

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 6: Work

Session 3: How Can You Help Hurting Men Through Your Work?

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. We are in this series, The Journey to Biblical Manhood. We're going to start today by asking you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 11 and, as you're turning to the verse, let's do our shout out for the day. Each week, we welcome a group somewhere around the world that is doing the Bible study with us. Today it's a group called Band of Brothers in Phoenix, New York. They're led by Barry Behlen. Now, Barry, I did Google translate this morning to try to figure out how to pronounce your last name and that's what Google translate told me. If I didn't get it right, I do apologize. Barry Behlen, they're joining us. They meet on Saturdays at 10:30 AM and they are offering "a no nonsense, no fluff gathering where men can bring any baggage they want to unload, anger, pride, doubts of faith, et cetera." That's a great mission and so I wonder if you would help me welcome Band of Brothers to our Bible study. One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, men. We're glad to have you with us.

It is The Journey Biblical Manhood. We're in the sixth challenge, the faith and life objectives. Loosely, we have been following the idea of speaking to the head, speaking to the heart, and speaking to the hands. Today we're in the third week so we'll do the hands part. It says, "I will work with diligence, integrity, and excellence to demonstrate God's character to a watching world." The title of today's message is How Can You Help Hurting Men Through Your Work. We're not doing a business seminar on how to be successful in the work that you do. There are plenty of seminars like that. What we're doing here is a Bible study and we're trying to look at those aspects of work that are distinctly Christian. This is in particular now getting down to a very spiritual part of our work, although we made the point in the first lesson, What Does God Want Us To Know About Our Work, that work is ministry, work is a calling, work is worship, and that we are ordained blank. That was the Big Idea. I am an ordained blank.

Then the last time we were together, what did we look at? Anybody? We looked at work. That's good. Hey, getting warmer, getting warmer, getting warmer. We looked at two different models. We looked at the success model and then we looked at the faithful model. The Big Idea for the week last week was that God calls us to be faithful, not successful. Then today, I want us to drill down now a little bit further and look at the ministry opportunities that work does have. We said that work is not just a platform to do ministry, it is ministry. Notice in that sentence it says that work is not just a platform to do ministry, it is a platform to do ministry. That's what we want to talk about today because it is very distinctly a Christian part of work.

Today, in this city and in every city where those of you who are doing the Bible study online live and in every other city, village, town, hamlet throughout the world, there are men who are showing up to work today with an array of problems that work can't solve. Work is a venue full of men who are hurting, hurting for various reasons. I talk about it all the time, that the seven big ones that I've sort of created this taxonomy for myself over the years, men saying, "I just feel like I'm in this alone. I don't feel like God cares about me personally, not really. My life doesn't have purpose. It feels random. I have these destructive behaviors that keep dragging me back down. My soul feels dry. My most important relationships are not healthy and I don't feel like I'm doing anything that will make a difference and leave the world a better place." Those are some more of the root problems, the presenting problems that we see. Men who have marriage problems, separated, getting divorced that are showing up to work. Men who are suffering from the consequences of infidelity. Men who have addictions. Men who are depressed. These men are driving all around our streets right now on their way to work and many of these men have lost hope. They don't know where to turn.

Well, it's interesting because Christians are not the only ones who care about hurting men. There are lots of people who care about these hurting men, but what is different is that we are the only group who can offer these hurting men more than cheer up and here's a bandaid. We are the only group who can offer these men a hope that will actually heal. When I was in Asia last year for three weeks, God changed my ministry. It was interesting because I have always sensed that God had given me a ministry of encouragement. Courage is the quality or state of mind that enables one to face hardship or disaster with the confidence in resolution. What does it mean then to encourage? Well, it means to inspire people to have courage. I've always felt that my ministry was to encourage you, to inspire you to have confidence in resolution, to face hardship and disaster with confidence and resolution, but I have come to see ... I was beginning to come to see and the Lord actually completed the process that encouragement is addressing the current situation. I need to encourage you because your wife hates your guts. I'm so sorry. I hope that encourages you.

