

# Six Habits of Spiritually Happy Men

## Habit #3: Spiritually Happy Men Serve

Unedited Transcript

David Delk

Good morning men. It is as always, a joy to be here. It's exciting to be back with you guys this morning. Really looking forward to the passage today and the topic. I think it's going to be helpful for you. It's certainly been helpful for me as I've been working through it this week.

I do want to give you some news, some sad news. John Ploehn, a long time member of the Bible Study, died yesterday afternoon after a struggle with cancer and so we are certainly sad at this loss. It's a little bit, honestly, serendipitous, the topic for today because I don't know anybody who embodied it more than John and you'll see why I say that when we get into it, but you know he now has experienced that final healing that Christ promises and so there's something to rejoice in that as well. Pray for Kathy and his family. I don't know any details yet about arrangements or services or anything like that for those of you who are interested. Hopefully, we can get the word out and let folks know about that.

Also, I wanted to share with you a quick story of encouragement. We love to kind of keep you informed about what's happening around the country. You guys are such a key part of that here in Orlando and everyone who watches via video as well. We received an interesting and encouraging word from a gentleman who shared his story. He said, "Up until now I never really had a mentor and really wasn't disciplined outside of what was offered through the normal channels of school and church." He said, "I first heard Pat Morley at a PK conference and then the church I attend had hosted a number of Man in the Mirror events including a Success That Matters and a No Man Left Behind training."

He said, "During these years, my son attended with me, sometimes begrudgingly, but now I have the distinct honor of serving with him and watching him lead groups of men as well as his family. Currently, I'm part of a team of men ministering to men in a recovery program. We're using the weekly devotional as a guide and the men are responding enthusiastically. What started out as a once-a-month trial has now blossomed into a weekly ministry with nineteen men." He said, "The Holy Spirit is transforming the lives of these men and the same Holy Spirit is transforming me through these men."

I'm also part of a team of men, including my son, who are working with eighth grade boys and their dads in a rite of passage called Pass Through Fire. We've been using several different materials over the past seven years, one of which is The Young Man in the Mirror. The Holy Spirit has connected the fathers and sons to the point that we have father and son alumni teams coming back to facilitate some of the classroom time. Thank you so much for the ministry of Man in the Mirror."

So just the encouragement of seeing what God is doing in one man's life who has stepped up into leadership, stepped up into service, and now with his son is even able to serve. The only reason this happens is because of the involvement, partnership of so many people in this room but also across the country. Your time, treasures and talent that make things like this possible, and so when you invest of

yourself into this ministry, this is the kind of thing that is happening literally all across the country and so we want to express our appreciation to everyone that is a part of what God is doing through Man in the Mirror.

We're going to start out with a little time for you at your tables. I want you to think about a gift that you received in your childhood. Could be a birthday present. Could have been a Christmas present but some kind of a gift that you received that you remember. Something that was such a big deal that it sticks out in your memory. Maybe during elementary school, that kind of age is what I'm thinking about. If it's older, younger, that's okay, but what is a gift? Just share with the guys at your table. What is a gift that you received, one gift that you received, sometime during your childhood and why do you remember it? We're going to give you about two minutes to do that at your tables.

All right, about thirty more seconds, thirty more seconds. All right, let's go ahead and come back together and I'm wondering if somebody would share, a couple people would share what was the gift that you remembered? What was the gift that you shared with your table? Who'll tell me about their gift? Somebody raise their hand. Tell me about the gift that you got, okay?

A Lionel train, all right. Why was that so memorable? Yeah, okay, wanted it for a long time. All right, who else? Wow. He got a new bike and started a paper route. That's entrepreneur. Yeah, I love it. Okay, who else? One more. Anybody else? Yeah. An air rifle. I'm not sure I want to ask what you did with that because ... We might have to go scan the newspapers about the local 7-11s or something, you know?

It's interesting because when you're a child getting a gift is such a big deal, right? I mean, it's just you have all the expectations and you get to open the wrapping and the whole nine yards. It's really ... it's not ... Especially after you have your own kids, gifts are not really that great anymore, because it's kind of anti-climactic but getting a gift is a big deal.

I need to let you guys know, for those of you watching live today here, Sunday is what? Mother's Day, okay, just in case you didn't know that. All right? Those of you who need to know that, if you know what I mean, okay? If you're watching on tape and you didn't know that Mother's Day was a couple weeks ago, sorry about that.

