

The Christian Man

Growth:

3 Keys to Become a More Kingdom-Minded Man

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror men's Bible study. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter six, verse one. So we are in this series on *The Christian Man*. Hey, I've been married, this makes me sound old, but I've been married for 46 years, and I do love her more today than the day we got married. However, so, we have several pairs of scissors in our house. And every family has scissors, and you use them for all kinds of different things, right?

I am the kind of person who has a place for everything, and the thing for every ... You know, whatever. And my wife, however, is not like that at all. And so whenever I need scissors, even though we have several pairs, there is no better than a one in four chance that I will be able to find those scissors in any place I'm familiar with.

And so, most of the time, I just suck it up, and ask her as sweetly as I can, "Could you help me find some scissors?" And then every now and then it just, the other pressures are just, have mounted up, and I say something I shouldn't say. And so, I had the most brilliant idea the other day.

I said, "Patsy, this can't go on after 46 years. Would you buy me my own pair of scissors that you're not allowed to touch? And then I can put them in my own place, and then whenever I need scissors, I would know exactly where they are and I could get them." So these are my scissors, these are my scissors. This is ... Problem solved. Problem solved. Right? Okay. So it is ... What's that?

And so, I'm going to give you a similar solution to a similar problem, or a different kind of problem, but with similar implications this morning. Before we do that, we have a couple of shout outs. The first one goes to Men of CalvaryMac. Dan Bellows is the leader there in McMinnville, Oregon, and they're brand new group meeting on Friday mornings at six o'clock at Calvary Chapel in McMinnville.

And Dan writes, "This will be a large group that gives birth to small groups." Love the vision, love the vision. And then a shout out today to Steve Basht, our area director in Maryland. And thank you Steve for your service to churches in that area. And so I wonder if you would join me in giving both Steve and the Men of CalvaryMac a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome.

One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, men. We're really honored to have you with us. So we're going to be speaking this morning on growth. This is the third installment in this series, *The Christian Man: Three Keys to Become a More Kingdom-minded Man*. So the goal of spiritual growth is to become a disciple of Jesus.

The purpose of becoming a disciple of Jesus is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple is the highest honor to which a man can aspire. Think of people like Peter, people like Paul, people like Timothy, the people that we respect. What is a disciple?

A disciple is someone who is called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ, and sent to live for Christ, called to live in Christ is the kerygma, the proclamation of the gospel, the putting your faith and repentance in Jesus, becoming a Christian. Equipped to live like Christ is to dedicate the teachings. It is the way that we grow. Sent to live for Christ is both love and good deeds, the things we do as a result of having been abiding in Christ. It's how we respond to the gospel as faithful stewards and servants of God's grace. So how do we become a growing disciple, then? You will, please, look at Hebrews chapter six, verse one, the verse I asked you to turn to. It says, "Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity."

Let us move beyond the elementary teachings and move forward to maturity, not laying, again, the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death and the faith in God. So there, you have the elementary teachings are about repentance and faith. It's this kerygma. It's the proclamation of the gospel. And then, nobody wants to stay there. They want to move on from there and they want to become spiritually mature.

So the men that I interviewed for the book had some interesting things to say when I asked them what is their biggest felt need as a man. The battle between my identity as a child of God versus in the world, accountability, and brother, how to make godly decisions and life choices, living fully for God, confidence that I'm following God in all areas. Are you feeling this? Hearing God's voice in all the noise, direction, understanding, and confidence I'm living out God's purpose everywhere.

Another man, knowing when I'm on God's path and when I've strayed. Another man, time to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. Another man, to be a man after God's heart. Well, it really sounds like Hebrews chapter six, verse one, right? So we could beat each other up for not being more spiritual, but my own experience has been that when you are talking to a man who knows God, there is always a deep desire to have this spiritual growth.

So, sometimes, you need a hug. And you've heard me say this before, other times, you need what? A kick in the pants. But here's another thought. Even if you need a hug, sometimes you can benefit more by watching me give another guy a kick in the pants, even though you're the one who needs a hug. Because there are some truths that are hard to hear, but they are extremely important.

