

Disciplining Men

Premiere Edition

2016

A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED JOURNEY

**3 MEASURES OF
SUCCESS FOR A MAN**

**A MAN'S GUIDE TO A
SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE**

**HOW TO LEAD A
CHRIST-CENTERED
FAMILY**

**WHAT IS A
MINISTRY TO MEN?**
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EXCLUSIVE! On the Road (and Off!) with Mark Batterson





Now is the time!

Welcome to the premiere edition of *Discipling Men: A Spirit-Empowered Journey*. We have created this magazine with you—a leader of men—in mind.

In August 2014, during the Centennial Celebration of the Assemblies of God, I first met Roger Gibson, the senior director of Adult and Family Ministry. At Starbucks on Glenstone Avenue, in Springfield, Missouri, he began to unpack Dr. Wood's vision for our Fellowship; they would begin creating an intentional strategy to build healthy homes. In this conversation, we recognized the importance of the father and the role of the man. I remember being inspired and walking away thinking, *I'm going to pray for him to find the right leaders for this ministry*.

A few months later, I found myself seeking the Lord about transitioning my family to join Roger on this team. The Lord spoke to me. He showed me how helping to create healthy homes through discipling men would have a profound impact on the next generation and culture. Shortly after that, we announced our resignation from our previous position and began moving our family from Ohio to Springfield.

Now, we are here and I recognize the significance of this moment that the Lord has called us to. My heart's desire is that Men's Ministry will continue to strategically disciple men as its primary focus. We hope to emphasize and unlock the potential of this great arena of impact—the men of our Movement. I reach out and ask you to please join us as we embark on this journey to create environments that encourage the development of Spirit-empowered men across the nation and around the world.

This magazine will take you on a journey in itself. We start by identifying the importance of a Spirit-empowered life then move into how a man sees the five functions of the Acts 2 model. Next, we will take a glimpse into the importance of family, and finally we will rest on a ministry model to disciple men—complete with a resource calendar. I look forward to partnering with you on this Spirit-empowered journey.

The world will look back on this moment and say that the time was right.

Now is the time!

Praying for you,

Tom Groot
National Men's Ministry and Christian Education Director

Discipling Men:
A Spirit-Empowered Journey
2016

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Photo by: Unsplash.com

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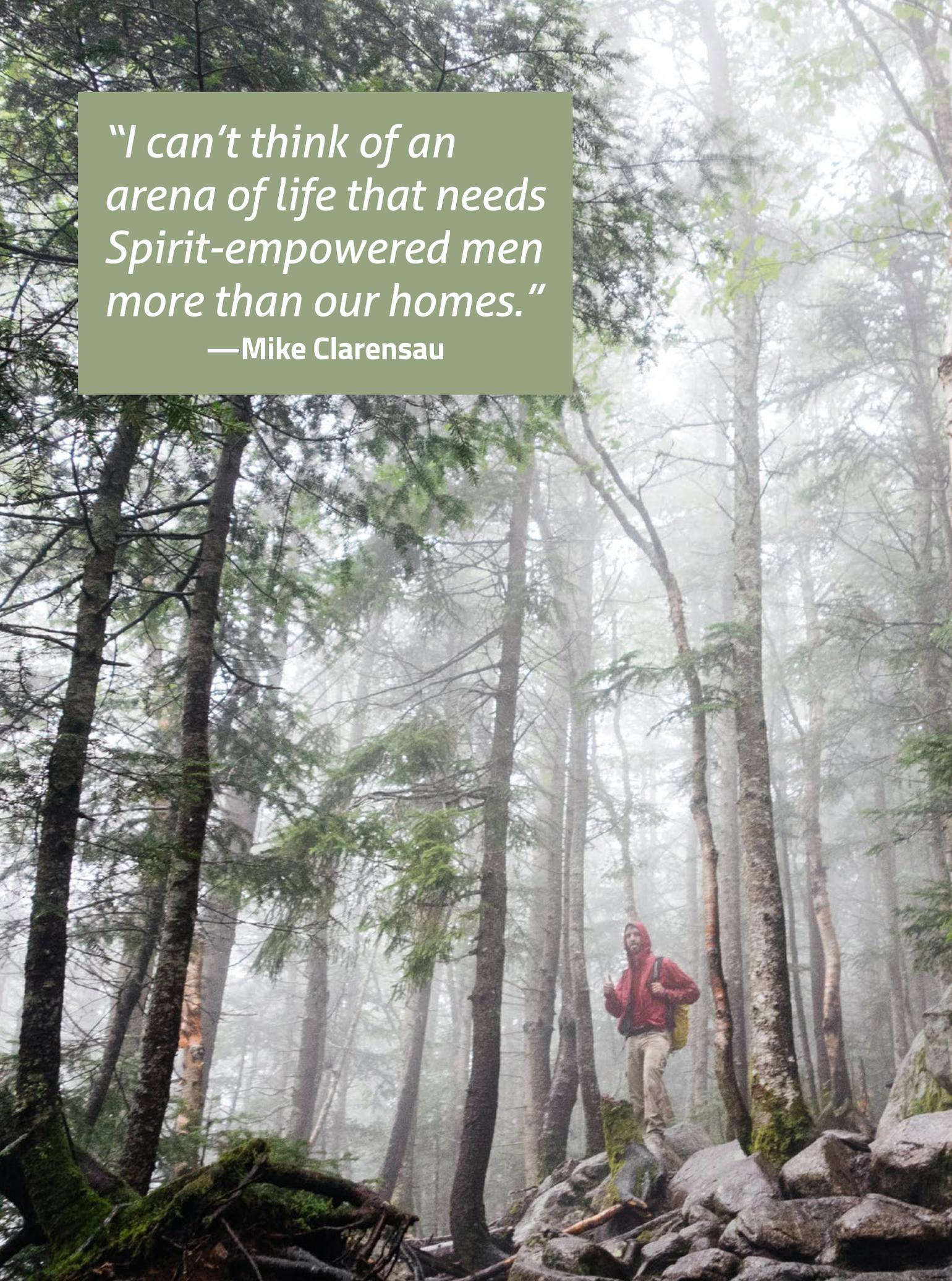
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Cover Photo by: Getty Images

“I can’t think of an arena of life that needs Spirit-empowered men more than our homes.”

—Mike Clarensau



A MAN'S GUIDE TO A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE

Interview with Mike Clarensau

A Spirit-empowered life is imperative for the days ahead. Realizing the crucial message in the book, A Spirit-Empowered Life, Tom Groot asked author Mike Clarensau about its impact on a man's journey and life.



Photo by: Mario Guerreiro

TOM: Mike, why is this book important in today's culture?

MIKE: There are really two sides—a need and a desire—to such a question. First, if God's people are going to effectively impact this culture, we absolutely need the power of His Spirit flowing through our lives. The job is simply too big for our efforts alone! He is available to transform people into the world-changers God desires them to become.

Couple that with the “want” side of this question. That's where we discover how desperate many are for a journey of faith that makes a real difference. People (myself included) don't just read Bible stories with a fascination for their historical impact. We want to live like that too! We want to see God's power flowing around and through our lives in ways that really change both us and those we love.

TOM: How can living a Spirit-empowered life affect our homes and families?

MIKE: I can't think of an arena of life that needs Spirit-empowered men more than our homes. To be led by God's Spirit as a husband, dad, even grandfather, can't really be narrowed into a single explanation, but just imagine such a man daily living in God's wisdom and direction. To be a great leader,

you must first be a follower, and that's what the Spirit-empowered man becomes. He follows fully after God and finds God shaping him into something he could never be on his own. Every kid needs a dad like that!