Let me give you a hint. We try to be really practical at the Bible Study. This is not pie-in-the-sky theology class. This is down where we live, nitty gritty kind of manhood stuff. I'm going to give you a hint today, all right? Do not buy this for Mother's Day. It may be great but you don't want to buy it for Mother's Day. Why is that? Well, when you think about a gift, you don't want to give somebody that implies that they've got to do more work for other people. That's typically what we do in our society. We want to give somebody a gift ... The gift that we give them, we say, "Hey, this is for you. You work all year round. You do all this stuff all the ... This is for you to enjoy for yourself." That's kind of how we think about gifts.

There's nothing wrong on that perspective on your birthday, or on Mother's Day, but it's interesting when we start to live that way all year round, that gifts are for me and that gifts are things that I'm supposed to enjoy for myself, because the Scriptures actually have kind of a different take on that, that we're going to talk about today. How can we become a spiritually happy man? How can we have a joy that resonates and lasts despite our circumstances? That's what we're talking about together.

Last week was being a member of a small group having those friendships. The Holy Spirit just has more options if you're in a small group. There's more opportunity for Him to work in your life, to transform you and this week, we want to talk about the habit of serving. Spiritually happy men serve and so I want to look at first Peter, chapter four, verses ten and eleven. If you have your Scriptures, we're just going to walk through this passage, so I encourage you to kind of keep your Bible open and look at it. First Peter, chapter four, that's after the Hebrews and James there in the New Testament, First Peter, chapter four, verse ten and eleven. So read that together.

"Each has received a gift. Use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace. Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves is one who serves by the strength that God supplies. In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." May God add understanding to the reading of His holy word.

The first thing I want us to notice in this passage is what is the mindset that Peter is asking us to have because this really is a different perspective than what we have in our culture today and we really need to go back all the way up to verse one in this passage, I mean, really the whole book. The whole book has been about living ... By the way, if you've not read first Peter in a while, I would encourage you to do that. I don't know of anything that could help you with the events of this last week more than reading first Peter because first Peter talks about being a stranger and alien in a world that's not our home.

I think at the end of this week, many of us are wondering what happened to the world that we used to know? So first Peter can help us understand that, hey, this world is not our home, there's certain things that we're going to have to endure. There's things where we're going to have to remain faithful in the midst of difficulties and so he's kind of piled that story up and then he gets here to chapter four in verse one, it says, "Since therefore, Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking." Arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

What he's saying to you is, the view that Christ had on his life and on the world and on his mission is the same view, the same worldview, the same mindset that you're supposed to have. The perspective that Christ had as he came to serve, as he came to obey the Father, as he came to redeem, as he came to lay down his life for others, that's the same view that you are supposed to have in you, not because you can sort of do it in your own strength or make it happen but because of what Christ has done. What he's done has the power to transform us from the inside out and so, for example, he says here in verse eight, "Show love, show hospitality to people. Keep loving one another." Verse nine, "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."

These aren't things that we can do unless we are empowered by the Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done in his death and his resurrection. You see, He's saying to us, "We are not the same anymore." In verses three and four, He basically says, "Look, you don't have to live like the Gentiles do anymore." Why? Because we have been transformed if we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and it certainly begs the question when we read a passage like this, how much of our life is still the same? How much of our life is still the same? How much of what you love is the same as everybody else around you? How much of the things that you're passionate about are the same as your neighbors who don't know anything about Jesus Christ? How much of what you work for, what you get angry about, what you love, what you get discouraged by, how much of that is the same?

If everything is the same, then what has Christ really done? Jesus didn't come to sort of clean up our life, take off the rough edges. Take a typical American self-made man and clean off the rough edges. Help

him not curse so much and maybe not get quite as angry as he used to. Maybe pay a little more attention to his wife and gosh, look at him. He coaches the little league now, sweet. This is it. Boom. There's a Christian guy. No. That's not what the Gospel is at all.

The Gospel says we are a whole new creation, that everything has been transformed from the inside out and so if we are going to live as spiritually happy men, one of the questions we have to ask is, "Have we really allowed Christ to dive down to the deep, into the foundations of who we are as men and say Lord, whatever you want to do, whatever you want to clean out, whatever you need to change, I'm willing to let you do that."

