

# The Journey to Biblical Manhood

## Challenge 7: Mission

### Session 3: Finding Your Ministry Niche

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to John chapter 15. As we get started, let's go ahead and do a shout-out. As you know, each week we give a shout-out to a group of men somewhere around the world. Well, today they happen to be right here in Orlando with us. The name of the group, Real Men East Orlando, eight men. They join us on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. at the Real Life East Campus. They call themselves a group of men who are completely broken and in need of a Savior to show us the true nature and design that God intended for men. Hard to get a better description than that, right? They're led by Derek Roush. I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm and a rousing welcome to Real Men East Orlando. One, two, three, hoo rah. Welcome, men. We're glad to have you with us.

The series is the Journey to Biblical Manhood, Challenge Seven. We are in mission. We're wrapping it up today. We've seen the faith and life objectives. Again, you have cards on the table, if you haven't seen those yet. Then today, we're going to talk about the hands part of this. We start with head, heart, and then hands in the third session. We're going to talk about how you can find your ministry niche.

I don't know how well you can see this, but this is a picture of a warning alert on the dashboard of my truck. It says ... Because it's out of focus because I took it at 75 miles an hour, it's a little jittery. I'm riding along. Patsy and I, we're keeping this camper that we have in Asheville so we can drive up to Asheville, hook it up, and then fan out from there. Left the house around 4:30 a.m. to get a good head start. It takes about two hours for us to get just to the north side of Jacksonville. Just as I came back onto I-95, this warning light flashes in the car: "No engine restarts" and 250 miles. It says 248 there. It took me a couple of miles to gather myself to take a picture. "No engine restarts" and 250 miles. "Incorrect diesel exhaust fluid quality detected." Oh, no. What's that?

So what was particularly shocking about this was that I had just had the truck serviced for this trip, and they replaced all the diesel fuel filters and all these different things. And so I said, "What am I gonna do? What am I gonna do?" So anyway, I got on the telephone and I called ... they had this roadside assistance number. So I get a phone, I call them up, and they've never heard of it. They've never heard of this. Great! So anyway, they did a little checking around and it took about an hour of phone work to figure out that there is such a warning. Now we've at least got that far. Oh, okay, yeah, we have heard of this before.

I figure that, after listening to everybody, that the car really is not going to restart if I go these 248 miles. So I have to make a decision: Do I turn around and spoil this vacation, or do I keep driving on? And I get this plan in my mind. We're gonna drive to the storage place where we have the trailer, I'm gonna leave

the car running, I'm gonna hook it up, we're gonna go to the campsite, and I'm gonna park the camper, and then I'm gonna unhook the truck, and then I'm gonna position the truck so that a tow truck can come to the campsite and pick it up and fix it, but we can still go camping! Great idea!

Get to the storage shed to hook up the camper, and the battery on the camper's dead. So now what do I do? So bottom line, I can make this story the whole talk, but we decided to go check in to a Hilton and then have the Asheville - and I had already figured out that there was a truck dealer at Asheville who could fix the thing.

So we check in to Hilton and I even called up roadside assistance and I said, "Okay, which way do I need to park the car so they can get it out of the lot?"

They say, "Back it in, back it in."

So I arranged a tow truck to come the next morning and I shut the car off, and just for fun I tried to turn it back on. It wouldn't come back on, so they weren't kidding. So 6:30 in the morning, the tow truck comes, because the place opens at seven o'clock. Actually it opens at eight o'clock, but I had them come at 6:30. And the guy in the tow truck couldn't figure out how to get the car out of park so that he could pull it up with a witch under the flatbed. So we call roadside assistance again and we got a woman in Ontario. Is it sexist to say that she was a woman, or is it just description? She was a woman. And she has not found her ministry niche.

So I'm sitting there with the guy from the towing company and he says, "I think it's down here underneath the cup holder." He said, "Do you have a screwdriver?"

I said, "Yeah," so I gave him a screwdriver. He couldn't get it out. And so we called roadside assistance. So he's sitting in the driver's seat, I'm sitting over in the passenger seat, and I'm explaining what's going on to this roadside assistance person, about the fourth one I've talked to there. I said, "We can't figure out how to get to the emergency parking brake release thingy."

And she said, "Well, I don't know where it's at."

I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. If you don't know where it's at, who's going to know?"

