

Reconstructing Manhood

The Future of Making Disciples

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

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Well, good morning, men. And welcome to Man in the Mirror, men's Bible study. For those of you joining us online, we want to give you a very warm rousing man in the mirror welcome. So guys, on the count three, let's do that. One two, three.

Hoorah. Welcome. Glad to have you with us. So we are wrapping up today, the series on **Reconstructing Manhood**. The title of the message today, which I think I might have previewed to you a little bit or gave you a hint on it, is **The Future of Making Disciples**. I told you we were going to do an extended four week session on reconstructing manhood and we did. We talked about reconstructing how we treat people, and we talked about do everything in love. I don't need for you to love me for me to love you. And then Brett came and he talked about the problem of going through great suffering and how to find hope in that. The last time we were together, we talked about the greatest contribution that we can make is to offer a man a way to reconstruct, if you will, the core affections or change the core affections of his heart.

So the natural place to go then would be to ask the question, okay, well, how do we actually do that? How do we actually help a man change the core affections of his heart when he's going through great suffering? Because we want to do everything in love. So the first thing then in this talk for the day is I want to talk to you about two opposite, but equal problems.

TWO OPPOSITE BUT EQUAL PROBLEMS

Every day, when we are here or you are at your place of work or at the gym every day, every day, passing by on the street out here are men who are in desperation, who are suffering with deep, gripping, agonizing problems. If you've been here, you've heard me, the way I categorize them, as seven inner aches and pains that represent the primal needs of a man.

The first ache and pain, I just feel like I'm in this alone. So we have guys driving by who just feel like they're in this alone, like nobody's invested in them. Maybe they grew up in a broken home and suffer with that feeling of abandonment or being suspicious, finding it very hard to trust people that actually do show an interest in them, like me. Or secondly, I don't feel like God cares about me personally, not really. Third, I don't feel like my life has a purpose, everything just seems random to me. Fourth, I have these destructive behaviors that keep dragging me back down. I don't know how to get victory over them. My soul feels dry. My most important relationships, they're not healthy. And I just don't feel like I'm doing anything that's going to make a difference to leave the world a better place.

And so every day these men are driving by this building. And if you're online and you're meeting together wherever you're meeting every day on that road, right outside the building where you're meeting, there are men driving to and from work every day who just don't know how they can go on one more day. That's problem number one. Meanwhile, inside, we have men who love God and would love to be helpful to those men out there. We don't have to go through all this. Let's stipulate to this list

of things, brothers. These are our stipulations. You love God, you have the gospel under your skin. You love people. You have an ache for the harvest.

When Jesus looked at the crowds and he said, "The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few," you have seen that and you have an ache for the harvest. You understand what the world needs. You understand that the world will never be right unless the church, the body of Christ becomes right. And that the body of Christ will never become right unless we figure out how to get families right. And we'll never figure out how to get families right unless we figure out how to get marriages right. And we'll never get marriages right unless we get these women fixed. Right?

Amen. Amen.

Yes, every now and then a woman destroys her family, but most of the time, it's about a man. So if you get the man right, you get the marriage right. If you get the marriage right, you get the family right. If you get the family right, you get the church right. If you get the church right, you get the world right. And you understand that, that that's what the world needs. The world needs that and that it's about the men. And so you feel the calling by God to help disciple men. And as we talked about last time, you're a believer. You're a true believer and the greatest contribution that we can offer a man is to help him change the core affections of his heart I'm sorry. So we can stipulate to all that. Right?

And you guys online, you can stipulate to that. So we're in here and we're desperate to help those men out there, and they're out there and they're desperate for ... They don't know necessarily what they're desperate for, but we know that we have what they're desperate for, if we could only figure out how to broker the relationship. And that's the future of making disciples, it's solving these two problems. And if we don't solve these two opposite, but equal problems, there's no future.

So discipleship is often presented as an institutional endeavor or something that requires immense organization. And doing it institutionally and doing it in an organized way is good. However, discipleship is also organic and can be done along the way, and there's no one right way to do it, but let me tell you a change that has occurred over the last decade or two. It used to be that you could meet a man out on the street and you could say, Hey, why don't you come to the Bible study and see if you could find some answers to your problems? And he would say, okay, and he would show up. Well, that's not exactly true. You might have to ask him eight times. Okay. But eventually he would show up today.

