

The Christian Man

Overtime:

Identity, Part 2: Settling Who I Am & What My Life Is All About

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror, man's Bible study. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 17. We're going to wrap up the series The Christian Man this morning with our second overtime session. Before we do that, let's give a shout out to Leesville Men. These are eight men who have been meeting for the last four months using the video Bible study with us at the Leesville Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. Their leader is Lee Cooper. Thank you, Lee, for submitting this. They meet at the church on Thursdays at 7:30 in the evening. Lee writes, "The Leesville ..." Oh, Lee Cooper, the Leesville Baptist Church. The church is named after you, Lee. That's pretty cool. "The Leesville Men group seeks to cultivate openness in learning how God can help us grow daily." I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm and rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to Leesville Men. One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, guys. We're glad to have you with us.

People that are doing these new registrations, I'm offering either Brett and/or myself to do a video meeting with you. If you'd like to pursue that, send an email to patrickmorley@maninthemirror.org and we'll work that out. Identity part two, settling who I am and what my life is all about. We opened the series with that. Identity, though, is such an enormously big and difficult area. Who am I and why do I exist? It's all about getting a sense of who I am, what my life is about, what the meaning of life is, what my purpose in life is, getting some direction.

THE MAN IN ROOM 3330 (WHAT MEN WANT)

This morning, I want to talk a little bit about what men want. I want to begin by talking about the man in room 3330. Word had spread throughout the hospital about the man with the upbeat attitude, the 80-year-old upbeat attitude in room 330. One morning, after he had been infecting the hospital staff with his positive, buoyant attitude, a doctor showed up at his room and began looking at his chart, but the doctor was not one of Ken's doctors. Then, after he had looked over the chart, he said, "Do you have a minute where I could talk to you?" Ken said, "Well, sure. Come on in. What's on your mind?"

He said, "Well, I have been hearing about you around the hospital. I wanted to stop in and ask you: How is it that someone your age with all the difficulties that you're going through is able to be so upbeat and cheerful?" Ken said, "I'd be happy to tell you, but first, why don't you tell me how do you find enjoyment?" He said, "Well, to tell you the truth, I really don't have much enjoyment in my life." He said, "I bought a plane. I thought that would do it. It didn't. Now we have a boat. I thought that would make me have some enjoyment, but that doesn't seem to be working either." He said, "I have a big income, but, to tell you the truth, I don't really have anything in my life that gives me any enjoyment. In

fact, I have never really experienced any lasting satisfaction." Ken said, "Well, I know what you're going through. In my own life," he said, "the only thing that has ever helped me find any lasting peace and satisfaction is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

About that time, Maria, a Hispanic housekeeper about 50 years of age, walked into the room. She wrung out her mop and began working on the other side of the bed from where the doctor was standing. Ken had talked with Maria on many occasions. He called her and he said, "Maria, would you come here, please?" She looked up and her radiant smile brought sunshine into the whole room. Ken said to the doctor, "I want you to look into Maria's face and tell me if you see what she has because what she has is the thing that I'm talking about." The room fell silent. The doctor did look into Maria's face. Maria and Ken exchanged glances between themselves and the doctor. Ken was able to peer into the doctor's heart and he could see that, yes, the doctor knew what she had. She had the thing that he had been looking for all of his life. It was a spiritual and a poignant moment. Then Ken said, "Maria, let me ask you a question. Do you have the Lord in your life?" Then the impossible happened, and she actually beamed even more broadly. She said, "Oh, yes. I love my Jesus Christ," at which Ken said, "Thank you, Maria." Then she went back to her housekeeping chores.

Over the next 15 minutes, Ken told the doctor that years before he had felt exactly the same way, no lasting peace, only short bursts of satisfaction and no real sense of who he was or what his life was all about. Then he said, "One Monday morning, I cried out to God and asked him to forgive my sins and to give my life purpose and meaning. Blinded by tears, I had to pull over to the side of the road. That morning, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. All I ever asked was for him to give me peace and joy and he's answered that prayer. That's why you're in here right now this morning trying to figure out what's going on, but it's not my peace and joy. It's the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit because of Jesus Christ. In five more minutes, you'll be gone. Tomorrow, I'm going home. We'll probably never see each other again, but the one thing I would offer to you is this. Sometime today, go and find a quiet place, pour out your heart to Jesus Christ, and ask him to come into your life, put your faith in him, surrender your life to him. Ask him to forgive your sins. Settle it and then you will have what I have and what Maria has."