And then she said this: She said, "Sir, it is the responsibility of the owner to know how to put the car out of park to release the emergency parking brake. It's not our responsibility."

And at this point I had a number of very snarky remarks come to mind, all of which I decided to restrain, and I just laughed. I said, "Okay. Well, what we really need to do, though, is to figure out, how do we go forward from here?"

So the bottom line is that it didn't work out. He left. Then I called, when they opened the Orlando store, I'd been building a relationship with the service manager who knew all the service staff there. So I called the service manager, and he literally spent 25 minutes ... I took a picture of the phone page to prove this. 25 minutes, 25 actual minutes, he spent on the phone with me, to help me discover. He had me taking pictures under my hood. He went out onto the lot to look at other cars under the hood to see ... they changed the location of it. We couldn't find it. And so this is why it took so long. And then finally he

went back and talked to a mechanic back in the shop, and we were able to actually get it and send out another tow truck. And so we had to pay for two nights at the hotel instead of one because of that.

So yeah. We're gonna talk about finding your ministry niche this morning, and I'm planning to email a link to the video to roadside assistance for my truck company.

So we're gonna begin by talking about the joy of abiding in Christ verses ... we're gonna compare that to striving to do work for Christ. We're gonna start in John chapter 15, and John chapter 15, verses one through 17. You could make a career out of this passage. In fact, some people have. You could marinate, you could swim, you could dive in between the syllables of these words and you could spend an entire life just meditating on these verses. We're gonna look at about four of these different verses a little bit more carefully this morning.

Now, when you think about wanting to serve God, wanting to have a personal ministry, wanting to be on mission, the natural conclusion is that I'm going to throw myself into this. I'm going to work for God because God is good and God is great and so I'm going to throw myself into this work and I'm going to try to have a big impact for God. Well, what happens when you do that? If that's all you do, what you end up doing is you end up striving for results. We've been trying to get Bono to come and speak at a ... why are you laughing? We've been trying to get Bono to ...It's amazing that... Oh, I don't know him.

Yeah. But we've been trying to get Bono to come and speak at a banquet for Man in the Mirror. And once I get on something, I always say I just go through the open door, but what I really mean is that if I find the door won't open, I get some C4 and put it on the hinges and blow the hinges. So finally, Brett Climber, our president, he said, "You know what? This feels like striving. Why don't we just back away and just begin to pray?"

And I said, "Oh great. I've been rebuked again." But that's what we've been doing. And I don't know if we'll ever have Bono come and speak or not, but the bottom line is that when you just throw yourself at something with human effort to do the best you can, you end up striving. You end up striving.

I've already taught you in a previous session that your work is ministry, so this can happen at your work too. You can end up striving. What happens when you do that? Well, first of all, you start to get a little cranky. You start to get a little irritable. When you're striving, people don't understand what you're trying to do for them. If you really understood how much God loved you, you would be more receptive! And then, after that doesn't work, burnout. Burnout. You get burned out. And how many men have I met in the last five years ... it seems like a recent phenomenon; I'm sure it's been going on forever, but just for me, it's the last four or five years. How many men have I met who have spent 10, 20, or more years in the church serving - should I say striving - in the church to do the work of God. They got exhausted, they got tired, they got burned out, and guess what? They're done. They're done. And they are not going back. Interesting. Interesting.

So that striving for Christ, but John 15 describes something very different. It's the way of joy. If you are in your ministry, in your personal ministry, or in ministry in the past that you stopped doing or ministry that you want to ... if you're not having joy, then we're about to give you the secret. It's the same thing that would help that poor woman in Ontario. This is the pathway to joy. John chapter 15 verse four.

Jesus says, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you." Now, frankly I can't stop using this Bible. This Bible was given to me in the year we started this Bible study by my wife and two children. So I have to keep using this Bible. This is NIV 1984. But the version that I'm reading most is ESV, and they render this word that comes out "remain" here in NIV as "abide." Abide. Abiding in Christ. And so I'm gonna do something a little unusual. I'm gonna read out of NIV, but I'm going to translate the word "remain" to "abide." So here's how I'm gonna read this. "Abide in me, and I will abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself." Just picture a limb that fell off a tree in your yard and you didn't pick it up for two weeks. What happened? It turned brown.