But hope is oriented to the future. Encouragement helps you feel better about how crummy you feel right now, but hope gives you something to look forward to the future. I still haven't wrapped my mind around this. I have a long way to go to understand what it means to shift from encouragement to hope, but I do know that what men need is they need a real hope and the greatest single hope that men have is found in Jesus Christ. How do we get men there? Well, it's not as hard as you might think. It's actually pretty simple. Work is a powerful venue to do this. The first thing I want us to see is that we are ambassadors. We are the ambassadors through whom Christ makes his appeal.

2 Corinthians chapter five, let's start at verse 11. Let's look at a couple of these verses. You know, I know why I run over sometimes. I just looked at my stopwatch here and it took me nine minutes to get this far. I mean, that was just like I need to do a better job introducing the topic. I mean, nine minutes just to tell you what we're going to talk about? That's ridiculous. Verse 11, Paul writes, "Since then we know what it is to revere the Lord, we try to do," what? Persuade men. That's the what. Drop down to verse 14. This is the why we do the what. "For Christ's love compels us." The word literally means Christ's love holds us together. Some of your versions might say Christ's love controls us. Christ's love has seized us. It holds us together.

"Because of what we have experienced in Christ," this is the motivation. This is the why we try to persuade others. I would just say if you don't have any interest in trying to persuade others, don't try to gin up inside of yourself, "I need to be more persuasive. I need to be more of an ambassador. I need to try to help these men more." No, draw closer in your own relationship to Jesus. We say this all the time.

When Augustine said, "Love God and do what you want," that's exactly what he meant because as we are more deeply in love with God, then we want to do the things that God wants us to do. You want to persuade men, don't try to just beat yourself up. Just draw yourself closer to Jesus.

"For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all and therefore all died." All these men are spiritually, that don't know Jesus, they're spiritually dead. A lot of them do know Jesus and have walked away and they're not spiritually dead but they have a pretty weak pulse. "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves," that would be us, "but for him who died for them and was raised again." And now the result of that. The result of that is so, from now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view. We have a different point of view.

Some people see people not like themselves and they hate them. They talk about them. They revile them. They ridicule them. They spurn them. They make snarky remarks to them and about them. Which, by the way, if you were a nonbeliever, that's pretty insulting. You know, there are some Christians who are hateful, who are trying to control other people, and say mean things about people who don't share their views, our views. I would just like to suggest that those are the same, that's the same 1% that won't let you into traffic or cut you off in traffic. The 99% of the Christians are doing a great job. Here's the thing. The ones of us who are doing a great job loving others as Christ loved us, we need to talk louder. We need to drown out the one-percenters who are the haters. Part of what we're doing here today is showing each other how we can help hurting men through our work. One of the ways we can do that is just by being more out loud. We'll talk more about this.

We regard no one from a worldly point of view, so we have a point of view that is ... Well, let's read on and see what he says. "Though once regarded Christ in this way, do so no longer. If anyone's in Christ, he's a new creation." Verse 18, "All this is from God." You know, this is not something that men are making up. It's not just a good idea. It's a God idea. "All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ," and watch this, "and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." I actually had this, originally this circle up here, I just had it the ministry of reconciliation. I thought this would make it a little bit more come alive, but it's the ministry of reconciliation. What is the ministry of reconciliation? That we're ambassadors through whom Christ makes his appeal. That's what the ministry of reconciliation is.

"He's given us this ministry of reconciliation, God reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled with God." God is making his appeal through us.

1 Peter something, which we'll look at in this next little section, but it says that always be prepared to give everyone an answer for the reason for the hope that is in you. This hope that is in you, which by the way, doesn't come off very well if you're a hater. But if you're a lover, this hope just kind of comes out. Well, it comes out everywhere and I would suggest to you that for most of us, this Big Idea, this is a deduction, so I'll prove this to you, why I think this is true. This is the Big Idea for the day. **How I do my work is my loudest voice.** How I actually my work is my loudest voice. That's not only ... That's in every way and I'm going to show you now, I'm going to show you three different ways from scripture that our work can appeal to hurting men.

