

The Christian Man

The Christian Man Recap: A Call to Action

Rough Transcript

Brett Clemmer

All right. Well let's jump into our series here. Good morning. We're going to do a couple of shout outs to start with. Kevin Gregory is one of our area directors in North Carolina. He's in the area around Sanford, and Kevin's great guy and been with us for for several years now. And he's one of those guys that is an area director part time and then he also has a part time job. He's able to split his time to make that work for him. And so he's making a great impact on churches throughout North Carolina. So we're excited to have Kevin on the team.

And also I want to talk to you about this group. These guys are "Iron Man". This is a group of two different groups of men that meet in the same church in Salina, Kansas. And the cool part about these guys is I got to meet them last Saturday. I was out in Salina, Kansas. Somebody convinced me to do a men's event in Salina, Kansas in January. I'm not really sure how that happened, to be honest with you. Pat Leupold. But we went out to Salina, Kansas, and they had 60 guys in a conference center for a men's retreat. And we did the Rock Solid Men Event. We had a blast. We talked about vigilance and faith and courage and strength and love, five attributes of manhood that we talk about in that event.

And then this group of guys, this is part of the group of guys that were there. They've been using Man in the Mirror materials, mostly the video Bible study for 10 years now, and they have a Sunday morning group and a Monday night group. And they doubled the size of both of those groups by doing the Rock Solid Men Event. And then they're also in the midst of starting at least one or two more small groups from that event. So great to have the guys from Salina. I told them I would come back and I would do a shout out the first day I had a chance to do a shout out. So here it is. So guys in Salina, we're glad to have you online with us and let's give Kevin and Iron Man Bible study a big hand.

All right. Well if you have your a handout and if you're watching this online or if you're listening to this on the podcast or on YouTube, I'm really going to encourage you to go to MIMBiblestudy.com and download the handout because there's an extra piece to it this time. So we're in the Christian Man Series and we're going to do sort of a recap and a next steps time today. And so the handout has a ton of information. This handout is basically a compilation, a recap of the entire series. So on the front side is the normal note-taking and discussion questions, but on the back are all of the topics that we've covered over the last 10 sessions and all the Bible verses the go with each session. And then the idea for each session is there. And so we're going to go through those this morning. And then the Declaration of Christian Manhood is on there.

So let's look at our outline for this morning. So we're doing a call to action today, and we're going to talk about these three things. We all have issues. We're men, we all have issues. And then we're going to talk about how you can change your life and then how you can help another man change his life.

WE ALL HAVE ISSUES

So we all have issues. We know the men problem today is a big one. We know that most of the ills in society, if you really sort of drill down to the bottom of many of the ills of society, eventually you'll find a man that's really, really struggling. The divorce rates are going down, but part of the reason they're going down is because people just aren't getting married. Why? Because men aren't equipped maybe, are not motivated. They're not excited about making that level of commitment to a woman. They're not leaders. And so many women out there today, the statistics show that upwards of 40% of single women, when you poll them, they say, well, they'd rather just not get married and that's not their fault. That's because when they look around at what's available to them, nothing is really exciting to them. So men are struggling.

You look at fatherlessness. We know that kids that grow up in a fatherless home are five times more likely to be involved in the justice system, to have mental health issues, to be kept back in school, to live in poverty. It's a tremendous burden on a child to be raised in a home without a father. And so we guys, we are the answer. As we as Christian men live our lives according to biblical principles, but just as important, maybe even more importantly, as we help other guys that are out there that are struggling and we bring them into the church, we bring them, and I'm in big C Church, not little C church, big C Church. We bring them into the body of Christ. We help them live a new life. We help them be a new creation. We help them have their minds transformed. That doesn't happen magically. We're the ones that are called to help make that happen. And so we are the answer to the issues.

Pat likes to say, no matter how we got ourselves into this, the only way out of it is to, we have to disciple our way out. Well that's us. We're the ones that have to disciple the men out. We're not like telling them, "Oh guys, just go disciple your way out." We're the disciple makers. And so if we will not be disciple makers, then we're just going to have the same issues that we've always had. And the issues that we face in our culture and in our society can't, they can't get better because no other solution that culture is going to offer is going to have the impact on men's lives that Christian men following Christ and helping other men find and follow Christ. That's going to have the biggest impact on our society that we can possibly make.

