

This is a must read for every pastor. *Pastoring Men* addresses the number one crisis in the church today, and that is a lack of men and the lack of opportunities for them to be in ministry for Jesus Christ. I endorse this book enthusiastically and believe in its transformational possibilities for men.

REV. DAVID ADAMS

General Secretary, General Commission on United Methodist Men

The church of the Lord Jesus is in desperate need for men of God; men who know God, love God and serve God with lives surrendered to his lordship. *Pastoring Men* helps us understand why we must and how we can effectively disciple men in our churches who will become radically devoted followers of our great Savior and King. Biblical and practical, this is a much needed resource for those who long to effectively pastor and raise up an army of godly men.

DANIEL L. AKIN

President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

I sensed the kindness of God while reading *Pastoring Men*, and it refreshed my soul. Pat Morley hits a home run with this, especially for leaders who want to have an effective ministry and desire to do something more than what has been going on concerning men.

GUS BESS

Senior Pastor, First Evangelical Free Church, Tucson

Pastoring Men is a realistic, encouraging, and insightful examination of how to develop—and sustain—a first-rate, field-tested method to disciple men. Put this book at the top of your reading list.

JAMES S. BOWMAN

Professor, Florida State University (and chair of Patrick's dissertation committee)

Editor, Public Integrity

I know of no one in America who knows more about men—what they think, want, feel, and believe—than Pat Morley. Not only that, I know of no one who cares more for men and has more passion for discipling them than Pat Morley. If you care about the “men problem” in our culture and the church, this is your book. It is profoundly biblical and incredibly practical. It could change the face of the church and, through the church, the nation.

STEVE BROWN

Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando

Teacher on the nationally syndicated radio program Key Life

Pastoring Men directly confronts a critical need in our churches today: developing godly men! The need is great, but so is the opportunity. Our churches must disciple all the men and equip them to succeed at home and in the culture. Pat Morley asks and answers the significant questions that enable pastors to effectively minister to all of their men.

KIRBYJON H. CALDWELL

Windsor Village Methodist Church, Houston

“This is a battle worth fighting.” What true words! It is a battle that takes diligent, persistent, effort along with even more diligence in prayer and trust in the Lord. It is also a battle worth fighting, especially by pastors. We need more men who are faithful followers of Christ in their homes, churches, jobs, and communities and who can lead and disciple other men, as well as women and children. The Lord has given Pat many insights into the effective discipleship of men. Come join the battle to disciple ongoing generations of godly men.

ROBERT C. (RIC) CANNADA JR.

Chancellor and CEO, Reformed Theological Seminary

Patrick Morley’s long-standing concern to see the light of Christ in the life of men has always been inspiring. Now this exceedingly practical book helping pastors implement discipleship programs specifically directed toward men will do much to shape the future of home, church, and the next generation. Morley writes in terms that reach men—and change them.

BRYAN CHAPELLE

President, Covenant Theological Seminary

This is an excellent book! One formula for excellence is: Passion + Precision = Excellence. Patrick Morley exudes a heart aflame for effective men’s discipleship while providing what pastors and lay leaders hunger for—precise, usable approaches and answers to the real needs of men today. If you have a heart to disciple men, this is your book. If you mark useable quotes as you read, plan to wear out your highlighter on this one!

TOM CLYMER

Ocean Drive Presbyterian Church

This is more than a book. It is a prophetic word that comes at a pivotal time in our contemporary history. *Pastoring Men* salutes the priority that God designed to be the leading edge of good, new beginnings of reformation and harbingers of hope. It’s a clarion call that not only beckons us back to His mandate, but gives us practical ways to follow. This book can renew our churches. It restores the priority of calling men to lead, to be the first to serve, and to be the examples that will direct us back to God’s best.

WAYNE CORDEIRO

New Hope Christian Fellowship Foursquare Church, Honolulu

Pastoring Men is written by a man who understands men—their needs, desires, and aspirations. Pat Morley offers a useful plan for any pastor who wants to focus on building a ministry of discipleship for every man in his church. Engaging, inspiring, and practical, *Pastoring Men* has vast potential in the process of discipling men in the local church.

ROD CULBERTSON JR.

Associate professor of practical theology, dean of student development

Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte

The information contained in this book is fundamental, biblical, and critical for this day and age. *Pastoring Men* articulates the needs of men both within the church and in representing the church in a secularized society. The church has, in many ways, failed at pastoring men. This book equips leaders to understand the challenge and have a clear vision for the call.

MAURY DAVIS

*Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Church of the Assemblies of God
Madison, Tennessee*

Every pastor knows that if you reach the man for Christ, you will also more than likely reach the entire family. Consequently, discipling the men in your church is strategic to fulfilling Christ's Great Commission. Patrick Morley's strategy is to disciple men who can impact every arena of life and ministry. This book combines the best of *Man In the Mirror* and *No Man Left Behind* to provide every pastor with the inspiration, strategy, and practical tools to disciple every man in the church. This excellent tool can create a continual flow of called, equipped, and committed lay leaders. It is a resource I and my leadership team will refer to time and time again.

MARK FULLER

Pastor, Grove City Church of the Nazarene

As a pastor to pastors, I believe you need to read this book. You'll discover how important you are in developing a vibrant men's ministry in your church. It won't happen as it should without your direct leadership. You'll discover that the results will permeate every aspect of your ministry.

GENE A. GETZ

*Pastor Emeritus, Chase Oaks Church
President, Center for Church Renewal, Plano, Texas*

Pat Morley knows men. He's been in the foxholes discipling hundreds for more than twenty years—weeping, teaching, counseling, and challenging them to be all that God wants them to be as husbands, fathers, employees/employers, and effective laymen in the church. As his pastor, I've watched him closely for all these years. He's the real deal. This book is a guide from Scripture to shoe leather to help all of us who are serious about change in our own lives as well as desperate to disciple others.

CHUCK GREEN

Pastor Emeritus, Orangewood Presbyterian Church

I don't think I have encountered a better apologetic for calling men to discipleship than Pat's new book. It gets inside the heart of both pastor and layman and introduces them to each other. Often much is lost in translation between pastor and the average guy; Pat becomes the mediator and translator. Real understanding is the result.

BILL HULL

Author, Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker, The Disciple-Making Church, The Disciple-Making Pastor

Men are indeed the untapped reservoir of useful energy for the kingdom of God. Patrick Morley has been used by the Lord to help men become a vital part of His work in the church and Kingdom. No one has more passion for men's ministry than this author. Read *Pastoring Men* and learn from one who knows how!

JOHNNY M. HUNT

Pastor, First Baptist Woodstock

President of Southern Baptist Convention

Pastor, this book will help you to better understand the men in your congregation . . . and to better understand yourself. It will sharpen your church's ministry to men . . . and it will sharpen you. Men are practical. And Patrick Morley is totally practical, but not predictable. Thank you, Patrick, for this invaluable tool!

JOEL C. HUNTER

Senior Pastor of Northland Church

If it were possible, I would give this book to every pastor in America. It's that good and right on target! It powerfully states what every pastor urgently needs to hear, namely, *your men desperately need you to disciple them*. Few men can explain why or how to do this better than Patrick Morley. Let him help you win with your men.

ROBERT LEWIS

Pastor-at-large, Fellowship Bible Church

Founder of Men's Fraternity

Statistics show the decline of participation of men in church. Pat Morley has confronted this situation with candor and compassion. He offers positive perspectives on how the church can reclaim men both in participation and leadership. His approach is extremely practical and very applicable for the local church. Those of us serving in the professional ministry genuinely appreciate this helpful and insightful book.

JOHN ED MATHISON

Senior Pastor, Frazier Memorial United Methodist Church

Leadership is influence. *Pastoring Men* is an insightful and practical tool to increase your influence with your men. This book will help you create, capture, and sustain the momentum you need to more effectively disciple all the men in your church. Read this book! You won't be disappointed!

JOHN C. MAXWELL

Author, speaker, and founder of ISS and EQUIP

Duluth, Georgia

Pat once again shows us that there is no task more important or urgent than discipling men. *Pastoring Men* shares with us the need, the burden, and the practical steps to "leave no man behind." Chapter 11, "Seventy Things Every Man Needs to Know" alone will prove to be an invaluable resource. I urge every pastor to read and apply this book to your life and ministry.

DWAYNE MERCER

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Oviedo, Florida

Patrick Morley has done it again. Just like *Man in the Mirror*, he has written a must read for men and pastors alike. Read it with your eyes, plant it in your heart, and you will be more of God's man than you ever dreamed you could be.

JAMES MERRITT

Cross Pointe Southern Baptist Church, Duluth, Georgia

Patrick Morley knows men. He knows their hopes, their hurts, and their dreams. Now The-Man-in-the-Mirror man provides pastors and other church leaders a tool that may become indispensable in our hurting churches that love hurting men. I commend *Pastoring Men* to you with enthusiasm. I just wish the book had been available when I was a pastor.

