

HOW TO START A MEN-FOCUSED MINISTRY

The simple method for developing a men's group in a small to medium church:

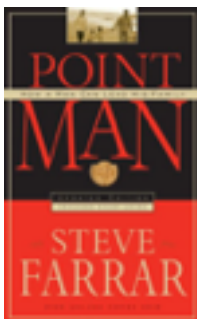
1. Have a monthly or every 2 weeks men's breakfast in someone's home (We shift between My home and another Elders home)
2. Ask volunteers to bring the breakfast (We do breakfast Tacos)
3. Open with heart felt prayer (Take a moment to share needs and encourage faith)
4. Share a meal together (Get to know each other)
5. Pastor/Leader reads then discusses a chapter out of a selected men's book. I read the whole chapter out loud. We discuss as we go. Have the books available. I suggest you have the men purchase from the ones available. Total time is about 1.5 hrs.

Suggested Books



The Man in the Mirror, 25th Anniversary Edition by Pat Morley

Identity. Relationships. Money. Integrity. What problems do you face? Men grappling with the pressures of everyday life don't need spiritual fluff---they need real answers, and Morley offers them in this revised and updated edition of his bestseller. Learn how to trade the rat race for the rewards of godly manhood! Each chapter includes focus questions. 336 pages, softcover from Zondervan.



Point Man: How a Man Can Lead His Family by Steve Farrar

The bestselling classic Point Man encourages and equips Christian men to lead their families successfully through hazards and ambushes like divorce, promiscuity, suicide, and drug addiction. Men will find practical insight on topics such as a father's influence, maintaining purity, and husband-and-wife teamwork. In this war, renowned men's author Steve Farrar emphasizes that Jesus Christ is looking for men who will not die, but live for their families.



A MAN'S IDENTITY

David Powlison

Who are you?

What gives a man his identity? On what foundation are you building your sense of self? Your answer, whether true or false, defines your life.

Wrong ways of defining who we are arise naturally in our hearts, and the world around us preaches and models innumerable false identities. What are the ways men get identity wrong? Perhaps you construct a sense of self by the accomplishments listed on your resume. You might identify yourself by your lineage or ethnicity, by your marital status or parental role. Your sense of self might be based on money, on achievements, on the approval of others, on your self-esteem. Perhaps you think that your sins define you: an angry man, an addict, an anxious people-pleaser. Perhaps afflictions define you: disability, cancer, divorce. In each case, your sense of identity comes unglued from the God who actually defines you.

Who God Says You Are

God's way of sizing up a man goes against the grain of our instinctive opinions and strategies. Rather than giving in to the culture's view, allow these biblical realities to orient you:

Your true identity is who God says you are. You will never discover who you are by looking inside yourself or listening to what others say. The Lord gets the first word because he made you. He gets the daily word because you live before his face. He gets the last word because he will administer your final comprehensive life review.

Your true identity inseparably connects you to God. Everything you ever learn about who God is—his identity—correlates specifically to something about who you are. For example, "Jesus knows your needs" means you are always a dependent child. "Jesus Christ is your Lord" means you are always a servant.

Christ gives a new identity in an act of mercy. Then the Lord makes it a living reality over a lifetime. When you see him face to face, you will know him as he truly is, and you will fully know who you are (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Your new and true identity connects you to God's other children in a common calling. It is not individualistic. You are one member in the living body of Christ. But that's not all. There are a few foundational truths that we need to understand in order to root our identity in the right place. Don't skim through. You will never be gripped by these truths if you treat them merely as an information download. All good gifts, beginning with life itself, come from God. The Lord sustains every facet of our existence; we are entirely dependent on him. And, our dependency as created beings is compounded, complicated, and intensified by sins and by sufferings. To know ourselves truly is to know our need for help. Faith knows and embraces this core identity: "I am poor and weak."