TOM: Why might it be difficult for men to capture the five functions from Acts 2 (Connect, Grow, Serve, Go, Worship) found in the book?

MIKE: I think there are reasons why every one of these can be difficult for men. We're not naturally good at admitting our need for help, so depending on God doesn't come very easily to us. Maybe it's “Go” that helps us see our need for God's help most quickly. But frankly, none of the five are truly within our capacity. We need the power of God's Spirit to equip us for all the above. If we try to do any of these in our own strength, well, there will always be something missing. The Spirit-empowered life isn't something we do. Instead, it's something we desperately want God to do in us—and as He does, we find a new capacity to demonstrate that power in each of these critical ways.

MIKE CLARENSAU is author of *A Spirit-Empowered Life* and dean of Southwestern AG University's College of Bible and Church Ministries.

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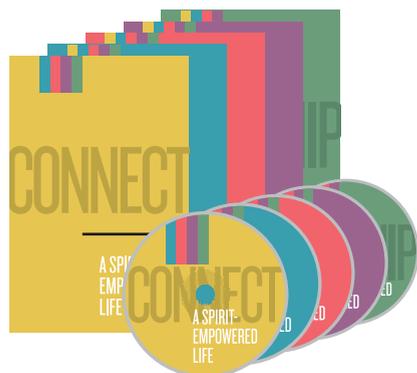
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Leigh Metcalf, Arizona District: CREATING LIFETIME CONNECTIONS AMONG MEN

By Darla Knoth

Each year, a group of select Arizona men are invited on a journey. Not just any journey, but one carefully planned to include awe, inspiration, casual and deep conversation, climbing, scrambling, rappelling—plus, a bit of fear and a lot of challenge. These trips make connections among men that remain for a lifetime.

Stephen Harris, Assemblies of God Arizona district superintendent, and Leigh Metcalf, Arizona district secretary-treasurer and missions director, invite a different group of around twenty men to go canyoneering in Zion National Park, Utah, each year. Leigh explains, “Zion has world-class canyons for hikers of every skill level.”

Kevin Macfee, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries pastor at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, leads these teams. He explains, “We spend four days camping, hiking, and canyoneering through the tallest sandstone cliffs in the world, as well as rappelling into and exploring the deep-slot canyons.”

Descending into these canyons requires the men to rappel off drops downward to 170 feet, swim through dark, ice-cold pools of water, scramble over rocks and boulders, and navigate the most remote spots in the southwest.

“Many ingredients go into relationships built on these trips—the team building, the hours

talking on the trail, reaching a summit, or sharing a meal—but the one ‘killer’ ingredient that makes this adventure so potent in opening the hearts of men is shared experience,” Macfee explains.

Metcalf agrees, “Most guys have never attempted a hike like in Zion Park. Walking backward off a 100-foot cliff is an astonishing feeling. Each man must trust the equipment and the guides who talk him through each step. Each man depends on the support of others.”

“Leaders need to create moments for men to experience life in ways they never have before. Sharing these moments together creates a lasting connection and friendship that opens . . . opportunities for God moments.”

—Leigh Metcalf

Macfee breaks down shared experience with one word: *discovery*. “Discovery can be defined by exploration and awe,” he adds. “When you explore with your friends, not knowing what’s next—then, round a corner and view scenery so spectacular, so deeply beautiful it inspires awe and a collective gasp—that moment draws you close. You are both appreciating the same thing, and have both worked hard to get there. This epic adventure of discovery, exploration, and awe shared by men becomes a touchstone. The ‘you-had-to-be-there’ moment creates a unique fraternity.”

Beyond discovery is another shared experience—that of fear. “Overcoming fear and meaningful moments of bravery are so powerful. This kind of adventure scares men. No one gets through without having to overcome some fear,” Macfee states.



CONNECT



Arizona men enjoy canyoneering together each year. **Leigh Metcalf** is fourth from the right.

The men on the trip learn to trust each other with their physical life. Macfee further explains, “When another man has seen me really scared, has spent time encouraging me, has watched me overcome that fear, and when I’ve done the same for him—we form a bond. It’s a foxhole-type moment.” This kind of intimacy leads to deeper connections and genuine, raw conversations about the things that matter most.

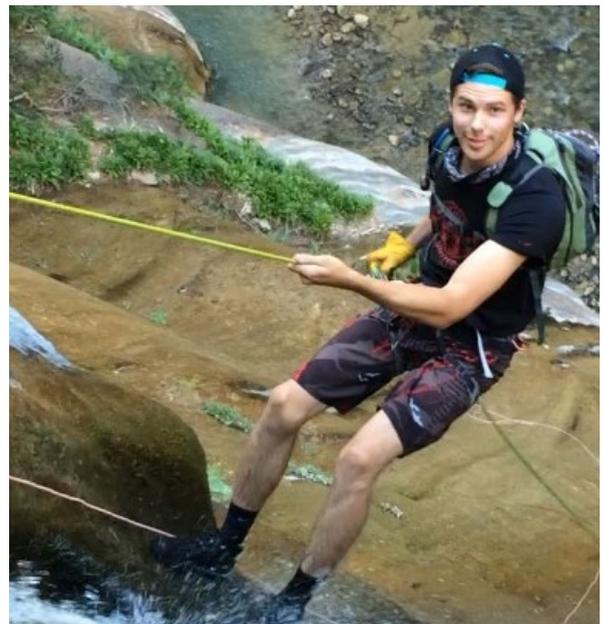
Any church or small group can provide shared experience for men. “It obviously doesn’t have to be in Zion National Park or in a canyon. Shared experience can happen in many different ways—it just needs to offer men the opportunity for exploration and moments of bravery,” Macfee adds.

Metcalf explains, “Jesus’ model of discipleship included some great moments with the disciples—whether going on a fearful boat ride through a storm, hiking into the mountains to pray, or holding a BBQ on the beach after a night of fishing.”

“Leaders need to create moments for men to experience life in ways they never have before. Sharing these moments together creates a lasting connection and friendship that opens the door to meaningful conversations and opportunities for God moments,” Metcalf continued.

“The reason I’ve had the privilege of these moments again and again with men is shared experience,” Macfee concludes. “We’re all scared, we’re all vulnerable, and we’re all exposed. We’re in it together.”

Caden Metcalf rappelling in deep slot canyons of Utah.



Sam Huddleston, Northern California and Nevada District: **THE POWER OF MENTORING**

By Christina Quick

Like any good father, Samuel Huddleston enjoys talking about his three grown children and 13 grandchildren. But he's quick to point out that he has other children as well—sons who are not related by birth or legal adoption.

Huddleston, assistant district superintendent of the Northern California and Nevada district of the Assemblies of God, calls the two men he has mentored through the years his spiritual sons. One shares Huddleston's black heritage; the other does not. One is a full-time minister like Huddleston; the other lives out his faith in a secular workplace. But the differences don't seem to matter.

"Once you have a mentor, you'll understand the importance of becoming a mentor."

—Sam Huddleston

"They're my sons," Huddleston says. "We do life together. We've taken vacations together. Their children are my grandchildren."

Huddleston, who became a Christian while in prison as a young man, discovered the power of mentoring when an older pastor, Bishop Green, took an interest in his spiritual development.

"He got up in my face and told me things I did not want to hear," Huddleston says. "I realized that only one other man talked to me that way, and that was my father."



