

LAUNCH: Strategies for Launching Your Career & Family

Men, Mentors and Mental Health

Edited Transcript

Featured Speaker: John Crossman, CEO of Crossman & Company

Patrick Morley:

Well, good morning, men. And welcome to Man in the Mirror Men's Bible Study, our new series called Launch. As we kick off this morning, we always start with a couple of shout-outs, and so we're going to go ahead and do those. And the first one goes to a group called **Building a Biblical Brotherhood**. This is a brand new group that's starting to meet in Phenix City, Alabama, which is near Fort Benning. I remember Phenix City from being at Fort Benning in jump school. They meet at His Gathering House Church, or they will be meeting, the first meeting is July 27th. And Ron Quinn is the leader, and Ron says that the purpose is to build a brotherhood to help men grow spiritually, helping bring the love and joy that can be found when walking as Christ laid out biblically, and really working with men who are discouraged, in particular. So this is going to be a great new Bible study.

And then the second shout-out this morning will go out to a Man in the Mirror Area Director, Craig Mayer, who is in the Peoria, Arizona area. And Craig is, he's so funny. If I could find this thing that he said. He said ... Well, first of all, his desire is to help men become what God, all that God has for them. And he says, "If he gets his honey-do list done, you can find me at the golf course. And before you play a round with me, I'll be sure to tell you that I have a very high handicap needs strokes." So anyway, that's Craig Mayer.

So I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to Craig and to the Bible study group. One, two, three, oo-rah. Welcome men, we are honored to have you as part of the group. So this is Launch, and what we've done is, these are strategies for building career and families. We've invited six men, who have very interesting stories to come and speak. And the way I would put it, if Jesus was alive today, and he was putting together a shortlist for the men that he would like to invite up to the mountain to interview to be his disciples, his 12 disciples, that certainly, these six guys would have all made the shortlist. These are some phenomenal people.

Our first speaker in this series this morning is John Crossman, and John's going to be speaking on **Men, Mentors, and Mental health**. And I want to tell you a little bit about John. So, John has a real passion for both diversity and college students, those are his two big areas of interest over the years. And so that vein,

Rick Scott appointed him to the Board of Trustees at Valencia. And then he's also very involved with politics. He's on a committee for Senator Marco Rubio.

John Crossman: That's enough, that's enough.

Patrick Morley: Buddy Dyer.

John Crossman: Yeah.

Patrick Morley: ... and some other things as well. Very involved in politics as well. John is the CEO of Crossman and Company, which manages leases, handles 28 million square feet of property throughout the Southeastern United States. And just an incredible organization that's really kind of mostly developed in the last 20 years, I would say, right. And he and his brother, Scott, own that together. John is married to Angie. His daughters are Claire and Ava. And I wonder if you would, and he's also extremely involved in the International Council of Shopping Centers, which is one of your main areas of interest for the past 24 years. So, I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to John Crossman.

John Crossman: Good morning. Hey, how are you doing? Thank you. All right. Well, good morning men. You guys doing okay? So I was thinking about my life and sort of the different things I've talked about, and one of the things that came to mind is that I heard the Ted Talk by Simon Sinek, where he did the Power of Why, right. Like why do you have your business? And a lot of people, when they have a business they think, "Well, the reason why is to make money." And Simon Sinek came in and said, "No, the money's a byproduct of that, it's the why."

And so when Pat was kindly talking about my background, I have all of these kind of different things I'm involved in, and so you might think, "Gosh, John, why do you have a company that runs shopping centers? And, why do you do all this stuff, political work? Why are you involved with colleges? Why is it that you give out full-sized Hershey bars on Halloween?" And we do do that, we're the most popular house in the neighborhood, right.

