

Guaranteed Ways to Build the Men Around You

Matthew 22:29, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Ephesians 4:11-16, 2 Timothy 2:2

Good morning, men. I would like to welcome our area directors that are in training. We have ten area directors in town all week long. If you are one of our area directors in training would you stand and let us give you some applause and appreciation? Thank you, men.

These men are from here to California to Oregon, Ohio and everywhere in between. It is good to have all of you men here. Let's do a couple of shout outs today. We have two new groups to mention today. The first is called the Dawn Patrol. They are a bunch of rangers. Jim DeHorn is the leader. They are the Fellowship Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. This is about 30-40 guys who meet on Saturday mornings at 7:30 AM. Welcome to you guys.

Men Following Christ is great too. That is the same thing as Dawn Patrol . Their leader is Larry Davids at the Minneola Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, just down the road. They meet on Saturday mornings. Join me in giving them a warm Man in the Mirror welcome. One, two, three, hoorah! It is good to have you men with us. Thank you for joining us.

We are in a series called "A City of Disciples." 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." The Greek word faithful is the word *pistos*. Whoever has been given a trust is required to be faithful, *pistos*.

In our series "Hanging Out with Jesus" we did a message on the ten minas. It's the same basic message of the five talents parable. The main message is to be faithful. The main message is to be faithful. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." When we look at that specific parable we asked the question what is my agenda, what is God's agenda? And are we working on the same agenda? In order to be a faithful man of God, it is to be working on His agenda, not necessarily on our agenda, or maybe not even at all.

Then we looked at the life of Nehemiah, and we said that a servant is not asking what do I want, a servant is asking what does the Master need? Then we updated the battle for men's souls. We did a message on that. The idea was that anything less than a plan to disciple every willing man is a catastrophic moral failure that Jesus puts making disciples on the level of being a moral issue.

Then we rolled into this series. The first week we said for there to be a city of disciples, it first has to be a city of disciple-makers. Then we looked at what disciple-making is all about. Disciple-making is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on every problem that is facing the city. What is a disciple? Someone called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ, and sent to live for Christ. Calling, equipping, and sending. I said I would take three weeks and teach you how to make disciples. Because it is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on every problem.

Last time we looked at the first piece, calling men to live in Christ which is the evangelism piece. We said that the bar for evangelism is quite low. We said evangelism is simply taking someone as far as they want to go toward Jesus. That is all it is. Today we come to the second part and that is equipping men to live like Christ.

The title of today's message is "Guaranteed Ideas to Build the Men Around You." If you want to have a ministry, if you have been a Christian for any time at all you want to help other men become what you have.

I remember when I was a young man and became a Christian, I took them to lunch telling them what happened to me. I didn't know anything so I pulled out the Campus Crusade Four Laws booklet. I said read this – you can become a Christian, too. Today we are talking about guaranteed ideas on how to build the men around you.

WHAT IS EQUIPPING ALL ABOUT?

First thing up is what is equipping all about? What is the mission of Jesus? We are equipping people around the mission of Jesus. His mission is total global conquest. Jesus is out to completely conquer all the forces of evil and deliver every willing person into an eternal relationship with Him. Total global conquest. How? By raising up an army of what kind of men? Faithful men. *Pistos*. Faithful men. He is raising up an army of faithful men who are increasingly becoming more like Christ, are surrendered to Christ are committed to the will of Christ and are going out living their lives for Christ. That is all good and well. He wants us to do it in this city. He is wanting us to do it where? Total global conquest begins where? In this city, or if you are online, your city. This is the place. This is the boundary in which we will operate. This is where relationships are for the most part.

What is the problem? The problem is we happen to live in a city, and everyone else listening this happens to live in a city, where there has been a lot of enlistment and not much training. In other words, the enlistment officers have been doing a good job getting people to sign up. But they have not had enough people to train them on how to clean and shoot their weapons. This is my own estimate, and I could be wrong, but about 90% of men who profess faith in Christ don't know how to clean and shoot. They have never been equipped to walk with God.