THOM S. RAINER

President and CEO, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville

The Bible repeatedly uses the phrase "act like men." So clearly there is something about Christian manhood and biblical masculinity that is desired when the gospel takes hold of a man's heart. Patrick Morley has again addressed this issue biblically and profoundly in a way that not only clarifies but also assists pastors and leaders in knowing how to shepherd and disciple men for Christ.

HARRY L. REEDER, III

Senior Pastor, Briarwood Presbyterian Church

Patrick is addressing one of the most critical issues for the church of the twenty-first century. Children will follow in the faith, values, and lifestyles of their fathers. We must engage men in the heroic places of their hearts to lead the next generation as role models of faith and integrity.

MIKE SLAUGHTER

Pastor, Ginghamsburg Church

Drawing from his vast experience, Pat has taken the mystery out of how to connect with, shepherd, and motivate men to be disciples of Jesus Christ. An incredibly insightful and practical work, *Pastoring Men* should be on every pastor's shelf as both blueprint for beginning a compelling men's ministry and as fresh wind to invigorate a stale one. This is a very important book for the kingdom.

JAY SIMMONS

Pastor, South City Presbyterian Church, St. Louis

As a pastor for fifty-plus years, I had a great desire to help men become the spiritual leaders God intends them to be. The work of Patrick Morley was very helpful to me. This newest book will be invaluable to pastors in that responsibility today. His chapters "What Do Men Want?" and "What Do Men Need?" are worth the price of the book.

JERRY VINES

President, Jerry Vines Ministries

Pastor Emeritus, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida

Past President, Southern Baptist Convention

Let's be honest: The worst kept secret in our churches is how poorly we're *really* doing at activating and equipping men for the most thrilling, fulfilling, and demanding purpose on the planet: following Jesus. With his new book, *Pastoring Men*, Patrick Morley squarely targets leaders and pastors with that challenge. Jammed with years of insight, "reality-check" statistics, and practical tips on the essential factors for discipling men, *Pastoring Men* gives us enough fire and resources to get it done. The "Seventy Things Every Man Needs to Know" topical index in part three is worth the price of the book alone.

DAVE WORKMAN

Senior Pastor, Vineyard Community Church

Author of The Outward-Focused Life

PASTORING MEN

WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T, AND WHY
IT MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

PATRICK MORLEY

MOODY PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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*In memory of ROBERT S. MORLEY
1923–2003*

*Husband of Alleen
Father of Pat, Robert, Pete, and Bill
A good man, humble, with integrity, and a hard worker*

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Gratitude must be offered to Moody Publishers for accepting me as a men’s author. Everyone on the Moody team has inspired me by their belief in the importance of this book, especially Paul Santhouse, Dave DeWit, Tracey Shannon, Greg Thornton, Steve Lyon, John Hinkley, Holly Kisly, Janis Backing, and my editor, Jim Vincent.

A special word of thanks to our dedicated headquarters staff at Man in the Mirror. They’ve heard everything in this book, and sharpened the concepts over the years: Pam Adkins, Jim Angelakos, Mia Angelakos, Ruth Cameron, Sharon Carey, Bernie Clark, Brett Clemmer, David Delk, Joanne Hunt, Vanessa Jones, Donna Keiderling, Kelly Laughridge, Michael Lenahan, Al Lenio, Stephanie Lopez, Liz Luke, Michael Maine, Scott Russell, Tracie Searles, Jim Seibert, Jamie Smith, Antonio Stevens, Svana Tolf, Greg Wilkinson, and Rise Wilson. Thank you for executing so well that I was free to pursue this book. And no one I’ve ever known is more helpful or productive than Daphne Mayer, my executive assistant. Thank you.

As always, my wife, Patsy, acted as my sounding board, offering both encouragement and wisdom.

PROLOGUE

AN OPEN LETTER TO LAYMEN FROM A PASTOR

The following letter is one I'm sure you'd love to send as a pastor—but, of course, you'd never send it. I'm writing it because I want you to know that I understand what you're going through with men.

Though it's fictitious, the letter is based on conversations I have had with hundreds of pastors during the past twenty years. I believe it represents their desire—and yours—to help men become disciples, as well as the frustration in pursuing that goal. It also reflects my passion that this book will equip you with the concepts and strategies you need to more effectively disciple every man in your church.

Dear Laymen,

I would like to get some things off my chest. Since I could never say these things to my own men (and survive), I will say them to you. I offer these thoughts humbly.

Frankly, I get nervous when some of my men get all excited and start talking men's movement lingo like *father wound, masculinity*, etc.

What usually happens is that the least respected men in the church—the ones who talk about Jesus all the time but struggle to keep a job—“take over” the men’s ministry. No one would follow them on a bet—I know I wouldn’t want to be in a small group they led.

So, honestly, it’s just easier for me to let them do what they want. I want to help them, but in my heart I don’t really think they have what it takes, and they will eventually peter out and I’ll be back to zero—or worse. Don’t get me wrong. I love them. And I have faith that God has good plans for them. But, at least at this point, they need to be the ministeres, not the ministers.

WHAT I CAN GET BEHIND

I’ll tell you what I can get behind. I can get behind a disciple-making plan that men I respect are personally involved with.

Let me tell you a secret. If you really want to get me involved, here's what you would do. You would find between six and twelve of the most respected men in the church—normal guys. Invite them to a meeting to explore and pray about reaching more men for Christ. Give me a heads up *before* this exploratory meeting, so I'm not feeling blindsided. Don't try to take it too fast. Pray a lot. Don't be afraid to ask men for a big commitment.

Once you have some men willing to make a go of it, then come see me. Please. When you do come see me, don't act like you're the first ones who ever thought of reaching the men in our church. I've beaten my head against that wall for years trying to get men more involved.

HOW TO WIN ME OVER

Give me space—and time—to process how it would work. Don't try to "close" me right away. Everyone thinks if they just lean on me hard enough then their program can go. Show me some stats, build the case, why should I add to, change, or tweak my existing focus?

Ask me how ministry to men can help me. Find out what I think are the problems our men face as husbands, fathers, workers, churchmen, and men in general. I pick up quite a lot, you know, in the course of a day.

And come see me before you have the whole concept designed—I will need to make sure the plans mesh with our vision and other church ministries. Besides, I probably can make a unique contribution as the pastor.

We can meet and discuss why we need to reach men, how men in our church are doing, what kind of men we want to produce, what will constitute success for us, and how we will measure progress.

Make it easy for me to support a ministry to our men. Talk about getting men into small groups to study the Bible. Talk about helping men understand the gospel. Talk about how we can build men up as godly men for the home, church, workplace, and community. Talk about integrating men into the existing ministries of the church. And not just some of our men, but all of them!

Don't talk about adding a bunch of new programming like retreats, seminars, etc. First things first. Let's see how you can help make the ministries we're already committed to work.

JUST SO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M UP AGAINST

Like you, I want to serve God and have a successful ministry. I got into this field because I sensed a calling from God to make a difference for the gospel of Jesus.

The other day someone asked, “Why don’t you care about the men in our church?” Why would they think that? It hurts when people question my motives.

I work hard to be an effective leader. The demands are unbelievably diverse—and they excite me. I love the variety of public communication, private counseling, leading a staff, inspiring volunteers, administrating an organization, marriages, baptisms, funerals, committee meetings, and more.

Here’s what I see happening when it comes to men’s ministries: A man brings me an idea, but often acts like I had nothing else to do but drop everything and embrace his idea . . . an idea he did not do a very good job researching, explaining, or finding others to support. He has no plan. In fact, what he really wants is to dump the whole idea in my lap and be done with it. He thinks I’m the professional so it’s my job. Are you surprised that a pastor would speak so bluntly? Don’t be. We’re human too, and we all feel this way sometimes.

You have no idea how many people let me down. Hey, I’m not feeling sorry for myself, and I’m certainly not angry. Indeed, I thank God for those people who, when they tell me they will get something done, I can bank it. But often I have not found people to be very dependable. It’s as though their word to the church is the first thing that gets cut. Even that wouldn’t bother me so much if they would just tell me. As it is, most of the nonperformers don’t tell me until the day they were supposed to be finished.

NEVERTHELESS, I WANT TO BUILD A GROWING CHURCH

So please keep me in your prayers. Think the best of my motives. Help me see that you are really serious about reaching our men. Show me that you don’t merely want to start something, and then dump it in my lap.

And by the way, you will have more clout with me if I see that you have

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a track record of actually ministering to men yourself.

So I'm excited about what we could do together that we could never do alone. I am eager to partner with you to grow Christ's church. When can we get together?

Warmly in Christ,
Your Pastor

1

IS PASTORING MEN WORTH THE EFFORT?

Much has been made about the “men problem.” You can hear about it on Oprah. You can read about it in *Time*. You can watch the destruction it creates with Dr. Phil.