So why? And so when I think about that, it has to do with the concept of love thy neighbor, and that I really deeply believe in community, and the importance of being aware of who's around us, who's being marginalized, and who needs help. And so part of that is a legacy issue, and so these are some slides and pictures. That's my dad, and on the left side there in that front row, the man on the right is Congressman John Lewis. And if you guys know your history with Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech, there were five speakers that day, four passed away. And Congressman Lewis is the last one still alive. Next to him is Julian Bond, who was the President of NAACP and passed away in the last few years. And then you can see just looking down, that's my dad. And so my dad was really involved in some really cutting-edge issues back in the day. On the right is a picture of my dad from an article in the Sun Sentinel in 1970, and he was referred to then as a community bridge builder. And two years ago, Governor

Rick Scott named the Maitland Rail Bridge, which is about a mile from here, to the Reverend Kenneth C. Crossman Bridge. So, if you happen to go down there, you'll see that sign, that's my dad. And the symbolism there is the bridge for the bridge builder. So, in my world, that's the context of how I kind of view things, is like what can we, as men in our faith, do to help people and community connectivity, okay.

With that in mind, I had one scripture that just jumped out because it's just one of my favorite scriptures of all time. And it's the faith of the centurion. And if you guys know that story, the centurion is a military leader, and he sees Jesus. And he says to Jesus, "Can you ..." I'm paraphrasing, obviously. "But can you heal my servant?" And Jesus says, "Yes, let's go to the house," and the centurion's like, "Whoa, you don't need to come to my house, just say it. You're Jesus, right?" And so Jesus responds, and when Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." In other translations, they say he was astonished. And so when I think about my life, I think to myself, "Man, what is my faith saying to Jesus? Is he astonished by my faith? Is he amazed by my faith? Is he embarrassed by my faith?" Right, what is Jesus feeling about my faith?

So when I think about all the gifts and skills God's given me, what I like to think about is, "How can I make the greatest impact for Christ in my community? And what does that look like?" So with that, I've done a lot of lecturing. In fact, I have to leave here immediately after because I'm going to the University of Florida to give a lecture today. And so when I do college lectures, often they're about real estate, you would think, and shopping centers, things like that. But years ago, I was driving to UF to give a lecture, and I thought, "Man, lots of people talk to students about cap rates, or where's the economy going, things like that." What could I offer that would be different? And so I wrote a speech called the **Top-Five Ways to Get Fired, and the Top-Five Ways to Keep From Being Fired**. Because I was looking, all these students I'm talking to, their average age is 22, right. Well, 10 years from now, they're 32, they should be doing awesome. They should be changing the world, right. And some will and some won't, so what causes the downfall and what will keep them from that?

And so that's when I wrote this book [**Career Killers, Career Builders: The Book Every Millennial Needs to Read**] and so that's my book here. And by the way, I got five copies in the back, so please take them. And I always tell people, "My book's available on Amazon, you buy it, that's great. I appreciate that. If for some reason, you really want the book, you can't afford it, email me, and I'll send you a copy, okay." And that same is true if you think somebody would benefit from it.

So when I did this speech, it became the most popular lecture I did. This book, interesting enough, there's a website called Next Thing that ranks 1,700 career books, and my book is currently number 10. So it's sort of interesting that I kind of poked into that. So I want to tell you a quick story that's the story I always

start off with college students, where we talk about things and career killers. And I want to talk to you about my friend, James.

So years ago, my wife and I were church shopping, and we heard of this church where they had a really great pastor. We visited the church, heard the pastor. It was okay, it was good, but what amazed me was is they had a thing after church, and it was a worship service for parents and kids together, and I just thought that was really cool. And a lot of churches you go to, the children's ministry is like really half-hearted, they don't put a lot of emergency into it, it's not that good. Well, this children's ministry was like Sesame Street Live every Sunday. I'm not kidding you, it was just awesome. And the guy that ran it was James Raffenaud. And so you can see James there, he's interviewing like on the top, he's interviewing Jim Carey and Jenny McCarthy. And if you look up these videos, I'm telling you, James is like as funny and as sharp and strong as any celebrity you can think of. Young, guiding full-time Christian service in Orlando.

