

# LAUNCH: Strategies for Launching Your Career & Family

## Abiding in the Father's Presence

Edited Transcript

Featured Speaker: Ed Kobel

Patrick Morley:

Good morning men. And welcome to Man in the Mirror, a men's Bible study. We traditionally start with a couple of shout-outs, and so, we'll go ahead and do that today. And the first is to the MOFIA, Men of Faith in Action, eight to 12 men who meet with us on Saturday mornings at 7:30 at Faith Pres in Morgantown, North Carolina. They started years ago with the study of the book, The Man in the Mirror, and now they've been with us since then. And led by Bill Grady, Keith Austin, and Bill Cooke in Morgantown.

And so, the second shout out that we're going to give ... Well, let's ... I tell you what. I can't figure out the right way to do this, but let's go ahead and give the MOFIA a shout out because I'm afraid if I don't, things could happen. So, let's give a very warm, rousing welcome to the MOFIA. One, two, three, hurrah! So, welcome men.

And then the second shout out today goes to Ivan Garcia, Area Director in Illinois, Round Lake area. And so, Ivan is ... This is up in the ... Wow. He's in the Greater Chicago Area, I think. Is that where Round Lake is? Somebody know? Anybody know? Yeah, so in the Chicago area. And Ivan is a deeply spiritual man, a man of God, a man who walks very closely with his Lord and is helping churches up in the Round Lake area disciple men more effectively. And so, let's give a warm shout out to Ivan as well. One, two, three, hurrah! So, Ivan, thank you for your service. MOFIA, we want to tell you how grateful we are that you're part of our Bible study.

And so, this morning, we are continuing in launch our six week series where we are inviting people who have extremely interesting stories to tell about how God is impacting their lives, and today, we're happy to bring back somebody who was with us earlier in the year, and that is Ed Kobel, the president of the DeBartolo Development Corporation.

So, under Ed's leadership over the last few years in this economic cycle, the DeBartolo Development Corporation has done about five billion dollars of development projects from here to Hawaii and up to even Montana, in Kalispell, Montana. One of the more recent ones.

So, Ed is like the fizz in a can of Coke. Ed is just effervescent. He brings an enthusiasm that is extremely contagious, and once you're around him you find your own desire to walk with God elevated. So, Ed is going to be speaking to us this morning from his own story.

I love Ed because he is a man who does love God with his whole heart, and that's in good times and that's in bad times. Maybe he'll say more about that. He's an extremely focused person, and so, I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm Man in the Mirror welcome to our speaker this morning, Ed Kobel.

Ed Kobel:

Thanks, Pat. Thanks, Pat. Great to be back with you guys again. He said I have a story, I don't know about that, but I did bring ... I dug up a story about Brett, our fearless leader, and Pat.

So, when Brett was seven, he was ... It was Sunday morning. He was in church. And he was leaving, and he was in the foyer, and he was looking at a wall as he was exiting the church. And little Bret was looking at the wall, and it had a list of names, and it had folded American flags. And he was mesmerized by it, and the pastor was walking out, said, "Bret, what are you looking at?" And he said, "Pastor, I don't understand. What is this?"

And the pastor said to little Brett, "Brett, those are folks that died in the service." And little Brett looks somberly up at the pastor and he said, "Which one? The 9:00 or the 10:30?" So, hopefully it won't be that way for y'all this morning.

But Pat, there's a story about Pat when he was little. He was seven also when this happened. So, Pat, you know, he was a little bit of a braggart when he was little. He's a pretty humble man now, but when he was little in the schoolyard he was bragging to some of his buddies about making money and doing things. And this little buddy of Pat's said, "Hey, my dad, when he writes a few words on a piece of paper, he gets paid \$50 for a poem that he wrote."

Pat's next little buddy said, "That's nothing! My dad writes a few words down and he gets paid 100 bucks." Not to be outdone, Pat said, "Hey, my dad writes a few words down, calls it a sermon. It takes eight people to collect all the money."

But anyway. We're talking a little bit about ... Kind of carrying on what we did last time, we talked about abiding. So, to refresh your memory, and I got some of my co-teachers here today. They'll come up here in a little bit. But what we want to try to challenge you with is kind of like Amazon. You know, Amazon is a disrupter. Pat's gracious comments, you know, the DeBartolo family where I work created the regional mall and did 21 of them, a ton of them here in Orlando.

