

How God Makes Men: The Principle Of Reproducing Yourself

Unedited Transcript

Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2

Good morning, men! Welcome to Man in the Mirror's Men's Bible Study where we always have room for one more guy. If you're that guy this morning, welcome, we're glad you're here! We usually start with a shout out, so today the shout out goes to a brand new group that's so new they don't have a name yet! They're meeting at First Baptist of Chesterton in Chesterton, IN. 10 guys meeting on Sunday's at 9:00 am using the video Bible Studies. Jake Bogard is their leader, so would you join me welcoming this new group to our Bible Study with a big round of applause? One, two, three, hoorah! Welcome guys! We're glad that you're here!

The series we're in is *How God Makes Men*. We're looking at various principles of how God makes men. So, I'm not a very good golfer. The reason I'm not very good at golf is I really don't care if the ball goes in the hole. I go out, I play. If it goes in, great! If it doesn't, that's fine, too! I just don't care. It's not that I have a problem believing that the rules are true. I'm a true believer in the rules and the way it works, but I just don't think it's important for me. It's not a priority for me, and as a result of that I don't care about the outcome. We talked last week about the principle of spiritual growth, and of course you're not going to grow unless you care! You're not going to get better at golf unless you care whether the ball drops in the hole! We looked at six spiritual disciplines last time. We said the spiritual disciplines are what differentiate men who are growing from men who are not, and we covered six of the seven last week. This week, we're going to cover the seventh of those disciplines, and the reason I want to give it the entire time this week is because I believe this is where the bottle neck is. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let's look at the title of the message, The Principle of Reproducing Yourself; specifically, the principle of reproducing yourself by making disciples. That's the seventh discipline, making disciples. The first six were all about becoming a disciple, but there's a difference between becoming a disciple and making disciples. Let's look into this.

What's Wrong And Why It Really Matters

First, the question: What's wrong and why does it really matter? One time, a newspaper was asking a number of important thinkers to write answers, letters to the editor, to the questions what's wrong with the world? G. K. Chesterton wrote to the paper, dear sirs, I am. Sincerely yours, G. K. Chesterton. I'm what's wrong with the world! That's what he said! Today we have a huge problem with men! There is a men problem that is... Well, at this point is there anybody who doesn't know we have a men problem? Is there anybody who's had their head so deeply buried in the sand that you don't know that we have a men problem? Of course you know that we have a men problem! You read about it in *Time Magazine*. You listen to it on *Oprah* with her guests and on *Doctor Phil* with the devastation that it creates. So you know that we have a severe men problem. It's interesting, because a lot has changed over the last quarter century, but what it means to be a man is basically the same as it always has been. So what has

changed? What has changed is not what it takes to be a man; what has changed is that men have been losing the ability to execute their manhood. We've been losing the ability to execute! Any coach knows it's execution, action! We've been losing our ability to execute!

I've told this story before here. I was discipling, mentoring a younger guy recently. He came into the fourth breakfast meeting. He sat down, looked at me for a few seconds slightly suspiciously. Then, he took the risk and said this. I have a mediocre business. I have a mediocre marriage. I have a mediocre relationship with God. Then he just sat back. What was going on? He did not know whether or not he could trust another man! He did not know whether or not he could trust me with this most intimate detail of his life! And part of the reason that he didn't know that he could trust me is that his father wasn't in the picture, and what it meant to be a man was completely unexampled to him. As a result, he didn't execute his manhood and he had mediocre business, a mediocre marriage, and a mediocre relationship with God.