And in fact, I used to get asked to do MC work all the time, and after I saw him do MC work, I was like, "Man, I'm like the ranking amateur MC, and he is a professional MC." So I started telling different organizations, "Hey, use James and not me." And so an example of that is this is the Man in the Mirror breakfast several years ago, and I called James like, "Can you be the host of this?" And so Pat was onstage and James was onstage, and did a really nice job for us.

Well, James then had some a challenging period in his life. In his early 30s, which is very common, he was having some business trouble. He was having some marriage trouble, and he and I were talking a lot, trying to work on that. And when he was out of work, my nephew's a recruiter. And so I called my nephew and I said, "Hey, can you meet this guy? Can you help him?" Nephew met with him and they had a great meeting, really impressed. My nephew got him a job, okay. On the first day of the job, my nephew emailed me and said, "Uncle John, James didn't show up for work today." And we found his body the next day, and James shot himself. And that photo from Man in the Mirror, is the photo family used for the memorial service. And the anniversary of his death was just a few days ago. So the question becomes, what happened to James? What happened there?

And I could put that, like we all know, like about Anthony Bourdain, and Robin Williams, Kate Spade, Aaron Hernandez. Listen, I'm a diehard Dolphins fan, like every good American should be, and I love Florida State, and so he was a patriot Gator. But when I heard that he had committed suicide, my stomach just wrenched for that loss. You might say, "Well, he was a criminal." Yeah, and in my heart, so am I, right. So it's just sad. These are some people having challenges.

So why do we lose great talented people to suicide? In the church and outside of church? Well, I want to mention this. 9/11, on 9/11, they estimate between somewhere 100 and 200 people jumped out of those buildings. The top right

picture, that's Falling Man, which is a famous photo. And if you go to the 9/11 Memorial, they have a private area, where you can go and you can hear about the people that jumped out of those windows.

So I have a question for you. Did they commit suicide? They knowingly jumped out of a, they went to work one day, and after being at work a little bit, they knowingly jumped out of a building, and you'd think that's suicide. Well, it's not. The coroner's office refers to it as homicide, they were killed by terrorists, is how it's recorded. But then you think to yourself, "Well, how does it happen?"

Well, listen, if all of us went inside a building and would you jump out? No. You know what would make you jump out? Jet fueled fire would make you jump out. Right. So what I want you guys to think about a little bit is, if that's not suicide, what about somebody who has a jet fueled fire in their head? It's in here and they don't know how to get out. And then they make that decision, and what do we, as men, as Christian men, as business leaders, and community leaders, how do we help them learn the skillsets to get that out, so they don't have that issue? Does that make sense, okay. So I love the scripture about the fruits of the spirit, and one of the reasons why I like this scripture, I actually have it at my desk. Is that it's really challenging and it helps me to kind of think through what kind of man I want to be.

And recently, my stepfather passed away, and it was really stressful. A stressful situation, and my mom was in bad health, and dealing with all that. And I had a family member text me and they text me and said, "John, you are just so blessed with the gift of mercy. That's just so great. You're doing all this stuff." And I honestly wanted to punch them right in the throat when I got that because I was doing all this work, and they were doing nothing, and then somehow like I have the gift of mercy, ergo I should be doing something.

And I sent a nice text back. Trust me, but I did. But one of the things I did say back was like, "I'm not a merciful person. I'm a terrible person. It's my work to be like Christ that makes me a better person." And by the way, I find that'd be really hard. When I think about self-control, man, I wish I had no control of my tongue, I wish I could curse constantly. I would love it, but that's my natural bent, I have to work really hard on it, right. And so again, it's about adding skillsets and worldly pushing, pursuing things.

So I want to talk about three quick things about skillsets we can do to help avoid some of the issues we talked about. And the first one I'm talking about is mentorship. That's George Livingston, and George was a real mentor to me in the real estate business. Always helping, good guy, passed away a couple of years ago. But when I think about mentorship, he was a great example of that. And when we talk to people, we talk to men, and we talk about the importance of mentors. We quickly, everybody says, "Yes, you should have mentors and that's a good thing."