You know, that's great, but you know, what happened is Amazon has disrupted the mall business, it's disrupted the shopping center business. And so, we want to disrupt your life this morning, hopefully in a good way. Obviously, praying to receive Jesus Christ, having your salvation, most important. And what we would challenge you with next, we call it abiding, hearing from the Father.

And so, what that looks like, and how it started was, Dr. Dobson, many of you are familiar with that name, was concerned many years ago that men in the marketplace, like this group, were going to lead the evangelical revolution in America. It wasn't going to come from the pulpit, but it was going to come from the marketplace. Men and women like y'all.

And so, he was concerned about it because he wasn't seeing the connectivity with men and women in the marketplace hearing from God. So, he hired a guy named George Barna, a sociologist, researcher, statistician, a cool, cool cat, to do some research. He found that less than 1% of those ... You and I that would call ourselves evangelical Christians in America are actually abiding.

So, here's what abiding is. Is a daily quiet time with the Lord, it's journaling. You know, if the Lord says something to you or me, we should write it down. That's pretty important. If the Creator of the universe speaks to us, it's probably important enough to write down, right? And then that we are hearing from Him and bearing fruit. Less than 1% of us were doing that after they studied, I think, almost 5,000 people and kind of came up with that.

And so, the result of that was, How do we get men and women in the marketplace to connect and to hear from God? And so, that's the passion that you're going to hear from us this morning, is to try to get you guys connected to doing that. And so, part of what we found in my own testimony is, I had been a Christian before I learned this abiding, how to hear from God, for 22 years. And I had tried adult Bible study, and I knew I was saved. I had basic apologetics, had kind of all of that figured out.

But I didn't have any of the cool, supernatural stuff in the Bible. Nothing was going on in my life. In fact, I was at a point that I would just say, "I'm going to go to church, and whatever the pastor says, I'm not really getting it reading my Bible." So I stopped reading my Bible, and I just said, "I'll try to listen to what the pastor says, obey that, and just walk this out." And it was a disaster. It was a fruitless life.

And then I had the privilege of being mentored and taught how to hear from God. But what had to happen is ... Would you give me that next slide? They had to kind of unravel some things for me, and for some of the guys, there were five of us, that went through this first class, and it was a Beta, to see if they could get some knuckleheads in business to try to hear from God. So, it was kind of an experimental thing, and I volunteered as a guinea pig.

So, we started out with John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy." So, you guys read that verse a zillion times. So, Satan is out there and he wants to come, steal, kill and destroy, and mess up your life. And these are words that Jesus spoke, "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." When we go and study this word, "Abundantly," it's not the stuff, right? It's not more stuff. It's not get-rich-quick. It's none of that. It's an abundance of peace, love, joy, and hope. Peace, love, joy, and hope, no matter what your circumstances are.

So, are you struggling financially? Are you struggling with a health issue? Are you struggling in a relationship? We, as followers of Jesus, can live in the power of this. And I didn't understand that at the time, so that took some time for me to get to that point where I believed that was true for me, and that's the cool part about abiding as ...

So, what we would do as steps is we would write that verse out ... And here's the cool part that I wasn't comfortable with when I was learning this is, I would sort of approach my prayer life in a pious way, and "Oh, yes, Lord. That sounds great." But in my heart of hearts, I'm like, I'm not sure that's true for me.

And so, what I learned was if I write that out and I say, "You know, Father? I'm not sure that that abundance, that peace, love, joy, and hope, is really for me. I'd like to say that it is, but I don't know if I can ... I don't feel it." And an amazing thing happens. When I do that, the Father takes me by the shoulder, He puts His arm around me, and He starts to reveal through progressive revelation what that scripture means directly for me.

And that's what's so addictive about the abundant life, about hearing from God, is that He's going to make it personal to your circumstances and your life where you are exactly today. Very powerful. And that's why we say that, when you start to do that, that's when you enter into the supernatural. Super, super cool stuff.