"No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must abide in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me." So that's the negative. Now, what's the positive? Verse five. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing." In other words, nothing of any significant value except to strive, strive, strive. He doesn't say to strive, strive, strive. He says abide, abide, abide. How many times has he said it already? Abide. Abide in me.

And then look over. Read these other verses when you get a chance, but look over at verse 11. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." In other words, full. "Complete" is the whole pleroma cluster of Greek words. "So that your joy may be complete," or "full." And then down at verse 16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you to go bear fruit, fruit that will last."

So this is the great joy that we can have: great joy when we abide in Christ and when we abide in Christ, then we will, out of the overflow of that, bear much fruit. This is abiding in Christ versus striving for Christ. In other words, before we go and do our ministry for Christ, before we go and do our work for God, there's something called our walk with God. Principle number one at Man in the Mirror - we teach this to everybody, everybody - principle number one at Man in the Mirror is that our work for God will always be a reflection of our walk with God. Let me say it again. Our work for God ... it's not a big idea, but let me say it again. Our work for God will always be a reflection of our walk with God. And if we're not abiding, then our walk is weak and we're gonna be striving to make God happy or avoid His wrath or somehow please Him because we're afraid of what He's going to do if we don't do the work rather than out of the overflow.

And so when we are abiding in Christ, what happens is that we get into this situation where we become full. We become full. Full of Christ, and then as a result of that, full of joy, and when we're in that position, we have margin, and when we're in that position, we have a spirit of gratitude. A spirit of gratitude for all that ... for our deep understanding ... I had an epiphany two weeks ago when I was not here. Whenever that was. I had this epiphany. I have a number of set prayers that I do, and one of them is I pray, "Lord, You are worthy to receive all worship, praise, glory, honor, majesty, power, dominion," and so forth and so on. About 15 to 20 things. And then I looked this up, and this was like 20 years ago. 20 years ago I had a different prayer, and that was that I would meditate on the attributes of God. You are great, good, almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omni benevolent, transcendent, imminent, alpha, omega, and all these different kinds of things. And I was doing that a couple weeks ago, and I realized that meditating on the attributes of God took me to a much higher state of worship, a much higher state of the sense of the presence of the Almighty, than my other prayer had been taking me for years.

And I said, "What just happened? What just happened?" And I realized that I had been meditating on my responses to God rather than on God. Did you get that? This was an epiphany. I'd been meditating on

my responses to God. Lord, because you're God, I worship you. You are worthy to receive worship and praise, glory, honor, majesty, dominion, authority, power, majesty, repentance, faith, love, adoration, affection ... these are all my responses to God. And they did lead me into worship but how much greater when I began to, instead of meditating on what I was doing for God, just meditating on God. And I realized that I'd been missing out on a much deeper level of what? Abiding. I'd been missing out on a much deeper level of the joy that Jesus promised. What does it say? "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. Abide in me, and you will bear much fruit."

He says some other things in that passage too, like, "This is my command, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must also."

So where does this desire to abide come from? Where does the power to abide come from? Well, it's Philippians 2:13. The other scripture on your scripture list, Philippians 2:13. "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." "For it is God ... "

[audible sound]

Speaker 2: Amber alert.

Patrick Morley: Amber alert. This is the Lord. "For it is God who works in you, both to will," in other words, give you the desire, give you the will, give you the desire, "and to do," in other words, the power. God is the one who works in us to give us the desire and the power to do that which is pleasing to Him, which is this abiding in Him. So the most important thing to remember today in this idea of finding your niche, and we're getting ready to put your hands to work here or affirm where your hands are already working. We're getting ready to do that. But these hands can either strive or they can abide.

All right. Now I need a volunteer. Actually, I need two volunteers. Let's make it three volunteers. Would you be my volunteer? All right. Let's see. And ... would you be my volunteer? And ... let's see ... would you be my volunteer? I need you men to come up here. I need you men to come up here. So which of you is the best sport? Come on over here just a sec. Which of you is willing to be the best sport, the go-along guy, go along, make a point.

Speaker 3: To take it all, huh?

Patrick Morley: To take it all. You're gonna be my good sport, all right? Here. What I want you to do is, here's a cup of refreshments. Stand right over here. And then I want you to take a cup and you to take a cup and kind of line up here with him. I really want you to be refreshed, and so why don't you take a sip of water there? Go ahead and take a sip. It's just water. That's good. Is it good? Is it refreshing?

Speaker 3: It is.