If we haven't, then we're kind of just adding Christ onto our life, with our own agenda, off to the side and that's not really the Gospel. No wonder we're spiritually miserable men. That's a habit of a spiritually miserable man, but a spiritually happy man allows Christ to transform him from the inside out so that we could have a new mindset on what's important in life.

The second thing that we see in this passage is that God supplies the strength, that God supplies the strength. Now why does God need to supply the strength? Have you thought about that? Look at what it says here in verse eleven. "Whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies." Now why would God need to supply the strength? You think about what most of us consider service, right? I mean, you would say, "Gosh, I helped this person out or I gave a couple bucks to a homeless person on the corner, or my wife and I, we made up some little plastic bags with soap and toothpaste and a toothbrush, and a MacDonald's card and we gave that out to that homeless person on the corner." Service, right?

"Maybe our neighbor's been in the hospital. We took him over some food. We stopped by Publix. We bought a rotisserie chicken, some sides. We dropped them off at their house. That's service."

Wait a minute, it says ... It says, "You need to serve as one who serves by the strength that God supplies." Do we think God really needs ... I need God's strength to give out a couple bucks to a homeless person through my car window? Do I really need God's strength to grab a couple extra things at Publix and stop a block earlier and walk them up to the door of my neighbor? Maybe Peter's got a different thing in mind when he's talking about service.

Most of us, we think about just kind of basically being nice. Pat talked about being in a small group last week and I've been in a lot of small groups. I know ... How many of you are in some kind of a group experience right now besides the table? You've got that already at your table but many of you are doing something else. A lot of guys around the room are doing something else and you know we're nice to people in our groups usually, right? We like to listen to them talk and they share things and we may pray for them. If they're going through some kind of hard time, we might help them, like they need to move and we'll go over and help load the truck. Maybe they're putting up a fence or something and we'll go and help them dig holes for their fence posts. Some things like that but basically, it's not really all that hard, right? For most of us. It's not really all that hard. It's kind of fun.

When Peter talks about serving with the strength that God provides, he's talking about something I think pretty different than that. He's talking about actually getting deeply involved in somebody's life. Doing things that are inconvenient, uncomfortable, difficult, hard, sometimes maybe confrontational. That takes the strength that God provides.

A man was telling me about a breakfast his wife had with a hurting woman and as she heard this woman's story, she has been through some crises relationally, in her marriage. She's been through some crises with friends. She's had some emotional difficulties that have made her a very difficult person. It sounded like a deep, dark hole that you would be climbing into. This person was really suffering and so after the breakfast, as this woman was recounting this to my friend, she said, "You know, I'm just not sure that I want to do that. Should I go to breakfast with her again? What should I do?"

He's like, "You know what's going to have to happen if anything's actually going to change. It's not going to be you go to breakfast once a month. It's going to be that we really have to get involved in their life," and he joked, and "By the way, I don't want to do that, so don't ever talk to her again." No, right?

When people are really hurting, when they're really going through a tough time, checking in with them once a month, texting them, "Hey, praying for you." That's not enough. It takes really getting connected to a person in a deep way, sacrificing, loving them, giving ourselves away, if we're really going to see transformation in the other person's life. It's hard. It's messy. It's inconvenient but you know what? Jesus didn't say, "Hey, take up your getting up early once a week to go to an air conditioned room and sit with some guys and listen to a guy talk. Take that up and follow Me." He didn't say, "Take up praying for your neighbor's marriage every once in a while when you think about it and follow Me." He didn't say, "Hey, take up your not getting angry and flipping people off at a traffic jam and follow Me."

This is not the epitome of Christian suffering, these things we think about as service or loving or whatever. He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me." He's calling us to die and if we don't have some situations in our lives that are inconvenient, uncomfortable, and boy, I am preaching to myself right now because I hate it. I want comfort and convenience. I engineer my life for comfort and convenience, but if we don't have some things in our life that are difficult, uncomfortable, inconvenient, that make us feel inadequate, that make us feel like we can't handle it, like we don't know what to say. We don't know what to do. If you're not finding yourself in that situation on a regular basis, my guess is you're not really serving someone the way that Christ has called you to serve someone, because it's just what it takes.

Take up your cross and follow Me. God supplies the strength because it's too hard to do on our own and if it's not too hard to do on our own, it's not really serving the way that God has called us to serve. One of the questions I would ask you is are you in a relationship that's too hard? Have you managed your life so that all your friendships and acquaintances and ministry things are all nice and convenient.