And even though you might be sensitive, fragile, broken, a bruised reed, these still are things that you need to know. And so I want to, so, if we were taken, condense all of the things I've been teaching all these years into one idea, I have this sentence on my Bible study preparation worksheet, is there one idea, if fully understood and truly believed, could change everything?

If there is one idea, fully understood and truly believed, that could change everything, what would that be? And so, if I would take all the things I've been teaching in 1,680 Bible studies that we've done as a group, 1,680 Bible studies that we've done as a group, I'm tired. No, I'm not really. Actually, I'm energized. 1,000. If we could condense all of that into one idea, it would be this. A Bible, a small group, and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems.

So when ... My vocation is working with men, and I'm kind of like ... A doctor doesn't see well people, usually. You see sick people. So, my 100% or maybe 80% of my experience is with the 10% of men who are really struggling at a particular time. So my world is a little distorted, like a doctor, or like an EMT, or like a military warrior.

I have a distorted view of mankind. Okay. Because I just see more problems, and I don't really get brought in when things are going really well. But, that said, when a man does talk to me about his problem, whether it's sending an email or one on one, and a lot of it's through email, I'm thinking of a number of emails this week where men are writing me, and they're talking about incredible problems with their marriages. Marriages have been a big thing.

I did a radio interview recently, and all three call-ins were marriage problems. Just incredible marriage problems. You've heard me say, we'll talk about marriage next week, so I'll just leave that alone for now, but what I will say is, I always ask men the same two questions.

Number one, tell me about your Bible reading habits. And there's a little bit of a surprise initially, and then most men have, well, I shouldn't say most of them. I can't think of anybody who's never said this. I cannot think of anybody who has never not said, "Well, to tell you the truth, I really haven't been reading my Bible very much lately."

And I'll say, "Well, I understand. I get it. I understand, but let me ask you a second question. Who is your best friend? Or are you a part of a small group of guys who are meeting together and trying to figure out how to do life together?" And now, I know this for certain. I've never, ever once in all of these years asked a man that question and had him say yes.

And the reason that I know this is true is, they wouldn't be talking to me. They wouldn't be coming to me. Generally speaking, in most cases, they wouldn't be coming to me if they had a group of guys they were doing life together because they wouldn't need me. So a Bible, a small group, and then serving someone else will solve 90% of the problems. So let's take a look.

WHAT CAN YOU GET FROM THE BIBLE THAT YOU CAN GET NO OTHER WAY?

What can you get from the Bible that you can get no other way? So if you would, turn to Matthew chapter 22, verse 29. Matthew chapter 22, verse 29. So there is a former, well, he's deceased, that's why he's former, church consultant named Jack. I thought that was funny to myself. He's former, he's dead. Of course he's former. His name is Jack Miller, church consultant. And he would go into churches and he would ask this question.

He would look around, he would look around, and then he would ask the question, "Why is there such little power here?" And if there was true, authentic Jesus power in churches, then people would be drawn to them, the church would be not only prevalent, but it would be powerful. And that's the number one problem we have, really, when you think about the church, and Christians in general today.

Christianity tends to be prevalent, but not powerful. And so, if we had power in the church, then Jack Miller wouldn't have had to ask, "Why is there such little power here?" We get part of the answer in Matthew chapter two, verse 29. Jesus is arguing with some Sadducees, and he wraps it up in verse 29.

He says, "The problem is this. The reason that you're having this problem, I'm understanding," he says to the Sadducees, "The problem is this. You do not know the scriptures, and you do not know the power of God." So, knowing the power of God, Jesus says, knowing the power God and knowing the scriptures are inextricably linked.

Psalms chapter one, verse one, all of David's readings, the first part of that Psalm, blessed is he who does not stand in the way as soon as walk, walk in the way, just stand in the way of sin. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's look it up. I'll tell you why I'm a little confused on that this morning. I learned it one way, I memorized it one way years ago, and then this morning, I'm looking and my new version of the Bible changed it to the more gender friendly language, which no, no, no, don't boo that.