Remember, "As though Christ is making his appeal through us." He is. He's making his appeal through us and so, when you go to work today, there are going to men all around you, there will be women too. I don't know anything about women so that's why I don't talk about women's ministry. I've been married,

you know, a long time and women really should, in most cases, have women minister to them. I was talking a man this morning who's reaching out to the girlfriend of somebody that he's ministering to, so yeah, that's there too, but this is the ministry to men that we're talking about.

These men are all around you at work and if you do view yourself as an ambassador through whom Christ makes his appeal, then you will notice things. You will notice changes that are taking place in demeanor, facial expression, habits, work habits, work production, things like this that are signals. Okay? Here are then three ways that our work will appeal to these hurting men. Turn, if you would, to 1 Thessalonians chapter four verse 11. The first way that our work will appeal to hurting men is do good work. Just do good work. Francis Schaeffer summarized, he said, "If you do your work well, you have a chance to speak." 1 Thessalonians 4:11 and 12 puts it this way, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your hands just as we told you." Why? "So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders." May be appealing, if you will, to outsiders. "So that you will not be dependent on anybody." The first way our work can appeal to hurting men is just by doing good work so that people respect us. You know, if we think of our ... Well, I don't even need to go off into the negative part because nobody here thinks that way. Everybody understands what I just said supremely.

Now, turn to 1 Peter chapter three verse whatever, 15. The first way is do good work. The second way is be nice. Be extra nice. I have just, over the years, you know, guys are guys, I get it. Some of you guys, the way you treat waitresses, I mean, it's embarrassing to me. I don't even want to be in the same restaurant, honestly. Just be nice. 1 Peter chapter three verse 15, "But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord, always be prepared to give an answer to," who? "To everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you, but do this with gentleness and respect." Be nice. Be ready, but when you have the opportunity, be nice. This is the idea that probably prompted, one way or another, Francis of Assisi to say the famous statement, "Preach the gospel always and if necessary, use words." You've heard this. "Preach the gospel always and if necessary, use words." That's what this is. This is living your life in such a way that somebody wants to ask you, "What's up? What's up with you?"

Then Jeremiah chapter 29 verse seven. The nation of Israel is in captivity at this point in Babylon and Jeremiah is writing a letter to the exiles. In chapter 29 verse seven, you thought I was going to say, some of you, verses 10 to 12 where there's that wonderful promise, "For I know the plans that I have for you, plans to prosper you," and so forth, but a little bit earlier in verse seven, it says this. He says, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Do good work, be nice, and work for the common good of the community where God has placed you. In other words, you know the old, I guess it's cliché that he was so heavenly minded that he was no earthly good. That's what this speaks to.

Even if you ... By the way, we are hardly in a Babylonian exile. We are hardly, I mean we have more religious freedom than, as far as I know, any country in the entire world. Yeah, we have a lot of people abusing their religious freedom that we have, but we have it. We have the ability to pray in public and to convene at meetings. I mean, there's are lots of Christians around the world that have to meet secretly and can't pray in public and can't openly talk about their faith. You can. By the way, is it illegal for you to witness to coworkers? Of course not. Now, it may be against company policy to use company time to do that and you may suffer persecution if you do it on your own time with an employee. Those are different issues, but it's certainly not illegal in any way to share your faith with a coworker. It's the thing that they most need and we live in a great country here in the United States, and a lot of people listening to this are not in the United States, but we here have the privilege of being able to work for the common good of the community and then have an opportunity to share our faith as a result of that.

There's so many Biblical examples of men who are living under regimes or under governments that were not Christian who, nevertheless, had a great impact. Think about Joseph working for Pharaoh in Egypt. Think about Mordecai working for whatever that king was in the citadel of Susa. Then think about Daniel in Babylon, you see. We have many examples where Christians have been in hostile cultures, working nevertheless with the common good, the peace and the prosperity of the place to which they were exiled. These were just like three of, obviously many other possible ways that we can do our work, but these things appeal to hurting men. When men see you doing good work and they see you being nice and they see you working for the common good of the entire community, then this is something that opens the door because the Big Idea is how I do my work is my loudest voice.