School teachers can barely educate on the heels of it. Social services are overwhelmed because of it. Employers are stumped by it. Law enforcement feels the brunt of it. Many jails and prisons are full because of it. Politicians don’t know what to do with it. Candidates avoid it.

Authors and academics have assembled alarming statistics to prove it. Health care professionals publish convincing reports to document the human cost of it. Cable shows rant at it. Talk radio personalities have all the answers for it. Movies glamorize it. Television commercials mock it.

The “men problem.” Divorce courts are at capacity because of it. Families are ripped apart by it. Wives soak their pillows with tears as a result of it. Children grow up in poverty as a consequence of it. Teenagers experiment with drugs and sex to cope with it.

A lot of money gets spent to treat the symptoms of it. We open teenage pregnancy centers, establish substance abuse centers, increase budgets for social

services, build homes for battered women, authorize more jail space, put extra beds in our homeless shelters, increase the number of law enforcement officers, and fit our schools with metal detectors to deal with it.

Everyone is concerned about it. Many address the consequences of it. Yet very few people are doing anything that will change the root of it.

“It” is among the most pervasive social, economic, political, and spiritual problems of all time.

Men have become one of our largest neglected people groups. As a result, they are prone to get caught up in the rat race, lead unexamined lives, and become cultural (rather than biblical) Christians.

CHECK OUT THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE

The collateral damage on marriages and families is staggering:

- Of men who married between 1970 and 1974, just 46.2 percent were still married after thirty years.¹
- Of the seventy-two million children in America under the age of eighteen, 33 percent will go to bed tonight in a home without a biological father.²
- Children in female-headed families are five times more likely to live in poverty, repeat a grade, and have emotional problems compared to families where a father is present.³

We have become a nation of spiritual widows and practical orphans (James 1:27). These are real people—real casualties. As one police officer said, “Statistics are tragedies with the tears wiped away.”

Today’s average man is like a deer caught in the headlights of a Hummer. He doesn’t fully understand—and so can’t apply—what God has to say about a man’s identity, purpose, relationships, marriage, sex, fathering, work, money, ministry, time, emotions, integrity, and dozens of other subjects.

As a result, most men are tired. They often have a lingering feeling something isn’t quite right about their lives. Often their lives are coming unglued. And it is common for them to feel like nobody really cares. Even in the church, men are being left behind. The situation is so significant that the next chapter will explore this in depth.

Yet men routinely “bluff” when asked, “How are you doing?” Pastors observe

this all the time. For that reason, I think we should be just as concerned about the men who have not become statistics as those who have.

It's not as though these men want to struggle or fail. But their *capabilities* are not equal to their *intentions*. As Denzel Washington, playing a recovering alcoholic ex-military bodyguard in a Latin American country, said in *Man on Fire*, "You're either trained or you're not trained." Spiritually, most men are not.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Reaching these men is one of the great strategic opportunities—and needs—of our time. Instead of the "men problem," some quarters need to start seeing the "men opportunity." Pastors are the logical choice. Pastors bring grace to the equation. They see men not so much for what they are, but for what they can become in Christ. Pastors are the ones whom God has called to instruct, encourage, correct, challenge, inspire, and call men to "act like a man." This is a significant yet solvable problem. There is no human or spiritual reason why we can't get this done. Of course, "it" will take time and dedication.

The purpose of this book is to equip you to more effectively pastor *all* of your men. God's vision is that *every* man in your church becomes a disciple of Jesus. Men's ministry needs to be redefined so that it is "all-inclusive." *This is a book about why and how to disciple every man in your church.*

Most pastors also desperately need more lay leaders. Another opportunity in discipling men is that some will grow into leadership. For example, a friend of mine started a small group with seven men in his Birmingham, Alabama, church. During the next seven years, his ministry grew to seven groups totaling 128 men. At that time his church needed about 150 leaders to function properly. One hundred of those leaders came through his small groups. But what's especially intriguing is that approximately seventy-five of those men—fully half of the church's leadership!—started in his groups as cultural Christians who would (probably) not have otherwise stepped up to become church leaders.

You would not be holding this book in your hands unless pastoring men was important to you. But if I were to ask you, "Are you effective in pastoring your men?" like most pastors you would probably say, "No." I have discovered that even pastors who rank among the most successful at pastoring their men are hesitant to say, "Yes, I'm effective."

When asked why he was so tentative, one successful pastor said, "I know

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too much. I know that even though we've made progress with a man by taking him through our basic discipleship course, then officer training, and now he's a leader—I still see areas in his life that need work—as in my own, or I hear about someone who had a negative experience with him and I say to myself, ‘Hmmm, he's not quite there.’”

Most church leaders we talk to are profoundly dissatisfied with the number of men in their churches who are effective disciples. But the majority of churches that have tried to implement men's discipleship initiatives have not been able to sustain them. They need better information, models, methods, and processes grounded in research, field testing, and biblical authority. That's why I wrote this book.

This is not a book about how to get a men's group going in your church. This is not a book about changing the décor of your sanctuary. This is not a book about starting a “separate” men's ministry that reaches a fraction of your men. Those are secondary concerns.

Since 1973 I have been “pastoring men,” and here are three promises I want to make. By the end of this book you will know:

- *The state of your men*—how they are doing, what they want, what keeps them from getting what they want, and what they need (chapters 2–5)
- *The essential factors* to successfully disciple men (chapters 7 and 8)
- *A concrete, sustainable strategy* to help you organize your passion for men's discipleship without a lot of new programming. As you will see, you are probably already doing most of what needs to be done (chapter 9)

Also, I've included an *alphabetized reference section* of (mostly) one-page summaries on seventy subjects that every man needs to know, giving you a masculine perspective that you can work into your sermons, teachings, counseling, and writing (Chapter 11).

THE STAKES

Helping pastors disciple their men is my passion for personal reasons. In 1926, when my dad was two, the youngest of four children, his father deserted his family.

The stress got the best of my grandmother. She had a stroke, so she and her four young children moved in with two of her unmarried sisters (my great-aunts). Together, those three women raised my dad and his siblings. They did a great job,

but they were dirt poor.

In those days, long before government programs, the community closed ranks when some of “their people” were in need. The one sister who worked was an elevator operator at the local bank; knowing the situation, the employer paid her a generous salary of \$50 a week (roughly \$15 an hour in today’s dollars). She bought groceries each day on her way home. The grocer told her, “Nina, you take whatever you need, and pay whatever you can.”

When my dad turned six he went to work with his older brother, Harry. They had two jobs. They rose every morning at 3:00 a.m. to deliver milk and then worked a paper route. The school gave them a permanent tardy slip.

My dad never knew the warmth of a father’s embrace. He never felt the scratch of a dad’s whiskers. He never overheard his dad whistling or singing while he worked, never smelled his work clothes, never heard him joke around or read a bedtime story, never tossed a ball, never felt a dad tussle his hair, never heard him say, “I love you, son” or “I’m proud of you, son,” and never had a father’s approval or guidance.

When Dad became a man he had to decide if he would repeat or break the cycle. As the oldest of four boys, I’m grateful my dad wanted to break the cycle. But fathering was unexampled to him. So our family joined a church because Dad and Mom wanted to get some moral and religious instruction for their four sons.

Our church had a vision to put my dad to work and, because of his strong work ethic, he responded to the challenge. By age forty, my dad was the top layman in the church. I suppose that’s what he thought it must mean to be a “good Christian.”

Of course, there is a lot of work to do in the church, but our church did not also have a vision to disciple my dad to be a godly man, father, and husband—the real reason he joined. He did the best he could, but he was left to “guess” at how to father my brothers and me.

Something happened in the church that hurt my mother’s feelings, and my dad was burned out, so we quit church when I was in the tenth grade and my youngest brother was in the third grade.

Our family was soon hit by a force from which we have still not fully recovered. I quit high school in the middle of my senior year. My brother Robert followed in my footsteps. He eventually died of a heroin overdose. My other two brothers have had a variety of employment, substance, and marriage issues.

My dad just never saw it coming. If he could have seen around the bend, I'm sure he would have done things differently. If he was still alive I know he would say, "I take full responsibility. That was my decision." And I respect that. Every man does need to take responsibility for his own life.

But I would like to suggest that the church is culpable. The church knew (or should have known) what was around the bend. The church should have had a vision to disciple my Dad. But it didn't.

Fortunately, God is the Redeemer, and this story took another turn—I fell in love with Patsy. She went forward at a Billy Graham Crusade to publicly profess her faith at the age of eleven, and has never wavered. God graciously grafted the gospel back into my family line through Patsy's family line—Patsy led me to Christ.

Then God allowed me the joy of leading my brother Robert to Christ before he died. Another brother has also professed Christ, and so has my only niece on this side of the family. Dad and Mom also both came to Christ (or came back—I'm not sure). Neither one of them ever got over their bitterness toward the church, but they both affirmed their faith in Jesus on their deathbeds.