Sam Huddleston, right, with Chris and Brenda Harrell.

Huddleston still keeps in touch with the now-retired pastor and considers him his mentor and spiritual father.

"He calls and talks to me," Huddleston says. "He's not impressed with me or what I do. His concern is making sure I live right before Jesus and go to heaven."

Huddleston has the same simple goals in mind for his two mentees, Chris Harrell and Gregory Campbell.

Harrell serves as pastor of South Hills Church, an Assemblies of God congregation in Corona, California. He was a student at Bethany Bible College in Scotts Valley, California, when he met Huddleston, who served as dean of students. Harrell sought the respected leader's spiritual guidance, and it wasn't long before he had a permanent place around Huddleston's family table.

"He's different from my family—he's a lot lighter," Huddleston says. "But he would come to the house and spend the night. My wife and children got to know him. My kids still call him their brother."

Campbell attended a church Huddleston pastored. When they met, Campbell's marriage was in trouble. Huddleston helped the young man turn around his life and repair

GROW

his marriage, and Campbell eventually became the church's youth pastor. Campbell now serves as a special agent for the U.S. Postal Service in Washington, D.C. Like Harrell, he stays in touch with Huddleston.

"I'm on the phone with him like I am with Chris," Huddleston says. "I ask them both difficult and challenging questions. I tell them what they need to hear and not what they want to hear."



Huddleston, right, with his mentor, Bishop Green, center, and Greg Campbell.



Huddleston, second from right, with Green, right, and Harrell and Campbell.

Huddleston encourages men to seek out mentors, as well as mentees. He believes these relationships are crucial to building the Church, especially as more young men grow up without fathers or Christian role models.

"Once you have a mentor, you'll understand the importance of becoming a mentor," Huddleston says. "We need each other to navigate this thing called life."

ENGAGE IN MENTORING

"Growth, for the disciple, is a life-long journey, defined and guided by the teachings of the Bible."

—Mike Clarensau,
A Spirit-Empowered Life

Mentoring is a crucial step in your discipleship journey. Every Spirit-empowered man should consider having a mentor and being a mentor. Here are three simple steps to get you started.

First, connect with other guys. We cannot become who God intended us to be by ourselves. Here are three relationships that every man needs. I would encourage you to make these a focus of prayer:

- **Those ahead of you on the journey.**

We all need a mentor. Find someone who has exhibited the qualities you would like to learn and ask them to consider becoming your mentor.

- **Those with you on the journey.**

We all have those close to us. Find a friend or two and gather regularly for the sole purpose of spiritual growth.

- **Those behind you on the journey.**

Look around you to find the next generation of leaders who desire to grow. Consider becoming a mentor to those young men.

Second, have spiritual conversations.

Mentoring is more than friendship, it's more than hanging out, and more than having coffee with someone; it is intentionally seizing those opportunities to talk about the Lord.

Third, have a plan. Setting goals and having a plan will help you stay focused and accountable to the growth process.

Looking for more about mentoring? Visit us on the Web at men.ag.org.

—Tom Groot

Bobby Bledsoe, CityReach Network: SERVING FOR A PURPOSE

By John W. Kennedy

Bobby Bledsoe was a heroin and crack cocaine addict, a dealer in illegal drugs, arrested frequently, and in multiple drug rehabilitation programs. Although such a background might not seem suitable for a ministerial résumé, Bledsoe thinks his experiences are perfect for those people he wants to serve as pastor of CityReach Bangor.



CityReach offers many ways to serve others through outreaches and more.

The Maine inner-city church plant began in April 2014 by targeting an unusual demographic: drug addicts sleeping on the streets and those living in homeless shelters. “I came from that background,” Bledsoe says. Within a year, the church had 200 in attendance.

Bledsoe underwent a radical salvation encounter in 2004—thanks to the prayers of his Spirit-filled mother. Now, he wants to help people in similar circumstances. Part of his ministry is to coordinate volunteers who help in the church, the Hope Homes, and the homeless on the streets of the city. “They’re responding because the gospel changes lives,” Bledsoe affirms.

“People are looking for a tangible way to get involved in a cause.”

—Bobby Bledsoe

As a network hub, CityReach Bangor operates Hope Homes in seven locations. Hope Homes provide support for those coming out of

addiction, abuse, homelessness, or incarceration, and offer a nine-month transformation phase, plus an additional four-month transition phase. The goal of the homes is to see residents restored as they take steps toward lasting change.

When Mike Caiacci got off a bus in Bangor, it was a cold, bleak November evening. He had come to the end of his running.

Caiacci was a long-time heroin addict, trying to escape the pain in his life. His dad had died from a heart attack, his mom was dysfunctional, and his sister was also addicted to heroin. In addition, he had tested positive for Hepatitis C.

As he observed the people assisting in a Hope Home, Caiacci realized his need for a Savior. “We prayed for him right in the Hope Home to receive Jesus. The next week he was baptized in water, then shortly after was filled with the Holy Spirit,” Bledsoe recalls. Caiacci graduated from the Hope Home and now serves as associate pastor at CityReach Bangor. And he is healed of Hepatitis C.

Every Thursday night, CityReach Bangor church members drive to the recovery homes in the city of 33,000 and bring the residents to the church. After hearing the gospel and accompanying

testimonies, the attendees eat a meal cooked at the church before returning to the shelters.

Motivating people to serve in ministry is a cornerstone of an Acts 2 church. First Corinthians 12:5, 27, NIV, says, “There are different kinds of service ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” Bledsoe says finding adherents willing to assist isn’t a problem. “People are looking for a tangible way to get involved in a cause,” says Bledsoe.

One CityReach couple, longtime Christ-followers Rick and Robyn McLaughlin, own a construction company, and use their business to help disciple men from the Hope Homes. Bledsoe says, “The McLaughlins take men from the homes on their construction job sites, and pour into their lives while doing carpentry or other tasks.” The men are taught a trade, so when they graduate from a Hope Home, they can find work.

Bledsoe’s wife, Jade, is familiar with difficult environments. Both her parents were meth addicts.

“We’ve seen God come through and bless us,” Bledsoe says. “We’re both now called to serve people who can’t give anything in return.”

SERVING WITH CITYREACH

CityReach Network exists to plant churches across America by “using unlikely people in overlooked places for extraordinary things.” The network also offers a great chance to serve.

Frank Madia is one example. As owner of Madia Properties in Pittsburgh, Frank serves CityReach by hiring Hope Homes graduates to work in his construction and real estate company. He coordinates the graduates’ schedules to allow them to minister and work full time.

Many people and groups working together have made CityReach possible. The Northern New England district partnered with Bobby Bledsoe for CityReach Bangor and Hope Homes, plus ten new church plants in Maine in fall 2015.

Currently, CityReach churches and Hope Homes are in Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio,

Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida, with many forthcoming plans. Brian Bolt is founder and president of the CityReach Network and pastor of CityReach Pittsburgh.

You can serve CityReach in one of these ways:

- If you are close to a CityReach location, **adopt a resident**, or **hire Hope Home residents** to help you complete projects like yard work, moving, painting, landscaping, snow removal, and cleaning.
- Hope Homes also **accept donations** for food, fuel cards, household items, and finances. The Web site includes Hope Homes’ wish lists.

Visit the Web site: cityreachnetwork.org

Find a CityReach church near you, or call for more information about how to serve.



David Houck, AG U.S. Missionary: WHEN GOD CALLS

By Rick Allen

Photo by: thinkstock.com

In north central Florida, a cluster of off-the-grid communities in the Ocala National Forest are plagued with low education, addictions, and generational poverty, making evangelism extremely difficult.