Matthew 22:29 catches it very well. Jesus is talking about a little problem. He says here is the problem. Here is why you don't understand what is going on. The problem is you do not know the Scriptures and as a result, you do not know the power of God. You do not know the power of God because you don't know the Scriptures. That is the problem.

What is the solution? The solution is to equip these men and make them into disciples because disciple-making is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on every problem facing our city including the sin and the ignorance of men who profess faith but don't really walk with Him, and every other problem.

The single greatest contribution you can make to another man is to help change the core affections of his heart. That is the single greatest contribution you can make. We do that by equipping him, by winning him, and by disciple-making him, and by helping him be conformed to the image of Christ. This whole process of equipping is what it is all about.

Are you ready? Here it is. The big idea is **equipping is simply bringing men together around Christ and watching Him change the way they think and what they do**. That's it. There is no secret knowledge, men. There is not some hidden book that you have not been allowed to read that trains certain special Gnostics to be the great men of God that do the discipling. It is for everybody. It is a command. Go and make disciples. Evangelism – the bar is very low – it is simply taking men as far as they want to go towards Jesus. Equipping is equally simple. **Equipping is simply bringing men together around Christ and watching Him change the way they think and what they do**. Is that simple enough? Do you think anybody could do this? Anybody could do this. That is the big idea.

HOW DISCIPLE-MAKERS DO IT

Next, let's talk about how disciple-makers do it. How do these disciple-makers do it? Who do you think was the greatest disciple-maker that ever lived? Jesus was the greatest disciple-maker that ever lived. Who said Paul? Paul was a wuss when it came to making disciples when it came to Jesus. Jesus is the greatest disciple-maker that ever lived.

Let me ask you a question. Is there anybody here who thinks they can improve on the method of Jesus? Is there anybody here that thinks they have a better idea of how to make disciples than Jesus? If we are looking at disciple-makers we need to look at how Jesus would do it. How did Jesus make disciples? How did He do it? What was His method? Men were his method. Come and see. Follow Me. Come and abide in Me. Let's go over here and see what is happening. Let me show you how to pray. Let's go over here and heal this person. Let's hang out. Let's have dinner. Let me wash your feet. Do you get it? Men are His method. He invested in men who would be willing to invest in other men. What kind of men? Faithful men. *Pistos*. Here it is with Jesus. How Jesus does it, how He makes disciples. Men are His method. The Bible is His means. The gospel is His message.

The method, the means and the message. Jesus is investing in men who will be qualified. Are the qualified on the front end? Think Peter. Not so much. He is always looking for the present and willing not the absent and able. He is looking for men He can mold and shape. Men He can be around and who can be around Him, so they can observe Him and He can change them. That is what equipping is all about. It is a process. Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. That is His method.

His mission, total global conquest, men are His method – hanging out, doing life together. It is the means. You should be at 2 Timothy 3:15. Paul is talking to Timothy and he says, "From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." There is part of a disciple – called to live in Christ. There is the salvation piece. Then he goes on, "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" – there is the equipping – "to live like Christ." So the man of God can be equipped for every good work. There is the sent part. Right there you have a biblical proof text. We don't want to follow man's good ideas, we want to follow the truth, and this is the truth. The Bible is the constituted means that God is good.

How many times do you think Jesus referenced His Bible, the Old Testament? 66 times. Remember, Jesus, if you take all of the words that are recorded that He spoke, it is 34,450 words, enough to fill about ten 30-minute sermons. That's it. On the red letter words, about ten 30-minute sermons. In ten 30-minute sermons He referenced directly 66 verses. He alluded to 90 more verses. That turns out to be for every two minutes Jesus spoke, He mentioned a verse. Jesus was very much into using the Scripture as the means by which He would make disciples. On top of that, don't forget He is the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" [John 1:1]. That is the means by which we make disciples.

When we get together with other guys we don't get together about the abortion issue. That may come up but we get together around the word of God. By the way, does the Word of God have any wisdom about abortion? We don't get together in our groups, although I know some of you do like to talk about the federal budgets, stop that. It's \$53,350 for every man woman and child in America. You can't fix that. Because disciple-making is God's designated way to release the power of the gospel on that problem. If you really want to solve the federal deficit problem, or the abortion problem or any other problem, solve the disciple-making opportunity and you will release the power of the gospel on these problems. This is so good.