Both of my children can never remember a time when they didn't love Christ. They are now both married to fantastic Christian spouses and serving the Lord. I wish my father was still alive so I could tell him, "Dad, we did break the cycle. It should have only taken one generation and it took two, but we did break the cycle."

My Dad and I have the same DNA, so what was the difference? Why did I succeed where he failed? The difference was that I belonged to a church that had a vision to disciple me to be a godly man, husband, and father, while my Dad did not. Church is where I learned how to study the Bible for myself, how to study together with others, and how to share my faith and lead someone to Christ.

The reason I am so passionate about equipping pastors and churches to disciple men is this: I know that in every church there are men just like my Dad. These are men with good hearts and good intentions who have come to church for all the right reasons. How tragic when they fall away.

I also believe that in most churches there are men like my grandfather—men who are not only going to pull the plug on church, but on their families too. And they have no idea of the forces of destruction they're about to set in motion—that more than eighty years later, like me, their children's children may still be

trying to recover from that fateful decision.

At the Man in the Mirror ministry, we see it every day in the broken homes and shattered lives of families who have lost a husband, father, and provider.

Obviously I will never know what it might have been like to grow up in a family with a dad who was discipled to be a godly man, husband, and father. My hope and prayer is that by learning and applying the skills in this book, you will feel equipped to more effectively pastor men like my dad and the grandfather I never knew. And men like me who sincerely want to break the cycle but can't do it without your help. May the young boys growing up in your church today never have to one day repeat a story like mine.

THE ANSWER: THE DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH

Scientists keep looking for a holy grail that unifies the cosmos—a “theory of everything.” Pastors don’t have to keep looking. We have a unifying theory. Jesus taught us the holy grail for unifying His church. It’s making disciples. Discipleship is the core mission Jesus gave His bride. Making disciples is the irrefutable biblical mission of your church.

Discipleship is the process by which men become civilized. The institutional church is God’s appointed means—the “first responders”—to help men become disciples. However, the church (in general) has not been making disciples at a proper pace. According to one survey, only 16 percent of church-attending adults are involved in organized discipleship classes, and twice as many women as men. (Discipleship, of course, is a lot more than attending classes; we will examine discipleship closely in Chapters 5 and 6.)

One day a highly placed executive in one of America’s largest evangelical denominations told me, “In our denomination, we are not making disciples. And that’s because our pastors have never been discipled.”

Later, my wife and I went to dinner with the chancellor of a seminary and his wife. I told him what the denominational leader (from a different denomination) had said. He lamented, “Well, I’m not surprised. We find that when our students arrive, they have never been discipled. And we have no plans to disciple them while they’re here.” (Since that time he has initiated a pilot program with full-time staffing to disciple their students.)

So people who have never been discipled go to seminary where they are not discipled, and then they are sent to churches where their main responsibility is

to—what? Make disciples.

Talk about an elephant in the living room! As a result, many pastors feel ill-equipped to disciple their men. They don't feel like they understand what their men are going through or how to help them. The unhappy result is that men don't get what they need from their church, and the church doesn't get what it needs from their men. That's why I wrote this book—to give you the confidence and tools you need to disciple your men. This is not an approach to make the world more comfortable, but different.

If you project out twenty or fifty years, can you visualize any way of ever getting the world right if men are wrong? The “men problem” is the root cause behind virtually every problem that ails us. It's an untreated cancer that keeps producing more and worse tumors.

One day a major donor said, “Pat, I can't support your ministry anymore.”

I said, “That's fine, but tell me why.”

He said, “My heart is really in prison ministry and teenage crisis pregnancy centers.”

I laughed out loud. I said, “By all means please support that important work. But why do you think so many young men end up in prison? And why do you think a young teenaged girl would hop into bed with a boy?” (We dialogued more and he did continue his support.)

Let's treat the symptoms, of course, but let those who can—pastors—also treat the disease. A disciple-making church offers the only *systemic* solution to what ails us. As someone has said, “The church has many critics, but no rivals.”

We need a fresh, research-based, pastor-led, biblical, field-tested approach that results in lasting change—one that is “actionable.”

WE NEED A FRESH APPROACH

There have always been men's movements. The contemporary secular and Christian men's movements both started circa 1990. The secular men's movement went “blip” and promptly disappeared.

The problem with the secular men's movement was that it had no answer for “Tuesday.” Men were lured into the woods on Saturday where they painted themselves up like Indians, beat on tom-toms, talked to trees, and cried out in existential pain. By Sunday they felt relief. But on Monday they had to return to civilization, and by Tuesday the futility and pain had returned.

The contemporary Christian men's movement has survived because Jesus Christ prevails on Tuesday. Instead of war paint, whoops, and grunts, men are being discipled into the gospel of Jesus. By the late 1990s, the nexus of the movement had shifted from loud stadiums into the quiet corridors of the local church.

Yet by the early part of this century, the Christian men's movement could be characterized as "a lot of men with really good hearts doing the best they could." There had been a lot of false starts.

Many pastors and laymen had devoted as many as ten years to untested strategies that really were doomed to fail from the start. And I didn't see any reason to think things would be different in another ten or twenty years—unless we came up with a fresh approach.

WE NEED A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH

At the same time, I have also sensed the need for a more research-based approach to men's discipleship. So in 2002, to augment my master's in theological studies, I embarked on doctoral research which led to earning a PhD in management in 2006. For my dissertation I studied the question, "Why do some churches succeed at men's discipleship while others languish or fail?"

My research revolved around two major issues. First, I wanted to learn, "How do church-based men's discipleship ministries that succeed differ from those that languish or fail?" Second, I wanted to discover, "What are successful pastors doing differently than the pastors of ineffective or failed ministries to men?"

I wanted to know from a management perspective, "What are the factors that lead to success or failure when implementing a men's discipleship program?" To get at the answers, I decided on multiple-case-study research. I compared and contrasted churches that had effective men's discipleship programs to churches that had ineffective or failed programs.

We will dive into the deep end of the pool and cover my research findings in chapters 7 and 8, "Success Factors in Discipling Men," but here is the indisputable bottom line: *The senior pastor is the key to everything.* These are the three main factors in the highly effective churches:

1. A senior pastor with the *vision* to disciple every man in the church.
2. A senior pastor with the *determination* to succeed.
3. A senior pastor who found a *sustainable strategy* to make disciples.

Of course, Jesus is the perfect example of these three factors. In fact, His sustainable strategy has outlasted every institution, organization, kingdom, and government ever established.

When it comes to men's ministry, I am aware of how brutally many overzealous laymen have treated their pastors. Yet, without you, the pastor, men's discipleship in your church will never be more than a fringe activity. And, as we will see, you can be successful at this without adding a lot of new programming.

WE NEED A PASTOR-LED APPROACH

I cannot overstate this: *No one has more influence with your men than you do.* While writing this book I was invited to speak to a special men's class at a local church during the Sunday School hour. My speaking was well publicized—both the senior pastor and the executive pastor announced it. About thirty-five men attended and we had a wonderful time. Simultaneously, the senior pastor was teaching a three-week series for men on Sunday evenings. He had five hundred men attend his men's classes. It was a priority to this pastor, and the men sensed it.

As the pastor, you can accomplish what laymen can only dream about—and so much more quickly. With the support of his senior pastor, John started a small-group ministry in his very busy 1,000 member church in Atlanta. Over the span of seven years, his ministry grew to ten groups with a combined total of about 120 people.

Then a new senior pastor came on board. He shared John's vision for small groups. He convinced the leadership that the congregation should stop coming to the church building on Wednesday nights. Instead, he wanted to break people into small groups that would meet in homes.

In the spring he announced that they would start the new small-group ministry in the fall. Over the summer he preached on the importance and value of small groups. On the first night, 817 people met in small groups.

It took seven *years* for a talented, committed layman (he's in top management with a Fortune 500 company) to recruit 120 people into small groups—even with his pastor's full *support*. With the pastor's *personal involvement*, it took only seven *months* to recruit 817 people into small groups—an increase of nearly 700 percent.

There's no getting around it—the senior pastor is the key to everything.

Everything points to this overarching conclusion: For a critical mass of men to become disciples in a church, pastors will need to take the lead. To succeed you

will need biblically sound, research-based, field-tested strategies and models. It would not be fair to ask you to develop these tools on your own.

WE NEED A BIBLICAL APPROACH

Suppose you wanted to start a company to make computers. You put together a business plan to manufacture 100,000 computers over the next five years. You raise \$100 million from an investor.

Five years later your investor returns and asks for a report. You say, “We’re doing great! We did it! We produced 100,000 units! We made 15,000 refrigerators, 10,000 toasters, 21,000 microwave ovens, 50,000 lava lamps, and we’re up to 4,000 computers!”