But the perseverance, patient spirit, and a strategic compassion ministry by U.S. missionaries David and Tammy Houck have made ministry in this area possible.

“When I was eight years old, my family moved here when my dad was injured and unable to work,” Houck explained. “The forest is cheap to live in.” Almost overnight, the family was subjected to absolute poverty—a world where food, shoes, and transportation were no longer a guarantee.

“I determined I would no longer live here when I was old enough to leave. I went as far away as California,” Houck shares. “But God began to call me home so strongly, that I could no longer ignore Him.” God gave Houck a plan and equipped him to reach the people of the area.

Salt Life Church began in April 2011 with a handful of local families. Today, the church has about 150 people. Most Salt Lifers come from a completely unchurched background going back several generations.

“The area is full of meth, pills and drugs, prostitution, and uneducated people who are just looking for a way out,” Houck reports. “We have a special community here at Salt Life Church. We joke that our church people have a combined length of prison time of over 200 years. The community has seen the change in these people firsthand, and have witnessed how they have gone from being criminals and users to being believers and givers, as well as how they’ve changed the entire environment in their community.”

David Houck frequently hears people say, “I never knew God cared about me ... but now, God is doing something in my life.”

In addition to pastoring Salt Life Church, the Houcks run SOZO Kids summer camp which ministers to hundreds of children, as well as ministering in a number of community education and vocational training centers. Every minute

of every day is filled with ministry opportunities. The Houcks have seen convicted felons, drug addicts, abusive parents, suicidal teens, and hardened atheists find new life in Christ.

Also, the children's Bibles provided by Light for the Lost are truly making a difference. "The children's Bibles are picked up the most," Houck states. "People will hold that book really tight . . . because it's their link to the gospel."

Houck frequently hears people say, "I never knew God cared about me. I didn't think God knew I was even alive. I thought God hated me. But now, God is doing something in my life."

Thus far, despite the many challenges and obstacles with working in "The Forest," the common spiritual theme has been changed lives and new life.



David Houck, right, ministers to the people of northern Florida.

Houck explains further, "I recently baptized someone who came out of the water saying, 'It feels so good to be brand new!'"

"When I hear that, I know this is why I'm here."

RICK ALLEN
is the national Light for the Lost director. He is married to Bev; they have two children and two grandchildren.



EMPOWERING THE CHURCH



Light for the Lost (LFTL) serves to "empower the church to provide God's Word for every person on the planet." Providing a variety of resources such as audiovisual and printed materials, LFTL has one guiding principle: all Light for the Lost assistance must be to provide resources directly related to evangelism. Through the generous giving of churches, individuals and businesses, LFTL is assisting missionaries and missions projects around the world with evangelistic resources to share the message of hope.

At Salt Life Church, in the Ocala National Forest in northern Florida, U.S. missionary David Houck says: "We've received truckloads of Bibles and literature from Light for the Lost." He exclaims, "That's why LFTL is so important to us!" Tools provided by Light for the Lost make the difference in many cases.

"Our adults go after the children's Bibles," Houck says. "They're learning stories they have never heard before because the children's Bible is written in a way that they can read, understand—and see pictures as well. We've been able to distribute them to literally thousands of people."

Houck reports that people take the Bibles home, then come back and say, "This is the first time I've ever read the Bible and understood what it meant for me." The children's Bible is on a level the people can understand. Houck concludes, "We couldn't minister in such a life-changing way if not for LFTL."

By getting involved in Light for the Lost, you help provide resources, including audio, visual, and printed materials for our missionary efforts around the world. Your sacrificial giving assists LFTL in its continuing effort to spread the message of hope to people who need Jesus.

Light for the Lost provides several ways to get involved, including financial contributions, being part of core support, being a councilman, or through resource endowment. For more information, visit lftl.ag.org.

Living a life of worship WORSHIP IS MORE THAN MUSIC

WORSHIP

One component of the Acts 2 process is discipling men to worship—to glorify—God through every aspect of life. The men featured here are unique examples of men who worship God through everyday life.

DAVID CLOUSE

Car dealer
Springfield, Missouri

David Clouse, of Clouse Motor Company, says, “I’m really in the people business, not the car business. I value what God values.” Clouse uses his business as an opportunity to share Christ in a practical way with everyone he meets.

God set in Clouse’s heart as a child a love of automobiles. From there, every step of his life was ordered toward reaching people for God through his business. God led him to O’Reilly Automotive where he gained management experience, to Metropolitan Life in insurance sales and financial advising, and to full-time ministry. He then felt a call back to the marketplace.

“I’m really in the people business, not the car business. I value what God values.”

—David Clouse

“God put His love for people in my heart—from all walks of life. I’ve learned the importance of building bridges and maintaining a good reputation in the community.” Clouse doesn’t take God out of the equation in any deal, and feels the best testimony in the marketplace is to show God’s faithfulness by being punctual, on time paying bills, and making every deal



David Clouse, above right, shares Christ with everyone he meets.

honest. “Then we can talk about Christ,” he adds. He networks with other car dealers, instead of competing with them, so they can help each other.

With a voice full of feeling, Clouse says, “Car dealer may be my title, but I hope my epitaph reads: He knew Jesus, and Jesus knew him.”

KEN HISER

Pastor, Sandusky, Ohio

“I don’t need to compartmentalize the secular from the spiritual. All of life is worship to God,” says Ken Hiser, pastor of Faith Memorial Church, Sandusky, Ohio. And Hiser can speak to that concept—since his

However, Hiser met a few bumps in the road, which led to him and his wife taking newspaper routes. While on her route, his wife had a car accident—just a fender bender. “It was a God moment,” Hiser says of the accident that led to his meeting Reverend H.J. Vaughn, then pastor of Faith Memorial. The family had been attending the church off and on for about two months, but had not yet met the pastor until after the accident.

“Soon a deacon approached me about being the janitor. For eight years, I buffed floors, cleaned toilets, and washed windows. People would come tell me their problems, and I would pray with them,” Ken explained.

“I took pride in my work. I wasn’t frustrated because I knew it was what God had for me—I did it for His glory. Seeing the floors shine and the windows clean glorified God.”

Pastor Vaughn asked Hiser to pray about becoming the principal of the church’s school. “I was already teaching a class, so I prayed about it,” Hiser recalls. He served as principal for five years; under him, attendance at the school doubled. Next, Hiser was asked to serve on the pastoral staff and was eventually asked to be the senior pastor.

“Whether I’m a pastor, or principal, janitor, or taking my grandkids fishing—all my life is worship,” Hiser concludes.

“When we know God is with us, and we move our own feet to serve

Him, He works through us—by praying, helping, or encouraging someone. When worship is not tied to our employment status, but part of everyday life, God can receive glory.”



Ken Hiser, above left, greets guests in the lobby of Faith Memorial Church.

life is a primary example of someone who worships God in everyday life.

Hiser explains, “Romans 12:1, *The Message*, says it so well: ‘Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering... Fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out.’”

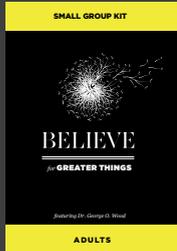
When Hiser was young—about 15 years old—his pastor took him on nursing home and hospital visits. “God used him to pour into me,” Hiser stated. Hiser went on to attend seminary and pastored several small churches in Texas, and Ohio.

“I took pride in my work. Seeing the floors shine and the windows clean glorified God.”