Hey, look, look, okay. For all of you logger head, block head guys who don't like the word that takes man and renders it gender friendly, it's *anthropos*. It's people. Okay? When it's man, it's Adam. But when the original is *anthropos*, it's not just man, it's man and woman. So, get over it. Okay?

Blessed is the one. So you are going to get a kick in the pants when you get well enough to have one. Blessed is the one who does not walk in the step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the seat of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD. That's the Torah of Yahweh, now in the New Testament.

It's the Logos. Whose delight is in the law of Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Okay, who needs a hug? Word of God. You'll be like a stream of water. Meditate on it day and night. Who needs a kick in the pants?

Read this stupid scripture and do what it says, that's all there is to it. Okay. Research, that's research. All right, so, how can you make this happen for yourself? I'm going to give you a call to action in each of these three. First one is, you could have a quiet time. How many of you have a quiet time? How many of you do that on a relatively consistent basis?

All right, and for those of you who do not have a consistent quiet time, how many of you need a hug? How many of you? Oh, that's okay. Don't worry about it. I understand, you're so busy. Oh, bless your heart. Bless your, sweet heart. I'll pray for you. How many of you would like a kick in the pants? Hey, just do it. What is up with this? Just read your stupid Bible, for crying out loud. I don't understand what the problem is.

If you have enough time to drink coffee, you also have enough time to read your Bible. Okay. So what do you do? Just take, look, you're only allowed to do five minutes. You can't do more than five minutes. That's your limit. So read a chapter in the Bible and say a prayer, like the ACTS, Acts formula. Just, but you can't do more than five minutes.

Now look, if you get to a point where you just can't possibly live anymore unless you go to six minutes, well, then you can go to six minutes. But until then, just do five. But do this five or six, something like that, a day. So just do it, for crying out loud. What's the problem here?

All right, that's call to action number one. Just quiet time. Call to action number two. So, I have told you before, I've read through the Bible cover to cover 30 times in 30 years, and I've been doing something

else for the last two years. I miss my friends. I can't do that. I'm going back to the One Year Bible starting in January.

I miss Moses, I miss Joseph, I miss David, I miss Samuel, I miss Ezekiel. I miss them all, I do. I just miss them. So I'm going back to the One Year Bible, and as a call to action, how many of you, how many of you do read through the Bible? Okay. How many of you would like to read through the entire Bible with me, cover to cover, next year? Raise your hands. All right, that's almost all of us.

Let's do it. We've done this before. It's powerful. It's impactful. I remember Mike came in one day, Mike, I've known for five or six years. Mike came in and I said, "Something's different about you. What's going on with your life?" Because he's always been quiet, timid, shy, retiree, not engaged. But he still was coming five or six years, and then all of a sudden, he came in with a glow, and I said, "What's going on?"

He said, "I don't know." And then it happened again. I said, "Well, what's going on with you?" "I don't know." I said, "Well, can I take you to breakfast, and let's just talk?" And at breakfast, he started explaining how he had been reading the One Year Bible with us, but he hadn't told anybody at his table that he was doing that, and his life was being transformed right before everyone's eyes by the word of God.

Oh my gosh. So why should you do this? Because, and I can say that personally, I have never known a single man whose life has changed in any significant way apart from the regular study of God's word. The Big Idea today is this: **A Bible, a small group, and serving someone else will solve 90% of the problems.**

WHAT CAN YOU GET FROM A SMALL GROUP THAT YOU CAN GET NO OTHER WAY?

And then what can you get from a small group that you can get no other way? So, if you would, turn to John chapter 11, verse 43. John chapter 11, verse 43. So, the plan A of Jesus for inaugurating, launching, and developing his big idea of total global conquest, which now has what, two or three billion people identify as Christians? His plan A was to form a small group of men and invest in their lives. Watch this. Jesus did not have a plan B. No other method has ever been shown to be even remotely as effective at changing men's lives as a small group of men who are doing life together.