Patrick Morley: Good. We'll give you a little bit more then. And so why don't you take another sip of that water. Go ahead. Yeah. Is it good?

Speaker 3: It is.

Patrick Morley: It's good. Oh, good. Since you like it, I'm gonna give you a little bit more, and so go ahead and take another sip there. How's that? Still tasting pretty good. As long as it's still good, we'll still give you some more then. So there you go. Take a little sip of that. How's that? How are we doing here?

Speaker 3: I'm getting kind of full.

Patrick Morley: All right. So go ahead and take another sip. Go ahead and take another sip. All right. How is that? Is that pretty good? Take another sip. Keep going. Yeah, okay. So how are you doing over there, Willy?

Speaker 4: I'm doing good.

Patrick Morley: You're doing good. So your cup looks a little empty, though, right?

Speaker 4: Yes, a little bit.

Patrick Morley: Okay. I'm going to ask him to ... maybe he has all that he needs for himself. It looks like he might have a little left over to give away to somebody else, so I'm gonna here in a moment ask him to share with you, but what I want you to do is say, "No thanks. I think I'm good." All right. And you're gonna say, "But that's okay. Let me know if you change your mind." All right? So let's have a little bit more of this. Now what would be a logical thing for you to do at this point?

Speaker 3: Would you like some right now?

Speaker 4: No, I'm good.

Patrick Morley: Knowing that you have all that you need for yourself and it looks like a little bit extra, and knowing that there's a guy next to you that doesn't have enough, it makes sense that you might offer some of the overflow to him, but he's just turned you down. Now what do you say to him?

Speaker 3: Okay, that's all right.

Patrick Morley: That's all right. Let me know if you change your mind. Oh, boom, there's another guy down there, and his glass is empty. See, he's just a pagan. He's not ready for this yet. So you take two steps back, or two steps forward, either way, and so now let's go ahead and ... you're over here abiding. Ask him if he'd like some. All right. That's great. Now, that brings you a lot of joy, doesn't it? That brings you a lot of joy, doesn't it? Well, guess what? It brings him a lot of joy too, because he's over there, he's been running on empty. He's been thirsty for what you have because you've been abiding. He hasn't been abiding or hadn't been in a position to abide, so now you're free. Guess what? To go get some more. And guess what? It's kind of like the Dead Sea. You understand the Dead Sea does have freshwater flowing into it, but nothing flowing out. That's why it's eight times saltier than any other body of water, and basically nothing that lives can live in the Dead Sea, because it's not giving itself away. In other words, it's just receiving.

Thank these men for being such good sports.

And so the big idea today is this. Here's the Big Idea. What we just looked at is how you can minister out of the overflow of your relationship with Jesus. When I say the words "How to minister out of the overflow," I'm talking about how to minister out of the overflow of abiding in Christ, because you do get full. You do get full, and then you can bear much fruit. This is what the scriptures teach. And so the Big Idea for this today is, when I am filled to the overflow, is this true? I just can't wait to give it away. **When I'm filled with the overflow, I just can't wait to give it away.** This is so huge. This is so huge! And so it's a litmus test for us, because when we don't feel like we just can't wait to give it away, guess what? That means we don't have enough Jesus for ourselves! At that point, guess what? Don't give away what you don't have! That's what striving is! It's giving away that which you don't have, or trying to give away that which you don't have.

If you don't have enough Jesus for yourself, then don't do ministry at that point. At that point, turn and abide and fill yourself up in your own relationship with Jesus until you get to this place where you're filled to the overflow so that you now have enough Jesus for yourself and you feel like you have something that you can give away to other people.

Ironically, finding your personal ministry niche, which is the topic of the day, I'm saying if you don't feel like you want to serve others, don't. Because you're not ready. Instead, turn yourself to figure out how to be filled up to the overflow so that you will get to a place where you just can't wait to give it away. The joy of serving others is not a force march. The joy of serving others is the overflow of filling up in your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. How amazing is this?

Here's some suggestions that you can use to start or to reboot. I'm just gonna give you a few of these things. **Tithe your time.** You've heard about tithing today. How many of you have ever heard "tithe your time" before? Yeah, you haven't heard that before. Tithe your time. Is that a law? No. But it's an idea. It's a concept. If you work a 40-hour week, just think, maybe I can tithe four hours a week to some kind of an organized ministry, like my church. So that's one idea. I can dive in to each of these ideas deeper, but I think we'll skip that.