I'm an eyewitness to Ken's life. We had lunch every week for 32 years. Although he was 30 years my senior, we were best friends. What is the thing that was motivating the doctor to come into Ken's room? Well, we all, as men, now, we can start talking about what do you want. We can come up with a very long list. A few decades ago, when I first got started, I had a very long list, but I've whittled my list down to three things. I think these are the three essential things that all men want. All men want a cause, a companion, and a conviction. All men want a cause, something they can give their lives to, something that will make a difference. All men want a companion, all men want someone to share that with, that cause with. A man goes out to hunt his bear, but then he comes home and he wants to share that news with his wife. Then, the third thing is a conviction that will explain why the first two are so difficult, a belief system, a value system, a faith, if you will, a worldview, a conviction that helps describe why those things are so difficult.

Now, the first time we did this identity, we talked about what it is that is really holding men back from getting what they want. We talked about, and there's no reason why you would remember these, but we talked about there are four essential worldviews, secular, moral, religious, and then Christian. The reason that the thing that's keeping men from getting what they want, this cause, this companion, this conviction, in the way that would bring lasting satisfaction is that they are pursuing those things with a worldview that never had any possibility of satisfying those needs, the worldview of the doctor, a

worldview that if I can just get the right things, then I'll be able to find the satisfaction that I'm looking for, for example.

What is it that happened to Ken that had not yet happened to the doctor that made the difference? It's 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 17, our verse for the day. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has gone. The new has come." There's a very famous theologian, F. L. Cross, he talks about how in Christ seems to be the basic construction that Paul uses to talk about a redeemed life, a regenerated life, a life of salvation, different ways of saying that. This idea of being a new creation, the new creation is the regenerated life. If anyone is in Christ, then they are this regenerated person. It's not just that Jesus is a new song. Jesus is a whole new genre of music that had never been heard before and has never been heard since. In other words, Jesus actually came and added something to the creation that had never been there before. He added a way to move from the old way of Adam to the way of the new Adam, to the way of Jesus Christ.

What Ken was trying to express to this doctor is that the only lasting satisfaction that he could ever possibly have, the only identity that would ever give him a sense of lasting satisfaction would be to put off the old self, whether it's a moral worldview, a religious worldview, a secular worldview, and put on the new, the Christian worldview. If you were to cut Ken Moore, you would find that he bleeds Jesus. That's the Big Idea today for us with regard to settling who we are and what our life is about. It's to be in Christ. It's to allow the new creation. It's that the new would come and that the old would be gone, to let it go away so that we would be this infectious person that word would spread around us, that people will come to our room and want to know, "What is it, given all you've been through and all the difficulties you have, that you can be so positive and upbeat?" The Big Idea today is this: **If they cut me, I want to bleed Jesus.** Do you feel it? Do you sense it? If they cut me, I want to bleed Jesus.

Now, Ken was, by the way, not a big man in any way in the world's view. He was a paint salesman, but he lived this new creation life in such a way, there was so much Jesus in him like if you cut him, he'd bleed Jesus, but it was like he was just infectious. He was buoyant because of it. How can I be that infectious? What is it that men need? What do they want? They want a cause, a companion, and a conviction that explains why it's so hard to have a cause and a companion, but what keeps men from getting it? We've talked about those worldviews.

HOW CAN I BE THAT INFECTIOUS? WHAT MEN NEED

Then, this question: How can I be infectious? What do men need? We've talked about being in Christ and we've talked about being the new creation. What I'd like to do is I'd like to give you two very what I think are practical things. The first one is I want to tell you about roles, the roles of your identity, and then I want to talk to you about the attributes of your identity.