Today, there's such distrust of institutions and especially all institutions. There's such distrust that it's difficult to actually get someone to come to us. And Jesus, by the way, he didn't say, come and be discipled. He said, go and make disciples, so there's that. There is a wonderful book called Escape from Reason by Francis Schaeffer that I got a hold of at the beginning of my journey. This book, it ends with a few paragraphs. When you're teaching, you should never read a few paragraphs. You should read a quote, a sentence or two, but never read a few paragraphs. I'm going to read a few paragraphs. He ends with this.

"There are two things we need to grasp firmly as we seek to communicate the gospel today. The first is that there are certain unchangeable facts, which are true. These have no relationship to the shifting tides, the change in culture. They make the Christian system what it is. And if they are altered, Christianity becomes something else. This must be emphasized because there are evangelical Christians today who in all sincerity are concerned with their lack of communication. They're concerned about how to connect with those guys out on the street. But in order to bridge the gap, they are tending to change what must remain unchangeable. If we do this, we are no longer communicating Christianity. And what we have left is no different from the surrounding consensus."

"But we cannot present a balanced picture if we stop here. We must realize that we are facing a rapidly changing historical situation." This change that I've been talking about here, it has been swift. It has been very swift. "We must realize that we are facing a rapidly changing historical situation. And if we are

going to talk to people about the gospel, we need to know what is the present ebb and flow of thought forms. Unless we do this, the unchangeable principle of Christianity will fall on deaf ears. It is much more comfortable of course, to go on speaking the gospel only in familiar phrases." Blah, blah, blah and then this. "Each generation of the church," the church being the people of God, "Each generation of the church in each setting," this setting, your setting online. "Each generation of the church in each setting has the responsibility of communicating the gospel in understandable terms, considering the language and thought forms of that setting."

I was so upset a quarter of a century ago, I was sitting at a meeting, a Campus Crusade biannual meeting out in Fort Collins, Colorado, and the Moby Jim and no other than George Barna of the Barna Reports was speaking. And he sat in front of an audience of which I was part and predicted the death of the Four Spiritual Laws booklet. I was so upset. I literally got up in a hussy fit and stormed out of the room, literally stormed out of the room. I was so angry that he would say that the four spiritual laws was losing its impact and would no longer be the primary means of communicating the gospel. Well, guess what? Who uses the four laws anymore? We used to a quarter of a century ago lead at least one man to Jesus every week here using the four spiritual laws. We have led a lot of men to Jesus here using the four spiritual laws and years reading on.

"The reason we often cannot speak to our children, or let's just say younger men ..." Well, it says it. That's what he said. "The reason we often cannot speak to our children, let alone other people's is because we have never taken time to understand how different their thought forms are from us. The issues that were precious to Christians a quarter of a century ago were the bellwether issues. Well, guess what? Men in the twenties and thirties, they have different bellwether issues that they're concerned about.

And then finally, I told you, I shouldn't read this much from a book, but in conclusion, "In crucial areas, many Christian parents, ministers and teachers, us are as out of touch with many of the children of the church and the majority of those outside as though they were speaking a foreign language. They just don't understand." So there needs to be, in the future of making disciples, a new way of approaching, a new way of thinking, a new way of talking without losing the core of the gospel itself.

So here's the Big Idea for today. When God puts a man in your path who is stuck, who feels like he's alone, God doesn't care, doesn't know his purpose, destructive behaviors, dry soul, bad relationships, not making a difference, **when God puts a man in your path who is stuck, discipleship means finding out why and helping him solve that problem.** Discipleship doesn't mean, let me tell you about the four spiritual laws. Eventually, it might involve explaining the gospel. It might involve using the four spiritual laws, but the immediate need that men sense today who don't know God is not for an explanation of the gospel, but it's rather for you to help them solve that problem. The woman at the well came out looking for water, so Jesus didn't talk to her about the gospel. He talked to her about water, how to find living water.

GOD HAS PRESERVED AN "ANYONE CAN DO IT" SOLUTION

Okay. So the second thing to talk about here is how God has preserved an anyone can do it solution to these two opposite, but equal problems. And before we look at the verse that he's given us to do that, I want to remind us that the verses that we're about to look at comprise the most impactful speech that's ever been given in the history of the world. More millions of people and more billions of dollars have been mobilized by this one short speech than any other speech that's ever been given. These are extremely important words. And what the scripture does not say, it does not say, "Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, continue to become disciples."