A MAN'S IDENTITY

David Powlison

The Lord is merciful to the wayward. He redeems the sinful, forgetful, and blind. Faith knows and embraces this core identity: “I am sinful—but I am forgiven.” The Lord is our refuge. Our lives are beset by a variety of troubles, threats, and disappointments. We aren’t strong enough to stand up to what we face. God’s presence is the only safe place. Faith knows and embraces this core identity: “I am a refugee.”

Christ is Lord and Master. He bought us with a price; we belong to him. We need someone to tell us what to do and how to do it. Faith knows and embraces this core identity: “I am a servant, indentured for life.”

Our God is good, mighty, and glorious. He is worthy of our trust, esteem, gladness, and gratitude. Faith knows and embraces this core identity: “I am a worshiper.”

Every core aspect of a man’s identity expresses some form of humility, need, submission, and dependency before the Lord. Our culture and our hearts might claim that masculinity means being independent, self-confident, proud, strong, assertive, decisive, tough-minded, opinionated, and unemotional. But Jesus is the true man, and he is unafraid of weakness, lowliness, and submission. He came as a helpless and endangered child. He became dependent, poor, afflicted, homeless, submitted—an obedient servant entrusted with a job to do. He became a mere man and died in pain—Committing humanity into the hands of Deity.



HOW TO BUILD A MINISTRY THROUGH YOUR WORK

A Look in the Mirror, Patrick M. Morley

A man began teaching high school math after college. He said, "After a few years I have identified two problems I think God is calling me to deal with. First, my students are coming to class with problems that math can't solve. Second, the Christian teachers at my school don't know each other." He is praying for a vision about how to respond to these two needs. He says, "I am an ordained math teacher."

Rebuilding Our View Of Vocation

God calls us to build the kingdom and to tend the culture. Often, we denigrate our work as of little consequence to the work of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your work does matter to God. In fact, 80-95% of our vocational time, or calling, will be devoted to "tending the culture." As Ken Myers said, "Changing my daughter's dirty diaper is not a redemptive act, but it is a good thing to do."

The first time my FedEx man stepped out of his van to deliver my package I knew two things. First, he loved God. Second, he understood that his job is his ministry. It's not just that our work is something we do to give us a platform to do ministry, it is ministry. It is tending the culture, and it is good.

There is intrinsic value in our work because it makes life more livable, creates jobs, contributes to an orderly society, creates income to meet family obligations, satisfies our need to be significant, and fulfills the biblical mandate to "fill, rule, and subdue" God's creation.

If you have a concordance, look up all the references to "secular." How many did you find? God makes no distinction between sacred and secular. The notion

that we perform secular jobs or go into the ministry comes from our culture, not from the Bible.

Every vocation is holy to the Lord. Our vocation, or work, is an extension of our personal relationship with Jesus. 95% of us will never be in "occupational" ministry, but that doesn't mean we are not ministers. The Bible teaches the priesthood of all believers. So, the issue isn't whether or not you are in ministry, but whether or not you are faithful in the ministry God has given you.

If you are a waiter, every customer that sits on your station is a divine appointment; an opportunity for you to be the incarnation of the loving character of Jesus Christ. If you are a salesman, every appointment is holy and (God knows) every sale is sacred. If you are a manager, every conflict between two employees is an opportunity for you to demonstrate the reconciling nature of Christ our Lord.

In addition to everything I've just said, let me add that our vocation must also always include a view to "building the kingdom." Unless our work contemplates how we can help others be persuaded to faith and equipped to love and serve God then we have missed the point. Our labors may be good, but they won't be great. God doesn't call us to the "Good" Commission, but the Great Commission.

Practical Ideas

Do you view your work as a calling from God? Consider some practical steps to help you have a richer perspective on your work.

Adopt a verse as a mission statement and place it on your desk or wall so that you will see it often.



HOW TO BUILD A MINISTRY THROUGH YOUR WORK

When you arrive at your office or place of business, begin each day with a short prayer dedicating your work to God.