And so we all have issues but every man has issues. But we as Christian men, we can help bring the answer to those issues.

So as we talked about these issues of Christian manhood, these are the 10 things that we talked about. We talked about your identity in Christ. A Christian man lives in Christ. When I was at the Rock Solid Men Event this weekend, we talk about this idea of being in Christ. What does that mean? I love the analogy that we use in the event we talk about imagine if you were paralyzed. You're paralyzed from the neck down. And somebody came to you and they said, "If you put this suit on, it will connect to your brain and everything will work. Your legs will work. Your arms will work. You'd be able to drive a car, run around, all that stuff. But you have to be in the suit in order for it to work, in order for your body to work." It's not a perfect metaphor, but it's pretty close. That's what it's like to be in Christ. When you are in Christ, life works. But if you're not in Christ, you're paralyzed. You have no chance of living a fulfilled life like you do when you are in Christ. And so that's why our identity is so important.

A lot of guys struggle with life balance, and it's interesting to me that as you look at sort of generations, the issue is the same. Life balance is the same, but the way that each generation approaches it is a little bit different. I call them... Well I don't call them, everybody called them the Boomers. The Boomers,

they're their life balance. They're trying to balance success and money and materialism. That is a huge challenge for guys. Say you know, over 50. Over 53. Yeah, over 53. Get it? I'm 53 so it's the guys over 53 that struggle with this. It's not that early, guys. Come on.

So it's success and materialism that might be an issue. You know, Pat's old adage when he was a young businessman, "money will solve my problems and success will make me happy", except it didn't. The Zoomers and Millennials, it's a different look at life balance. I think younger guys actually have a much healthier view of trying to figure out life balance than their father's did. Why? Probably because they looked at their fathers and went, "Well that didn't work." But then you can swing the other way, and you can say, "Well, I need to have a crazy experiences, and I need to have flexibility and leisure and adventure." Well if that's all you're trying to do, that's not a balance either. And so we had to figure out how to find that thing in the middle that balances work-life. Because we were made to work.

We're made to be productive. Your family life, we were made to be husbands and fathers. Your impact on culture. We were made to impact other people and build God's kingdom. And certainly your ability to fulfill your own, the way you're built, which might be adventure or some leisure. But keeping all of those things in balance can be difficult. And that's why we need each other to help reflect back, but to be the mirror for each other, to help us figure out when the pendulum swinging too far one way or the other and we're getting out of whack life balance.

How do you grow spiritually? How do you build the foundations into your life? If you're married, what does a godly marriage look like? Most of the time when a guy comes to me and he says, "I'm really struggling," it's... I very rarely hear a guy goes, "My life's horrible. I mean, my marriage is great, but the rest of my life is horrible." I almost never hear that. What I hear is, "I'm struggling and my marriage is right at the foundation of that struggle. I had all these expectations of what married life was going to be like. It was going to be my best friend, and I could have sex anytime I wanted. And she was going to always tell me that I was good looking and support every decision I made." And they're like, "Actually, it's not like that at all." There's a lot of gray heads in here going, nodding right now. No, it's not like that at all.

Of course, it's not like that. That's an unrealistic expectation. So how do you build a godly marriage? Or what if you're not married? What if you're dealing with a marriage failure and you're still feeling the ramifications of that, how do you deal with that? Or if you're not married and guys now are getting married older and older and older. And so I talked to some guys today in their late 20s and early 30s, they're not married. And frankly, they're a little scared. They're like, "Will I ever the right woman?" Well, how do you deal with those issues? These are huge issues that guys have to face. And having somebody walk through that with you can help you deal with those issues in a way that it's not all sitting on your shoulders by yourself. Right. That's why we're here for each other.

Children. Children are a blessing from the Lord. And when they move out, it's even more of a blessing. I mean because then eventually hopefully they bring back grandkids and you can just buy them toys that make noise and feed them sugar and send them home. That's like the best part of parenting is grandparenting. That's what guys tell me anyway. But kids are a challenge. I was talking to some guys last night. I was hanging out with some guys last night around a fire pit and I was talking to... They're a few generations of guys there and some of the guys with... One guy had a kids from 11 to 18, and we were just talking about the difference between the 11 year old and the 18 year old. And how if you had teenagers first, you would never have another child after that. If your kid came as a teenager, you would just stop.