The collateral damage to this men problem is staggering! Did you know that today 42% of women would rather live with you than marry you? That's what women think of the men problem! Did you know today that 41% of all children are born to single moms? You're not a father, you're a sperm donor! Did you know that today that 1/3 of the 78 million children in America do not live with their biological father? They don't want you around! The collateral damage of this men problem is staggering! That's what's wrong and why it really matters! Can you picture any way of ever getting the world right without getting the church right? You guys in this room, and online; if you don't get this right, can you picture any way of ever getting the world right? It's not going to happen! There's no other group of people who care so deeply about the state of the world and culture of society! If you're tracking with me and believe that's true, can you ever picture getting the church right without getting families right? That's probably not going to happen! And if that's true, can you picture any way of getting families right without getting marriages right? That's family systems theory 101! Page 1, paragraph 1, it's the first sentence of the theory! You get the marriage right, then the family takes care of itself generally speaking. If that's true, can you picture any way of getting marriages right? Unless we get these women straightened out! We laugh, but why do we laugh? We laugh because it's such a joke to even think that way. Sure, every now and then a woman rips her family apart but it's news! We make a big deal about it, like the woman driving into the surf with her babies. Even then it's usually after years of emotional neglect! It really is about the men! You get the men right, you get the marriages right. You get marriages right, you get families right. You get families right, you get the church right. You get the church right, and then you really have the potential to make an impact on the world! That's what's wrong and that's why it really matters!

How has God provided to solve this problem? We see it in Matthew 28:18-20. If you don't have a Bible, look on with somebody else because I'd love for you to see this for yourself. Some of you have this memorized, many of you are at least familiar with it. This is the passage we call The Great Commission, but before we look at this familiar passage we have to look at the problem that sometimes passages become overly familiar. We're too aware of what they say! So just to remind us, these are the last or near last words of Jesus Christ. When someone is getting ready to go the way that we all go, they want to say the most important thing. They want to say the thing that matters to them. They want to talk about where they want the golf ball to go in the hole. This is where Jesus wants the golf ball to go in the hole, you see? Last words. And it's also worth noting that this is the most impactful speech that's ever been given in the history of the world! More millions of people and more billions of dollars have been mobilized by this one speech than any other speech that's ever been given in the history of the world.

These are very heavy words! This passage has gravitas! With that backdrop, let's read how God has provided to solve the men problem and every other problem:

... Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and become disciples..."

It doesn't say that does it? It doesn't say go and become disciples. But you want to know what? For at least a couple of decades, that's the way we've been working this out. The idea has been that we go and become disciples. We come to Bible Study, we come to private devotions, we come to our mentor, and we come to all of the things we talked about the last time. We keep becoming and becoming. Twenty years ago, the bottleneck in discipling men was that there was not enough good curriculum or material. So some of us who are leaders in the Christian men's discipleship movement began to talk that out and encourage people to develop good materials and curriculum. Twenty years later, guess what? We don't need any more curriculum! There's so much great material for men's discipleship now! The repackaging of the Biblical concepts and relevant ways to think about them, it's very robust now! So if you think the secret to making disciples of men is to develop a good curriculum, guess what? You're twenty years too late! This development of curriculum that has taken place over the last twenty years has led to a huge acceleration in men's discipleship. Let me tell you, men's discipleship is on the radar! There are tens of thousands of groups, tens of thousands of churches that get it! Maybe they're not all the way there yet, working with men is messy, but the point is that all of this had led to an acceleration. So where's the bottleneck today? Here, in my opinion at least, today the bottleneck is that all of those men who have been becoming disciples over the last twenty years now need to turn around and make other disciples. In other words, all of us who have been receiving now need to obey the scriptures and not become, but make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded. I will always be with you, even unto the end, if you do this!

Here's the Big Idea: **Making disciples is God's designated way to release the power of His gospel on every problem we face.** Every problem we face! Whether it is divorce, fatherlessness, pornography, substance abuse, domestic abuse, racism, whatever it is! This is the only mission that Jesus gave us to solve these problems. This is the only mission he gave to his church! Go and make disciples! That doesn't mean he's not interested in the specifics of all these problems, he just knows that you don't solve these problems by trying to solve these problems! You solve these problems by raising up a new generation of men who love God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Who love each other and understand the importance of making disciples and understand the importance of taking care of culture. Raise up that new generation, and they'll figure it out! If 100% of our nation were mature followers of Jesus Christ, what kind of nation would we have? A different one. Now, think of what else our nation could be 100% of that would lead to that same result? Is there any other solution that even comes remotely close to making disciples? That's why I think this is important. That's why I care if this golf ball goes in the hole, and I hope you already cared before you got here. I suspect you did! But I hope that not only do you see that it is important but that it is urgent that we do something about this, and we do it right now!