(Perhaps when you pull into the parking lot or walk through the front door.)

Meet for lunch once a week with a Christian coworker for prayer and encouragement.

Here are some categories to think about building an outreach ministry through your business or work.

What other ideas can you think of that will help you view your work as a calling from God? Implement one of these ideas in the days ahead.

Building The Kingdom

In addition to everything I've just said, let me add that we should also view our work as a way to "build the kingdom."

Unless we help others be persuaded to faith and equipped to love and serve God through our work, then we have missed the point. Our labors may be good, but they won't be great. God doesn't call us to the "Good" Commission, but the Great Commission.

All of us interact with others at work. We need to view these relationships as ministry opportunities ordained by God. You are an ordained _____! (Insert your job title). The people you work with have tremendous needs, the greatest of which is their need for Christ. God calls you to help meet their needs and be the incarnation of Christ's love for them.

Some men occupy leadership positions within their company, helping direct its people and resources. These men have unique opportunities to shape the atmosphere of their company so that each employee has the opportunity to experience the love of Christ and hear the gospel. If you are a leader, it is especially important for you to remember that people are watching to

see if your faith consistently influences your life. Actions do speak louder than words.

Practical Ideas

Here are some categories to think about as you build an outreach ministry through your business or work.

"Bi-Vocational"

It wasn't until I was forty that I realized I had always been "bi-vocational." In the early years I was 90% real estate and 10% ministry. Then it was 75-25. Then 50-50. Then 25-75.

If you own your own company or control your own time you may want to consider describing yourself by the category "bi-vocational."

"Professional Tithe"

If you spend fifty hours a week practicing law or mowing lawns (tending the culture), why not consider giving a "tithe" of your time to the work of building the kingdom?

"Optimizing Versus Maximizing"

The word of the success culture is "maximizing." I don't think Jesus would use that word. The idea that is most useful for balancing our priorities between vocation, family, and Christ is not "maximizing" but "optimizing." Think about it for a few weeks.

"Good Ideas Versus God Ideas"

Strong-willed men often have good ideas. King David was such a man. Yet, on all but two or three occasions (Bathsheba, taking a census) David always "inquired of the Lord." The problem is that not every good idea is a God idea. Ask this question to keep on track: "Is this a God idea or a good idea?" I've learned the hard way that the hardships from many ideas that haven't worked out could have been avoided



HOW TO BUILD A MINISTRY THROUGH YOUR WORK

...altogether if I had only asked this question.

“Shine Light Versus Curse Darkness”

Some people are surely called to curse the darkness. But probably not as many as do. Draw this distinction in your own mind and try to be a positive influence for the gospel on those around you. Too many negative Christians.

“Calling”

In the end everything boils down to calling. This issue is, “What is God’s call on your life?” This often doesn’t come easily. And when it does come, it is usually followed by a season of equipping in which God works things into and out of our lives. Then, when we have been fully equipped and prepared for the battle, He sends. God has a special purpose for your life. Seek and you will find.

Business leader, author, and speaker, Patrick Morley has been used throughout the world to help men and leaders think more deeply about their lives, to be reconciled with Christ, and to equip them to have a larger impact on the world.





HOW TO READ THE BOOK: NINE RULES FOR EFFECTIVE BIBLE READING

By Jason Jackson

Who needs to read the Bible? Kings were commanded to read the Scriptures all the days of their lives (Deuteronomy 17:19). The Scriptures have been read aloud for the benefit of various groups of people (Exodus 24:7; Deuteronomy 31:9-13; Joshua 8:34-35; Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8, 18; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 15:21; Colossians 4:16). God's word needs to be taught to families (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 2 Timothy 3:15). It must be read individually as well (Psalms 1:2; 119:11, 105; Acts 8:28-32).

The Bible is not an ordinary book. It is the only revelation of God's nature and will; it alone is "profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteous" (2 Timothy 3:16). It can make us wise unto salvation, and the word is able to save our souls (2 Timothy 3:15; James 1:21).