When I pray every day ... When I say every day, like a literature professor would say, almost every day, virtually every day, but I start every day like this, "Father, we come to meet and abide in you, our much loved creator, sustainer, and redeemer. We pray that you would meet with and abide with us, your much loved sons and daughters." That's the Father. "Jesus, we come to meet and abide with you, our much loved Savior, Lord, and Master. We pray that you would meet and abide with us, your much loved disciples, friends, and servants." The Father, Jesus. "Holy Spirit, we come to meet and abide with you, our much loved comforter, counselor, and power. We pray that you would meet and abide with us, your much loved temples, vessels, and charges." In that prayer, I have just summarized all of the roles, the Christian roles, that are precious to me. Now, you might take my list and add to it. You might subtract

from it. You might change some things around, but I think this is a pretty good representative list of the roles of the identity of a Christian man. Let me extract them from that little prayer and give them to you in a list.

My roles as a Christian man are, number one, that I'm his much loved son. Everything starts for me as being the much loved son of a Father. I have a son and I have observed in my son that the single most unique thing between my son and me is that he knows that I unconditionally love him, whereas he may not have, and he probably does, but he may not have, you might not have anyone else in your life that actually loves you unconditionally, I mean, like even your wife perhaps. Hopefully that's not the case. To experience the unconditional love of the Father towards me, I am his much loved son. I have been adopted by my Father in heaven. He loves me no matter what I do, no matter what I've done, no matter what I will do. He will always take me in. If I need another \$100, he will always figure out how to get me another \$100. Number one, my number one role is much loved son.

Number two, his much loved disciple. In other words, the great commission was make disciples. The single highest honor that a man can aspire to is to be a disciple of Jesus. I am his much loved disciple. Number three, I am his much loved friend. John 15 verse 15, "I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I've called you friends because everything the Father has told me, I've shared with you." That's a pretty incredible statement all by itself. The idea of being the friend of Jesus. Then, his much loved servant. He doesn't call me a servant, but that doesn't mean I'm not a servant. The greatest joy of my life is serving you. Actually, I mean like literally, not just figuratively, but literally serving you is my greatest joy. This is the single place where I find the greatest joy. You realize I don't just walk in here and start talking. I spend 20% of my life getting ready to come here. Did you know that? I spend 20% of my life getting ready to come here, 20% of my waking life getting ready to come here because I'm a servant.

Luke 17:10, "And after you've done everything that you were told to do, you should say, 'We are unworthy servants. We've only done our duty.' You've heard me say this before, the chief test of a servant is whether or not you're willing to be treated like one." Much loved son, much loved disciple, friend, servant, and then temple. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. I don't understand this, especially when the body isn't working like it's supposed to or the brain isn't working like it's supposed to, but the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It's not like God is out there. He is out there. He is transcendent, but he's imminent. He is within us. When I'm thinking about saying something sinful or looking at a woman longer than I should or whatever the issue is, I actually, because I pray this prayer every day, I'm actually aware that it's like your sin will find you out. You know, the Bible says that. Well, it's like he already knows that. You see? We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Then, the next role is his vessel. In other words, it's not just that he's in us, but that he wants to flow through us as well. It's the difference between a river and the Dead Sea. If you've ever been to the Dead Sea, I have, I floated on top of the Dead Sea. Why? Because everything flows into it, all the impurities get stuck there. That's what it is if we are not vessels. Then, charges. John 14:26 says, "And the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you." We're like his students. What's the opposite of a tutor? A pupil, I guess, whatever it is. That's our relationship to him. How can I be as infectious as that man in room 3330? It's to understand that my identity includes certain roles as part of this new creation, as part of being in Christ. The new, this is the new that has come. It's these roles.

Then, the second are the attributes. Now, the list of attributes. While the list of roles you might add like husband or steward or whatever or maybe take something away, the list of attributes is a little less flexible because it's given to us in Galatians chapter five verses 22 and 23. It's the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. Those are listed right there in that passage, Galatians five verses 22 and 23. Then, I think it would be appropriate to add James 4:6, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble," to add humility in there. From the beginning of the scripture to the end, humility is one of the most prized attributes of a person. When you think back to Ken, what was it that the doctor was looking for? He was looking for some lasting satisfaction. What was it that Ken said? He said the only lasting peace and joy that I've ever found, fruits of the Spirit, the attributes. It's not my peace and joy. It's the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit because of Jesus Christ.