Well, there's one aspect I just want to challenge you guys to think about and that's this. Let's forget about the word mentorship for a second. Let's think about the word charity. What is charity? Charity is giving and expecting nothing in return, right. We don't go work at a soup kitchen and say, "Here's where my watch?" We don't, we just give, okay. Charity tends to be in a crisis situation. It tends to be short-term, right. And it's one-sided. So if a woman's being beat up by her husband and she throws her kids in the car, and she drives out, and she's got no money, whatever, man, that's a crisis situation, okay.

Now what is relationship? Relationship is a healthy giving and receiving. The yin and the yang, like the art of a great conversation is, "How are you?" Look at me. "How are you?" Look at me. Like if you have any money in your life that they just talk about themselves and never ask you about you? Right, and by the way, it might be you doing that, so keep that in mind, all right.

I have a friend that's one of my best friends to call for wisdom, and he's fantastic, and there are multiples I call him and I say, "Hey, how are you," and I shut up because I'm so tempted to just always, because he's so good at that, right. So when we're in relationship with people, it's giving and receiving. It's not just ..., it's ups and downs. It's both things. And relationships are forever.

Now if we're encouraging people to have mentor relationships, are we're trying to get men to have mentor relationships or mentor charity cases? I want you to think about that. If somebody is seeking a mentor relationship, it'll last forever. If they're seeking charity, either you're the giver or the receiver, it's not going to go well. Danny Wuerffel, a famous Gator endorsed my book, talks about how you help people get out of homeless issues like that. If you think about yourself here and then here, it's bad for them, and it's bad for you. But when we look at people in crisis and they need help, and we think that they have something to offer, and we kind of try to stay in balance, that's healthy for both sides, okay.

That's not saying we don't do charity, we do do charity, but when we think about mentorship, it's both sides. So somebody would say, "Well, gosh John. I'm a new Christian and Pat Morley's mentoring me, and he ... What possibly could I give to Pat?" Well, you know what you can do is encourage him, you can send him a note, you could buy him a book, he could review it. I mean, forget Pat, anybody here that has a business like support their business, be a fan, offer to cut their grass. But anytime someone's giving to you to have a thought process of how am I acknowledging that and giving back, right. And I think that's just a healthier way to build on that relationship.

The second thing I want to mention is brothers and sisters. When I think about relationships, I kind of break them into three categories. One is acquaintances, right. We just meet somebody and we know their name. The second one is friends, and I think a good definition of friends is encouragement. Friends tend to encourage one another. And the third phase is brothers and sisters. That's my actual brother, by the way. And if you ever meet him, just remember, I'm mom's favorite, okay.

So but when we think about brothers and sisters, the word that really defines it in my mind is exhortation. That when we have people in our lives that are truly a brother, they tell us hard things in love. Okay. So somebody that's your brother is going to say things like, "You have broccoli in your teeth," all right. Or, "Your zipper is down." Or, "You are verbally abusive to your wife and it's wrong. And it's got to stop. And I go with you to the counseling center, but it's got to stop, okay."

Now what I want to tell you about this though, is it's simple that we could all say, "Oh, yeah. Absolutely. That's what I want, yeah. I want that." Until someone looks you in the face and says, "Gosh, you're really terrible at that." And then it doesn't really go that well. We like to say, "Iron sharpens iron." I want you to visualize iron sharpening iron. Is that a delicate, soft, easy? Or, does that sound like a violent, painful process?

Two things with this. When somebody gives you criticism, train yourself to respond this way, "Thank you. Thank you." Thank you doesn't mean you agree with what they said, what it means is, you're honoring the fact that they're telling you their truth, right. They may be wrong, but when we thank them, we honor them and cultivate that relationship, okay.

The second part, if you want to give some truth to somebody, I always like to say, "Would you like my advice? Would you like my feedback?" And if they say, "Yes," then I step into it. Sometimes people are not ready for message. I know many times in my life I've heard a message, it took me years later to figure that out. So they got to be in the path and place to do that, where we got to dive in.

