lamentations 3:1–66, Hebrews 1:1–14, Psalm 102:1–28, Proverbs 26:21–22

*The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law. (Luke 16:16–17)*

The Pharisees scoffed at Jesus’ statement that a person can’t serve both God and money. (See Luke 16:13.) In response, Jesus confronted their love of money and then gave the statement quoted above. He highlighted the Pharisees’ efforts to dilute God’s Word so it wouldn’t challenge their own bad theology. The Pharisees created 30 additional books called the Talmud as a basis for interpreting Jewish religious law. Among other things, the Talmud said a man could divorce his wife if she overcooked his meal or put too much salt in the soup. Jesus referred to the scriptural view of marriage to show that God’s Word will not change.

Many men today create their own version of biblical teachings that are easier to swallow and fit in better with our culture. We all need to step back and ask the Holy Spirit to challenge our assumptions so that we can build on the solid foundation of God’s revealed truth.  Week 4

*Prayerfully consider any specific areas where you’ve created a theology to support your own desires, rather than submitting to what the Bible really says. Share your thoughts with other men in your group.*


**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 1:1–3:15, Hebrews 3:1–19, Psalm 104:1–23, Proverbs 26:24–26

## Tuesday—October 31 • Warnings About Loving Money

*Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:9–10)*

When the apostle Paul warned Timothy about people who pursue wealth, he carefully distinguished between the love of money, and the money itself. The Bible cautions that people who are “eager for money” are open to temptations that may distract from their relationship with Jesus.

Money itself is morally neutral, and a necessary part of living in our world. Wealth, or the lack of it, will neither get you into heaven nor keep you out. Our world system often judges people’s value by the size of their wallets or bank accounts. That’s all outward appearance. Scripture tells us that God has a different “measuring stick,” for He looks at the heart. (See 1 Samuel 16:7.)

God doesn’t love a rich person more than He loves a person with great financial need. Nor does He love a pauper more than a tycoon. When God talks about wealth, He addresses our stewardship of His resources. But He also goes to a deeper level, concentrating on what our attitude about money reveals about the condition of our hearts.  Week 4


*How does God’s “measuring stick” differ from the world’s? Which measuring stick have you been applying to yourself? For other people?*

**Daily Reading:** Lamentations 4:1–5:22, Hebrews 2:1–18, Psalm 103:1–22, Proverbs 26:23

## Thursday—November 2 • The Rich Man and Lazarus

*There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. (Luke 16:19–21)*

Jesus’ story about a rich man and a beggar is the only parable where Jesus actually named a character. It’s interesting that He didn’t name the wealthy person who was powerful by earthly standards. Instead, Jesus identified the poor panhandler, calling him Lazarus.

If you finish the story, you’ll find that both men died, and Abraham welcomed Lazarus into a good place, while the wealthy man went to a place of torment. Was this because God’s judgment automatically rests on those who have money? No. Abraham himself (along with many other people described in Scripture) was extremely wealthy, and God did not judge him for having money. God looks on the heart, not the financial situation. God doesn’t condemn rich or poor men to hell. Rather, men condemn themselves by their attempt at self-justification. Sometimes that is revealed when they value possessions more than people. In America, with almost all of us being incredibly affluent by historical standards, this is a very real danger. All men, both rich and poor, need to find righteousness through faith in Jesus.  Week 4

*Have you ever valued possessions or things more than people? What was that like? Ask another man about his experience in this area.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 3:16–6:14, Hebrews 4:1–16, Psalm 104:24–35, Proverbs 26:27





# LONG TERM, LOW PRESSURE

We're not called to be successful, just faithful.

**We teach men's leaders a discipleship concept we call "Long Term, Low Pressure." The basic idea is that a man will make progress on his spiritual journey when *he's* ready to (or when the Holy Spirit whacks him so hard he finally gets moving).**

Whether it's a man's own choice or the persistence of the Spirit, it's not our job to dictate how a man should grow. Our job is just to be faithful.

Our Area Directors are learning that this principle applies in their work with churches as well. We often hear stories from them that go something like this: "I talked to this pastor/men's leader a few times three years ago. He said he didn't need any help with reaching men in his church. I've sent him my newsletter and dropped him an email here and there to let him know I'm available. But frankly, I'd given up on him. Today, he called me and said, 'Hey, I really need your help with our men's ministry!'"

Long term, low pressure. I have come to realize this concept applies in many places. If you're a parent, you've probably had the same experience I have, when your

teenager comes and tells you she has "discovered" something you've tried to tell her, like, *a thousand times!* Totally!

The truth behind this principle is that we are called to be faithful. Paul said in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." In due season we will reap.

For six years we have been recruiting, training and deploying Area Directors and Representatives on our Field Team.

From 100,000 unique

website visitors we have generated over 600 applications and have 78 men currently engaged on the team.

Frankly, 78 out of 100,000 over six years feels, well, *frustrating*. But then, the Holy Spirit prompts me to "not grow weary," and encourages my soul with this: in the last 18 months alone, we've seen over

20,000 new men engaged in discipleship in over 1,000 churches. Six years. Long term, low pressure.

## Short Term, High Pressure—Our Two Greatest Needs

There are times, however, when you need to violate the long term, low pressure principle. I need to ask you to help us—*right now*. We have two urgent needs, and you can meet at least one of them almost immediately.

First of all, we need to grow our Field Team. With 330,000 churches in America, we are brushing the surface when it comes to helping pastors and leaders disciple more men. We're looking for a man who:

- Is strongly committed to his relationship with Christ.
- Is a man of integrity with a humble and teachable spirit.
- Feels called to help men become disciples.
- Feels the local church's primary purpose is discipleship.
- Is comfortable talking to anyone, no matter their status.

Who do I know that fits the description of a successful Area Director? Got someone in mind? Email me their name and contact information at [baclemmer@maninthemirror.org](mailto:baclemmer@maninthemirror.org) and we will follow up with them. (See more at [mimfieldteam.org](http://mimfieldteam.org))

Secondly, we need to fund the efforts to support our field team. Currently, it takes about \$4,500 to recruit, train, deploy and support an Area Director, whose work will, on average, result in 20,000 new disciples in five years. I don't have to explain the massive ROI that represents.

It's been a long summer. The Lord has provided for all our needs literally week by week. We praise Him for His faithfulness! But we are severely limited in our ability to recruit and support our Area Directors right now by a lack of funding.

**We urgently need 100 people to step up and help us get one or more Area Directors started at \$4,500 for 2017, or \$375 per month for at least one year.**

You can call us today at 407-472-2100 and sponsor a new Area Director with an annual gift or monthly commitment right now (or go to [mimdonate.org](http://mimdonate.org)).

We're grateful for the faithfulness of our many partners and contributors. We pray for you regularly. And we covet and appreciate your prayers, counsel and gifts.

May your efforts to disciple men be fruitful in the long term as you seek to bring God's Kingdom to bear in your family, church and workplace. 🙏

Until every church disciples every man,


Brett Clemmer

**THEN HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABORERS ARE FEW; THEREFORE PRAY EARNESTLY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT LABORERS INTO HIS HARVEST." —MATTHEW 9:37-38**

*As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”... Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” (Mark 10:17, 21)*

If you read on through Mark 10, you’ll find that the man who came to Jesus did not follow our Lord’s suggestion. The passage says he walked “away sad, because he had great wealth.” And Jesus told His disciples that it’s hard for rich people to enter God’s Kingdom. (See Mark 10:22-23.)

It’s important to understand that Jesus wasn’t asking this man to do some great work of self-denial to justify himself and make himself righteous in God’s eyes. Jesus already loved this man, so He wasn’t requiring him to win approval by adopting a poverty lifestyle. Rather, Jesus’ words were designed to help this young man remove the obstacle that was keeping him from responding wholeheartedly to faith in God. Jesus was saying it’s better to sell everything and give it to the poor than to be caught up in priorities that are limited to the temporal world.


