



What have we learned since the beginning of the Christian men's movement in the late 1980s? We've learned a lot. We've also realized we need to rethink some things. Here are some adjustments or "tweaks" we at Man in the Mirror think need to be added to the calculus of reaching men.

### **1. WE NEED RELATIONSHIPS IN ADDITION TO EVENTS**

Many leaders who have tried to reach men have become discouraged, but many others have had wonderful results. What's the difference? Using a task-oriented event approach, many leaders have watched their ministries disappear as their men experienced event fatigue. Leaders who worked to get men into small groups where they could talk and build relationships have experienced solid growth.

For example, one church was able to get record numbers of their men to attend events. But few of those men did anything to grow beyond the event. Then the pastor decided to recruit "shepherds" to lead their small groups instead of "teachers." When the men had the opportunity to share what was going on in their lives (instead of having someone lecture them), they began to open up. By building around relationships, the church has grown tremendously. Ironically, their event attendance has also increased.

### **2. DON'T START A NEW, SEPARATE MEN'S MINISTRY**

Men's ministry has a big black eye. The mental image is a separate group of the most zealous men in the church. Many of those men are viewed as kooky, or even a threat to the pastor. Instead of encouraging the pastor, they often act like they know something he doesn't. It can be a real downer.

We need a new paradigm. Instead of thinking about starting "another" ministry for men to join, we need to figure out how to disciple men "where they are." In other words, how do you make disciples of men who are elders, deacons, ushers, choir, and youth workers?

Ministry to men needs to disciple men in their existing roles.

### **3. DISCIPLE MEN TO BE GODLY MEN, HUSBANDS, AND FATHERS**

When a family fails, who is to blame? Is it because children are tearing their families apart? Sometimes, but that's the exception. Is it because mothers are abandoning their children? Every now and then you hear a sensational story like that, but it's rare. Or is it because fathers are not equipped to hold their families together?

Many churches have gotten away from making disciples of men. I know. My dad was the top laymen in his church when he was 40 years old. I was in the 10th grade--the oldest of 4 boys. I was an honor student and an athlete. But my church did not disciple my dad to become a Godly man, husband, and father—they just made him a worker. He burned out. We quit church. He never went back. This threw our family into a downward spiral from which we are still recovering 40 years later. Two of four boys (including me) quit high school. My brothers experimented with drugs and alcohol, divorce, and employment problems—I even have a brother who died of a heroin overdose. That's why I'm passionate about helping the church see that we must "make disciples" in addition to making "workers."

#### **4. MAKE DISCIPLESHIP THE “PORTAL PRIORITY” OF THE CHURCH**

What are the priorities of a church? Most people would list worship, fellowship, stewardship, service, social justice, evangelism, and discipleship. You can, no doubt, think of others. But where do you focus? What's the starting point?

Let me answer these questions by asking you to consider more questions...

- How can we worship a God we don't know?
- How can we handle resources wisely unless we're taught God's way?
- How can we serve effectively if we don't know our gifts and that God can use us—or even that He wants to use us?
- How can we bring about social justice if we don't know what is just?
- How can we evangelize unless we have been trained?
- How can we have genuine fellowship unless we are taught to love and not be selfish?
- How can we become disciples unless we “hear the word of the LORD”?

As you can see, one idea sits squarely in the center of all others. The focusing priority of a thriving church is discipleship. Sheep cannot do right until they believe right. Discipleship is Job One for the church. Making disciples is the “portal priority” through which all the other priorities of the church are met.

#### **5. UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DISCIPLE AND A WORKER**

The church needs workers. But we don't get workers by making workers. We get workers by making disciples. Jesus did not say, “Go and make workers....” He didn't say, “Go and make worshippers....” And He didn't say, “Go and make tithers....” Our Lord said, “Go and make disciples....” Does God want men to work, worship, and tithe? Of course. Does God want men to be better husbands, fathers, and citizens? Of course. But out of the overflow of a growing personal knowledge of and love for Jesus.

The method of Jesus was to focus on discipling men who in turn disciplined their families and the world. He won the world by winning 12 ordinary men. What would happen if your church had a growing group of men whose supreme passion was to see Jesus Christ receive glory in everything they did? The church is central to God's plan, and discipling men to love God from the heart is central to the mission of the church.

The Bible says “make disciples” (Matthew 28:18-20) and “pray for workers” (Matthew 9:37-38). Too often we try to “make workers” and “pray for disciples.”

#### **6. ALL MINISTRIES NEED TO GRASP THAT WE ARE “IN LEAGUE” TOGETHER**

Can you visualize any possible scenario that makes the world right without first getting the church right? If you agree, can you visualize any scenario that gets the church right without first making families right? If you agree, can you visualize any scenario that makes families right without first getting marriages right? If you agree, can you visualize any scenario that makes marriages right without first getting men right? If you agree, can you think of any way to get men right unless they become disciples of Jesus Christ?

If this is true, two things become clear. First, we need to allocate more intellectual and financial resources to reach men. There exists an urgent necessity to reach men.

Second, all ministry disciplines—whether family, women, children, teens, or men—need to understand that we share a common cause, we are in league with one another, and we need to speak with more of a common voice.

For example, why couldn't a church host a half-day retreat and discuss how each of their ministries can work together to build families and the church? At the denominational level, should there not be symposiums designed to get all the department arrows pointed in the same direction?

#### **7. WE NEED TO FOCUS ON INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY**

Many observers now think that the age segregation of our youth into youth groups has had a profoundly negative impact on the faith of young adults. What would happen if the youth minister and the minister to their parents developed symbiotic initiatives?

Mature Christians have so much to offer young Christians, but they are often age segregated into age-based fellowship groups. All miss out on something special that different age groups have to offer.

What's worse, the sins of the fathers continue to be passed on to their children. To break the cycle we need more emphasis on this "intergenerational transfer." We need to establish rites of passage for boys and girls. They need their father's blessing. And they need to have adults show them that they are not alone.

## **8. WE DO THIS TO BE FAITHFUL, NOT TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS**

Men, this is a war we can win. God does not call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful. Disciple the men in your church. It's tough. It takes a long time. It's not glamorous. It's often thankless. Yet nothing is closer to the heart of Jesus. The hearts of our children depend on what you will do for the hearts of their fathers. We cannot, we must not and, by God's grace, we will not fail.

### **APPLICATION**

Which of these "tweaks" most applies to your ministry with men you know? Pray and ask God what steps you might take to more effectively make disciples of the men God has brought into your life.

---

*Business leader, author, and speaker, Patrick Morley helps men think more deeply about their lives, to be reconciled with Christ, and to be equipped for a larger impact on the world. David Delk is the COO of Man in the Mirror © 2002. Patrick Morley and David Delk. All rights reserved.*

**Would you like three sample monthly issues of this complimentary newsletter or information about our dynamic church based men's events and follow-up program?  
Call us at 1-800-929-2536.**

A Look in the Mirror™ is distributed at no charge to our ministry partners.  
Additional copies are 25¢ each, with bulk pricing for large orders.  
180 Wilshire Blvd.  
Casselberry, FL 32707  
Catalog Orders: 1-800-929-2536  
Fax: (407) 331-7839  
For more info call (407) 472-2100 or visit us at  
[www.maninthemirror.org](http://www.maninthemirror.org)