The last one is professional counseling, and so I want to take just a few quick stories about this. My dad was a pastor, a civil rights leader. My dad did counseling. And when I would see people go to my dad for counseling, I just thought they were idiots, right. Like, "Why are you going to my dad? What possibly could my dad tell you? Just figure it out," was what I thought.

So in 2004, I had a very hard year. You guys remember the hurricanes and how bad that was. My house got damaged, we had to move out. During those hurricanes, my dad died, and so we had that. And during that time, I injured my back, I had to be hospitalized. And after that, my youngest daughter almost died, and I had to be in an ambulance with her. She was two weeks old. It was terrible, right. She's okay now. She's 14, she's great, saw her this morning.

So I was going through all that. I was enraged. I would be in the shower. I remember being in the shower and just washing my hair and being like, "Oh, my gosh," just so angry. And my wife said to me, "You should go see a professional counselor." And I was like, "Why would I need that?" She's like, "Well, you're angry all the time." I'm like, "Well, yeah. My dad's dead, my house is screwed up, my kid almost died, my back hurts. I'm pissed off," right. By the way, my business was going fantastic. I was having the best ever, but I was real angry.

So my wife was like, she encouraged me, encouraged me, "Go to a counselor." So I went to a counselor and here's what's amazing to me. The counseling absolutely helped me being a dad. It absolutely helped me with my marriage. But it really helped my business. I can't express that enough. I was really struggling, thinking about quitting my job, and my visual of quitting my job was I'm going to quit and I'm going to drive over a bridge that connects to my old company, and throw a torch out the window that explodes. I'm going to give double-birds, and I'm going to just drive ... That's what I was thinking out, that's what I was going to do. Self-control, right. Self-control.

So I saw the counselor and here's the deal. I had real issues with my company, but I had major issues personally, and these because they weren't addressed, were amplifying this. It's not that there weren't issues, it's that they were exploding them. So when I got these issues down, I was then able to figure out how to resign properly. I didn't resign for 18 months, but let me tell you something. When I did, they threw me two parties, they wrote a poem about me. I'm not kidding you. I have it in my office. And they forwarded my emails and voice mails for three weeks, which is unheard of in our business. And I still have a lot of great relationships, right. It was still right to leave because it was the right season. At the same time, I needed to do it the right way.

In 2013, I was really got back into running. I ran track in college and I got back to running. Was doing a lot of distance running, and I got good at it. And I did a half-marathon, and I ran my best time. When I crossed the finish line, I just didn't feel right, and I saw an ambulance. And I thought about walking to the ambulance, but I just didn't know, so I didn't. So the next day, I went to work. The next day I went to work, had one meeting, and my calendar was open. I'm just going to my doctor's office and I don't know.

So I went to my doctor's office, and when I went to my doctor's office, the nurse walking me back looked at me and she goes, "I think you're suffering from depression." And I was like, "What? Like I'm the happiest guy I know. What are you talking about?" I got in there and I got diagnosed with clinical depression. Now let me just tell you something. I have had all kinds of medical issues. I would not want, I would take any level of broken bones, or anything you could possibly think of pain-wise, and not go through clinical depression again.

When you think about somebody suffering from clinical depression, and they kill themselves, pause before you judge that. Without having faith, without having people around me who were able to pour into me and give me wisdom. The fact that I don't drink. I mean, if I was somebody that was a heavy drinker, I think I'd be dead, okay. It's awful and hard to comprehend if you've not experienced it.

For one year, I was on Zoloft and Klonopin, and when I first started on those meds, I was embarrassed. I didn't want to tell Christian men because I thought Christian men would say to me, "You're a loser, like you don't have any faith." And as I started to tell a handful of men and I said this is what's going on. Do you know what they said to me? "Yeah. Me, too. I've been taking that for a long

time." It happened over and over again. I encourage you, men, to get an annual physical every year, see your doctor. Sometimes issues we have are medical-related and that we have the wisdom of doctors. We live in a great age, let's get that wisdom.