Money will not keep you out of heaven, nor will poverty ensure your place in heaven. And frankly, money is not the only thing that can prove to be a distraction or even an idol. But because our world values wealth, it is one of the primary issues that can stand in the way of full surrender to God’s principles and priorities. In God’s economy, it’s not about the money. It’s about complete and total surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.  Week 4

*Imagine yourself in this story. Is there something in your life that Jesus would suggest might be a distraction from wholehearted commitment to Him? How would you respond if He asked you to remove that from your life, so you could concentrate more fully on His Kingdom?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 7:1-14:11, Hebrews 5:1-7:17, Psalm 105:1-45, Proverbs 26:28-27:3

*Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:24-25)*

Most of us are familiar with the nickname “Doubting Thomas,” which comes from today’s Scripture. But the somewhat pejorative name doesn’t offer a complete picture of Thomas’ character. The Gospels show him to be a dedicated disciple who even expressed a willingness to die with Jesus. (See John 11:1-16.)

Admittedly, we don’t know his tone of voice when he said it. He may have been somewhat sarcastic. Possibly he leaned toward a pessimistic view of circumstances. But the Gospels show Thomas as a loyal follower of Jesus who wasn’t afraid to ask questions. In this instance, he only wanted what all the disciples already received. He wanted to experience the resurrected Jesus for himself, rather than relying on assurances from others. Commentators tell us John didn’t try to write an exhaustive account of Jesus’ life. Instead, he concentrated on the most important events. He chose to include Thomas’ statement, along with Jesus’ later appearance. (See John 20:26-27.) Because of Thomas’ honesty regarding his position of unbelief, we have one of the clearest testimonies supporting belief in Jesus’ bodily resurrection.  Week 5

*In what area of your life are you asking God for “proof” before you will believe?*

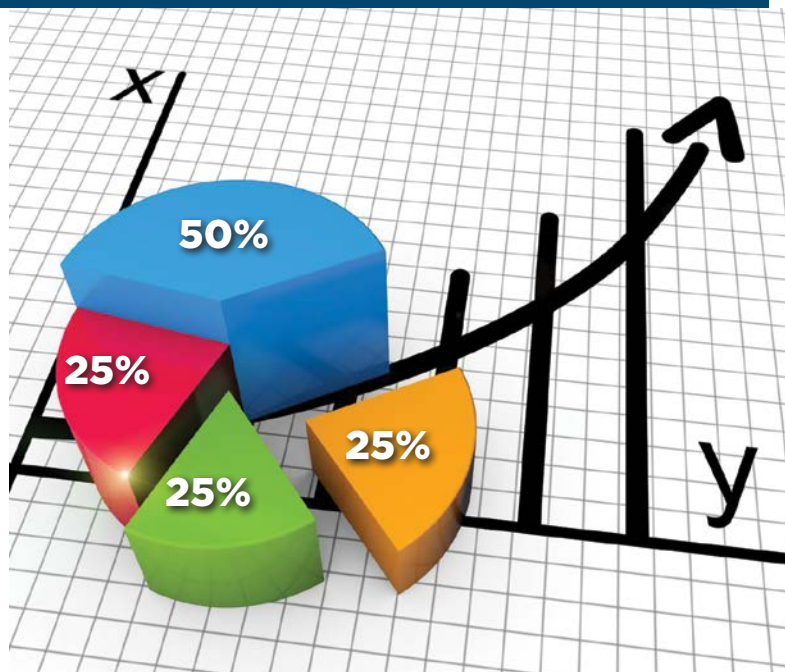
**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 14:12-16:41, Hebrews 7:18-28, Psalm 106:1-12, Proverbs 27:4-6

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

October 30–  
November 5

By percentages, estimate how your money is spent (mortgage, food, car payment, etc.).

- If your income was instantly quadrupled, how would you like to see those percentages change?




Tuesday—November 7 • Jesus Is Faithful to His Friends

*A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.” (John 20:26-27a)*

Thomas was not in the room the first time the resurrected Jesus showed up among His followers. Thomas heard secondhand about Jesus’ visit, and he implied that he didn’t really believe their report. He wanted more evidence before He would believe. Jesus responded to His friend’s request. Our Lord didn’t condemn Thomas. He didn’t put His hands on His hips and say, “Oh, ye of little faith!” Instead, He submitted to Thomas’ desire. “Go ahead—touch me.”

Jesus was faithful to pursue Thomas, and He responded to His friend’s emotions, giving exactly what Thomas needed to believe. And this wasn’t a one-time shot. The resurrected Jesus showed up repeatedly, giving His followers ample evidence of His victory over death and the grave. First Corinthians 15:3-8 tells us that eventually he appeared to more than 500 people.

We are 21 centuries removed from that event, yet in our darkest and most frustrating time, Jesus shows up. He’s willing to meet us where we are and draw us toward faith.  Week 5

*Jesus did not condemn Thomas for his doubts. Does that encourage you to be honest with Jesus about your doubts? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 16:42-17:24, Hebrews 8:1-13, Psalm 106:13-31, Proverbs 27:7-9



*“Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27b–28)*

I see belief as movement toward something, while unbelief is movement away from something. In the verses preceding the ones quoted above, the resurrected Jesus confronted Thomas with evidence His friend needed to move forward in faith. Then Jesus basically invited Thomas to “become less of an unbeliever and more of a believer.”

You can see Thomas’ movement, for he went from requiring evidence of Jesus’ resurrection to recognizing Jesus’ identity. He responded, “My Lord and my God.” This was an important theological statement. People in Thomas’ culture would have called their rabbi “Lord.” This would have implied that Thomas intended to submit to Jesus and follow Him. Beyond that, frankly, Caesar required people to call him Lord. The disciples were persecuted because they refused to say, “Caesar is Lord.” They declined, because Jesus is Lord. He’s the One they followed. Then Thomas added, “... and my God.” He understood that Jesus is not just a mere man. He’s God—the one who created the universe. Clearly Thomas moved toward belief as the result of this experience.

 Week 5


*In your faith relationship with Jesus, are you moving toward Him or away from Him? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 18:1–19:14, Hebrews 9:1–10, Psalm 106:32–48, Proverbs 27:10

## Thursday—November 9 • 21st Century Friends

*Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)*

Jesus offered Thomas the physical evidence he needed to believe in the resurrection. But He also gave a blessing to those who believe, even without that kind of evidence. That would include those of us who count ourselves among Jesus’ 21st century friends. We didn’t walk with Him personally, and it’s quite rare to meet someone in our century who has encountered the resurrected Jesus. Yet the reality is, we can trust in His faithfulness.


Jesus will keep showing up. When your relationships are falling apart, you may feel alone, but you’re not. When you lose your job, or you have problems with your kids, you may experience loneliness, but I can assure you that you are not alone. Jesus is faithful to His friends, regardless of the time and place where we live. His interaction with Thomas demonstrates a heart that is willing to meet people in their challenges and draw them deeper into a trusting relationship as they learn the faithfulness of His character and His response to life’s difficult situations.  Week 5

*Think of someone you believe is a strong follower of Jesus. Ask that person to relate a dark time in his or her life, when Jesus demonstrated His presence in a recognizable way. Or recall a time in your own life when you felt Jesus’ presence in a unique way. How does that testimony, or that recollection, build your faith?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 20:1–49, Hebrews 9:11–28, Psalm 107:1–43, Proverbs 27:11

*As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:1–2)*

Several years ago, I met semi-regularly for Bible study with a small group of younger guys. We had one skeptic among us. We’d talk about something in the group, and he would always say, “Yeah, but...” Finally one day I challenged him. “You own your own business, right?” He said he did. “How many decisions do you make every day with just 51 percent of the information?” He didn’t answer, but I continued. “You have way more than 51 percent of the evidence you need to believe in Jesus, so you either need to believe or not believe. This deal of sitting on the fence and using all these questions—you’re just stalling. Make the call, man!” He stared at me and finally said, “Fair enough.”