Your investor replies, “Wow, 4,000 computers. But that’s only 4 percent of what you projected.”

“Oh yes,” you say, “but look at all the other useful things we’ve produced!”

“That’s wonderful,” he says, “but I was planning to use those computers to change the world. Now it cannot happen. You’ve made the world more comfortable. I wanted to make it different.”

For 2,000 years we (the church) have only had one business plan: “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:18–20). The final marching orders from Jesus are “Go and make disciples.” Those orders still stand. They have not been amended, altered, or rescinded. More millions of people and more billions of dollars have been mobilized by this brief message than any other speech in recorded history.

Our “investor,” Jesus, could have directed us to make anything he wanted. He could have said, “Go and make *worshipers*.” But he didn’t. He said, “Go and make disciples.” He could have said, “Go and make *workers*.” But he didn’t. He said, “Go and make disciples.” He could have said, “Go and make *tithers*.” But he didn’t. He said, “Go and make disciples.”

Does that mean Jesus isn’t interested in worshipers, workers, and tithers? Of course He is. But Jesus knew we don’t get worshipers by trying to make worshipers. We get worshipers by making disciples. Jesus knew we don’t get workers by trying to make workers. We get workers by making disciples. And so on. Everything falls into place when we make disciples. True disciples can’t wait to work (and worship, tithe, serve, perform social justice, evangelize, love one another, and so on).

The central mission of the church—the overarching goal—is to “make disciples.”

Discipleship is the “portal” priority through which all the other desired outcomes of the *ecclesia* are achieved. (The “portal” priority concept is explained graphically in chapter 9, “A Strategy to Reach Every Man.”) The key to success at every point is, “Go and make disciples.” The pastor’s chief role is to make disciples.

There is one, and only one, way in which a man can win the battle for his soul. It is simple and concrete. His single greatest need is to become a disciple of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The goal of pastoring men, then, is to disciple men into the gospel.

WE NEED A FIELD-TESTED APPROACH

A large part of my purpose and calling—and also for *Man in the Mirror*, ministry—is to help bring vision, strategic thinking, and organization to the Christian men’s discipleship movement.

I am a men’s specialist—a “one trick” pony—a consultant on men’s issues, and an advocate for men. (I hesitate to say “expert” since I think of an expert as someone who knows more and more about less and less until finally he knows everything there is to know about nothing!)

From the time I became a Christian in 1973, my overarching passion has been to challenge men to stop, examine their lives, be reconciled to Christ, and make needed changes based on God’s greater purposes for their lives.

Since 1986 I have taught a new Bible message (almost) every week at *The Man in the Mirror* Bible Study—150 men of all ages and stations in life who meet every Friday morning at a local civic center. I figure I’ve prepared and delivered over 1,000 different messages tailored specifically to men.

When I wrote the book *The Man in the Mirror* in 1989, no one, and least of all me, ever imagined the millions of men God would touch through that book! After all, I was an anonymous commercial real estate developer plying my trade here in Central Florida.

In fact, if it weren’t for pastors, I wouldn’t be in ministry today! In 1989 we had a warehouse full of unsold copies of *The Man in the Mirror*. So we offered them for free to pastors. Seven thousand pastors took up the offer, and that’s how the book took off.

And the rest, as they say, is history. I have written fourteen books for men and several hundred articles for and about men. In 2000, we started a program to offer books by the case for just over \$1 each. At this writing, about eight million

books have been distributed to men through churches. Our faculty members have conducted over one thousand men's seminars in churches throughout the United States and the world. The Man in the Mirror Bible Study went online in 2001 and is now downloaded thousands of times each week—many for men's groups that meet in churches, conference rooms, and cubicles around the world.

Annually we work with over thirty thousand leaders who disciple men. Our Leadership Training Center has equipped thousands of leaders in conferences that teach a model that I will unpack for you in chapter 9, “A Strategy to Reach Every Man.”

I tell you these things because I want you to know that I am not writing from an announcer’s booth; I am actively in the game, as are you. In this book I consider it my privilege and duty to share with you what we have learned through these field-tested experiences.

Research-based, field-tested concepts are important so you don’t waste your time—often measured in years—on second- or even third-level priorities. For example, a lot of thinkers have tried to turn the church’s failures with men into a gender issue. They offer solutions that address making the church more male friendly. I’m certainly not against this, but it falls in the category of “second things.” It’s just a theory, and one that may prove costly. As my dissertation committee often asked me, “Sez who?”

If you’re not careful, you can end up with a committee talking incessantly about decorating themes instead of how to lead men into a vital communion with the living Christ. I’m almost embarrassed to write those two concepts in the same sentence.

I don’t think Jesus minds if your church wants to park a Harley in the narthex—it’s not the main thing, but neither is it prohibited (and it’s probably a culturally relevant idea). But I do think Jesus desperately cares if your church wants to disciple men into His gospel and help them become friends of God.

It takes a long time to make a disciple, the process is often messy, and it rarely proceeds in a “step-by-step” sequence. To illustrate, I’ve included a case study of how I became a disciple in Chapter 6.

In chapter 10, “Why the Man in the Mirror Men’s Bible Study Works—A Case Study,” I will break down for you what I think makes this long-running, field-tested Bible study an effective model for men’s discipleship.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MAN BECOMES A DISCIPLE?

As the pastor, you hear a loud knock on your door. It's Jason Steele—a "Sunday only" Christian for seventeen years. But three years ago you decided that discipling men needed to be one of your top priorities. Two years ago, your church sponsored a seminar to create momentum among men on the fringe, and Jason attended. Though it wasn't anything you hadn't said all along, the speaker came at things from a fresh angle, and the message rang Jason's bell. (Actually, the only reason an outside speaker can harvest is that you have faithfully prepared the soil. See John 4:36–38.)

Jason surrendered his life to Christ at that point—whether for the first time or as a recommitment, it's hard to say.

When offered a six-week, follow-up discussion group, Jason leaped at the chance to sign up. At the end of the six weeks, the leader asked him for "six more weeks" to go a little deeper. Eventually, the group gelled into a long-term Bible study and prayer group.

Jason, like many men in your church, has come to know and love Christ with a passion. And now here he is, standing in your doorway. He says, "Pastor, you have to give me something to do—a work or service or ministry of some kind. As I have grown to understand more about the unfathomable work of the cross, I can no longer sit idle. I can no longer be happy unless I do something to serve this great God. What can I do to help you?"

This is a great day in your life. Even though the results seemed small at first, you persevered with "discipling men" as a top priority. The long hours of building into the lives of your men, the countless prayers for God to send workers, your determination—at this moment all of it seems worth the effort.

Soon after Jason, other men begin to trickle, then flood, into your office. At the five-year mark, you actually run out of ministries for men inside the church! Now you start "sending" workers into community-based ministries.

One day the financial secretary brings you a report that the church has a surplus. As the men have grasped their roles as stewards, they have been much more generous. Gone is the need to plead for finances. You have been able to respond to additional requests from missionaries for support that you once had to turn away.

One afternoon your secretary announces at 3:00 p.m. that all your marriage counseling appointments for the day are finished.

“What?” you say, in a mild state of shock. As your men have come to understand their duty to love and nurture their wives, marriages have been healed and the counseling load has dwindled. On that happy day, you arrive home early and have a meaningful conversation with your own wife!

Then one day, your youth minister brings you a report that the youth facilities are out of space. Apparently, as the young people have watched their fathers transformed before their very eyes, they want in on what’s happening. They have flocked to the youth meetings to learn more about this Jesus, this radical person who changed their fathers’ lives.

Growing men. More workers. Better leaders. Bigger budgets. Restored marriages. Curious youth. A balanced workload. A strong reputation in the community. An increase in first-time visitors. Spiritual satisfaction. A calling come true.

Sound too good to be true? There are churches all over America experiencing these results because the pastor has focused on discipling men.

IS PASTORING MEN WORTH THE EFFORT?

There is raging in the cosmos and all around us a titanic battle between the forces of good and evil for men’s souls. This battle is raging out of control in neighborhoods across America—your neighborhood. Sound overstated?

Think for a moment about the casualties taking place on your street, where your men work, even in your church. Men leave homes, women weep, a little twelve-year-old girl prays, “God, why is my daddy always so angry?”

This is a real battle. These are real men with real families.

The single greatest hope for these men and the world is Christ and His church. I love the church, but the church on the whole has not been able to muster an ongoing will or comprehensive strategy to disciple men. Pastoring men is not a top priority in *any* denomination based upon their actual allocations of financial and intellectual resources.

Nevertheless, we should be optimistic. Together, we can create a national dialogue about the importance of reaching men—men like my dad, my grandfather, and me. I thank God all the time for inserting me into a disciple-making church. In fact, I shudder at the thought of what might have been.

This is a battle worth fighting. Woodrow Wilson said, “I would rather fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail.”