We have His mission. We have His method. We have the means, the Bible. What is the message? John Calvin's first sentence in *his Institutes of a Christian Religion* says nearly all wisdom consists of these two things: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self. Jesus' message, His gospel, helps us understand who He is. Don't live your life as a legalist, when you are always ticked off at people because they are not more religious and bashing people. Why do you do that? Stop that. That is not the gospel. The gospel is Ephesians 4:15, speaking the truth in love. Speak the truth, but speak it in love. It is all there. He has given us the means and the message is His gospel. We can have the knowledge of Him and have a knowledge of yourself. If you want to know yourself, read the Bible and you will see yourself leaping back sometimes with claws out. That is the message.

We are not going to get into the details of all that because we are not talking about the equipping, we are talking about how you do the equipping. We are rocking and rolling. I want to give you a couple of examples. Take Lyle Nelson for example. For 35 years on Mondays he has assembled 7-10 men for a Bible study. Dozens and dozens of men have been through that. He is a *pistos* man who has been doing that. John Anderson is starting this series at his church this Sunday. This "City of Disciple" series is to help equip some of the men to become disciple-makers.

Bob Shoemaker does a Man in the Mirror Bible study on Tuesday mornings through his church. Northland. I spend 12-15 hours per week on this Bible study. You probably don't have that much time during the course of the week to prepare a study. Do the videos. The questions that you have on your tables, you can download those on the website and you can lead a discussion.

Why is this important? Because it is equipping. **Equipping is simply bringing men together around Christ and watching Him change the way they think and what they do.** That is what transformation is. We don't have the power. We don't have the power to do this. He has the power to do this. You do not know the Scriptures and you do not know the power of God. He is the power of God. We have faithfulness; He has power.

We have *pistos*. He has *dunamis*, the dynamite. He has the power to change lives. Equipping is not about us using our power; it is about being faithful to use His power to release the power of this gospel. That is what disciple-making is all about. That is what equipping is all about.

Rick is a dear friend of mine and has been for 40 years. He became a Christian at 38 years of age. He was a lawyer and then went into partnership with another guy at Florida Potting Soils. When he became a Christian at the age of 38 he started going to First Baptist Church. Ted Bywater invited him to a Monday Bible study. See how much impact? Everything is connected to everything. He spends a year with Lyle and he begins to awaken because Lyle is bringing Rick into the presence of Christ and then talking about him through the means of the Bible and then what happens is that Jesus begins to get a hold of the way that Rick is thinking. Then eventually, what he is doing. Then, down at his church, they were looking for somebody to teach a young married couples' class. Rick was getting all revved up and he stepped up. For 15 years he and his wife taught a young married couples' class. Then Rick got interested in some of the young guys there and their business and personal in problems. When he became a Christian his calling was immediate and God told him I want you to mentor younger men into Christ. All these young guys were coming to him and he had a calling to do it.

Has anybody drunk the Kool-Aid yet today? I want you to drink the Kool-Aid. This is the Kool-Aid. If you believe what the Bible says and if you are a true believer then you can release the power of the gospel on this city. Many of you already have done that. Some of the men I am talking about and dozens more of you. I praise God for you faithfulness. I give thanks to God all the time, especially when I am preparing. I give thanks all the time when I think about the men who have stayed the course, who has been *pistos*, faithful; you have been at it. Even when you felt like quitting you just keep on plugging away. Some of you need a nudge. Drink the Kool-Aid because equipping is simple. You just bring men in the presence of Christ and you just watch.

I am looking around. I am trying not to make eye contact too long with any of you guys, but I am seeing guys that I know this thing has happened here. It has happened right here. Somebody dragged you through the keyhole, whose Bible study you didn't want to go to. They kept knocking on your door and calling you and after eight weeks you've said I'll go just to get him off my back. Then you came. Many of you have had this experience anywhere else. But for some of you, this is the first time you have had any of this disciple-making experience of being equipped and being simply brought together around other men in Christ. Your wife has said, the way you think is different. What you do is not the same as it used to be. You may not have even noticed it, or maybe you did. But it happened and now, you are on fire. Let me tell you, you are on fire and the only way to put the fire out is to give the fire away.