Next, **schedule something.** I put it in your notes: everything in Christianity evolves around an event. That's not exactly true, so I shouldn't have said that, but almost everything evolves around an event. Schedule something. I have learned over the years that ministry happens because I make an appointment. Ministry happens because I set a meeting. Ministry happens because we schedule an event, so almost everything evolves around events. So schedule something. A breakfast. A coffee. If you want to do ministry, that's how you do it. Or attend a scheduled meeting of a group in your church who's planning a mission or whatever it is.

And then the idea of **doing something every day that has potential to last forever.** Do something every day that has the potential to last forever. That might be simply introducing yourself to somebody at work that has a downcast face, that you don't know whether or not they have faith at all, but it doesn't look like they have enough of the overflow. Their cup isn't full in whatever sense. So try to do something every day. I actually ... for a long, long time, I think in the category of trying to do things every day that have the potential to last forever.

**Sharpen your ax.** If you get dull, and you can get dull in this, right? Story of a lumberjack crew and a young man who wanted to join the crew and so he came and he applied for the job. Foreman said, "Let me see what you can do." So he went out and he took his ax and he chopped out a tree. Bam! It went down and he said, "Okay, you're hired. Let's see what you can do." The first week, the results came out.

This guy was chewing up the forest. The second week, his numbers started to fall. By the end of the third week, the foreman called him in and said, "I'm sorry. We're gonna have to let you go."

He said, "Why? I'm working harder than I was the first week! How does that work?"

He said, "The numbers don't lie."

He said, "I don't understand. I've been working really, really hard."

And then the foreman said, "Let me ask you a question. Have you sharpened your ax?"

He said, "Well, no. As a matter of fact, I haven't." And so if you find that you're getting dull in ministry, sharpen your ax. How do you do that? You go back to the abide. You go back to the abide. Go back to the abide.

And then, **show up**. This is a show up picture. This is where I went when I went hiking. This is the top of Mt. LeConte, 6600 feet, in the Smokies. Look at that view! Isn't that awesome? Doesn't that bring joy to your heart? You don't have any idea what it's like to stand on clifftops of the top of Mt. LeConte from a picture like this, no matter how good it is. I have a video of it too and it's pretty good, but I was there and I can tell you, there's no way you can experience the joy of that place unless you are there. Show up. Just show up. Just show up.

On your tables are these reach 3 cards, and this is another very practical thing you can do in terms of ministry. In fact, let me ask all of you to take one of these cards. You can put the names of three men. You can put down women too, I suppose, or kids, but the idea, it was designed to be a men's ministry thing. The names of three men who are not known to be following Christ. And then there are some instructions on how you can engage them on the front of the card. I've been doing this for 20-ish years. Currently have five men on my reach three list, and a very practical way that you can mobilize and find your ministry.

Why do we do all this? Because when I am filled to the overflow, I can't wait to give it away. Let's pray.

Our dearest Father, Lord, as these men have learned or been learning their spiritual gifts or reaffirming their spiritual gifts, thinking about their personal ministries, where they might fit in, Lord, I pray, Lord, that you help each of us to be able to experience the fullness of Your joy by abiding in You, the abiding that leads us to the desire to bear much fruit, fruit that would last. Bless these men now, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, amen.

Hey, also I'll mention here. More copies of the spiritual gifts assessment tool are on the tables in case any of you wanted another copy. You might consider taking a copy. Children, spouse that may not have done this yet, something like that, as well as completing it yourself. Let's go ahead and break to the tables and we'll come back together at about, let's say, six, seven minutes before the hour. First-time visitors, if you would, first-timers, how many first time visitors do we have today? Raise your hands, first timers. How many visitors do we have that have not been with me yet at the visitors' table? I know that you haven't. Anybody else? Okay. Let's welcome these men. Anybody that's here who has not been with me at the visitors' table, I'd really like to meet you. Why don't you join me when we break here and



come to this card table at the front right-hand corner. Thanks. Break to the tables, and see you in a few minutes.

Father, thank You so much for these men here and also the men online and around the world. We just thank you for giving us Your Word, which gives us such a clear path to how we can experience this joy. Jesus, we love You and we pray, in Your name, and let's say it together. Everybody say amen.

Have a great weekend.