What Is Making Disciples?

What is making disciples? We have talked about Romans 8:29, that we're predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. So that's the goal, but how do we do that? How do we actually make these disciples? There is a definition that we use at Man in the Mirror of what a disciple is. We use it because it's Biblical and we use it because it is actionable. In other words, you can actually build ministry

initiatives around this threefold definition. A disciple is called to live in Christ. That's evangelism, winning them. Equipped to live like Christ, that's the curriculum, the teaching, and the growing. And lastly sent to live for Christ. The six disciplines are just the start. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:8. Called, equipped and sent. Write that down somewhere. Memorize it. It's so great because if you want to make disciples then there are three things that you can do. You can call men to live in Christ, you can equip them to live like Christ and then you can send them to live for Christ. Whether you're the leader or the guy setting up the chairs for the meeting, you can make disciples if you do one or more of those three things. Hopefully, all of them! Calling, equipping, and sending.

Turn to 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Here we start to talk about how we make disciples. Jesus gave the vision of making disciples, but how do you do that? There are libraries of books about this, but we can start talking about it today. The passage says this:

... so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

How do we make disciples? Proclamation plus incarnation. You see it in that text? We were delighted to share with you the gospel of God, that's the proclamation. But also our very lives. Incarnation, to live it out with you. It's not just a word message, it's a life message. It's Ephesians 4:15, sharing the truth in love. The truth of the proclamation and the love of the incarnation. Turn to 2 Timothy 2:2 as we drill a little deeper into what is making disciples. It says this:

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.

I think I've let you down. I say this to the leaders, it's in their job description. Don't say it often enough, but I need to say it to you, too! The things you hear here in the presence of all these witnesses you need to take those things and entrust them other reliable men who will then take them and share them with others. You see four generations here, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to reliable men, reliable men to the ones they'll share with. You see, there's a difference between becoming and making disciples. You're not making disciples until your disciples are making disciples. This is the uber solution to everything we face. Making disciples is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on all of these problems that we face, every problem we face!

I Know You Care, But What Can You Do?

To give this some practical application, I know you care, but what can you do? Let me tell you what doesn't help, complaining. My dad, God bless him. I loved him, he was a sweet guy, except when the evening news came on. My dad would sit in front of the TV and yell at the evening news, as though that was going to change something. You have a choice to make to. Complaining is not helpful. I do radio interviews, I did three this week. Different places on books and for Area Directors. All kinds of different reasons. I do them on the telephone from my office. I did one in Washington state, one in Branson, MO, and one in Albuquerque this week. It's interesting, because I would say one out of every four or one out of every five radio show hosts is just mad. They're just angry at the way things are turning out, and they want to engage me against all these problems. It's a very difficult interview to have! There are plenty of people out there talking about the problem. We need to talk about the solution. Jesus said go and make disciples. This is the solution!

What is it that differentiates men who are making disciples from those who are not? The men who are out there doing it, what are they doing differently than the men who are not making disciples? One, they have made making disciples a priority. A priority is something to which we assign a degree of importance or urgency to. Remember I was talking about how if it's not important, you're not going to do it? If it's not urgent, you're not going to do it? That's what a priority is, if it's not important, not something you think is urgent, if you don't care that the ball goes in the hole, it won't get done. Make it a priority! What does that mean? You have to be a true believer, believing this really is something that will make a difference! Guess what? Even if it doesn't make a difference, it's still the right thing to do! Because this is what Jesus told us to do! Even if you give your life to making disciples and you're just totally discouraged at the end of your life, you still did the right thing because you did what Jesus wants us to do.