HOW YOU CAN DO IT TOO

How you can do this too. You already know it is pretty simple. Here are a couple of thoughts. First of all, be a disciple, be faithful, reproduce yourself. Just be a disciple yourself. The most important thing about making disciples is to be a disciple. You can't give what you don't have. Be a disciple. Figure out how to balance your walk with God and your work for God.

I spend a couple hours a day with the Lord. I don't have kids at home. Maybe that is not realistic if you have kids. But I did it when I had kids at home, too, for just a couple hours a day. I can't even drag myself out of the house without a couple of hours with God.

Focus on your own walk with God. We will get to that next week. Balance these things out. Be a disciple yourself. Be in relationship with other guys where you are doing life together. That is what Jesus wants us to do. That is His method. He wants us to come together around Him and around His Word, and then He will use all of that in supernatural Holy Spirit ways to micromanage your life to change you; to transform you. Be a disciple.

Here is what I see. I see 90% of men who don't have enough Jesus for themselves, let alone enough left over to give to anyone else. They don't have enough for themselves. If you want to drink the Kool-Aid but you are saying I'm still thirsty. That means something. Probably what that means is you don't have enough Jesus for yourself. The first thing to do is to get filled up in your own relationship with Jesus. If you don't want to drink or can't drink the Kool-Aid then don't. If it is not welling up within you to have a personal ministry, let me tell you what to do. Nothing. Don't do it. Don't let anyone twist your arm and get you to do some kind of ministry out of a sense of compulsion or some kind of a legalistic duty. What you need to do is focus on filling up on your own personal relationship with Jesus until you are filled to the overflow with Christ, then if you do that one day you will be overflowing. You will think I have so much Jesus it is spilling all over the place. You realize I can't let that go to waste and then you give it away.

You will be scooping it up in buckets and going to give it to other people. Until then, don't. Just focus on your own walk with God. Be faithful. You have heard the Word of God. Do the Word of God. Be obedient to the word of God. And joy and peace and contentment, and all your New Year's Resolutions are wrapped up in obedience.

Then reproduce yourself. This is a classic text from *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman. This is an old copy. If you want to know more about making disciples, this is a *tour de force*. This is magnificent. There have been millions of people that have read and studied that book. In there he tells this story. Billy Graham was once asked if he was a pastor in a major city in a major church, what would be his strategy. He is Billy Graham, you would think he would say we will get all the churches in the city to work together, and we'll put on a huge evangelistic crusade, and we'll have follow-up teams and counselors. You know what he said? If I were a pastor at a major church in a major city probably would do it I would probably gather together a dozen men and over a period of years, I would share with them everything God had showed me. Then I would challenge them to go out and do the same thing. It is not that original to be honest. If it is good enough for Billy, it is good enough for you.

That's that. Then when you have all that taken care of just gather a few men around yourself, around Jesus, you can tell them, follow me as I follow Christ. If I'm not following Christ don't follow me. That was Paul's admonition. On the tables on the yellow sheets there is a guide on how to lead a weekly men's small group. I think I wrote this in 2002. I read it again yesterday, and you know how many changes I would make to it? Aside from a couple of typos, nothing. If you want to have a small group of guys, do the yellow sheet. Anybody who loves Christ and wants to be a disciple-maker can do this. You can change the city. You can make this happen. We are making it happen.

I am here today because 40 years ago, a man named Jim said, "I'm starting a small group. Would you like to come and see what we are doing?" The big idea today is that **equipping is simply bringing men together around Christ and watching Him change the way they think and what they do.** That's the deal. That's equipping. Let's pray.

CLOSING PRAYER

Our dearest Father, Lord, thank You for giving us this clear path to significance and meaning in our lives by helping You, by giving us a place on Your mission. Thank You that we are your method and that you have given us the means and the message to do this.

Lord, we pray that our city ten years from now would be a different city because these men thought about ten years from now, and thought about making disciples. They said to themselves I am going to drink the Kool-Aid. I want to be part of that. In Jesus' Name. Amen.