Let me have the next slide. This is the next part of sort of rewiring and disrupting my spiritual life that I had to get through. John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for sheep." So, I knew, and I could say the word Sunday at church, Jesus is the good shepherd and he's for me. But at 22 years, you know, I had a lot of issues. We had adopted two girls. They had some challenges in their life, and it didn't seem, at that point in time, like that was good, right?

We had prayed to God to adopt. We got the adoption, and it was a little rocky. And so, we were struggling with that, so we had to go back to the Father and say, "Hey, are you really in my corner, Father?" And of course, again, He comes up, takes me by the shoulder, walks me, and starts to show me through progressive revelation, through things that I can understand. Not big, fat, spiritual things, but just like this table, He was showing me things in this world and pulling together the pieces to give me clarity on it.

And next slide. John 15:1-5, this is so powerful. So, the vine is God the Father. We have ... The vine-dresser is Jesus. Every branch that does not bear fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And so, we're the branches. And the cool part about abiding is this, is that, if you were outside in the parking lot, you ran into Pat Morley, and he led you to Christ, and you walked in here. You don't have to have any spiritual maturity for this to be processed in your life.

And so, you literally ... Being a branch. If you think about what does a branch do? A branch simply stays connected, right? And so, all we have to do is ... For me, I'm a morning person. I was in the military, that stuck with me after I got out of the military. I get up early and I spend time with the Father, with my Bible, with my journal, and I'm processing, I'm looking at a piece of scripture, one or two verses, and I'll look something up that's sort of relative to the circumstances of my life. And I'll write them out, and then I'll start to ask questions and begin to process with the Father speaking to me, and then literally showing me through my day, through progressive revelation, what He wants to teach me.

And it's amazingly powerful. It was disrupt your life in a positive way and lead you into a deeper, deeper relationship ... Yeah, next slide. Thanks. With the Father. Look at the last part of this verse. It says, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." And part of my learning this, I had a lot of times in my life where I was sort of struggling. I felt like the hamster on the wheel, whether it was a relationship with my life, a relationship with my kids, or at work, and I'm sure there's a few of you here today that feel like that. You're sort of stuck on this wheel.

And what I found was, as I get connected to the Father and I enter into that supernatural ... And I'm going to tell you this, entering in the supernatural, and this is probably freaking out a little bit here, but what happened ... It's a little uncomfortable because there'll be a crisis of belief that you'll run into. And what I mean by that is, you're going to hear from the Father and He's going to ask you to do things.

They're going to be counter-cultural and counterintuitive, and they're going to make you feel uncomfortable. This is where the disruption comes in. And your first inclination is going to be, "No. I'm not going to do that." And it might be something simple, right? It might be when you leave here and you go get a bagel at Einstein's out front here, and there's a homeless person there, and he says, "Hey, Cole, buy that fella breakfast." And we might have that struggle where, "Well, what if he doesn't want it?" Or, "What if he rejects me there?" What if? What if? What if? Right?

And so, He's going to start with little things, and as you begin to honor that, entering into that supernatural, He's going to give you bigger and bigger things that impact your marriage, impact your relationships, impact your business in a huge, huge way.

We have one friend that we taught this. He ended up putting together a company, sold for 100 million dollars, walked away with \$10 million, and he was abiding ... He's one of our rock star abiders. And he was sitting on a plane after he sold that company. He was sitting on a JetBlue flight from New York to Fort Lauderdale, where he lives. And he said, "Father, what's next?" And in just a second, the Father downloaded his next business plan. So he wrote it out on a two hour flight from New York to Florida, and he's well on his way, and I think it's a billion dollar business.

My point is that this applies to everything, right? And as you begin to live this out and enter into the supernatural, what's going to happen is you're going to have an evangelism explosion because people are going to come up to you and say, "Cole, there's something different about you. What is it?" And Cole's going to be able to say, "Hey, you know, I started this thing, abiding, hearing from God, entering into the supernatural, which freaks people out." And you're going to go on this crazy, crazy journey. Next slide.

And so, this is a key one. So, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." Here's how this would work. I would write this verse out ... In my journal. And I'd ponder it. And so, if you think about it, "I shall not ..." That's pretty powerful, right? And you guys have all read that. That's not a surprise verse to you.