I love working with guys that want to help themselves. It's a joy ... I've worked with some young men and these guys are awesome. They want to grow. They want to love, learn, they want to be mentored. They want to have an impact. It's a joke in terms of like sacrificial service. It's great. It's a good ministry. There's nothing wrong with it but it's nothing like what Peter is talking about here. If you're going to help people that are really struggling, you're going to have to get involved with them in a significant way.

That really brings us to the purpose of the gift. The purpose of the gift and the purpose of the gift that we would use it to serve and that's what Peter talks about here. So imagine that you have a good friend. They're not all that technologically oriented. You go to their house. They're getting a phone call, it's on a flip phone. They can't barely figure out how to answer the call. They're trying to get a speaker phone so their spouse can hear. They don't know how to turn the speaker phone on. It's just ... They're looking at your phone and they see the screen and how it works and you're showing them and they're all

interested in it. They're like, "That looks amazing. It's so easy, look the phone call comes up. You just do that. Oh my goodness. That would be amazing. You're so lucky to have a phone like that."

You go out, you buy them a huge big screen eight hundred dollar smart phone. You bring it over and you show it to them and they're so grateful. They're so thankful. You say, "All you do is you call the company and you transfer your number to this. You're going to be all set. Here's the phone number to call. I hope you enjoy it." You come back about a week later and you're sitting down and all of a sudden, his phone rings and it's his flip phone. He's opening up his flip phone and then you look down and you notice that there is the smart phone on his coffee table with a glass of iced tea on it.

He answers his flip phone, hangs up and you're like, "Hey, dude, dude. What's going on? Why are you still using a flip phone? What ..." "Well, you know, I just, I don't know. I just used it." He said, "What's going on? What's the smart phone?" He said, "That thing is the greatest coaster. It's amazing. It just keeps everything right there and my table's in perfect condition. I used to have these rings on it. I don't have any rings on it anymore. It works for hot. It works for cold. Doesn't how much water drips down. It's amazing. That thing is incredible."

Now what are you going to be feeling as someone who gave the gift? You're going to be thinking, "What in the world have I done with my eight hundred dollars? What in the world have I done?" Because when you give a gift to someone, you want them to use it for the purpose that it was made for and the purpose that you gave it to them for.

The same thing is true with God. When He gives us gifts, He wants us to use it for His purpose. When He sees you taking the persistence that He's given you, or the entrepreneurial skill that He's given you, or the empathy that He's given you, or the insight that He's given you, or the charisma that He's given you. When He sees you taking those skills and gifts and abilities and all you're doing is staring at your own navel thinking about, "How can I make my life better because of these things that I can do with my abilities?" None of us is going to be crass enough to say that, right, but that's really what's happening. It's like looking at the guy with the smart phone who's using it as a coaster. This is not what I gave you these things for. I gave you these things so that you could bless other people. I gave you these things so that you could make a difference in the world. Why are you hoarding them for yourself? That's what He's asking us.

We're supposed to serve to bless and to make a difference in the lives of others. God wants us to use His gifts for the purpose that He intended them. One of those purposes, it says here, is that "We should be oriented to others." It says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another." Oriented to others.

I remember a guy that made a huge impression on me in college. He worked with a Christian ministry and he would visit our campus and when he visited our campus, he would spend some time with some of the guys in our ministry and every time you were with him, you felt like you were the most important person in the world. He just was so focused on you. He was so interested in you. It was obvious he had no agenda other than whatever you needed him to be and to do and how could I help you? What do you need to be more successful in what you're doing... He was just one of those guys. It was so contagious and so magnetic. If he came in the room and you shook twenty people's hands, you would not have put him in the top fifteen of those twenty people if you had to grade them somehow at the end of that. He just was not that ... He wasn't a really charismatic guy. He wasn't a big guy, wasn't a necessarily good looking guy, any of that.

He was a man that was radically committed to being other-centered and you felt it and you experienced it and it made a difference in your life. That's what Peter is telling us. We need to be oriented to others and then secondly, he says, "That the ultimate purpose of these gifts is to bring glory to God in order that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

When we think about this, what is the ultimate goal of serving? What is the ultimate goal of getting involved in the life of another person? The one goal is to have an impact, to make a difference but ultimately, we do it because it glorifies God and that has to be true because there's oftentimes when you try to serve people and it does not work out. Most of the time, when you try to serve people, it does not work out the way that you wish it would, right? People don't appreciate it. People don't see it the same way that you do. People might get offended. People might take it for granted.