A few weeks later, this man started telling us about meeting with another businessman. “This guy said something religious, so I said something religious. Pretty soon, the guy asked me, ‘Are you a Christian?’” We all held our breath as he continued, “I said, ‘Are you asking if I believe that Jesus is real and that He died and rose again and paid for my sins? If that’s what you’re asking, then yeah—I’m a Christian.’” We all have doubts and questions. Belief is not a line to jump over once all our questions are answered. It’s a continuum challenging us to give our questions to Jesus, so we can move toward Him rather than away from Him.  Week 5

*In what areas of faith have you been saying, “Yeah, but...”? Are you ready to give those questions to Jesus so you can move forward in your faith relationship? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 21:1–26:21, Hebrews 10:1–11:16, Psalm 108:1–110:7, Proverbs 27:12–14

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



**November  
6–12**


In what areas of your life have you been asking God for “proof” before you will believe?

- In your faith relationship with Jesus, are you moving toward Him or away from Him?
- Explain your answer.

*For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. (1 Corinthians 3:9-10)*

In 1981, at the Harbor Cay Condominium in Cocoa Beach, Florida, a building collapsed killing 11 workers. Later, an investigation revealed that the floor slabs in the five-story building had not been poured at the code-specified depth of 11 inches. Instead, they had been cut short to eight inches. Eleven workers died, 27 people were injured, reputations were destroyed, and a lot of money was lost, all for the sake of three inches of concrete.

God has a building code also: it's the Bible. He promises to reward those who follow it. He also warns those who want to take shortcuts. Don't invite catastrophe by pouring 8 inches of concrete when all 11 are required. Don't build a gospel for yourself based on just the parts of the Bible that you like.

A contractor studies the plans before construction, and constantly checks them as the building goes up. In the same way, refer to your plans—the Bible—often as you build a life that seeks to honor and follow Christ.  Week 6


*In your own words, describe the danger of not following God's building code when you are building your life.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 27:1-28:26, Hebrews 11:17-31, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 27:15-16

*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. (2 Corinthians 13:5)*

Life can expose your character issues, sometimes in seemingly insignificant events. Several years ago I went to Las Vegas to speak at a prayer breakfast for 500 shopping center developers. I was going to tell them how Jesus could change their lives. When I left my room that morning, I saw a newspaper in front of every door, except for mine. I said, "Man, I really wanted a newspaper today." So I reached over, picked up a newspaper from the door across the hall, and started walking away.

I got 10 steps down the hallway, and I asked myself, What in the world are you doing? Can Jesus Christ be Lord in that? So I tiptoed back down the hall, because I didn't want to get caught, and I returned the newspaper.


It's the simple tests that will help you gauge the quality of the building that represents your life. It will help you determine if you are truly building your life according to God's code. Simply ask yourself, "In what I am about to think, say, or do, can Jesus Christ be Lord?"  Week 6

*Has anything happened recently that helped you test the quality of the building that represents your life? Were you happy with the results of the test? Why or why not?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 31:1-32:32, Hebrews 12:14-29, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Proverbs 27:18-20

*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)*

You probably know the importance of having a good foundation for a building. The same is true for your life. Jesus said, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25). The opposite is true for the one who hears Jesus' words and does not act upon them. Jesus compared that to building on soft sand, so that when life's storms come, the house falls "with a great crash" (Matthew 7:27).

In writing to the Corinthian believers, the apostle Paul compared the work he and other leaders performed among them to constructing a building. He did not claim to be the foundation of their lives. He simply said he laid the foundation, which is Jesus. No other foundation will stand up to life's tempestuous times.  Week 6


*Suppose your friend was having a house built, and upon inspection you realized the foundation was not strong enough. How would you know? How does that relate to a spiritual foundation for building a life?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 29:1-30:26, Hebrews 11:32-12:13, Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 27:17

*It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3:13b-15)*

We've already noted that God has a building code. He has a plan for building a life that reflects His Son's character. Today's passage shows that His code includes a deadline and an inspection.

Salvation depends solely on our foundation, our faith in Christ. But someday you will have to account for how you built on that foundation. This isn't about earning merit—it's about the work that should accompany authentic faith.

When your work faces the test, if it survives you will receive a reward. This passage indicates that our failure will bring about loss. The passages about rewards and crowns are not the easiest to interpret, but it is clear that both Jesus and Paul thought this message was very important. When Jesus recreates the new heavens and new earth, in some sense people will reap the fruits of their labor. I don't know about you, but I want to be on the positive end of that equation.  Week 6

*Explain how works that attempt to earn merit are not the same as works that accompany authentic faith.*


**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 33:1-34:31, Hebrews 13:1-25, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 27:21-22



*If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is... It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. (1 Corinthians 3:12-14)*

When I was in elementary school, I got the idea that I wanted to dig a cave. I don't know if I was prompted by something I saw on TV or in a movie, but I talked my mom and dad into getting me one of those helmets with the miner's light on the front, and I started digging. We lived in Florida, which is primarily sandy, so I was burrowing down to get some wet soil so the sides wouldn't cave in. Then I started digging sideways, and every few feet I would put a "brace"—a board on each side of the tunnel, holding up a third board which supposedly secured the roof. Of course, nothing was bracing the sand between the boards, but it looked pretty good.

You've probably already guessed what happened. One day I was working way down into my backyard, and the tunnel collapsed. I was buried inside this cave, and I remember wondering if I would die. You can imagine my delight when, after five or ten minutes, I saw my dad pulling away the boards so he could dig me out. I had built with inferior materials, like the "wood, hay or straw" mentioned in today's passage, and I suffered the loss.

In building our lives, we need to make sure we're using the right materials. God calls us to build His Kingdom and to tend the culture. As Christians, we want to leave our mark on the world. But what good will it do if we leave the world a better place but we don't leave the world for a better place? Or as Jesus once asked, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Mark 8:36).  Week 6

*What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the quality of each man's work will be tested by fire? Have you experienced the consequences of building with "inferior materials"?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 35:1-40:27, James 1:1-3:18, Psalm 116:1-118:18, Proverbs 27:23-28:2

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

### November 13-19

How would you describe the foundation of your faith?

- Who participated in establishing that foundation?
- What else was important to the start of your faith journey?
- On the picture blocks, write in names of people who have helped build their faith.



*I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. (John 17:13)*

John 17 records Jesus' prayer with His disciples just before He was taken into custody and subjected to a mock trial, to physical brutality, and finally to a sacrificial death. You can imagine the depth of emotion and sincerity expressed by Jesus. After all, when you listen to a man praying, it gives you a window into his soul. You realize what's in that person's heart.

This chapter invites us to listen as Jesus prays for Himself and for His followers who have identified with Him in ministry. But before He's done, He also prays for me and you. As you read this chapter, you'll realize Jesus wanted you to hear this most intimate conversation with His Father. Right in the heart of His prayer, He expresses His desire that we would experience sustainable joy. He wants us to be fundamentally joyful people, even in the midst of our suffering and sorrows.

As we focus more and more clearly on how much Jesus really cares about us, our joy will grow and become more and more robust.  Week 7


*This devotional uses "robust" as a synonym for "full measure" in the verse above. List some other synonyms. Then briefly describe what life would look like for you if you experienced that kind of joy on a continuing basis.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 40:28-41:26, James 4:1-17, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 28:3-5

## Tuesday—November 21 • Our Relationship with God

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:1-3)*

Jesus opens the prayer recorded in John 17 by asking God to "glorify your Son." To glorify means to give praise and honor and dignity and worth that is good for someone. Jesus set aside His glory when He came to earth. Now he's saying, "Glorify your Son so I can glorify you, Father." And He adds that God has given Him authority over all people.

Does that sound familiar? Roll back to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), where the resurrected Jesus told His disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." And then, Jesus says He has the power to grant eternal life, and He defines what that means. Eternal life rests in our relationship with God. That's sort of like the 800-pound gorilla in the room. As we focus on our relationship with God, and what we inherit in Jesus because of our faith in Him, even difficult circumstances seem so very small by comparison. And so, knowing and understanding that relationship can fuel sustainable joy, even in less-than-perfect conditions.  Week 7

*Hebrews 12:2 reminds us to "fix our eyes on Jesus..." What habits help you to do that? And what has been the result?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 42:1-43:27, James 5:1-20, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 28:6-7

*I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. (John 17:4-5)*

We can hardly imagine the love revealed in Jesus' choice to lay aside His glory and come to earth. A few years ago, my wife and I bought a camper. One perfect spring night, wanting to enjoy the beautiful evening, I pulled it into the backyard and slept there.