Two, they have determination. When I was doing some research on this, why churches that were making disciples were effective versus churches that were not, I discovered these three factors. They had a pastor who had a vision to disciple all their men, and he was determined to make it happen no matter what it took. And third, he had a process to make disciples that was sustainable. A layman like us who is making disciples, we make it a priority, and we do have a vision. We have something in mind, the command of Jesus to make disciples. We have a vision ourselves, a calling. We sense that we are called to participate in this. This may not be the main thing that you do. The main thing you do may be pounding nails while reroofing widows' houses. But guess what? If you're doing that, you're doing it in the context of making disciples, because you've been sent to do that. You're sending other people, too, the guys you're dragging along with you to do that. While you're up on the roof, you're sharing your lives with each other and talking about the scriptures. Or maybe you're taking meals down to the rescue mission. You're making disciples when you do that because you are setting the example. Sharing not only the Gospel of God but your very life as well! That's how you do it! Determination, but you have to understand determination is not a strategy. It's not enough to have a good heart. Let me tell you, there are ministries all over this nation that are filled with people that have good hearts, who really want to make a difference, but they don't know what they're doing. They have no skills.

Third then is strategy, to have a process, by which you can then make disciples. I posted on my Facebook page something to this effect. A guy posted back that the answer is this program. It had about twenty people in it. This one thing is the answer. You realize how stupid that is? Do you realize how many ways there are to go about making disciples? Countless! The best method of making disciples is the one that you'll use! You figure it out, the strategy that you want to use. We recommend the *No Man Left Behind Model* because it's Biblical, research based, and proven. That's Man in the Mirror's iteration. You can go online to maninthemirror.org and click get trained to begin that process, we deliver it in all sorts of ways. But you need skill and you need strategy to do this! I hope that making disciples is sounding more attractive to you this morning than ever before. Listen, you may not be ready yet. You might hear this and think well, I'm just not ready yet. You may be right. If you don't have enough Jesus for yourself, if you have not really become what you're trying to make then keep focusing on becoming. If you're not ready for this, then you just keep focusing on becoming a disciple. When it's your time to engage, God will tell you! I won't have to tell you, he will tell you. He'll say okay, you have enough Jesus for yourself! I'm giving you an overflow of my son, and now take that and give it to somebody else. That's when you'll know!

Maybe you're getting it done, and praise God that so many of you men that I know are absolutely making disciples. You're getting this done! So be encouraged! You are not alone, you are doing God's will, and he is pleased!

Another category is that you know that this is what you need to do. Between you and God, figure it out. Sit down and make it a priority. Figure out exactly what the vision is. Be determined that you're going to make it succeed no matter what, and then find the strategy, the method and process that will work for you. And just get it done! Ask some of the guys at your table if you need some advice on next steps. We had a guy trying to figure all this out. I won't use his name because I didn't get permission to use this story, but we were at a workshop and he said I've got 13 men in this small group. So he's making disciples. But it's too big, too many guys. I've been trying to figure out how to break it up. What should I do? I said, well do you really want to split your group in two? Well, next time you have a meeting just tell them you believe in gay marriage and that'll split your group in two! Joking aside, why don't you begin by giving them the vision that you're not making disciples until your disciples are making disciples? You've just given them the vision of becoming disciples. You see? So over the next several weeks and months, give them the vision of not only becoming but making disciples. Then at some point, when they're beginning to connect with that idea, suggest that at some specific point down the road that you're going to break your 13 guys into four groups of 3. Then each of those groups of 3 are going to recruit 3 new guys, and reproduce in that group what was made in the original. You're not making disciples until your disciples are making disciples! The Big Idea today: **Making disciples is God's designated way to release the power of His gospel on every problem we face.** Let's pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father, thank you so much for this great commission that you've given us. Help each of us to think through the kind of priority you want us to give this great commission. Lord, show us how to work it in over and against our work, our families. In fact, make it part of our work and families. Help each man sort this out for himself in Jesus' name amen!