But God's and God's graciousness, he lets us have a few years to get ready for the whole teen thing. But how do you raise godly kids? How do you help point them towards a relationship with Christ? It's hard for a man to do that. All of us that are dads have a struggle with that. How do you have good friends? What does a godly friendship look like? A lot of guys tend to not... Women are very prone to sharing face to face pretty quickly in a relationship. Guys aren't like that. It takes us time to establish trust. We need to go through things together to really trust a guy.

I hear this all the time and this even happened to me. One of my best friends in high school was the guy that I got in a fight with in middle school. Because until guys go through conflict together often, they really can't form a deep friendship. Why is that? Well, it's biblical guys that go through struggle together or even against each other. When they come out on the other side of that, they're much more likely to be friends and brothers. How we do that in a world that tends to isolate us; the tends to create false intimacy? That's what social media often does for us. It creates false intimacy because I can see... It used to be that you only showed your friends your pictures from vacation. Now you show anybody, any of your 1800 friends on Facebook to pick your pictures from vacation. And so it creates this false sense of NMC. How do we deal with that from a biblical standpoint?

The issue of work and what you're made to do. The huge issue in men's lives of lust and having a holy attitude towards your sexual integrity and not just what you do, but even Jesus said, even what you think is an important thing. So how do you bring even your thoughts under the Lordship of Christ? How do we influence the culture? How do we influence the culture? How do we find that little corner of the culture that that needs the light of God's truth brought into it? And some of those things are big, heavy things. Like sex trafficking is a huge example of this where men have really started stepping into this area and in bold ways making a difference in the sex trafficking industry.

We're going to have the Superbowl. As we record this, we're going to have the Superbowl this week. The Superbowl is not just about football unfortunately, but the Superbowl brings the law enforcement people tell us that Superbowl brings huge sex trafficking issues to the community where the game is held. How does that happen? Why would anyone in their right mind think that this is the way that people should treat each other? Well, because they're in the darkness, and if we won't shine the light into the darkness, then how will they know? How will they be influenced? How can we speak into the lives of men to help them change, but how can we also rescue people who are caught up in things like that. And so there are all these areas of culture that we can engage in from politics to homelessness and other social issues to criminal justice issues like Desmond Meade dove into this huge criminal justice issue and is making a difference in many people's lives. Helping men that have felt completely cast out of society and saying, "No, no, no, we don't want you to be cast out. We want you back and to be a part of our society." And when you do those things, you make a difference in how people look at themselves and their identity and who they are. And you open them up to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And then finally, just very directly, how do you share your faith with somebody? It can be really scary sharing your faith and really just talking to somebody bluntly about what you believe and why you believe it. And in today's day and age, sometimes you feel like you're going to be persecuted for that. I'm just here to tell you that you're probably not going to be persecuted for it. We hear the big news about the people that are persecuted for specific actions that they feel are consistent with their faith. But we're really not. The only reason we know about those things is because they're pretty rare and so it makes the news. But most of us are not ever going to face any kind of serious persecution for telling somebody about our faith. So why are we so afraid of it?

Well, because the devil's telling us, "You better be careful. You better watch out. You don't want to offend somebody. You don't want to..." And that that voice whispering in your ear could be the devil lying to you about what will happen if you tell somebody about your faith. And then the world compounds it with headlines about those rare cases and then your own flesh because we're all, sometimes we're kind of cowardly. You want to do it, but you just, you just don't. Paul said, "The things I don't want to do, I do. The things I want to do, I don't do." This is one of those things I think that we all want to do, but we don't do is just be open about our faith and what we believe and why we believe it.

And guys, the gospel is attractive. When somebody really understands what the gospel is, there's nothing to be offended by other than you can't save yourself. That's what makes the gospel offensive. You can't save yourself, but the rest of it's a pretty good deal. In fact, it's the best deal ever. And so why wouldn't we want to share that with people? Why wouldn't we want to help people understand the incredible freedom that comes from following Christ? It's not a burden. It's really a freedom. And so we had to learn how to do that, build our skill set up, but also build our boldness and really believe what the Bible says about building God's kingdom.