Just before midnight, a giant flashlight shone through the camper window. When I investigated, I found two policemen standing in my backyard. The house alarm had sounded. My wife tried to call the alarm company, but got a repeated busy signal, so she returned to bed. Seeing evidence of my presence in the camper, the officers thought I might be a burglar. When they awakened me, I was wearing nothing but my briefs. You could say I was stripped of my glory as I stood in the bright beam of the officer's flashlight. Yet the indignities we experience don't compare to what Jesus experienced in coming to earth. He was the craftsman who created the world. He was stripped of all that so He could offer us eternal life. 📅 Week 7

*Isaiah 53:2-3 prophesies Jesus' earthly ministry like this: "He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem." Compare that description to the glory you imagine as belonging to Jesus before He came to earth. How does that reveal His love for you?*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 44:1-45:12, 1 Peter 1:1-12, Psalm 119:17-32, Proverbs 28:8-10



## Thursday—November 23 • God's Witness Protection Program

*I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. (John 17:14-16)*

As Jesus prepared Himself and His disciples for His coming crucifixion, He prayed that God would protect His followers. That prayer extends to us as well. He leaves us in the world, intending that we will influence others to seek relationship with Him. He also knows we will meet resistance. You could say Jesus placed us in God's witness protection program, but it's the reverse of the world's witness protection program. God doesn't hide us, but He surrounds us with His presence and His power. He explains that, when we live out God's truth, the world will hate us. And yet, this description is encased within Jesus' desire that we would have robust joy. How can that happen? Jesus prepares us for the hatred we can expect as we live out God's principles before people who haven't yet responded to His invitation to relationship. As a result, we don't have to be sad when people hate us, and we don't have to be sad that we're still in the world. We can experience the full measure of His joy as we live out His purpose. 📅 Week 7

*Matthew 5:14-16 records Jesus telling His disciples that people don't light a lamp and then hide it under a bowl. "Instead," He said, "they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven." How does that relate to today's passage about remaining in the world, but being protected by God?*


**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 28:11

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

—Colossians 3:16-17



*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.” (John 17:20–22)*

In His high priestly prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus asked God to instill in His followers a sense of unity and love. He notes that, as we express this love, the world will take notice. If you’ve ever invested time and energy in a garden, you know you don’t get a crop simply by pulling weeds. At some point you have to plant some seeds. In keeping with that principle, Jesus calls His followers to expand His kingdom by growing disciples. We won’t grow disciples simply by weeding out and defeating our opponents or by warring against cultural norms. If that strategy could bring change, we’d already have won the battle. We won’t grow disciples by knocking off evil people or by ridiculing them or even by expressing anger toward them. Jesus gave us a weapon that the world doesn’t expect. He gave us love and unity. He’s the Prince of Peace, and His purpose is reconciliation in our vertical relationship with Him, and in our horizontal relationships with others. The next time you’re in an argument, even if you know you’re correct, present your position wrapped up in the love that Jesus has already offered to you. When we truly understand the depth of care that Jesus has for us, we can offer that same love to others. We also can experience the full measure of our Lord’s joy as we pursue His eternal purposes.  Week 7


*John 13:34–35 says, “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.” In your own words, explain how that corresponds to His words here in John 17.*

**Daily Reading:** Ezekiel 47:1–48:35, Daniel 1:1–3:30, 1 Peter 2:11–5:14, Psalm 119:49–96, Proverbs 28:12–16

*The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” (Judges 6:11–12)*

Judges 6 explains that the Israelites had abandoned the lifestyle that God desired, so He allowed them to be oppressed by the Midianites. Finally, the Israelites cried out for help, and in response, God sent an angel to a man named Gideon. He was hiding from the Midianites, trying to keep them from stealing his family’s food. The angel greeted this cowering man as a “mighty warrior.”

While we generally see ourselves as we are, God sees us as we will be. Gideon responded by asking why these horrible things were happening to his family and his nation. He even expressed his belief that God had abandoned them. God didn’t answer Gideon’s questions. He simply said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand” (Judges 6:14).

In a similar way, God won’t necessarily answer our questions about why things are the way they are. But He does call each of His followers to be His redeeming agent in the culture around us. We are His plan for transforming our world.  Week 8

*Today’s devotional says, “While we generally see ourselves as we are, God sees us as we will be.” When has God revealed to you that He sees you in a different way than you see yourself? How?*


**Daily Reading:** Daniel 4:1–37, 2 Peter 1:1–21, Psalm 119:97–112, Proverbs 28:17–18

## Tuesday—November 28 • You Can Do Anything

*“Pardon me, my LORD,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.” (Judges 6:15–16)*

An angel appeared to Gideon, telling the young man that God wanted him to deliver his nation from the oppression of the Midianites. Gideon was understandably hesitant, and he pointed out to the angel that his family was the weakest in Israel, and he was the weakest in his family.

How was he supposed to do what God desired? God didn’t say, “Oops! I guess I’m talking to the wrong guy! I meant to give this message to someone else!” He didn’t accuse Gideon of false modesty. He wasn’t surprised by Gideon’s lack of power or position or status. But He implied that it didn’t matter. Gideon asked, “Given my limitations, how am I supposed to do what You’ve asked?” God simply replied, “I’ll be with you.”

God says the same thing to every person who follows Him. You may feel you’re the most unlikely person to do the task that God has quickened to your mind. But if God has given you a passion, He also will give you the ability and resources to accomplish His desire.  Week 8

*Has God given you a specific passion or desire? Have you seen Him working through you? Why or why not?*

**Daily Reading:** Daniel 5:1–31, 2 Peter 2:1–22, Psalm 119:113–128, Proverbs 28:19–20

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



### November 20–26

What does your life look like in the moments when you experience robust joy?

- What does it look like when you don’t live in that reality?
- What habits or priorities would help you move toward experiencing that joy on an ongoing basis?

*The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'" (Judges 7:2)*

God called Gideon to wage war against an enemy nation, and He graciously gave Gideon several signs to let the young man know this incredibly difficult assignment was authored by the Lord of the Universe. (See Judges 6 and 7.)

Gideon assembled 32,000 troops, starting with an army that was about one-fourth the size of the Midianite force, with its 132,000 soldiers. That seems like a daunting enough task. But then God said, "If you go to battle with that many, you'll be able to say you gained victory yourselves!" So God took the Israelites through a process of elimination, until Gideon finally led only 300 men. The "odds" went from daunting to seemingly impossible. Yet, because of faithful obedience, God empowered the 300 Israelites to rout the huge enemy force.

God intentionally chose a weak man, then reduced his forces to 300 soldiers. He clearly demonstrated that, when it comes to our obedience, unlikely odds simply don't matter. Even our personal strength or weakness is immaterial. God's unlimited power is available to bring about His purpose.

 Week 8


*What personal calling has God revealed to you? How does today's devotional encourage you to pursue that calling?*

**Daily Reading:** Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 28:21-22

*Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29a)*

When I first left real estate, and went into full-time ministry, I was inexperienced and untrained. I started praying and felt that somehow God wanted me to do something in Jackson, Mississippi. I called two guys there whom I knew—a pastor and a layman—and they agreed to meet with me. I guess I thought I was supposed to go up there and be the next Billy Graham or something, because I proposed a city-wide outreach event.

These two men said, "That's great, but that's not our problem." They added, "Our problem is that 50 percent of our community is black, and 50 percent is white, and we don't know each other. We have a great need for racial reconciliation." I had a close African American friend named Tom Skinner who agreed to go with me to see if we could address this issue. We met with a group of pastors, and after the event one of them said to me, "This is exciting. I've been praying for years that God would send someone to help us heal our city. I'm just a little surprised that He sent you."