—Ken Hiser

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Inspire men through testimonies from Spirit-filled people who all needed to see God move in an amazing way. Dr. George O. Wood adds biblical examples of those who chose to overcome their struggles in spite of challenges—

1. Sarah laughed as she doubted God's promise.
2. Naomi plodded and persevered through her loss.
3. Hannah wept in brokenness as she longed for a child.
4. Mary submitted and willingly obeyed God's supernatural plan for her life.

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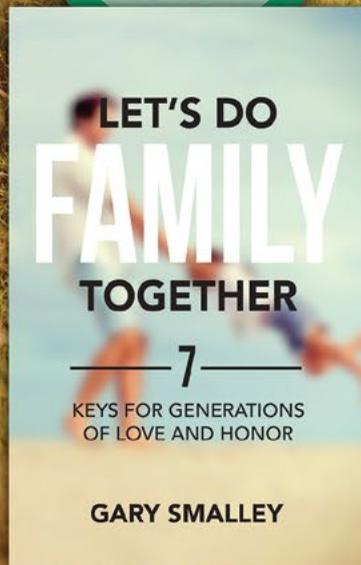
3 STEPS TO A STRONGER FAMILY



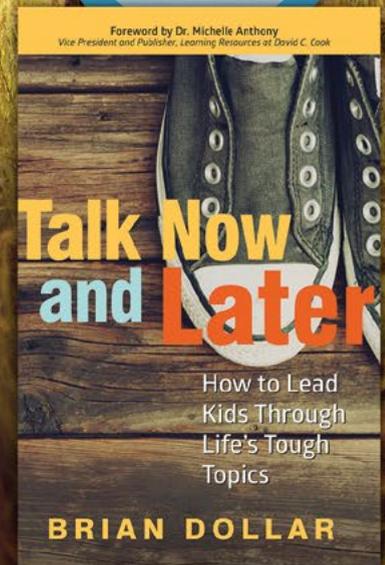
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2



3



Building a strong spiritual foundation begins at home. Let us help you develop both your faith and your family with these resources.

STRONG FAMILIES, HEALTHY HOMES

By Roger Gibson



Soon after our wedding, my bride began to have second thoughts about her novice husband. We'd just returned from our honeymoon, and our marriage appeared perfect. Honestly, I often wondered why people complained about marriage.

Fresh out of college, I had just been hired by a national finance company. I had passion, enthusiasm, and an appetite to make money. Unfortunately, my desire for “stuff” almost derailed my new marriage.

I found myself in a meeting daydreaming about a new 4 by 4 extra-cab truck. Between appointments I visited a nearby car dealership. Immediately, I saw my dream ride in forest green, loaded with bells and whistles. Thirty minutes later, I was a proud new truck owner.

Quickly, I realized I should have talked to Kari—especially since I just put us in debt. But I thought, *It's the coolest truck ever. She'll love it.* I was wrong! That night I learned the harsh reality of marriage as I slept on the couch.

Fortunately, Kari and I worked through my impulsive purchase—but many marriages today just give up. As leaders, we hear stories about the decline of marriage and family.

The U.S. Census Bureau states that 45 percent of families have absent fathers. Single parent homes, cohabitating couples, grandparents raising grandchildren, and other family dynamics are the new normal. The familiar nuclear family—a male and female married couple with children—is now in the minority.

What, then, is family?

Dennis Rainey of Family Life shares, “The purpose of family is to glorify God by forming the spiritual, emotional, physical, and economic foundation for individuals, the church, and any society.” Sadly, sin entering the world continues to cause havoc on families.

God is the originator of family. He blessed the union between Adam and Eve, then commanded them to multiply and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28). The home is where our children should first learn about God, see Jesus modeled, and have a personal relationship with Him (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Men—husbands and fathers—are significant in influencing the lives of children. A sociologist, Vern Bengtson, University of Southern California, found that 71 percent of children with close

Here are some good points for leading a Christ-centered family:

- **Husbands, love your wives** as God wants you to.

Give your children a positive example of interacting with your wife.

- **Hold intentional family devotional times.**

Spend a few minutes daily to read, talk about, and memorize Scripture. Include God’s Word in family conversations.

- **Lead your family in being missional.**

Give to and serve those in need locally, nationally, and globally. Your children will absorb your heart for serving and sharing.

Men—husbands and fathers—are significant in influencing the lives of children. Let’s empower men to influence their families to become strong Jesus-followers!

—Roger Gibson



relationships to their father continued their faith, versus only 46 percent of children continuing in faith without a close relationship to their father.

Leaving a legacy of faith for the next generation requires lifelong commitment. After the 35-year study on passing on a family’s faith, Bengtson discovered two significant points: First, how parents model their faith is important to children. Parents who are consistent at home and at church are more likely to have children who follow their faith. Second, family relationships are the greatest factor in determining a child’s decision to continue in the parents’ faith.

As men accept their God-given roles, effective discipleship within their families will extend to effective discipleship within the larger family, the church. Let’s empower men to influence their families to become strong Jesus-followers!

Calgary Stampede, a horse show spectacular, demonstrates the power of partnership between home and church through one of its events. Two horses pull weight one at a time. One pulls 9,000 pounds; the other pulls 8,000 pounds. However, when harnessed together, they pull—not 17,000 pounds, as we would think when doing the math—but over 30,000 pounds.

Imagine church and family harnessed together, doing what God intended. How strong they would both be in discipleship and in the mission of knowing Jesus and making Him known!

ROGER GIBSON

is senior national director of Adult and Family Ministry. He is married to Kari, and they have three children: Michael, Hannah, and Zoie Senait.



Be a Man: **MODELING MANHOOD**

By Tom Groot

We must capture a healthy definition and rediscover God's intended purpose of what it means to be a man.