So these are 10 of the issues. We have a lot more issues than 10. But these are 10 of the issues, and I think in these 10 issues, you sort of get the bulk of what men are struggling with today. And so it's been a great a series I think just to talk about some of these important issues.

Now here's what you cannot do. You cannot go like, I have to solve all my problems then all 10 of these areas right now. There's no way you can do that. It's overwhelming. That's the problem with things like this when you talk about a lot of things kind of rapid fire like we have. And so what we're going to do in our discussions times is we're going to talk about what are just one or two areas that you really feel like if you focused on that area or those couple areas right now, we'd really have the greatest impact on your life.

And so if you've got issue with friendships or with lust or with work or with balance, whatever it is, if you just sort of narrowed in on that thing for a little while, how could you bring some change into your life that would help you really enjoy being in Christ more? And the way that you do that is you do that with brothers. So we all have issues. These are issues.

CHANGE YOUR LIFE

So then how can we change our lives? Well, I think the first step to changing our life is deciding that you want to change your life. I mean, life change doesn't usually happen by accident. In fact, when it happens by accident, it's usually because something bad happens to you that you had no control over. And I don't know about you. I'd rather decide to change my life then have it imposed on me. And so the Declaration of Christian Manhood is one way to sort of remind ourselves to take a stand about what we want to change in our life. And so on the back of your sheet and in the Christian Man Book, there is the Declaration of Christian Manhood at the end of chapter one. And I want to read two Bible verses to you that are sort of key to this Declaration of Christian Manhood.

So the first one is Second Corinthians 5:17. Many of you probably have this verse memorized, but Second Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a..." Say it again loud. "He is a new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come." So when we become a man in Christ, if anyone is in Christ, we literally become a new creation. The old, the old sins, the old habits, the old mindsets, the old worldviews, they pass away. Now do they do it instantly? I wish. They don't happen

instantly. But frankly, all those sins and negative issues in your life and difficulties that you face and worldviews that don't work, this is the only way you're going to get rid of them. You can do a lot of hard work. You can do self-help, you can read every self help book in the world. And you can try to muscle your way into being a new man. But the Bible says that when we are in Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, the very power that raised Jesus from the dead, Paul says, becomes available to us.

And I don't know about you, but I think the Holy Spirit is a much better chance of helping me defeat sin in my life, change the wrong attitudes that I have, repair the relationships that are broken, give me a way of looking at the world that actually works and actually explains the real way the real world really works. The Holy Spirit has a much better chance of doing that in my life than me. And so that's becoming a new creation when we become in Christ, we become a new creation.

And then turn over to Romans 12. And look at Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." So what happens when you're in Christ is your mind is transformed and then look what happens. "That by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Whew. I mean think about that. I mean, really think about being able to discern what is good and acceptable and perfect. Your decision making just went up about five notches when you can truly discern was good and acceptable and perfect. And that's what happens when we're in Christ. Our mind is transformed, we get wisdom, we get discernment. Right away? Nope. It builds over time as we spend more time in Christ, as we spend more time in the scriptures, as we spend more time with godly brothers, these are the things that happen. Our mind is transformed.

And so these two verses are sort of at the basis at the Declaration of Christian Manhood. So let me read... I'm going to read the Declaration of Christian Manhood here and then you're going to talk about it in your groups.

Heavenly father, I am tired of weak, unsatisfying faith. I am weary of leading a divided life. I want to be so fully in Christ that others want to catch what I have. As a new creation, I long to know your love for me as a son, a disciple, a friend, a servant, a temple, a vessel, and a charge of the Holy Spirit. I want to experience and infectiously exhibit all the fruit of your spirit with all humility. So here today I take my stand. I repent of my worldly and sinful ways, and I put my faith in Christ alone.

I hereby declare that from this day forward, I will stop seeking the God or the god that I've wanted, and I will start seeking the God who is. I pledge to lead a Bible, saturated life of devotion and study of God. My desire is 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 fully follow Jesus with all my heart each and every day. I will make it my business to live in right relationship with God and in right relationship with all people and to exercise my gifts to fulfill your calling on my life.