You see, I was one man with not much to offer, but I offered what I had, and God used it. I haven't been involved in that program since its inception, but 20 years later it's still going strong, with about 20 branches throughout the state of Mississippi. God's plan never depends on our ability. If you're willing to offer what little you have, God will use it.  Week 8


*How does your experience demonstrate the truth of today's Scripture passage? If you don't feel like God is using you, why do you think that is?*

**Daily Reading:** Daniel 8:1-11:35, 1 John 2:1-3:24, Psalm 120:1-122:9, Proverbs 28:25-29:1

## Thursday—November 30 • Serve Right Where You Are

*From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. (Acts 17:26)*

God wants us to grow exactly where He sets us. Last year I joined a new gym, so I began relating to guys around me. Soon I had engaged about 10 men in meaningful conversations. I chatted for about a month with a guy using equipment beside me. Eventually I asked where he was in his spiritual journey. He tightened up, so I smiled and asked a few more questions. He had prayed for help when he was a young man and got no answer, so he "realized it was a bunch of nonsense." I just listened to him rant and said, "I'm sorry that happened."

A few weeks later he asked about my occupation, so I replied, "One thing I do is write books for men." He agreed to read my most recent book. I knew God put me in that specific place, so I was looking for His specific purpose. Sometimes He isn't asking us to change the whole world. He's just asking us to talk to Joe or Bill or Chase, so they can understand and respond to His offer of abundant life.  Week 8

*Describe three environments where you frequently go. Then prayerfully ask God, "What or who is the reason You've placed me there?" Record your answers.*

**Daily Reading:** Daniel 7:1-28, 1 John 1:1-10, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 28:23-24

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

November 26-  
December 3

List three things that you are passionate about.

- Are you actively participating in one or more those passions?
- Why or why not?

What are you passionate about?





*Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me.” (Matthew 26:31)*

Jesus warned His disciples that, in the chaos surrounding His betrayal and execution, they would all “fall away.” Peter responded, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matthew 26:33). Yet we know he ended up denying that he even knew Jesus.

If that can happen to Jesus’ first century disciples, who personally witnessed His miracles and His ministry and His character, what does that mean for us? Research from the Pew Foundation indicates that in 2007, 78 percent of Americans claimed to be Christian. Just seven years later, that percentage dropped to 70 percent. In that same period, those claiming to be unaffiliated rose from 16 percent to 23 percent.

Our culture is experiencing seismic shifts that can be traced to a variety of reasons. But the reality is, a week doesn’t go by without my hearing about some man who fell away from his Christian faith. No one plans to have a crisis of faith, but it happens. In our own strength, all of us are susceptible.


 Week 9

*In your own words, define what it means to “fall away” from faith.*

**Daily Reading:** Daniel 11:36–12:13, 1 John 4:1–21, Psalm 123:1–4, Proverbs 29:2–4

*The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death. (Proverbs 13:14)*


Certainly it’s true that wise teaching is a fountain of life, preparing us to meet life’s challenges in a way that honors God. It’s equally true that bad teaching can set us up for failure. Sometimes people even fall away from their faith because they receive bad teaching.

I once knew a woman whose grandmother was an incredibly important person in her life. When her grandmother died, this woman never had a true opportunity to grieve in a healthy way, because some mistaken person told her she should rejoice rather than give in to tears. “After all, your grandmother is in heaven.” And so she suppressed her grief and lived instead with shame and guilt regarding her response to her grandmother’s death. Poor teaching leaves us susceptible to captivity in things that Jesus never intended for us. Wise teaching gives us resources that help us cling to faith and live it out on a daily basis, even in difficult times.  Week 9

*2 Timothy 3:16–17 notes, “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.” Based on that passage, how would you explain to a new believer the importance of balanced Bible study and teaching in preparing for life’s challenges?*

**Daily Reading:** Hosea 4:1–5:15, 2 John 1:1–13, Psalm 125:1–5, Proverbs 29:9–11

*“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)*

Jesus told His disciples they would all fall away from Him in the confusion and disillusionment surrounding His trial and crucifixion. If you read Matthew 26, you’ll find that Peter rejected that possibility, and so did all the other disciples. Then they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, and when Judas arrived with soldiers to arrest Jesus, the Gospel notes that “all the disciples deserted” Jesus (Matthew 26: 56). In between those two events, Jesus asked His disciples to pray for strength in the face of great temptation. Jesus lived with them for more than three years. He knew their human weakness. Jesus told them, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Most of us associate falling away with some horrible sin, like idolatry or sexual immorality. I propose these are not reasons *why* men fall away. Rather, these failures happen *because* men fell away. When we fail to remain alert to our enemy and to rely on Jesus’ supernatural power, we leave ourselves with no defense outside of the flesh. And as Jesus said, “The flesh is weak.”  Week 9


*Many years after these events recorded in Matthew 26, Peter wrote, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (1 Peter 5:8–9). Explain how this warning might relate to Peter’s experience surrounding the events of Matthew 26. How does it reflect Jesus’ admonition to “watch and pray”?*

**Daily Reading:** Hosea 1:1–3:5, 1 John 5:1–21, Psalm 124:1–8, Proverbs 29:5–8

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)*

I heard of a young man who joined a church. Then that church split, and all the men whom he admired turned against each other and began making venomous, unsupported allegations against each other. They set such a bad example that this young man went through a tremendous crisis of faith.

His situation serves as a warning on two levels. First, we must be careful whose example we emulate. Even the apostle Paul indicated that people should follow his example, as He followed Christ. Ultimately, Christ must be our example, and in the areas where our mentors are not imitating Jesus, we must stay focused on the One who said He is “the way, and the truth and the life” (see John 14:6).

Secondly, we all need to realize the potential that people are watching us, perhaps even imitating us, as we walk out our faith through our daily choices. We need to align our lives with Christ’s, for our own sake, but also for the sake of those who follow in our footsteps.  Week 9


*Describe a time when someone’s good example caused you to mature in your faith, or someone’s bad example pushed you toward a crisis of faith. What can you learn from that experience?*

**Daily Reading:** Hosea 6:1–9:17, 3 John 1:1–14, Psalm 126:1–6, Proverbs 29:12–14

*The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. (Matthew 13:20–21)*

Christian men face situations every day that have potential to challenge their faith. Today's Scripture describes people who respond to the Gospel with great joy, but they don't nurture their newfound faith. Maybe they don't make time for daily disciplines like prayer and Bible study, or other habits that would help them put down deep roots of understanding God's principles and His ways. So when trouble or persecution comes, they abandon their faith. "Trouble and persecution" come in many forms. Sometimes men endure bondages or addictions. Or they've been wounded by some relationship, and they can't seem to move forward from that.

Then sometimes men just neglect their faith. They say, "I'm glad I have Christ in my life, but I also have all these other interests." And they prioritize those other interests over the habits that would encourage them in the daily expression of their relationship with Jesus. They remind me of people who jump off a pier into the water, and they just drift without paying attention to their surroundings.

Eventually they realize they've drifted too far from the dock, and they don't have the energy or the strength to swim back. They didn't think they would drift away, and so they neglected making the choices that would anchor them and keep them safe.  Week 9


*Consider that description of drifting. Does that image accurately portray the person who doesn't invest time and energy in the activities that build his faith? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Hosea 10:1–14:9, Joel 1:1–3:21, Amos 1:1–3:15, Jude 1:1–25, Revelation 1:1–2:17 Psalm 127:1–129:8, Proverbs 29:15–20

*So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:12–13)*

I don't know any man who enters into relationship with Jesus and then plans to fall away from his faith. And yet, almost every week, I hear of at least one person who has abandoned his faith.

In John 17, Jesus warned those who were closest to Him that they would fall away. And John 17 also tells us that, in the chaos surrounding Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, all His disciples deserted Him. If those men could advise us, I believe they would warn us about where we place our confidence. Let us learn to distrust any confidence that does not depend entirely on God.