Our church has a ministry to the homeless and probably ten or twelve or fourteen years ago, I remember one of the lessons that they were teaching us about why we were doing this as a church and one of the things that one of the leaders said that I'll never forget, he said, "We don't minister to homeless people so that they will change. We minister to homeless people because Jesus told us to." I thought that was so powerful because when our expectation is we're going to get a certain response from the people we are trying to serve, what happens when we don't get that response? We're going to get disappointed. We're going to get frustrated. We're going to want to give up, all those kinds of things.

Peter says, "Ultimately, when we serve, using the gifts that God has given us, that we are ultimately bringing glory to God." That's the ultimate goal that we have and so the Big Idea for this week is that **you need to have a deep, intentional spiritual impact in one person's life. You need to have a deep, intentional and spiritual impact in one person's life.** You're just called to do that. You'll love it and God gets the glory. That's the Big Idea.

A self-oriented life always leads us as a shadow of the man we could have been and you've seen this. You've seen guys who get to the end of their run and they've been about themselves and they've kind of lived for themselves and their family is very uneasy about their life and their impact. People in their business are not that excited about having been a part of their business life. It's a waste. A self-oriented life always leaves you as a shell of the man that you really could be. The way to become a spiritually happy man, the way to flourish as a man, is to give ourselves away.

Jesus said, "If you want to find your life, you have to lose it for my sake." One of the questions I would ask you is are you using your strongest gifts for the good of others? Are you using your strongest gifts for the good of others? God's given you some talents. He's given you some abilities. He's given you some things that make you able to accomplish things, that make you powerful, that allow you to get things done. It could be your determination. It could be your relationship skills. It could be your analytical abilities. It could be your charisma. It could be resources that you have available to you, relationships, whatever, but are you using those not just for things that benefit yourself, but are you using those to be a blessing in the lives of other people?

The greatest way that we can serve someone, the ultimate good for someone else, is that they would actually become a disciple of Jesus Christ. So ultimately, when we think about getting involved in the situation, whatever ministry, whatever circumstance we're in, and by the way, serving in your business is serving. Serving in your neighborhood is serving. Serving in your church is serving. Attacking a problem in the community is serving. I'm not trying to define for you exactly what serving looks like but it does

involve actually getting into a real person's life in such a way that we are helping them become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

That's what we ought to be oriented towards, that this person would become a committed, mature follower of Jesus because that's ultimately what He wants for them. One of the questions I would finish with is, "Are you involved in someone's life in a deep enough way to actually produce a disciple?" It's very easy for me to have these casual kinds of interactions. I teach the middle school boys on Sundays at our church. I love it. I've been doing it for twelve years. We do a young couples group in our home on Sunday nights. We've got seven or eight couples in our home. It's a lot of fun. It's great. It can be very casual. It can be very surface-y, but are you and am I involved in a person's life in a deep enough way that there's actually a reasonable chance that that person may become a disciple of Christ?

If we're not, there's probably something wrong with the way that we're serving. God has called each one of us to use the gifts that He's given to serve others for his glory. You need to have a deep, intentional, spiritual impact in one person's life. You'll love it and God gets the glory. Let's pray.

"Father, we thank you so much for this morning, for your word that speaks to us as men. We live in a culture that is so self-oriented that wants to say that everything is about me and tries to tell me all these different things that can make me happy and satisfied and fulfilled and successful and as men who have come into a relationship with Jesus Christ, we're not immune to that. We're swimming in that and it's so easy just to adopt that worldview from the culture.

So I pray, Lord, that you would transform us from the inside out and if there are men listening to me today that have not yet repented of their sin and placed their faith and trust in You, I pray that they would do that today, that they would recognize that there is no other thing that can satisfy them. There is not other thing that can fill the hole in their hearts other than You. That You are who we were made for. I pray that as men, we would recognize that You have called us to take up our cross, to lay down our lives for You and we're not just simply supposed to be nice or do some activities that sort of seem like they help people but we're meant to actually serve in the power that You can provide for us. Serve in significant ways, use the gifts that You've given us to help transform the lives of people around.

I pray that each one of us could identify those one, two, three people that You've placed in our lives where we can actually make a difference to help them become Your disciple for Your glory, we pray, in Jesus name. Amen."