We've already stipulated we love God, we love people, but Jesus is not saying to us, continue to become disciples. He's not excluding it, but that's not what this verse says. When I look at a text, I ask a number of questions. Three in particular, though, are very important. The first is what is the situation that called this text into existence? The verses that we're going to look at next year, the situation that called this text into existence was that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. That's one of the core things that Schaeffer was talking about. Without the resurrection, Christianity is not Christianity. After the resurrection, at the moment before his Ascension, Jesus called together the men who had been with him, the men that ... When God puts a man in your path who's stuck, discipleship means finding out why and helping him solve that problem.

Jesus had done that. He had gathered a dozen guys around him who were stuck in different ways. And he figured out what their problems were and he helped them solve them. And then Jesus took those dozen men with him and he went other places and he found other people who were stuck. And Jesus figured out why they were stuck, and then he helped them solve those problems. And he invited these 12 men to watch him do that. And they had done that, but Jesus ... So, that's a situation that calls this text into existence. Jesus is getting ready to give them their final marching orders, his final instruction before he ascends into heaven.

Another question that I ask of a text, is there something that we learned from this text that we would otherwise not know? And this is probably the most important. I'm sure other people ask it in different ways, but to me, this is the only question that if you only had one question, this is it, because if a text actually says something that you would otherwise not know about God and his gospel, then that's why that text was called into existence. That's why that text was called into existence.

This is such a text. Jesus has never told his disciples what he tells them in this text. He's never told you until this text, what the mission is. It is not to continue to become disciples. It's therefore go and make disciples. And make disciples is one word. It's like, it's one Greek word. Make disciples, that's one Greek word. It's a thing. Making disciples is its own thing. Go, go out. Find those guys in the gym, in your neighborhood, at your place of work, who might darken the door of your church or anywhere else you meet them. Go and smother them with the information that they need.

There was probably a time where you could smother them with the information they needed and that would've worked. This is not such a time. We're looking at the future of making disciples. Having the right information and being able to pass that along is no longer the starting point for making disciples. Now, eventually that information has ... There can't be a conversion if a person doesn't understand the truth of the gospel, but that's not the starting point that's working now. The Big Idea, **when God puts a man in your path who is stuck, discipleship means finding out why, and then helping him solve that problem.**

So the last thing for us to talk about then is an actionable plan. My own experience has been, as a leader and a business owner and a ministry leader and all these, is that people cannot move forward unless they hear and have a picture in their minds of a feasible plan with concrete, credible steps that they can take, that they can visualize themselves succeeding at, discreet, defined, clear steps. You can't get me to do something if you tell me, go and make disciples. And Jesus didn't just say, go make disciples. He showed them all the little discreet steps that they could take to make disciples.

THREE QUESTIONS THAT WILL EXPLODE YOUR IMPACT

So what I want to do is I don't want to give you a bunch of glittering generalities. Oh, that was lofty. Oh, that was wonderful. I want to give you some discreet, specific, intentional, actionable steps that you can take. And I've decided to have these three questions, because I think these can explode your impact with all of these men driving up and down these streets, because we've already stipulated that we want

to help them. This is how you can do it. The first question, when you meet a man, ask yourself, can I take him?

Steve and I were talking about this last week. It used to be that this was actually my question. I grew up in the hood, man, so I was the fighter. Actually, my whole life changed when I started dating the ex-girlfriend of the starting half back on our football team. He was a senior and I was a sophomore, and he dumped this girl, and I picked her up. And then he decided he wanted her back and he accosted me in the hallway one day. Of course I was scared to death, but I beat the crap out of him and he has blood everywhere. Nobody ever messed with me again after that, but that's the kind of place that I grew up, can I take him? That's what I'm really thinking. But actually the real first question when you meet a man is just, I wonder if he's a believer. I wonder if he's a believer.

Well, this is my question. When I meet anybody, if it's a male, female, cashier, car repairman, RV person, sale ... whatever it is, the first question that I have is, I wonder if that person's a believer. And then that's the first domino. It puts everything else in the motion. So it's not a glittering generality. It's a very discreet step, and it's a mindset. So think about it.