These roles and these attributes, this is how we can be infectious. This is how, when we live out these roles, and it's not that we self-will, it's not that we gin up inside ourselves, it's not that we muster the courage to be loving, peaceful, gentle, but rather it's because of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ that we are like that. I had a guy say to me one time, say, "Hey, Pat. I'm really having a hard time. Would you please pray that I would have patience?" I said, "I don't think you want me to do that." Then, I said, "But you don't need me to do that. You already have the Holy Spirit inside of you and patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Instead of you trying to figure out what you need to do to be patient, why don't you just figure out how to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit?" It's a pretty big insight. How can we be that infectious? Well, if they cut me, let me bleed Jesus. Let me bleed out these roles. Let me bleed out these attributes. This is who I am. This is what my life is all about.

"CAN I GIVE YOU A HUG?" WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Then, finally, God wanted to know if he could give you a hug this morning. You know, what do you need to complete out your identity? I have observed over the years that, and I've probably been guilty of it too, I try not to be, but there is a tendency to tell you what you need to do, "If you will just do this," and then pleading with people to get involved and so forth. I have always, not always, but for a long time, I try to take the opposite approach. I try to tell you how great God is. My understanding would be that if you see a little larger glimpse of the God who is when you come here on Friday morning, if you appreciate a little bit more just how much he loves you and cares for you, then I don't need to tell you you need to do this, you need to do that. Instead, because of your growing sense of gratitude for the grace and understanding of what God has done for you and is doing for you, out of that gratitude that you'll want to do something to respond. It's like carrot and stick. I'm giving you the carrot, not the stick. This is the carrot.

My calling given to me by God with these specific words, I want you to take my message of love to a broken generation. I'm going to give you a hug this morning from the Lord. This is what I think God wants to say to you this morning, "I love you very much. I know your name. I knit you together in your mother's womb. I numbered all the days of your life before one of them came to pass. Your times are in my hands. I know every thought you have from afar. I know when you get up. I know when you sit down. I know every word you speak before it forms on the tip of your tongue. You are my new creation. You are the full expression of my creative genius. I was at my very best when I made you. Receive it. That's who you are. That's what your life is about. Do that and then when they cut you, you're going to bleed Jesus." At the end of our time today after you complete the discussion questions, there is on your handout a declaration of Christian manhood. It's made to really reflect the understanding a Christian guy would have about who he is and what his life is all about.

I'm going to read this now, but then, at the end of our time, we'll close with prayer. About two minutes till, we'll come up and we'll close with this prayer because the man who makes this declaration and allows the Holy Spirit to make this the reality of his life, if you cut this guy, yeah. My declaration of Christian manhood, "Heavenly Father, I'm tired of weak, unsatisfying faith. I'm tired of leading a divided life. I want to be so in Christ that others will want to catch what I have. As a new creation, I long to know your love for me as a son, disciple, friend, servant, temple, vessel, and charge of the Holy Spirit. I want to experience and infectiously exhibit all the fruit of your Spirit. Here today, I take my stand. I repent of all my worldly ways and put my faith in Christ alone. I hereby declare that from this day forward I will stop seeking the god or gods I want and start seeking the God who is.

Before a watching world, I pledge to lead a Bible-saturated life of devotion and study of God. My desire's to renew my mind, to be a man after God's own heart, to live out of the overflow of a vibrant relationship with Jesus and to each day fully surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ. I will make it my business to live in right relationship with God, in right relationship with all people, and to exercise my gifts of calling to fulfill the great commission and cultural mandate. My true identity is in Christ. I commit to live openly for the glory of God in all my ways. I openly confess that I can do none of this apart from your grace, Father, through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I pledge my allegiance this day to a Christ-centered manhood. If they cut me, I want to bleed Jesus." For those of you online, at the end of your discussion time, I want to encourage you to pray that out loud together. Then, that's what we will do here at the end of this session.