Today's Scripture reminds us that, when we trust in our own power and ability to endure, we stand on shaky ground. But when we rely on God's faithfulness and His power, we can trust that He will provide a way of deliverance, even in our most difficult seasons.  Week 9


*Re-read 1 Corinthians 10:12–13, quoted at the beginning of this devotional. Then consider how you can discern if you are relying on your own strength, or if your confidence is fully resting on God.*

**Daily Reading:** Amos 4:1–6:14, Revelation 2:18–3:6, Psalm 130:1–8, Proverbs 29:21–22

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. (Psalm 51:10–13)*

The Bible describes King David as "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Yet even David fell away from his faith and went so far as to commit adultery and murder. Psalm 51 records his prayer for restoration, with verse 3 saying, "My sin is always before me."

A person who falls away from his faith will suffer. This does not mean everyone who suffers has fallen away. We live in a fallen world which causes pain on many levels, even for people who remain faithful to God. But I've never known a person who walked away or drifted away from a relationship with Jesus without suffering in some way. That person's sin will haunt him.

The good news is that Jesus will pursue us and restore. Men who have experienced that kind of restoration are uniquely capable of sympathizing with others' weaknesses. And often, when they return to a strong faith and a powerful reliance on God for daily living, they find that God ignites a passion for ministry to others.  Week 9

*Take a moment to look up Psalm 51 and read the whole thing. Then concentrate on the verses cited at the beginning of this devotional. List the phrases that David uses to describe restoration in his relationship with God.*

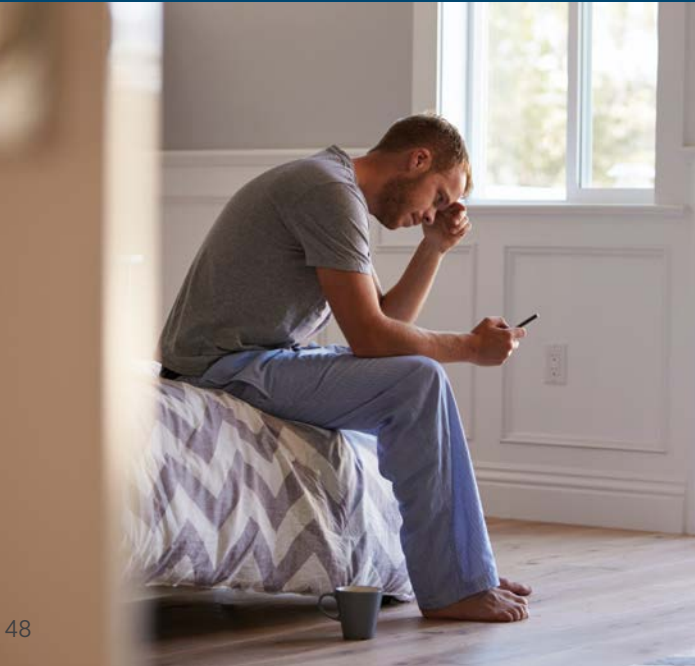
**Daily Reading:** Amos 7:1–9:15, Revelation 3:7–22, Psalm 131:1–3, Proverbs 29:23

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

### December 4–10

In your own words, define what it means to "fall away" from the faith.

- How can you nurture your relationship with Jesus so you don't drift away from Him?






Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:15–16)

My ministry passion reflects my times of weakness more than my times of success. For years, I lived “on the fringe” of Christianity, pursuing a god I wanted rather than the God who really is. I thought I could have the best of what God offered, and the best of what the world offered. I tried to blend two competing worldviews, and I found it didn’t work.

God broke through that, drawing me into full relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. He also birthed in me a passion to disciple men. And He gave me a special interest in reaching out to men who are cultural Christians, because that’s where I used to be. My ministry passion comes from my failures, and I believe that will be true for most men.

Perhaps you had a marriage problem, and now you are uniquely qualified to help men whose marriages are failing. Or maybe you battled an addiction, or endured through some type of physical suffering. Those weaknesses carry the seeds for ministry harvest.  Week 9

Where do you need God’s restoration? How can that affect your desire to reach out to others?


Daily Reading: Obadiah 1:1–21, Revelation 4:1–11, Psalm 132:1–18, Proverbs 29:24–25

Thursday—December 14 • Protect Your Faith

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul lists several Old Testament examples of people who fell prey to various sins. That list begins with idolatry and proceeds to various forms of personal indulgence which all brought God’s discipline. Then Paul reminds his readers, those examples serve as warnings.

I don’t believe anyone responds to Jesus, intending to fall away from that relationship. But it does happen. We prioritize other things over our relationship with God. That’s idolatry. And then we find ourselves mired in suffering that we never anticipated. Because of His great mercy, God warns us about the various attitudes and actions that can contribute to our demise. If you find yourself chafing at God’s warnings, I’d ask you to consider why you have that response. That attitude rarely comes from a spirit of humility. It usually indicates that someone is behaving like a rebellious teenager.


Sometimes we see God’s warnings as limiting our freedom. In reality, they are expressions of God’s love, designed to protect us from drifting from our relationship with Him and falling away from our faith.  Week 9

What happens when you disregard a warning light on your dashboard?  
What does that imply for people who disregard God’s warnings?

Daily Reading: Jonah 1:1–4:11, Revelation 5:1–14, Psalm 133:1–3, Proverbs 29:26–27

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9–10)

Humility is one of the strongest weapons we have against falling away from our faith. I challenge you to confess your weakness, just as the apostle Paul did in today’s Scripture passage. Don’t put confidence in your own strength, but humbly learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for power to live daily in accordance with God’s principles and priorities.

I don’t mean to imply that Christianity requires no personal effort. We do need to cooperate with God and avail ourselves of the resources that He provides. However, we need to understand that we don’t stay strong by our own effort. The Gospel tells us that we are saved by faith, and we also are sanctified by faith. Let us learn to distrust any confidence that does not depend entirely on the Holy Spirit. Put no confidence in the flesh, no confidence in your own determination, no confidence in your will, no confidence in your knowledge, no confidence in your experience. Put your confidence in Christ and in His spirit alone. If you feel that you’ve slipped in your commitment, come humbly to Jesus and make a full surrender to His Lordship. I assure you, instead of limiting you, it will liberate you to experience life with exuberance in the power of the Holy Spirit.  Week 9

James 4:7–10 begins with this: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” It ends with this: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” Read that full passage. Then use it to explain how the principles outlined there can protect us from falling away from our faith, or can help us pursue restoration if we have already slipped in our devotion to Jesus.

Daily Reading: Micah 1:1–7:20, Nahum 1:1–3:19, Revelation 6:1–8:13, Psalm 134:1–136:26, Proverbs 30:1–9

FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

December 11–17

Read James 4:7–10, and then use it to explain principles that can protect us from falling away from our faith, or help us pursue restoration if we have already slipped in our devotion to Jesus. List three principles:

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*“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)*

My wife and I took up camping a few years ago as a hobby we could enjoy together. Before we bought a camper, we rented a couple of them so we could see if we enjoyed doing this together. I experienced quite a learning curve with setting up a camper. On one of our early trips, I plugged our power cord into the little panel at the campground, but nothing happened. No electricity. I checked every fuse box. I looked behind every panel I could find, and I was completely baffled. Finally, I called the magic number on the rental agreement. The man receiving my call said, “Did you turn the breaker on?” I went out and flipped the switch, and everything came on.


In the same way, we need an external source of power to fulfill the responsibility and privilege we have of sharing Jesus with the world around us. As we learn to witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than our own power, we will see lives change.  Week 10

*How can you tell if you are relying on your own power or on God’s power when you witness?*

**Daily Reading:** Habakkuk 1:1–3:19, Revelation 9:1–21, Psalm 137:1–9, Proverbs 30:10

*For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power. (1 Corinthians 2:2–5)*

The apostle Paul was one of the most effective evangelists and disciples in history, and he clearly explained that he relied on the Holy Spirit to empower his witness. I understand what we mean when we say, “I led so-and-so to Christ.” That statement reflects the inadequacy of human language.