—Tom Groot

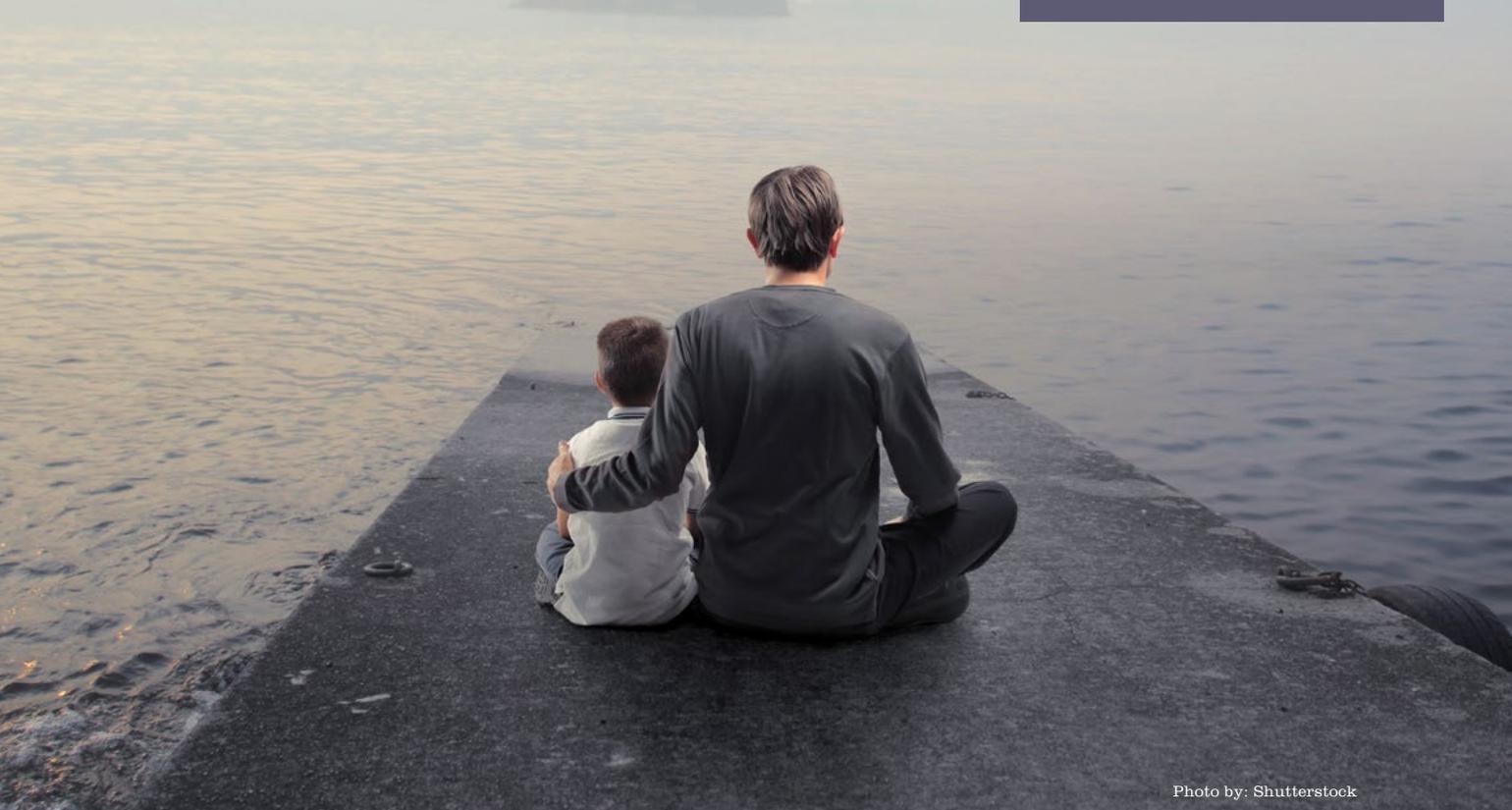


Photo by: Shutterstock

I have heard it said, “you teach what you know, but you reproduce who you are.” As the father of three young boys, I recognize my opportunity to not only teach, but to model what it means to be a man. It’s about guiding them in becoming everything God created them to be. My prayer is that all men would embrace godly manhood by following Jesus wholeheartedly and showing it to the world around them.

**“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”
(1 Corinthians 11:1, NIV).**

Unfortunately, the definition of manhood is somewhat confused. Society today has developed an unhealthy, negative view of masculinity. Prolonged adolescence stops boys from taking on manhood at an appropriate age. Feminism, when it is belligerent, attempts to weaken men, and gender confusion seems rampant. Society emphasizes traits such as financial status or physical dominance, which have nothing to do with real manhood.

So, what does it mean to “be a man”?

Unique cultures around the world try to answer that question with unusual rites of passage. For instance, in the Amazon jungle of Brazil, to prove manhood, a boy in the Sateré-Mawé tribe must stick his hand in a glove woven with bullet ants, and withstand their excruciating stings for 10 minutes—without making a noise.

Or consider land diving. On the Island of Vanuatu, a boy shows manhood by climbing a 100-foot crude, wooden tower—tying one end of a loose vine to the top, and the other end around his ankle. Mustering his courage, he plunges headfirst off the tower, reaching a speed of 45 miles an hour; his goal is to touch the ground with his shoulders as the vine pulls taut. If he miscalculates the length of the vine, it means serious injury or death.

The concept of being a man goes back as far as some of these ancient rituals.

Today, we must capture a healthy definition and rediscover God’s intended purpose of what it means to be a man. As leaders of men, we must encourage others to embrace a biblical model of manhood. This model is summarized within three specific discipleship outcomes. A Spirit-empowered man is continually seeking God’s help to be responsible, growing, and missional. These three outcomes become the target for returning to what God originally intended for a man.

A Man Is Responsible

A responsible man moves from adolescence to adulthood, and demonstrates this transition at home, at work, in the community, and at church.

Dennis Rainey, in his book *Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood*, says, “God calls you . . . to courageously set aside any obstacle—your fears, your insecurities, your selfishness and sin—and to step up to fulfill the responsibilities He has given you.”

A Man Is Growing

A growing man is committed to a lifelong process of being conformed into the image of Christ, spiritually, relationally, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. The process of outcomes-based discipleship allows men to be on the pathway to growth, healing, and restoration. We want men’s hearts to reflect the identity of Christ—becoming more like Him.

A Man Is Missional

A missional man desires to know Jesus and to make Him known personally, locally, nationally, and globally. In day-to-day life, he represents Jesus in every conversation, action, and deed. He uses his gifts and abilities to serve his community, reaching people for Jesus. He is willing to go spread the message of hope in Jesus, when called, or he provides financially to send others God has called.

These traits represent what God has called men to be. As leaders of men, let’s challenge the men we lead to embark on this journey to be responsible, growing, and missional. Let’s remind them that God is there to help us and not to judge us. Let’s teach them to understand their design for service, not for dominance. Let’s encourage men to pick up their cross and follow Christ; to lead by example; to love their wife as Christ loved the Church, giving up all for her sake. Let’s call them to show unmatched love in laying down their life for another. God has given us the Holy Spirit to be courageous together as we model manhood to those around us and to those generations who follow us.

Be a man.

TOM GROOT

is national Men’s Ministry and Christian Education director. He is married to Mandy, and they have three boys, Micah, Levi, and Noah.



Discipling Men: A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED JOURNEY

What is a ministry to men?

An effective Men's Ministry intentionally engages men on a journey to know Jesus and make Him known. The destination of Men's Ministry can be summed up in three measurable discipleship outcomes: men who are **Responsible**, **Growing**, and **Missional**. Men can be directed on a path by leaders who skillfully resource four strategic environments—the **Gathering** Environment, the **Involving** Environment, the **Mentoring** Environment, and the **Learning** Environment. Each environment is unique in experience, but all share the five spiritual functions of Acts 2 (Connect, Grow, Serve, Go, and Worship).