Last thing with this as I wrap up, I want you guys to think about is, we tend to, in our Christianese world, have a view of like we need to have all these young men go to college, and get a job, and get married, and tithe, and vote, and we check all these boxes. And those are all nice things, but when that man wakes up and he's 31, and he's like, "I hate my life. I hate my job. I am totally unfulfilled," right. Where does that man go? And then he develops an addiction, to deal with that, where does he go?

So when the resources for these people, sometimes it's not pastors, sometimes it's counselors. Sometimes it's recovery groups, and it may not look like we totally think it's going to look like, but there are phenomenal, wonderful resources out there. And I just encourage you to deal with your issues, get some light, get the right resources, and push it. And don't be afraid to then share that story with other people.

I got my card in the back if anybody wants to email me, they can. And I've asked Man in the Mirror to send you guys an article I did on how marriage counseling helped me be a better dad, where I talk about these things some more.

Patrick Morley: Thank you so much, John. So I just, we're going to have some Q&A, but let me respond in a way that expresses our appreciation to you. First of all, it's very infrequent that you see such stunning and staggering personal vulnerability, would you not agree? So John, we want to thank you for that. Your authenticity is amazing. Also, truthful. That was something that came to mind. How does Jesus see my faith? Oops. Does my faith amaze Jesus? Wow. Jet fuel fire in your head, that helps, that helps. And by the way, now I know how to deal with the anger that I have, I'm going to go see a counselor, and get that worked out.

Yeah, the iron sharpens iron sounds harsh and violent, and now I know why I don't like some of these guys here in the room. And then, John, would you like my advice? Just kidding. No, the other one, thank you.

John Crossman: My pleasure.

Patrick Morley: Thank you.

Brett Clemmer: Well, guys, we're going to take a few minutes for some discussion time at the tables, I just want to tell you quick things. First of all, for those of you that are here for the very first time, I'm Brett Clemmer. Pat's the main teacher, but I help him out sometimes and get to teach here every month or so. So it's great to do that and then together, we run the Man in the Mirror Ministry.

And we're so grateful for John. Like John said, he's been a friend for a long, long time to the ministry. And a personal friend to Pat, and becoming a personal friend to me. So thank you so much, John, again.

I want to let you know, one of the things that John talked about so much was this idea of mentorship. And so at the end of this series, we are going to have an opportunity for guys that want to, to sign-up and join a 10-week mentoring experience that we're going to have here. So if you're here and you're thinking, "Man, I wish I had someone to talk to, especially talk to about things of faith with," we're going to have that opportunity for you to sign-up and get with a guy one-on-one for about 10 weeks. We have a little, the Christian Man Coaching Guide, that we're going to go through. And if you're sitting here thinking, "Man, I would love to sit with a guy for 10 weeks and have that give-and-take, that relationship, and sort of be the mentor in that relationship," please talk to the table leader at your table because we're going to have a little workshop at the end of the month for guys that want to do that. So that we can make sure that everybody's on the same page and show you the material that we're going to use. So either way, we'd love to do that with you.

So we're going to break to the tables now. I'm going to say a quick prayer for us. We're going to break to the tables, and then ... Oh, yeah. Actually, next week, thank you, Pat. So here's all the ways to connect to John. Basically, just go online and Google John Crossman, he's everywhere. And then next week, we're going to have Chris Mikkelson in, he's going to talk about the idea of overcoming your past to fulfill your calling, so you're never disqualified, and Chris is going to talk about what God's done in his life with that.

So let me pray for us and then we'll break to the tables. Guys, have a great weekend. Father, thank you so much for John, for this important message. Lord, to overcome all the different addictions that we might have, whether we label them that way or not, father Lord, that the awareness that you would build in our hearts for men that have that jet fuel fire in their head and in their heart, and they need someone to come alongside of them and help them to deal with that. Father, make us a light to the men around us, and a friend, and a brother, and in true relationship. Bless us all, Lord, this day, this weekend, until we gather again next week. We lift this up to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks guys.