Then just three practical suggestions for you, all right? Three practical suggestions for you. The first has to do with your personal life, just the way you live. The first suggestion is live an attractive life. The question that the hurting man is asking is, the thing that's going to either draw him to you or turn him away when he is hurting, I mean, what's going to make him want to ask that question is that he can see that Christianity has actually made a difference in your life. If you're the grumpy guy, if you're a Christian but you're still the grumpy guy, then why would anybody want that? What difference has Christianity made in your life and how do we exhibit that? We do that by leading an attractive life. That includes things like, well, the things we've already talked about, but it also includes ...

Why do we call it work-life balance? Why don't we call it life-work balance? It's like work is like the ... Well, we do that of course because work occupies so much of our time. That's an argument for another day. In this idea of balancing our life and our work and everything like that, it's that you do have boundaries. If I was a nonbeliever and somebody wanted me to ask them about how I could help overcome my problems, if they have more problems than I do, I'm not going to ask that person. If they don't have their family life in balance, I'm certainly not interested in asking them how they can help me with my family. If I'm stressed out because I work too much and a believer works 60 or 70 hours a week, he's the last person in the world I'm going to be interested in asking because he doesn't have an attractive life to me. Live an attractive life.

You know, I've never worked past 6:00 PM and I don't take work home. Men tend to compartmentalize their families when they go to work and not think about them, but then they tend to come home and not compartmentalize their work. John Barbara gave me this insight 20 years ago. It's fantastic. It's fantastic idea. Most men come home and they bring their work home with them in their minds. They're distracted. This is not an attractive way to live. That's one practical suggestion.

The second one is see something, say something. If you see something is askew with a man who is hurting at work, say something. How do you do that? Here's how I do it. You can do it any way you want, of course, but here's one way to think about or adapt. When I see something is askew and I can tell a guy is down, I will say something along the line, "You seem to me a little down." I say, "You know, when I'm down sometimes I like to talk about it and sometimes I don't. I don't know where you are, but if you'd like to talk about it, I would love to do that. Would you like to talk about it?" Sometimes I get a no, although usually when I get a no, later that person will circle back anyway. Sometimes I get a yes.

The third suggestion is have a plan. The first idea is lead an attractive life. The second idea is see something, say something. The third idea is have a plan. If you say to somebody, "Do you want to talk about it?" and they do, there's probably a good idea to have thought about that in advance. I just was thinking there are many different things you could put in here, but the things I thought about this morning was one of our members is not attending anymore because of mental illness, dementia, Rod

Clark. Rod used to go to McDonald's and Starbucks every day and every day he would put a copy of a book in his back pocket and then he would wait. Almost every day, he would end up giving a book to somebody that he had engaged in a conversation. A big part of the plan could be to just have a little stash of books. We do those books by the box. You can get them for under two bucks. I think you can get that book that Rod was giving away for like 82 cents a piece or something like that. Just have some Christian literature.

I love the ministry of Christian literature. I don't write books ... Okay. Why do I write books? Do I write books because I love the ministry of Christian literature or do I love the ministry of Christian literature because I write books? Chicken and egg. I believe, it's been incredible to me how often a man will get hold of a book and God will use the book to get hold of the man. It's a very powerful ministry. It's a very low impact, nonthreatening way to introduce the idea. You can invite guys to this Bible study or another Bible study or small group. Be ready to invite a guy out for a cup of coffee or a meal. Have a few people that you can refer him to for professional Christian counseling if necessary. Some of you are capable of doing some one-on-one mentoring. Just have a plan to do that because if you do your work well, it's going to speak very loudly and people are going to want to hear from you a reason for the hope that is in you. Big Idea today, **how I do my work is my loudest voice**. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, first of all, we're looking at something today that is something that there will not be a business seminar anywhere in America that's not Christian that will talk about this today, and yet, Lord, this idea that we are ambassadors through whom you are making your appeal in the workplace is such an important and exciting and such a significant opportunity for us. Lord, just help us to reflect on these truths and just think about this idea for each of us, if we think it's true that how we do our work really is the loudest voice with which we speak. We ask this in your name, Jesus. Amen.