But the simple reality is, if we lose the consciousness of the Holy Spirit, we either stop trying, or we continue in our own wisdom, our own persuasiveness, our own cleverness. Paul probably had more reason to depend on his own ability than anyone you’ve ever met. Yet he knew he would only be effective as he relied on the Holy Spirit. If you are serious about following Jesus, you know He intends for you to engage in the process of making disciples. Desire, will, self-discipline, and training are all important, but they will never provide the necessary power to draw people into relationship with Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit can do that.  Week 10

*Re-read 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, recorded above. How do those verses encourage you in your efforts to share Jesus with those around you?*

**Daily Reading:** Haggai 1:1–2:23, Revelation 11:1–19, Psalm 139:1–24, Proverbs 30:15–16

## Tuesday—December 19 • Responsibility and Resource

*That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: “You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don’t reduce the quota.” (Exodus 5:6–8)*

Have you ever been assigned a job but denied the power to accomplish it? The Old Testament book of Exodus tells about Israelite slaves who served Pharaoh in Egypt. In response to Moses’ demand that the Egyptian ruler release the Israelites, Exodus 5 tells us Pharaoh opted instead to increase the slaves’ tasks. He required them to continue making bricks for his various construction projects. But now the Israelites would have to find their own straw, which was one of the key ingredients in the process. Pharaoh assigned them a job, but he denied them the resources to do it. That’s the opposite of what Jesus did when He gave His followers the Great Commission. He gave us the task of witnessing and making disciples all over the world. But He also promised the supernatural resource of the Holy Spirit – the exterior power source that will fuel our witness and encourage people to embrace our faith.  Week 10

*Have you ever experienced the supernatural resource of the Holy Spirit? Was it an encouragement to you?*


**Daily Reading:** Zephaniah 1:1–3:20, Revelation 10:1–11, Psalm 138:1–8, Proverbs 30:11–14

## Thursday—December 21 • Pursue Training So You Can Be Qualified

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

You may not be the most natural witness in the world, but that doesn’t mean you can’t be great at it. Repetitive training is crucial for all types of security jobs and emergency response teams, because it helps people overcome the natural tendencies that would keep them from responding in a crisis.

In a similar way, repetitive training can prepare people to respond to spiritual crises with the Gospel, even if they are not naturally gifted speakers. You may be nervous about witnessing. You may think you don’t know how to make disciples. But you can learn. Then you trust your training. Today’s Scripture reminds us that we can trust the Holy Spirit to bring to our minds the things we need to say, and we can trust Him to do it in a timely manner.


Plug into the Holy Spirit and rest in His ability to remind you of appropriate Scriptures, or to help you discern the best way to speak to a given situation. He is the external power source that fuels effective discipleship.  Week 10

*In your own words, explain how repetitive training can be coupled with Holy Spirit guidance to enhance the effect of evangelism and discipleship.*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 1:1–21, Revelation 12:1–17, Psalm 140:1–13, Proverbs 30:17

*“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 13:9–11)*

Today’s passage encourages faithfulness in the face of persecution. But it also offers a principle that is universally true. You can trust the Holy Spirit to tell you what to say at the time that your witness is needed. I engaged in a simple conversation with an acquaintance at the gym. Suddenly he asked me, “How many times does the Bible say I should forgive someone?” I wondered what precipitated that question, but I just answered, “The Bible says seventy times seven, but that’s hyperbole for as many times as you’re offended.” He told me that day was the second anniversary of his having major heart surgery. “I’ve been on the exercise bike, and I got my heart rate up to 100 beats per minute today.” That was a big deal to him. “There was a 50/50 chance I would die in the first two years,” he explained. “There’s still a 70 percent chance that I’ll die within the first five years, so I know I’m living on borrowed time.”

I would have loved to offer him a Christian book. I would have asked him to read it and then meet me to talk about any questions that arose. But I had just cleaned out my car and removed all those resources. As I left, I prayed, “Holy Spirit, what is this all about?” I realized the Holy Spirit had restrained me from offering the right thing at the wrong time. You can trust Him to guide you. He’ll put words in your mouth when needed, and He’ll remove them when words would get in the way of movement toward faith.  *Week 10*


*How can you stay alert to the Holy Spirit’s leading, so you’ll know when to speak and when to be silent?*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 2:1–7:14, Revelation 13:1–15:8, Psalm 141:1–143:12, Proverbs 30:18–28

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

The biblical story of the birth of Jesus is an incredible narrative describing a historical event, but sometimes I think we get a little jaded and even confused about the details, maybe because of the little kids’ pageants. I saw one presentation where two children, dressed as Mary and Joseph, knocked on the door of the inn. The innkeeper, also a child, came to the door and reported the No Vacancy status of his establishment. Then, seeing Mary’s sad expression, the innkeeper said, “Never mind. You can have my room!”

In some ways, it makes a great spiritual application, and yet it’s just not what really happened. When we gloss over the true story of the very human birth of a baby who was both God and man, we do an injustice to our faith.

The details of Jesus’ birth don’t just matter at Christmas. They matter all year, because of what they imply about His identity. He was the Word (God) made flesh. Every day of the year, our faith rests on the Person of Jesus Christ.  *Week 11*


*List three details you recall from the biblical Christmas story. What do they reveal about Jesus’ identity?*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 8:1–23, Revelation 16:1–21, Psalm 144:1–15, Proverbs 30:29–31

*The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.” . . . “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:30–31, 34)*

Matthew and Luke both recorded in their Gospel accounts that Jesus’ mother, Mary, was a virgin. They didn’t gloss over it at all, but rather stressed this information in a variety of ways. The angel that brought Mary the news of the impending birth explained how this would happen. He said, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Joseph was Jesus’ earthly father, but the Scripture tells us Mary was a virgin whose pregnancy was the result of God’s intervention.

As humans, we could not pay the penalty for our sins. Only God could save us and restore our relationship with Him. And so, as Scripture tells us, “When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship” (Galatians 4:4–5).  *Week 11*

*Why do you believe the doctrine of the virgin birth is so important for us to understand and accept?*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 9:1–17, Revelation 17:1–18, Psalm 145:1–21, Proverbs 30:32

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP



### December 18–24

Describe a time when you were given a job but denied the resources to be successful.


- How did that make you feel?
- How does that experience prepare you to embrace the Holy Spirit as your external power source for witnessing to and discipling others?



*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. . . All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). (Matthew 1:18, 22–23)*

Because we hear the biblical Christmas story repeatedly, perhaps we lose sight of the mind-blowing nature of a virgin birth. Hundreds of years before the event happened, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: “The virgin will conceive” (Isaiah 7:14).

The reality that Jesus was born to a virgin is crucial for our faith, because it underscores Jesus’ identity and His power and ability to save us. If Jesus had come as a man directly from heaven, we would have said, “He’s not really one of us.” Instead, God chose a human mother who was a virgin. She was supernaturally “overshadowed” by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) so the baby growing inside of her was fully God and fully human.

When sin entered the world through Adam, the whole world reeled. All of humanity was affected, so that C.S. Lewis refers to us as “sons of Adam.” But Jesus was not a “son of Adam”—He was the Son of God, uniquely qualified to break the power of sin and restore each of us to fellowship with God.  Week 11

*What does it mean to you personally to recognize that Jesus is uniquely qualified to break the power of sin in your life and to restore you to fellowship with God? Share your thoughts with your group.*


**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 10:1–11:17, Revelation 18:1–24, Psalm 146:1–10, Proverbs 30:33

## Thursday—December 28 • Jesus: Fully Human

*When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. (Luke 2:39–40)*

Jesus was born as a baby, then grew naturally and matured to manhood. He dealt with difficult people and environments, and sometimes grew weary. Once when He fell asleep in a boat, a “furious storm” arose on the lake, “so that the waves swept over the boat” (Matthew 8:24–25). Despite those conditions, Jesus slept so soundly, the disciples had to wake Him.