This is also a battle we can win. The challenge before us is daunting, but not

Pastoring Men

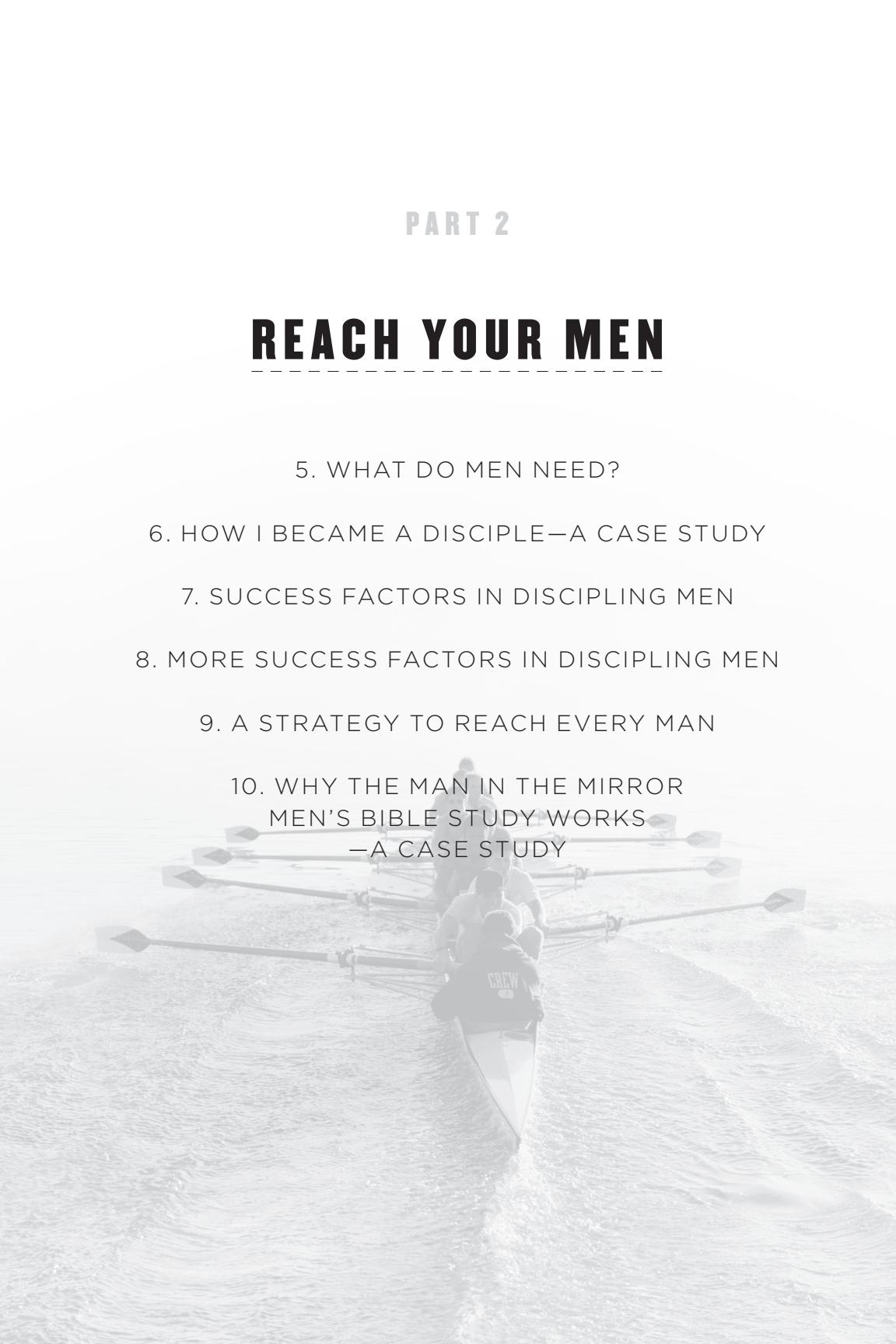
impossible. In fact, Jesus Christ will win. We cannot, we must not, and, by God's grace, we will not fail. Pastoring men is worth the effort.

Ultimately, though, we need to pastor men because it's the right thing to do. Pastoring men may not be easy or glamorous, and it's often thankless work. Yet when a man conquers "it," that will likely change the entire course of his family for many generations to come.

And what if you're behind? A Chinese proverb says, "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now."

PART 2

REACH YOUR MEN

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5. WHAT DO MEN NEED?
 6. HOW I BECAME A DISCIPLE—A CASE STUDY
 7. SUCCESS FACTORS IN DISCIPLING MEN
 8. MORE SUCCESS FACTORS IN DISCIPLING MEN
 9. A STRATEGY TO REACH EVERY MAN
 10. WHY THE MAN IN THE MIRROR
MEN'S BIBLE STUDY WORKS
—A CASE STUDY



WHAT DO MEN NEED?

Once upon a time there was a manufacturing plant that produced an equal number of trousers and dresses. The plant prospered—three shifts ran around the clock. Nearly everyone in town worked there and, of course, wore trousers and dresses.

THE PARABLE CONTINUES . . .

It remained that way for generations. But about fifty years later, when some of the grandchildren had grown up, they became bored with factory work, especially the ones who wore trousers. They felt most of the trousers—and many of the dresses—manufactured at the plant were out of style *These clothes just aren't relevant to the times*, they thought. So they left to search for a better life.

With fewer people in town, the demand for trousers and dresses began to decline, especially for trousers; in fact the plant was producing only half as many trousers as dresses.

Few noticed the change day to day, but after a couple of decades the plant—which had the capacity to run three shifts—was down to a single shift. That left a tremendous unused productive capacity, though hardly anyone seemed to notice

and even fewer made a fuss. After all, the troublemakers had left, and those who remained seemed content to leave well enough alone.

Because the demand they did have was heavily weighted toward dresses, plant management, as you might expect, increasingly catered to the dress division. When management felt they could afford to purchase new equipment, they naturally bought it for the dress division, since that's where the sales were.

Dress purchasers insisted the plant keep up with current styles, but management rarely heard from trousers at all. So the dress division received a large budget for new product design, while trousers hardly received any budget at all.

Since more people worked in dresses than trousers, most of management's time focused on dresses. Each year they spent less time thinking about trousers, and trousers became terribly out of step with the times. In fact, some of the designs had not changed in decades. The trousers they did make seemed to be of inferior quality—not able to stand up to normal wear and tear, nor the demands of everyday life. Since the plant wasn't making as many trousers, there just weren't enough good ones to go around.

It became a vicious downward spiral. In fact, conditions deteriorated so far that poor trousers sales eventually threatened to bring down dresses too.

Some of the more perceptive people began to ask, "Why can't they make trousers the way they used to?" Eventually, a few of the more innovative plant managers began to explore ways to solve the problem.

Management realized that if they were ever going to get the factory back to full capacity, they would need some fresh ideas to increase trouser production. They would have to design some new products to attract purchasers, stimulate demand for new trousers, retrain some managers, and retool the assembly lines to make quality trousers.

They knew they would need to find raw materials that could be made into trousers, get them into the plant, and start producing trousers suited for the times. The managers were excited and dreamed about adding a second shift. But they weren't quite sure where to start.

SOLVING THE RIGHT PROBLEM

In this chapter we will answer the all-important question, "What do men need?" Like the plant managers in the parable, where do you start?

It is easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. When you

and I are at work, all day long we look at “the data.” If we rely on our own best thinking, we will often come to the wrong conclusion. We will believe those we should not, disbelieve those we should, pick the wrong people for leadership, launch the wrong programs, and fear our friends while embracing those who oppose us. Consider just three historical examples.

The men of Israel made a treaty because the Gibeonites showed them moldy bread, cracked wineskins, old clothes, and claimed to come from a distant country. This was a clever ruse—they lived nearby. Where did the men of Israel go wrong? Joshua 9:14 (NLT) says, “So the Israelites examined their food, but they did not consult the Lord.” The men of Israel came to the wrong conclusion because they looked at the data, but didn’t ask God for direction.

Frankly, our men also put on a ruse. They put on their “game faces” so we will think everything is “just perfect.” And then, when they crack, it’s tempting to give them a social worker’s or a psychologist’s answer.

For forty days the troops of Israel listened to Goliath and cowered in fear. David looked the giant over once and said, “Don’t worry about a thing. I can take him. The battle is the Lord’s.” Armed with confidence in God, he then went out and killed Israel’s enemy. It is easy to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion, as the soldiers did. The “men problem” is a Goliath, but God has called pastors to “take him.”

Samuel, sent to anoint one of Jesse’s sons to be the next king, on seeing Eliab thought to himself, “Surely he is the one!” But the LORD said, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height. . . . The Lord doesn’t see things the way you do. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7 NLT). If you have been a pastor for very long, you know how easy it is to look at the data and come to the wrong conclusion. You have a growing list of failed initiatives that promised to grow your men but were not sustainable. You are tired of “clever.” All along you knew in your heart, “There are no short cuts.”