Even secularists understand this. Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, she said, "Never doubt the power of a small group to change the world." That's about the only way it has ever happened in the past. To be part of a small group is so powerful. Most meaningful change takes place in the context of relationship.

And as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he understood the power of having the community being involved in what was happening through his gospel. And so Jesus raised him from the dead. But then look what happened in verse 43. Lazarus come out, the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped in strips of linen, and a cloth around his face, and Jesus said to them, to the disciples, to a small group there, "You take off the grave clothes and let him go."

So he got them involved in the community. And he exhorts us to get involved in taking off the grave clothes, the things that have been part of the bondage. Jesus, if you came here and you need to be healed, Jesus will do the healing. But then, Jesus had brought you here so that the other guys at your table could take off the grave clothes. Can finish the work of releasing you from that bondage. It takes a community.

Oh, there's so many more things that could be said about this, but how can you make this happen for you? Couple of calls to action. Two, so, one is, we used to have a table leader who was an optometrist here, and in the early days of him coming to the Bible study, his staff kept scheduling appointments when he was supposed to be here at the Bible study, or wanted to be here at the Bible study.

And so finally, he sat his staff down. He said, "You are never, ever to schedule over the Bible study. Going to the Bible study on Friday mornings is a priority for me. Don't schedule over the Bible study." And so, whether it's this Bible study or some other group where you can be involved in a small group, make it a don't schedule over this kind of priority. Life takes place in these small groups. Who do you think wants to squeeze that life out?

Stop and think about it. Let us reason together. If life is comes through groups in Jesus, this is his plan. Who do you think wants to have you scheduled over on Friday morning something else? Yeah. So, we do have an opponent, so that would be a call to action. I'm always just proud, whether it's here or somewhere else, but just make that part of your calendar that cannot be scheduled over. All right?

And then secondly, if it's to mentor someone else or start a small group of your own. Some of you take what we talk about here and have other small groups where you reproduce this, and you guys that are doing this online, you're already doing it. But take advantage of the opportunity to build into the life of someone else.

I have my mentee. So, we have this coaching program going on in conjunction with this series, and so my mentee and I have met twice so far, and we're having a fantastic time. How many of you are involved in the mentoring stuff so far on either side of it? So, we have a lot. Thank you for doing that. A lot of guys, it's crawl, walk, run around here. So, this is crawl, but we're hoping that more and more men will find it attractive to either be mentored or be a mentor. And that would be a call to action.

All right, so, why did we want to do this? Again, because most meaningful change takes place in the context of small group relationships. Big Idea today: **A Bible, a small group and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems.** And then finally, what can you get from serving someone else that you can get no other way?

WHAT CAN YOU GET FROM SERVING SOMEONE ELSE THAT YOU CAN GET NO OTHER WAY?

So just out of curiosity, how many of you take care of your physical body in some way? Like go to the gym, or running, or doing something like that? So almost all of you do. And I realize not everybody's physically able to do that. Let me ask you, do you view the soul and spirit that is within you as something that needs to be nourished and exercised and taken care of in the same way that your body does?

The physical body, by the way, you can abuse your body for 20, 30 years, and before you really notice it, and you can abuse your soul and spirit for your entire life. And the same thing can happen. So spiritual fitness comes about through being in the word of God. It also comes about by being a small group. But then, when God puts all of these things into you, if you don't do something with them, you will become spiritually obese.

Now, there are ... Spiritual obesity, think about it. Spiritual obesity is not necessarily that you are not eating enough food or eating too much, but you're eating the wrong kinds of food. That's part of it. So,

it's important to be in a place where the proclamation of the gospel and the teaching of the word of God is accurate, or you will get too much of the wrong kinds of food.

You can become spiritually obese that way. The average Christian today, the average, not you, because you're here, the average Christian today doesn't need more food. He needs more exercise. And the way you do that is by serving someone else. I've told the story many times, I love telling this story here. When I was a young Christian, and I was moping around the house, and my wife said, "You know what your problem is?"