But the difference is, do you believe that's true for you? Right? So, as we write that out in our journal, and we begin to process that, what happens is ... "I shall not want." So, let's think about it.

So, right now, for example, I just got the word I have cancer. And so, I went back to this verse, got my journal, wrote it out. I said, "I shall not want." Okay, so, I didn't particularly want cancer. Just had my second chemo treatment this Monday, and you know, I got a long road of that, and then surgery and all the stuff that goes with it.

And so, I had to come back to the Father even though I felt, before getting that message, I had mastered this verse, but I had to come back and say, "Wow. Okay. Lets go on this journey again, Father. Let's enter into the supernatural, and let's see where we go on this journey."

And we've had lots of supernatural things. We're a little iffy if I was even to make it here today because they said, "Hey, with the chemo, you're going to be tired. Your hair is going to fall out. You're not going anywhere. You're going to be pooping your pants and throwing up, and so, don't plan anything." And we just ... My prayer warriors here said, "Hey, let's see what happens." You know? And so, I'm doing pretty good today. Thank you. If I run to the restroom, you'll know why.

So, you can kind of see how you begin to process this. And so, what I'm saying about this verse, you might wrestle with this verse, right? And different elements, right? Statistically, more than half you guys in here have a problem

with pornography. Might go to this verse, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Father I have a need. I've got this sexual need and I'm engaging in pornography. I know that's not right. How do I disrupt that, right?

We disrupt it through this fellowship with the Father, through the Holy Spirit, where we're sitting there and abiding, and we're asking Him for, "Father, show me how to disrupt this pattern in my life. How do I break this apart?" And this applies for anything. It could be financial, it could be cheating on your taxes, it could be anything. We're faced with all sorts of things. How do I walk through and not want? And how do I rely on Him for the things that I desire and I need?

As you begin to write this out and go to the Father with those questions, right? That's the difference. I was approaching my prayer life in sort of that pious thing, and not challenging the Father. But as I go to Him and I challenge Him with, hey, I didn't want cancer, but Father, I'd like to have a healthy body. Can you show me how to navigate this cancer? Boom. He's giving us progressive revelation. We're not there yet. And we just see all sorts of cool supernatural things happening in the therapy, with the doctors, and the whole thing.

Anyway. Next slide, thanks. Here's ... You guys know that Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar story. I'm going to wrap it up here real quick. But you know, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were selected ... You know that story. But we know part of the story that the king, King Nebuchadnezzar ... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow down to the golden tower.

And you know, what I wanted to mention to you guys is there's a couple different levels of faith, and when you begin abiding and you begin hearing from God, it's going to take you to the next level. Let me show you what I mean by that.

So, you know the story, the king loved these guys, right? Because they lived in the court with the king. They ate at the king's table. You remember that. And so, the king actually gives them another chance. He goes, "Hey, you know, we're going to give you another chance to bow down, or you're going to go in the fire." And they said, "King, we're not going to bow down. We're not going to bow down. And we have a God."

Watch this. They said, "We have a God who is able to deliver us," but then they went on and said, "But even if He does not, we will not bow down. We're still going to praise and worship Him." And so, part of the disruption we want to do in your life this morning is, do you have that faith? Right? We all know here, sitting around our table, "Hey, God is able. God is able to do a miracle in my bladder with this cancer thing." God is able to do a miracle in your financial need. God is able to do a miracle in your relationship need. We know that.

So, knowing that He is able is our beginning faith. The next level of intermediate faith is, is He willing? Right? Is He willing to do a healing for my bladder cancer?

Is He willing to do a healing for your financial need? Is He willing to do a healing in that need of a relationship fix?

Then the next level is, the higher level is, "Even if." So, even if I'm not healed from this cancer, will my faith go on? Will I praise and worship Him? So, as we begin to abide, we get to this next level of faith.

One of the things I want to share with you is that that kind of commitment lasts longer, that kind of even if commitment lasts longer when we're in community. And that's what Man in the Mirror is all about, right? It's about this kind of community. It's about the table talk we're going to do. It's about mentoring, it's about getting into a small group. It's men walking through this together, being transparent.

And Man in the Mirror is fantastic because they have lots of on-ramps to get into community. So, community builds that commitment and helps you to walk that faith journey out.