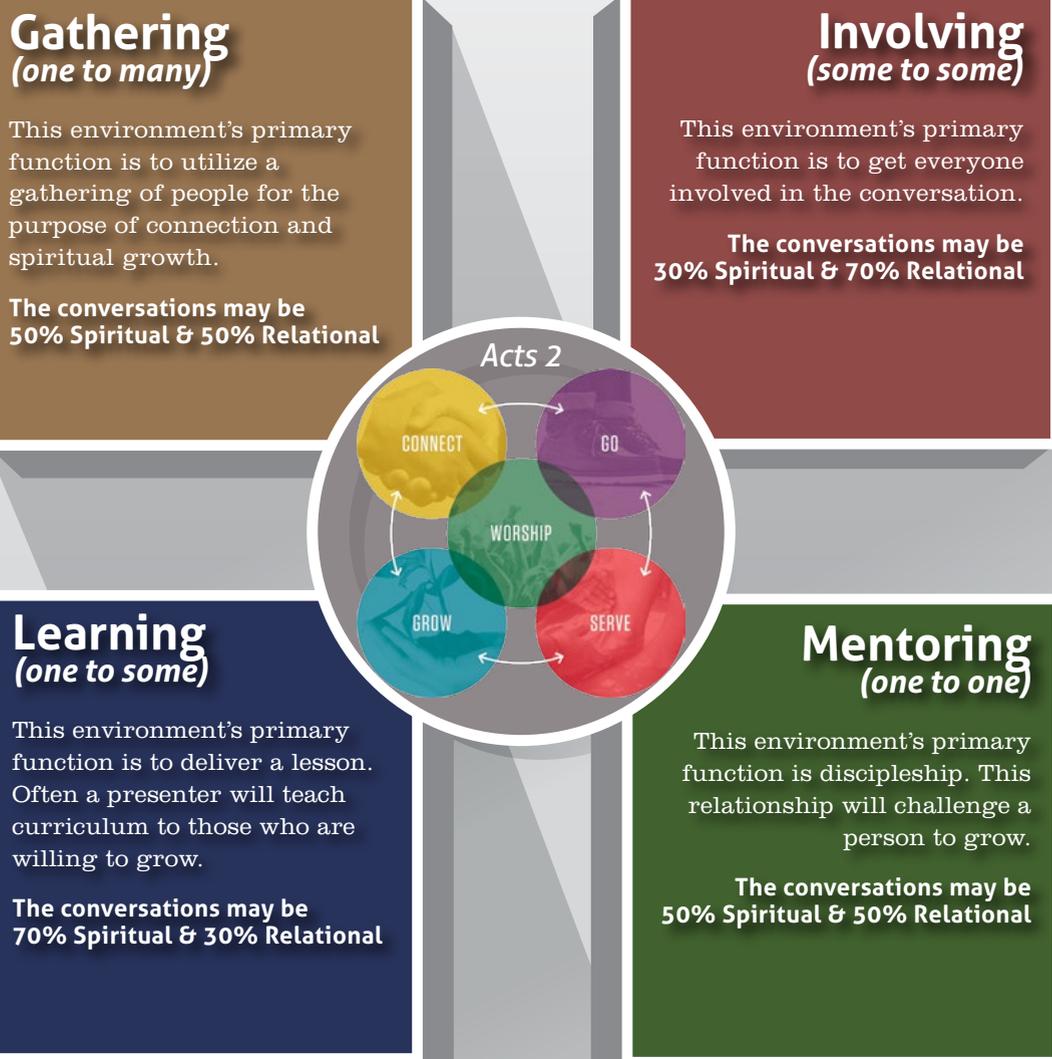
The discipleship journey begins when a man expresses a desire to know God more. These environments provide the path, and the outcomes provide a destination for a personal discipleship plan for each man in your congregation.



What is the role of the leader?

A leader's primary responsibility is to:

1. Encourage men to take ownership of their discipleship journey.
2. Skillfully resource these four discipleship environments. On pages 26 and 27, we have suggested four resources to help you get started.
3. Keep the focus on healthy men—not on programs. To use these environments effectively, discover how to engage a man in his daily routines, without overwhelming his calendar.



For more information about resourcing these environments for these outcomes, go to men.ag.org.

MEN'S RESOURCES

The men of your local church can be disciplined all year with these resources created expressly with men's groups in mind. Consider a calendar where the resources listed here can be used with your men's groups throughout the year.

Stepping Up: A Call to Courageous Manhood

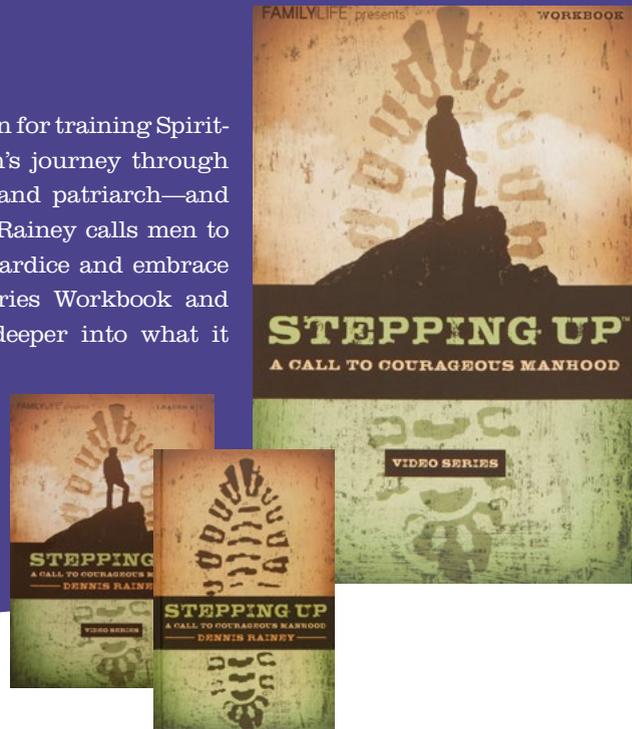
By Dennis Rainey

Stepping Up, a resource that provides a foundation for training Spirit-empowered men, identifies five stages of a man's journey through life—boyhood, adolescence, manhood, mentor, and patriarch—and examines a man's responsibilities at each step. Rainey calls men to seize the moment and take action to reject cowardice and embrace courage. Pair with the *Stepping Up* Video Series Workbook and *Stepping Up* Video Series Leader Kit to dig deeper into what it means to live courageous manhood. Includes 10 video sessions, 25-30 minutes each.

Book **03MN9070** **\$17.99**

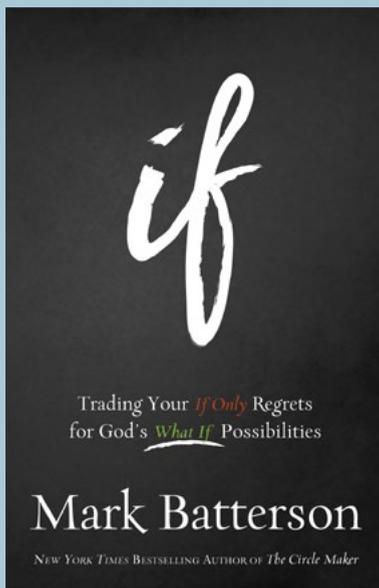
Leader Kit **26MN0426** **\$89.99**

Workbook **03MN0986** **\$14.99**



Fall Sept–Nov 2015

Winter Dec 2015–Feb 2016



If: Trading Your If Only Regrets for God's What If Possibilities

By Mark Batterson

Some people are stuck in “if only” regrets. But God wants you to live a life marked with “what if” possibilities. Unpacking the promises of Romans 8, Mark Batterson helps you overcome feelings of guilt, fear, and doubt because in Christ there is no condemnation. The possibilities for life are limitless. Explore further with the *If* DVD and *If* Participant's Guide. Includes 4 video sessions.

Available October 2015

Book **03MN1028** **\$19.99**

Curriculum Kit **26MN0436** **\$54.99**

DVD **26MN0427** **\$24.99**

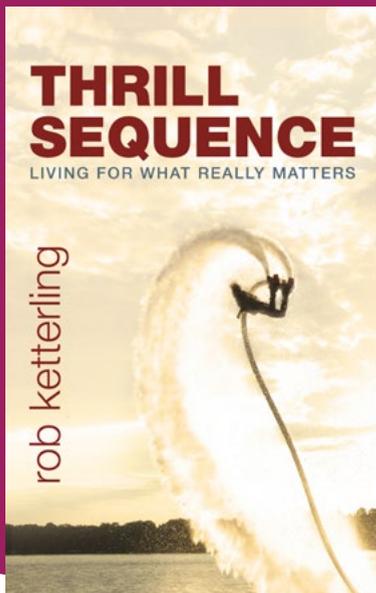
Participant's Guide **03MN1030** **\$ 9.99**



NEW! Men's Ministries Starter Kit: includes *Stepping Up* Leader Kit, (workbook, DVD, book), *If* Curriculum Kit (participant's guide, DVD, book), *Thrill Sequence* book and *Good or God?* book.