THE BIBLICAL SOLUTION

We can give men what they really need if, instead of looking at the data, we ask God for direction. Fortunately, in the Bible, Jesus has already given the church its direction. In this chapter we will see that, despite the complexity of men’s lives, there is a single, golden solution. Jesus called his followers “disciples.” And Jesus told those of us who are already disciples to go and make more disciples.

What men need is to become disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and all that this implies. It is a single concept that fully captures the essence of what it means to be “in Christ.”

I know you will agree that people often use the same word to mean different things, or different words to mean the same thing. So before going further, let’s make sure we mean the same thing when we say “disciple.”

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

When I ask pastors and lay leaders, “What is a disciple?” they often don’t have a ready answer. In fact, one time I was part of a panel talking about discipleship and someone from the audience asked, “Exactly what do you mean when you say ‘disciple?’” The other panelists started shuffling their papers. Since I am a one-trick pony and this is my trick, I fielded the question. Here’s what I said: “We all know that the Greek word *mathetes* means a ‘learner’ or ‘pupil.’ However, when applied to the early Christians, the term “disciple” came to mean someone who had declared a personal allegiance to the teachings and person of Jesus.”

Then I offered this working definition: “A disciple is someone *called* to live “in” Christ, *equipped* to live “like” Christ, and *sent* to live “for” Christ.” And I amplified:

First, a disciple is someone *called* to profess faith in Jesus Christ (this is the “evangelism” piece). Second, they are *equipped* in an ongoing process of spiritual growth and transformation (this is the “teaching” piece). Third, they are *sent* to love, serve, and abide in Christ (this is the “go” piece).

The reason I like this definition is that it is both biblical and actionable. You can build ministry around these three rubrics. Your men need a practical, not theoretical, understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and how to live it out daily as regular guys.

Figure 1 lays out some of the biblical support for this definition:

TEXT	CALL	EQUIP	SEND
Matt 28:18-20	Baptize in name of Father, Son, Spirit	Teach to obey	Go and make disciples
Luke 6:47	Comes to me	Hears my words	Puts them into practice
2 Tim. 3:15-17	Salvation through faith in Christ Jesus	Teach, rebuke, correct, train to thoroughly equip	For every good work
Isa. 6:7-8	Guilt taken away and sin atoned for		Whom shall I send ? Who will go for us?
Acts 26:20	Repent and turn to God		Prove repentance by deeds
Eph. 2:8-10	Saved by grace through faith		To do good works
Matt. 13:37-38	Love God with all heart, soul, mind		Love neighbor as yourself
John 3:3	Must be born again		
Matt. 7:24		Hear my words	Put into practice
2 Tim. 2:2		Entrust teachings to reliable people	Qualified to teach others
John 20:21			As the Father sent me, so I am sending you
John 13:34-35 (Rom. 13:7) (Luke 7:12)			All men know my disciples if you love one another
John 8:31			If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples
John 15:9			Bear much fruit showing self to be my disciples
Matt. 7:12			Do to others what you would want done to you. Sums up law and prophets.
Luke 14:27			Must carry cross and follow Jesus to be His disciple
Gen. 1:27-28 (Psalm 8:6-8)			Be fruitful, fill, subdue, and rule over creation

FIGURE 1
Biblical Support for the Definition of *Disciple* as One Called, Equipped, and Sent

I think the Bible makes a strong case that *calling, equipping, and sending are the “trinity” of making disciples*. Calling, equipping, and sending are the actionable components of discipleship—the learning process that forges men into passionate followers of Jesus. Isn’t that what we all want? The rest of the chapter will explore each in more detail.

CALLING MEN TO CHRIST

First and foremost, men need to become born again. A disciple is *called* to profess faith in Jesus Christ—*evangelism*. Jesus said, “I have come . . . to call . . . sinners” (Mark 2:17).

I grew up in what we thought was a “Christian home,” but we didn’t know Christ. We didn’t reject the gospel; we never heard it. Our church was focused on other things. In my early twenties, though, my soon-to-be wife, Patsy, explained the gospel of Jesus to me, and I soon embraced Christ as my Lord and Savior.

There are about 115 million men in America fifteen years of age and older.¹ Regrettably, about 60 percent, or 70 million,² of these men have made no profession of faith in Christ. That’s sad, because many of them would gladly receive Christ if engaged in a credible way. What’s even sadder, though, is how many men think they have tried Christianity, found it wanting, and rejected it, when in fact they have never properly understood it.

There’s no other way to say it. To be truly happy a man must be born again—to surrender his life to Jesus. To be born again is the right starting point. And unless a man has the right starting point, everything else will turn out wrong.

This may be more difficult for men who already believe they are Christians than for those who know they are not. Søren Kierkegaard wondered of his countrymen, “Are all who call themselves Christian, Christian?” Today, it just does not seem possible that all the men who claim to believe in Jesus have truly and earnestly repented of their sins and embraced Jesus by faith.

C. S. Lewis once said, “Before you can make a man a Christian you must first help him understand that he is a pagan.” D. L. Moody put it like this: “You’ve got to get people lost before you can get them saved.”

This is exactly what Jesus proceeded to do with the religious Nicodemus in John 3:3: “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

Jesus Christ has issued a divine summons to salvation. He has commanded

men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Once a man has professed faith, he should be baptized, as applicable, in accordance with your tradition.

Salvation should be made as simple as possible, but not oversimplified. I once heard a speaker say to eight hundred leaders in our community, “If you want to go to heaven and receive eternal life, all you have to do is pray this prayer.” There was no mention of why men need a Savior. There was no mention of “sin” or “the cross.” That was a gross misstatement of the gospel. Jesus did say to count the cost. For an “as simple as possible” explanation, see “The Gospel” in chapter 11.

When Are Men “Callable”?

It makes sense to fish for men when they’re “biting.” Your ministry to “call” men to Christ will be most effective if you connect with them when they face a turning point or crisis. Here is my list of reachable moments. You will no doubt be able to add to this list:

Searching for a purpose	Searching for an identity	A lack of meaning
Loneliness	Emptiness	Marriage
Divorce	Out of wedlock pregnancy	Birth of a child
Loss of a child	First job	Fired from job
Business failure	Financial crisis	Moral failure
Midlife crisis	Stalled career	Failed romance
Loss of physical strength	Sense of mortality	Empty nest
Health crisis	Aging parents	Loss of parents

Find a man’s point of pain and you’ll find an open door. Be there for men when they feel a need. Appeal to what men want, not what they don’t really care about. For example, attract a man to your church service or event by offering a topic with a title like “How to Find True Success.” From there you can segue to “How Jesus Gives Us Abundant Life.” The more we touch on their wants (their felt needs), the more sticky our ministries will be.

Commitment Versus Surrender

Once Adrian Rogers, the famous Baptist preacher, went on a mission trip to Romania. Over the course of two weeks he bonded with his interpreter, but hadn’t learned much about his thoughts. So toward the end of the trip he asked, “Tell

me what you think of American Christians?”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” came the strange reply. This, of course, only made Dr. Rogers more curious, so he began to press him for an answer.

After several attempts he finally said, “Why won’t you tell me? I really want to know.”

Finally, the interpreter capitulated. “Well, okay then, but you’re not going to like my answer. I don’t think you Americans understand what Christianity is all about. Back in the 1960s you began to use the word ‘commitment’ to describe your relationship with Christ.

“However, any time a word comes into usage, another word goes into disuse. Until the 1960s you Americans talked about surrender to Christ. Surrender means giving up control, turning over all to the Master Jesus.

“By changing to the word ‘commitment’ your relationship with Christ has become something you do, therefore you are able to keep control. Surrender means giving up all rights to one’s self. You Americans don’t like to do that so, instead, you make a commitment.”³

It is worth pondering.

Men need to become disciples of Jesus, and the first thing this implies is that they must be born again.

WHAT YOU CAN DO | *To Call Men to Christ*

- Regularly present the gospel and invite men to put their faith in Jesus. Offer opportunities “from the front” at thought-through intervals.
- “Be there” for men when they feel the need. Address their turning points and crises from the front. Enlist your strong disciples to be part of a “system” to reach out to hurting men (e.g., meet for ten minutes right after the service in Room 100 where strong disciples set coffee and breakfast appointments with men).
- Teach your men the difference between “commitment” and “surrender.”
- Call your men to surrender. Tell them Dr. Rogers’s story, then issue the call: “You must reach a turning point. The turning point of our lives is when we stop seeking the God (or gods) we want and start seeking the God who is. No amount of wanting to recreate Him in your imagination to be different is going to have

any effect on His unchanging character and nature. Your principal task, then, is to come humbly to the foot of the cross and there surrender of your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ. If you would like to do that right now. . . ." (Then lead them in a prayer of surrender which includes repentance and expresses faith.)