The Gospels also record a time of fasting in the desert, when He endured 40 days of temptation. At the end of that time, “he was hungry” (Luke 4:2). That’s evidence of His humanity. Scripture shows that He experienced all kinds of emotions from compassion to anger, and even grief. The Bible says He can empathize with our desperate situation, because He was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus is uniquely qualified to save us. Because He did not sin, He could give His own life on our behalf, breaking the power of death, and offering life instead.  Week 11


*How does Jesus’ human experience make God more approachable?  
How does it encourage you to seek God’s mercy and grace?*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 12:1–13:9, Revelation 19:1–21, Psalm 147:1–20, Proverbs 31:1–7

*“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. (John 8:58–59)*

John’s Gospel records a time when some people asked Jesus, “Who do you think you are?” (John 8:53). Today’s passage records part of His answer: “Before Abraham was born, I am!” From our perspective, there seems to be a grammar issue with His answer. Normally we would expect Him to say, “Before Abraham was born, I was.” When Jesus said “I am,” He used the name by which Hebrew people knew God. They understood He was equating Himself with God. The people reacted violently, because they couldn’t accept this reality.

Jesus was sovereign Lord of the universe, even as He was born as a baby, grew up through childhood and adolescence, and lived as a man. The apostle Paul wrote that “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell” in Jesus (Colossians 1:19). We will never fully comprehend how that is possible, but the reality is that God will always far exceed our ability to understand. The prophet Isaiah recorded God’s declaration: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). This is evident in Jesus’ identity as fully God and fully human.

The essence of Christianity isn’t rooted in a creed or a system, but in the Person of Jesus Christ. The challenge of Christmas is to realize that the baby in the manger, fully human and fully divine, is the core of everything we are as Christian men. Let’s devote ourselves to loving Him better and demonstrating that relationship through our daily choices.  Week 11

*List three choices you’ve made recently that reflect the depth of your relationship with Jesus. Do your choices show your love for Him? Explain your answer.*

**Daily Reading:** Zechariah 14:1–21, Malachi 1:1–4:6,  
Revelation 20:1–22:21, Psalm 148:1–150:6, Proverbs 31:8–31

## FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

### December 25–31

During this week of Christmas, please take time to celebrate the birth of Christ through giving, through worship and through spending time with family and friends.





# THE INGREDIENTS OF A LASTING LEGACY

How Will You Be Remembered?

**Most likely you will only be remembered by a few people, and even those people will not remember you for long.**

For example: Several times I have asked someone, “Does the name Tom Skinner ring a bell?” I’ve been a little startled when they said, “No.” How could the memory of the greatest black evangelist of the twentieth century so quickly pass into obscurity?

I cannot remember the first name of my great grandfather. Can you? And so it goes.

Given the brevity of personal notoriety, what can we invest in that will leave a lasting legacy? And what should be our realistic expectations?

## A Realistic Legacy

Jim was twenty years older than me, yet we had always co-labored in ministry together. My wife and I were honored to be invited to his 50th wedding anniversary. Of course we joined his wife, his children, his pastor and 40 close friends. This celebration made Jim very happy. It showed a great legacy for Jim. What more can a man really want? It’s a realistic and lasting legacy.

How can you and I achieve such a legacy? Here are a few ideas to consider....

### Idea #1: Decide What Is Important and Write It Down

Twenty-five years ago I did just that. I made a list of my ten most important philosophies, values, and beliefs. They hang on a wall in my office in plain view

#### What’s Important?

- To love God and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- To keep family life as our highest priority after God.
- To invest in people and relationships.
- To think and act with integrity.
- To pursue excellence in every undertaking.
- To express gratitude whenever possible.
- To lead a disciplined, prudent life.
- To acquire wisdom in humility and the fear of the Lord.
- To trust God completely and not worry about life’s many cares.
- To live by setting and working toward realistic goals.

These are the standards by which I have measured my life. These are the particular ways I have articulated my understanding of the Bible. What’s on your list? What are the ingredients of your lasting legacy?

### Idea #2: Make Memories

I do not remember routine childhood moments.. Instead, I remember the special occasions and memorable experiences. I remember crabbing off a bridge with a chicken neck on a string, being the king of my 6th grade class, and surf fishing with my family at the beach.

Spend time with your children. Every Tuesday night I took one of them out for dinner and an activity. My son liked go carts. My daughter liked the mall. They both loved being with their dad.

My adult son told me, “Dad, I want to have a job like you did because I can never remember you missing one of my games, and I want to do that for my kids too.” Kids remember the funniest things, but they all remember that time = love.

### Idea #3: Practice Spiritual Disciplines

A legacy doesn’t just happen; it takes diligence, forethought, planning, and execution.

One of the oldest traditions of Christian faith is the practice of spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines are how we keep our lives focused on the ingredients of a lasting legacy.




#### ■ 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](http://www.maninthemirror.org)

Spiritual disciplines do nothing to improve your record with God—that’s what Christ did on the Cross. Spiritual disciplines will help get you where you want to go—to a lasting legacy. Here are four disciplines that are on my “must do” list.

- Be part of a disciple-making church. The mission is, “Go and make disciples.” If you are not in a church that’s focused on the mission you’re in the wrong place.
- Read the Bible for yourself. The Bible is God speaking to us. You will not grow deeply until you set aside quiet times when, without interruptions and distractions, you can tune your ears to hear the speech of God.
- Participate in a men’s small group. Couples groups are good, but there is an unparalleled bond that develops in a men’s small group. In our experience, most meaningful change takes place in the context of small group relationships.
- Pray for your wife, and, if possible, with her. Easily the number one issue facing men is that marriages are not working correctly. One of the most powerful solutions is to pray for and with your wife.

Why not give these ideas a try? A list of what’s really important to you reviewed regularly, a plan to make memories with your children, and a commitment to practice spiritual disciplines.

These may not be all of the ingredients of a lasting legacy, but they seem more than adequate to assemble a wife, your children, your pastor, and forty friends. 



effectively. We teach them how. It takes a F.A.T. man to be an effective Area Director.

### A Humble Servant

The final, and perhaps most important hallmark of an Area Director is having the heart of a servant. **Humility** is the bedrock of everything we've described above. In Luke 17:10, Jesus says, "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

As Patrick Morley wrote in *How God Makes Men*, "The chief test of whether or not you are a servant is whether you are willing to be treated like one." Elsewhere he answered the question, "What does it mean when we say, 'Jesus is Lord?'" He wrote, "It means I want to be a servant. A servant isn't seeking what he wants. Instead, he is asking, 'What does the Master need?' When Jesus is my Lord, I am much better at seeing the world through His eyes."

For Area Directors—in fact, every member of the Man in the Mirror team—humility is how we illustrate our core value of Love. We put others' needs ahead of our own. We seek to do what the Lord wants us to do, not what we want to do. We surrender our own will to do the will of our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ. Quoting Patrick Morley again, "I am not my own Lord, and I don't want to be. I've tried that, and I make a lousy Lord."

### Is This You?


We're looking for a few Called, Equipped, Sent, F.A.T., Humble Servants to join our team. The stakes are high: Every church

has an *obligation* to make disciples. They were among Jesus' last marching orders. *Go and make disciples*, he said (Matt. 28:18).

It's important work. When you disciple a man, you don't just impact that man. You impact his wife, children, co-workers, church, neighbors and community. *Discipleship changes everything!*

What about you? Do you feel a stirring in your heart as you read these words? Do you have experience discipling men in your church and now see the potential of helping dozens of churches reach hundreds, even thousands of men with your help? Or perhaps you know someone who fits this description. Here's what you should do:

- 1** Pray. Ask God whether He is calling you to this great endeavor. Ask Him to reveal others you know that could join this effort.
- 2** Go online today to [mimfieldstaff.org](http://mimfieldstaff.org) and learn more about what it takes to be an Area Director. You'll see an overview, a job description and an application.
- 3** If you're married, talk to your wife. Many of our team members weren't sure it was for them—then their wives said something like, "Are you kidding? This *is* you!" But she needs to be in agreement.
- 4** Fill out the application and get the process started.

Our vision is for every church in America to have an Area Director—a trained and equipped men's discipleship coach/consultant—within driving distance. We need hundreds more to make that happen. 

*We are in a battle for men's souls. The staff and directors of Man in the Mirror want to lock arms with you to help men lead powerful lives transformed by the Gospel. This is a battle we can win. We cannot, we must not, and by God's grace, we will not fail.*

—Patrick Morley

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**"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." —1 Corinthians 9:24**



## Run the Race Together!

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