Ships by October 22, 2015

02MN0393 \$149.99



Thrill Sequence: Living for What Really Matters

By Rob Ketterling

Are you constantly looking for your next adrenaline-packed experience? What if your Christian life were just as thrilling? Jesus said that He came to give us abundant life. In *Thrill Sequence*, Rob Ketterling encourages readers to seek adventure in a full-on, reignited faith. He challenges others to discover the excitement in passionately pursuing a life of service and reckless faith. *Thrill Sequence* demonstrates that intentionally following Jesus is the ultimate thrill experience.

Book 02MN7363 \$14.99

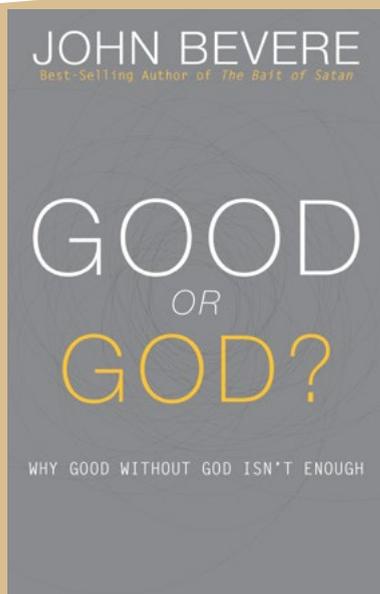


Available as an eBook.

Watch for the downloadable small group video study in spring 2016!

Spring Mar–May 2016

Summer Jun–Aug 2016



Good or God: Why Good Without God Isn't Enough

By John Bevere

These days the terms *good* and *God* seem synonymous. We believe what's generally accepted as good must be in line with God's will. But is that all there is to it? If good is so obvious, why does the Bible say we need discernment to recognize it? *Good or God?* isn't another self-help message. This book will do more than ask you to change your behavior. It will empower you to engage with God on a level that will change everything. Hardcover, 199 pages. 5.5 x 8.5"

Book 03MN0988 \$19.99



Why You Need to
Exit the Freeway and
Follow Your Imagination

THE ART OF WANDERING OFF-TASK

By Mark Batterson

In my latest book, *If*, I tell the story of four college friends who had no idea what to do after graduation. They decided to climb into a green-painted RV and travel across the country, interviewing inspiring people.

After 15,000 miles and hundreds of interviews, their adventure became a PBS TV show called *Roadtrip Nation*. My favorite story of theirs is the one where they simply decided to exit I-90 and take in a beautiful river view in Montana. Just a spontaneous impulse.

What they found was a parked eighteen-wheeler, its driver skipping stones across the water. By this time the travelers knew that truck drivers don't do this kind of thing—they're foot-to-the-metal, eyes-on-the-route types who brake only for truck stops and restroom breaks. A couple of questions revealed that this trucker had lost his wife the previous day. Grief had jarred something loose in his sense of routine.

"For thirty-five years," he said, "I've driven by this exit without stopping. I decided this once to exit the freeway."

“Exit the freeway” became something of a mantra for the Roadtrip movement the four travelers spawned. I love that: it captures all the sense of wonder and possibility I’m going for in my book *If*. What happens when you get off the beaten path? What if?

I need to ask myself that question pretty regularly. You see, I’m part of an impatient, gratification-demanding generation. You too. In some ways, we’re all truckers charging to some goal-shaped horizon, fueling up, teeth gritted, clock watched, then charging back the other way. Sooner or later life is little but gray pavement and white lines—with a thousand possibilities hiding beyond every exit ramp.

Let me suggest this to you: What lies off-road is not random happenstance. The worlds of

never have jotted down on your “to do” list for today.

This life isn’t meant to be a long haul down a drab freeway. It’s a Spirit-Empowered Journey that transforms the traveler from a face in the crowd to a hero on a quest. If you don’t believe me, read the stories in your Bible—stories of mundane men and women who ended up in the Hebrews 12 Hall of Champions. Talk to a few of those serious Christians you know, men and women who have followed the narrow path—the one Jesus described—for a lifetime. They’ll tell you the best stuff lies just off the wide road and the heavy load that the dull, listless world trucks along.

Even now, as I look at the shape of my life, my church, and my family, I have to shake my head.

All the time I was following one GPS, the Spirit of God had another one—and His has made all the difference. My GPS comes from a satellite made of metal. His comes from heaven, and it’s fashioned from love and hope.

Isn’t it about time you exit the freeway and follow the Spirit?

**The worlds of possibility
are shaped by the
Spirit of God, who wants
your life and mine to
be defined by unbroken,
unpredictable, unlimited
adventure. —Mark Batterson**

possibility are shaped by the Spirit of God, who wants your life and mine to be defined by unbroken, unpredictable, unlimited adventure. Whenever you feel that little twinge—that “what if” impulse—there’s a good chance the Holy Spirit is inviting you on another episode of a wild story you could never have predicted,

MARK BATTEY
is lead pastor of National Community Church in Washington, D.C. He is a *New York Times* bestselling author.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

National Men's Ministries is committed to equipping and resourcing the church in creating environments for the development of Spirit-empowered men.

We are growing stronger—and we don't want you to miss out!



National Men's Ministries



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Men's Ministries



Men's Ministries



Men's Ministries

Visit men.ag.org today, and sign up for the daily e-devotional—delivered to your inbox.

THE ADULT AND FAMILY TEAM



Photo by: Mario Guerreiro

ADULT AND FAMILY TEAM: first row, left to right: Roger Gibson, Jennifer Ray, Kerry Clarensau, Natalia Guerreiro, Karlene Gannon, Mandy Kennedy, Tom Groot
second row, left to right: Ryan Horn, Angie Hughes, Darla Knoth, Saehee Duran, Andrea Mgebrishvili, Melanie Gardner, Rachel Harden, Rick Allen, Wes Bartel (not pictured)

The Adult and Family Ministry's desire is for every man and woman to know Jesus and to make Him known. Through our ministries to men, women, senior adults, Christian education, Light for the Lost, and marriage and family, our objective is to uphold the Great Commandment and the Great Commission by equipping churches to develop Spirit-empowered men and women, thriving marriages, and healthy families. Our Adult and Family Ministry team is committed to serving our leaders and the church in making disciples.

Our newest ministry to marriages and families is designed to come alongside the church to assist in establishing a solid biblical foundation in every home. Whether a couple is preparing for marriage, wanting to strengthen their relationship, or in need of saving their marriage, we want to provide a simple, effective ministry to build healthy marriages.

We believe God is the originator of the family. It is at home that children see and hear how to be a follower of Jesus (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

For the next generation, our passion is to see every church fitted with a parenting ministry that will build healthy families and disciples.

The Adult and Family Ministry team is enthusiastically and fervently endeavoring to fulfill the mission of the Assemblies of God ... so that all may know Jesus and make Him known.

Roger Gibson

Senior Director,
Adult and Family Ministry

Rick Allen

Director, Light for the Lost

Wes Bartel

Director, Senior Adult Ministry

Kerry Clarensau

Director, Women's Ministry

Tom Groot

Director, Men's Ministry and
Christian Education



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