- Find additional concepts under "The Gospel" and "Evangelism" in the topical summaries in Chapter 11.

EQUIPPING MEN IN CHRIST

Second, men need to grow in their faith. A disciple is *equipped* in a process of ongoing spiritual growth and transformation—*teaching*. The second part of making disciples is teaching—to equip men to live like Christ. The church is a learning organization.

A man came to my home to fix my Internet service. He was a nice man with a good heart, but he wasn't trained to figure out my problem. The next man had the proper training and easily solved the problem. An untrained Christian is no better off than an unskilled laborer or a high school dropout. He simply won't enjoy as much of the abundant life as a man who has been discipled.

Have a Plan

It may do more harm than good to invite a man to become a Christian if we have no plan to train him how to truly know and follow Christ.

When we don't disciple (educate, train, equip) a man who professes Christ, he will almost always become lukewarm in faith, worldly in behavior, and hypocritical in witness.

The single most important thing we can do for a man once he believes is to help him change the core affections of his heart.

One day I was seemingly at the pinnacle of my spirituality. Then I saw a sensuous woman and was immediately tempted to lust. The world, the flesh, and the Devil were telling me, "Jesus is not enough to make you happy. You need this lust." That was the lie.

Fortunately I was reminded that I needed only Christ. I was, by God's grace, able to reject the temptation because I wanted to express my faith in Jesus, that He is sufficient for me.

Can you look at something or someone, be tempted to lust for it, and say,

“Lord Jesus, I don’t really need that to be happy because I have you”? This pinpoints the difference between what it means to be “committed” to Jesus versus “surrendered” to Jesus.

Seek Heart Transformation

There is a sensitivity of spirit that can develop when your men are walking closely with Jesus, renewing themselves daily in the gospel through repentance and faith. The Holy Spirit speaks, and they hear.

Christianity is not about *behavior modification*; it is *heart transformation*. Rules and regulations to make a man a better Christian will not change his life. To change his life he must change the core affections of his heart. Jesus needs to become his highest and best thought in every situation.

What men need is to become disciples of Jesus, and the second thing this implies is that they need teaching, education, training, and equipping.

WHAT YOU CAN DO | *To Equip Men in Christ*

- *Help your men to slow down and examine their lives.* When your men first join you, they come tired. If men are tired, then they need rest. Unfortunately, many churches emphasize work, not rest, so ten years later their men are just as tired as they were when they joined! Your men won’t be able to examine their lives until they slow down. They need to lower their “revs” so they can hear the “still, small” voice of God speak to them.
- *Equip your men with truth.* Keep in mind that all week long many of your men have had people tickling their ears. When a man comes to church, he wants some straight talk. He wants someone to hold him accountable. So give him the truth. Give him what Francis Schaeffer liked to call “true truth.” At the same time remember that it’s tough out there, so include some encouragement and support. Nothing lubricates a message to men more than a good laugh. It’s also important not to take ourselves too seriously and lighten it up.
- *Equip your men to read the Bible on their own.* It’s said that Spurgeon once lamented he could find ten men who would die for the Bible for every one who would actually read it. The Scriptures are key in this process of calling, equipping, and sending. Notice how this process is described in Paul’s instruction to Timothy:

From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus [calling]. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness [equipping], so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work [sending]. (2 Timothy 3:15–17)

- Find additional concepts in the alphabetized reference section (chapter 11) of this book.

SENDING MEN FOR CHRIST

Third, men need to be sent to live for Christ. Jesus prayed, “Father, as you have sent me, so I am sending them” (John 20:21). A disciple is *sent* to abide in Christ, love others, bear much fruit, and do good works/deeds.

A disciple is sent to abide in Christ. Jesus said, “If you hold [abide] to my teaching, *you are really my disciples*. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32, italics added).

A disciple is sent to love. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. *By this all men will know that you are my disciples*, if you love one another (John 13:34–35, italics added).

Prepare Your Men for Fruitful Lives

A disciple is sent to lead a fruitful life. Every man wants to give his life to a cause, to make a difference. Men are made for the task. When we disciple a man, he will eventually want to make that difference for the glory of God. “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, *showing yourselves to be my disciples*” (John 15:8, italics added).

At some point, every true believer quivers a bit when he reads John 15:8. Once the grace and love of Christ sink in, a man will feel compelled to do something to serve his Lord. Here’s how Brother Lawrence expressed it: “I tell you that this sweet and loving gaze of God insensibly kindles a divine fire in the soul which is set ablaze so ardently with the love of God that one is obliged to perform exterior acts to moderate it.⁴

Why do we equip men to live like Christ? So they can enjoy Christ by knowing Him better—sure, but also “so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). And that’s what pastors do—

Pastoring Men

equip people to do those “good works”:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God’s people for works of service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11–13, italics added)

“Ordain” Your Men

Once a man has been with Christ and experienced the joy of His grace, the warmth of His love, the cleansing of His forgiveness, and the indwelling of His Spirit, he inevitably comes to a point when he can no longer be happy unless he is serving the Lord.

I once met a man who said, “All my life I wanted to be a high school math teacher. Finally, my dream came true. But I soon saw two problems. First, my students were coming to class with problems math can’t solve. Second, the Christian teachers in my school didn’t know each other. God put a vision in my mind about how to address those two issues. *I am an ordained math teacher.*”

He understood that every vocation is holy to the Lord. Some of your men are ordained truck drivers. Some are ordained computer programmers. Others are ordained farmers. Help your men understand what they have been “ordained” to do and they will forever be grateful to you.

All men want to be happy. A man will feel most happy, most alive, and most useful when he is doing what he was created to do—when he finds his cause, his woman, and his God.

Besides, if you don’t give him the opportunity, he will go somewhere else. Don’t let this happen to you: “I was bursting at the seams to serve, but they couldn’t figure out how to mobilize me.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO | *To Send Men for Christ*

Help your men understand what it means to be a disciple after they leave the church building:

- *Teach them how to abide in Christ.* Teach your men how to abide. Equip them with the spiritual disciplines to “continue” in Christ all week long.
- *Encourage them to love like Christ.* Show them concrete ways to love others in practical ways. Wouldn’t most problems go away if your men simply practiced the Golden Rule?
- *Prepare, challenge, and “ordain” them for works of service.* Give your men tasks. Once a man gets turned on to serve, he will not rest until he finds an outlet for his passion. When he comes to you, I suggest you drop everything and engage him. If you do not give such a man a place to serve, he will still find a place to serve—but it will be elsewhere. When all the time and energy to bring the man to this point are considered, I think the best course of action is to suspend all other activity until you have engaged the man in a ministry of the church. Again, if you don’t, someone else will. This is an “urgent” felt need of the man.
- Read more on “Disciplines, Spiritual,” “Calling” and “Work” in chapter 11.

MOVING TOWARD HEART CHANGE

Our main task is to present the gospel of Jesus in such a way that it helps men change the core affections of their hearts so they want to be disciples. Discipleship is not merely presenting *the right information* through teaching and preaching—although that is important. Discipleship includes everything that moves men along toward spiritual maturity.

How do we do that? It could be a sermon, an encouraging or inspiring word in the hall, an unforgettable solo, getting a cup of coffee together, a Sunday school lesson, a home Bible study, a hug, a small-group experience. It also includes acts of service, such as teaching Sunday school, volunteering to work in the homeless shelter, leading someone to Christ, giving or getting a meal when sick, or setting up chairs for the mission conference—anything that moves a man forward in Christ.

Build around relationships, not programs. Discipleship is more relationship than task. Love them from the front, but then get them into “life on life” groups

of all kinds (e.g., home groups, couples' groups, men's groups).

Jesus is our model for making disciples. From a learning theory perspective, Jesus was a genius. His methods overlapped. He gathered men together. He forged relationships with them. They did "life" together. They dialogued. They socialized. They went with Him. They listened to His teachings. They observed His life. He gave them assignments to build their confidence and build His kingdom.

Jesus pastored for "life change." Jesus wasn't so much interested in what men heard, but how they responded. The result? Two thousand years later Christianity is the world's largest movement, and Jesus is the most famous person on earth.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- We can give men what they really need if instead of looking at the data, we ask God for direction.
- What men need is to become disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and all that this implies.
- A disciple is someone *called* to live "in" Christ, *equipped* to live "like" Christ, and *sent* to live "for" Christ.
- To be truly happy a man must be born again—to surrender his life to Jesus.
- An untrained Christian is no better off than an unskilled laborer or a high school dropout. He simply won't enjoy as much of the abundant life as a man who has been discipled.
- The single most important thing we can do for a man once he believes is to help him change the core affections of his heart.
- Once the grace and love of Christ sink in, a man will feel compelled to do something to serve his Lord.
- Help your men understand what they have been "ordained" to do and they will forever be grateful to you.
- Jesus is our model for making disciples. From a learning theory perspective, Jesus was a genius.