Have you ever had your wife say, "You know what your problem is?" I bet your reaction's exactly like mine was. "Oh, I can't wait to hear what this is all about." Right? Well, before I had a chance to defend myself, she said, "Your problem is is that it's self pity. You need to get out of the house and go do something to help someone else."

And boom, I knew that what she said was accurate. And I immediately, that day, I got up and I went down to a local urban ministry and said, "Hey, is there anything I can do around here?" And they said, "Yeah," and they gave me a lot to do down there. And the cloud lifted immediately. The cloud lifted immediately.

At this founder's weekend that we had, I wasn't here last week because we had this founder's weekend kind of a thing, and so upshot of that is, is somebody said to me, "You really had to do a lot of work and a lot of preparation to a service like this this weekend. I know it took a lot of work." And I said to them, "I appreciate the gratitude, but serving you is its own reward."

Service is its own reward. When you serve other people ... My fraternity in college, it was a business fraternity, and, but our motto was, he who profits most serves best. And that's great advice for the Christian, too. He profits most who serves best. Service is its own reward. And so, why do we do this? We do this, we do all of these things, there are human reasons to do it. This particular case, John 15:8 says, "This is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

We do it because it brings glory to God. It's a way we prove that we're disciples. We show the word disciples by serving other people. So, how can you make this happen for you? Call to action. Two of them. Number one, in the book, *The Christian Man*, is a spiritual gifts assessment tool. In *The Christian Man Coaching Guide*, which, this you buy, this is for free. You get this one for free at thechristianmanbook.com, you download it.

This one, you pay. I forget how much. Anyway, buy the book, download the free guide. In the guide, there is a spiritual gifts assessment tool, and you can go through that and have ... You'll want to, in your small group, maybe, have them verify, if you will, that these are your gifts, or help you think that through and affirm you that those are your gifts.

But you can get almost all the way to where you need to be and knowing how you will best serve by doing the spiritual gifts assessment tool. I encourage you to do that. That's one call to action. So, a second call to action is to become a volunteer, a church volunteer, a ministry volunteer, become a volunteer and find a place to, an outlet to, actually do that kind of serving.

So, I was at lunch with a man who was struggling with all of the questions that he had. I put the list in the book, in this particular chapter, I think I put it in this chapter. Or maybe not that chapter. Oh, there it

is. He is a bruised reed. He needs a hug. He didn't need me to pound on him, so I just listened. I don't pound on people anyway, one on one. Just in the group.

And so, he started peppering me with these questions, and he never came up for air for about 20 minutes. How can a snake talk? How could you get all those animals in one boat? What kind of guy would tell a man to kill his own son, Abraham and Isaac? How can a man be swallowed by a fish and then live for three days? How could a virgin have a baby? How could a man walk on water? And just dozens more like that.

And when he was done, I don't know what he was hoping for from me, but I told him, I said, "Wow, those are all the questions I'd like to have answers for, too." I have no idea what the answers are to those questions. But I do have a degree in theology, and I have read through the Bible year after year after year. And here's what I would say to you.

5% of the Bible is very mysterious. Confounding, even. I'm totally baffled by 5% of the Bible. But 95% of the Bible, I understand perfectly clear. It's a very coherent, cohesive, progressive story about a loving God who relentlessly pursues those who have wandered away from him. And when they are reunited with him, he protects and watches over them for the rest of their lives. That's pretty clear to me.

So I said to this man, David, I call him David, "I'm not going to let the 5% of the Bible that confuses me distort or undermine the 95% that I do." And I encourage you to do the same. The Big Idea of the day: **A Bible, a small group, and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems.** Let's pray.

Our Father, our dearest Father, our Lord in heaven, thank you. Thank you that we could do this and have fun and cut up, but it is serious business. And so I pray, Father, you would just simply tutor to our hearts the things that you would have us act on today. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.