My true identity is in Christ. I commit to live openly for the glory of God and all my ways. I openly confess that I can do none of this apart from your grace, Father, through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I pledge my allegiance this day to a life of Christ centered manhood. If they cut me, I want to bleed Jesus. Amen.

Now, let me tell you guys, this is not a feel good. Oh, let's all stand up and say a prayer together statement. This is life changing. This is sacrificing the things that you've been using to make yourself happy and instead seeking to live a life that's holy and pleasing to God. And then the letting the chips fall where they may. So don't look at something like this and take it lightly. Look at something like this and

say, "You know what, if I want to change my life, this is the foundation for me really changing my life. If I want help another man change his life, these are the issues that I need to talk to him about, that we need to discuss honestly and openly about how to live a life of a disciple of Jesus Christ."

So how can you change your life? You can start with the Declaration of Christian Manhood and really decide that this is who you're going to be and how you're going to live.

HELP ANOTHER MAN CHANGE HIS LIFE

So then the last thing is how can you help another man change his life? And so using *The Christian Man*, like we've been doing here in the Bible study now for the last probably three months, you can coach another man, you can mentor another man through these issues. And so y'all know, we've talked about it. There's a downloadable Christian Man Coaching Guide. It's free on the website. You can download this. You can go through the book and then use the coaching guide to talk about the issues. Or you can just use the coaching guide.

So I've been, I've been meeting with a guy in the Bible study now. We've been meeting probably for... We've probably met nine times over the last 13 weeks because life happens. And we've been going through this, and it's been fascinating to watch the gospel work in this guy's life. But it's been more fascinating for me to watch the gospel working in my life as we've talked about these issues. The impact of me coaching has been much greater on me, for me anyway. It's been huge for me. Yeah, he's walking and talking and acting differently than he was before. And that's great. That's the power of the Holy Spirit at work. But so am I. And so that's the power of being a mentor or being a coach is not so that you can be some savior that goes and helps another guy turn his life around. That's not what it's about. It's about finding a guy who's a little bit behind you on the journey. And so he can use a little bit of your experience and the hard lessons that you've learned. But you're both going to keep moving forward on that journey.

And the real goal is for you to help him get to a place where then he can go back and grab another guy, and he can bring another guy along on the journey. And that's how the kingdom of God is meant to work is, is men discipling other men and bringing them along on the journey. So I really want to encourage you to, if you're watching this online, go to the maninthemirror.org/mentor. When you go there, you'll see a video from Pat sort of explaining how it works. Then you'll be able to download a guide, and then you'll have two more videos that actually are sort of like short training videos are like four minutes long. They're easy. Couple of training videos to show you how to do it, and then you can't even think about how can I take this into my church and do this church-wide. We now have some churches that are doing this church wide. So this is how you can change another man's life.

So today is about a call to action. So on your handout you've got these questions. In fact, let's go ahead and look at the questions on the handout. And so this is where you're going to talk about what topics have impacted you the most and how. And then go through the big ideas on the handout. Which big ideas for you are the most helpful and why are they helpful? And then read back through that Declaration of Christian Manhood together. What phrases resonate the most with you, and is this a declaration that you feel like you could actually live by? And then what will you do as result of this series? Maybe there's an issue that you need to address. Maybe you need to take a stand and the Declaration can help you do that. Or you can seek a mentoring relationship. Either find a mentor or be a mentor, find a coach or be a coach and that would be a great next step for you to take.

So let me pray for us and then we will break to the tables.

Father, thank you so much for the last 10 sessions that we spent together talking about these key issues that that every man faces, Lord. And father, I pray that you would help us as men, as Christian men, Lord, to want to be in you, to want, father, to have a transformed mind and a transformed life. Father, we pray for the wisdom and discernment that you tell us comes from being a new creation. Father, draw us to yourself, draw us to your son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Lord, that we would live renewed lives, that we would be new men. And Lord, don't let us keep it to ourselves. Father, help each of us to look around for another guy or another couple of guys that we can lock arms with, that we can walk through this journey together with to Christian manhood. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.