And then second is a question that you can ask the person and there's many different ways to ask it, but where are you on your spiritual journey? And I know that I've asked this question of thousands and thousands of men, where are you on your spiritual ...? I ask everybody this question. Sometimes I'll say, are you a spiritual person? Or tell me a little bit about your spiritual journey. Or where are you on your spiritual journey? Or where are you on your spiritual pilgrimage? Different ways to ask it, but it's a question.

It's like when I'm out hiking, so I do like to think about maximizing things. So I used to pass somebody on the hiking trail and I would say, how you doing? Have a great day. And I did this for a few years and I kept thinking, I'm wasting an opportunity here. I'm wasting an opportunity here. So I said, what is the thing that I could say, or the question that I could ask that would give the highest return on that interaction? And I came up with a question, have you seen any wildlife? Because that's a useful interaction. So when I'm on the trail, if I see you on the trail and we go by each other, you can count on it. I'm going to ask you, have you seen any wildlife, or did you see any wildlife yet?

And that to be at the ready, you see, with a question that you already have decided in advance that you're going to ask, it's intentional, it's intentional. And if you want to expand your ministry, if you want to help those men, and I know you do, if you want to help them solve their problems, when you see them, just say to yourself, I wonder if he's believer. And then engage in a conversation, and however you say it. Use your own imagination. There's no one right way, but I wonder where that person is, if they're a believer. And then ask that person themselves, tell me a little bit about your spiritual journey. Where are you on your spiritual journey? And then walk away, wash your hands of it because you've done your job. Right? Or lean in.

And then the next question is, after you find out where they're in the spiritual journey, let me tell you about Jesus Christ and now he solves each and every one of these problems. Probably not, but the third question is, would you like to grab a cup of coffee? Would you like to grab a cup of coffee sometime, or lunch or breakfast? Or whatever because one cup of coffee can change the world. One cup of coffee can change the world. I gave last time a long list of the things that I didn't get as a child, but one thing I did get as a child is ... There was one teacher, his name was John Barber. And I actually had him for all sixth grades from the seventh through the 12th every year.

And somehow I got what scholar James Garbarino calls, I got tidbits of love. I got tidbits of love. I got enough tidbits of love from him that I could tell that somebody was interested in me and it made all the difference. And that's what having a cup of coffee with one of these guys out here who is in his moment of desperation ... I can look in your eyes and I can see the light. I can look in their eyes and I can see the

lack of light. You can tell. Where are you on your spiritual journey? Oh, that's really interesting. Would you like to get a cup of coffee sometime? And then whatever you want to talk about.

I have my own little formula. I call it foe swig. You have foe like he's a foe, and swig like you take a swig of whiskey, F-O-E and S-W-I-G. That's my formula, family, occupation, education, sports, work, interest goals. It's a progression. I used to use it in business. In fact, I used to sell investment shares in my real estate deals. And you couldn't buy an investment share at a first meeting, because I had a two step process. The first was relationship and the second was task. So at the first one, I wanted to get to know the person and I wanted them to get to know me, see if we shared values. And so I used foe swig, and I would ask them about their family, their occupation, their education, their sports, their work, their interests and their goals. And you can see the progression, you're moving.

And then they might say, well, tell me what kind of deals do you have? We're not going to talk about that today. This is just getting to know you. Now there is a second appointment where you can go beyond the getting to know them, but this is the future of disciple making. This is the future of disciple making. It's taking time with individual men. You may not be able to reach 10,000 men using this method. You most certainly will not, but over the course of years, you might be able to reach and impact who knows? Maybe a dozen, maybe 100. Who knows? Maybe more. I've been doing this once or twice a week for almost 40 years. Add it up. The Big Idea today; When God, and this is the future of making disciples, **when God puts a man in your path who is stuck, discipleship means finding out why, and then helping him solve that problem.**

Let's pray. Our dearest father, we are men. We stipulate, God, that we love you. We love people. We understand what the world needs. We're committed to our calling to disciple men. We want to help them change their core affections, and yet we need to be mobilized. So Lord, I just pray that you would help each of us to rethink these discrete, actionable, concrete steps that we could take. And whether it's these or some adaptation of it or some other innovation, that we would have our own way of actually engaging men who are stuck, figuring out why together. And then helping them solve that problem so that there can be a trust relationship that leads to all these things that Francis Schaeffer writes about. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.