Standing alone amidst the world's literature, the Bible especially ought to be read. The skills for Bible reading are identical, mechanically, for reading a secular document. But a keener appreciation applies to the divine revelation, and additional considerations for the heavenly message are required. Our devotion to the sacred word must be as special as the book itself.

Rule One

We ought to read the Bible regularly. John Stott was right when he wrote to preachers, "Sporadic and haphazard dipping into the Scriptures is not enough" (1982, 182). Neither is it enough for any Christian. Any child of God who needs convinced that he ought to read the Bible regularly is in spiritual peril already.

Rule Two

We need to read the Bible analytically. God intends for us to understand the Bible, and we ought to analyze the word's component parts to better understand it as a whole. For example, the Bible student needs to understand the two major parts of the Bible—the Old and New Testaments. The differences between the Old and New Testaments are critical to "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

A good Bible dictionary will facilitate this rule. For instance, if we plan to read the book of Genesis, we ought to consult a Bible dictionary article on "Genesis." An introduction to the content increases our ability to understand and retain the material. Give the mind an advantage by knowing as much as you can about your reading before you read. This is true with respect to the Bible as a whole, and in connection with chapters and verses. Halley's Bible Handbook is a useful tool for this; its chapter summaries are a helpful reader's guide.

Rule Three

We would profit more, I believe, if we read the Bible systematically. A well-organized plan facilitates any objective—even Bible reading. Reading calendars, study aids, and valuable suggestions are numerous (see Robert Murray M'Cheyne's [1813-1843] calendar for daily Bible readings, which averages four chapters a day from four different parts of Scripture. Download it in PDF format at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/d.haslam/mccheyne/FAQ4rmm.htm#Q1>).

Take advantage of a method and use it. Devise your own and tenaciously work through it. The most prolific Bible



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...readers with whom I am familiar are people who are systematic in method and time. A designated pattern and time of day, interrupted only because of absolute necessity, establishes a way of life; there is no need to “fit it in” to one’s schedule. Other things may be postponed. We have our Bibles to read!

Rule Four

We must read the Bible persistently. Bible reading can be discouraging for some, especially the new Christian. He may be distracted by what is not readily understood, rather than absorbing what could have been easily grasped. I recommend that you keep a notebook nearby while reading the Bible. Write down the reference of a verse that perplexes you, and keep on reading. Schedule another time for a more exhaustive study to research the difficult text. Avoid interrupting your plan, as a general rule, to ponder about an obscure thought to the neglect of much that could have been understood. Don’t allow discouragement to set in. Keep reading, and press on.

I do not imply that the Bible should be read sloppily. We ought to devote separate time and proven methods for deeper study (see [Effective Bible Study –An Urgent Need For Everyone](#)). This is indispensable to our growth as well. Such projects, however, usually cannot be accomplished in short periods of time. We need an entire morning, evening, or Saturday afternoon, to devote uninterrupted hours for these special studies. With perseverance and planning, we can devote ourselves to persistent Bible reading with thirty minutes to an hour per day.

Rule Five

The previous guidelines help us accomplish this one: read the

Bible completely. A plan best accomplishes this, and it certainly ought to be our resolve. Some books of the Bible captivate our attention more than others. Some are more immediately relevant to our spiritual needs. Yet neglect none of them. Read it; read it all –1,189 chapters. And read it over and over again, for “man does not live by bread alone” (Matthew 4:4).

The next several suggestions involve a mind set more than methodology. They are vital for effective Bible reading.

Rule Six

We must read the Bible reverently. Bible reading is not a matter of Pharisaic self-congratulation. It should not degrade into a mere routine. For reverent readers, Bible reading and prayer are inseparable (see Acts 6:4). The regularity of our reading should not diminish our respect for the words breathed out by God. To the contrary, I believe that the persistent reader will become more reverent through the passing of time.

Rule Seven

Because this book is from God for our utmost good, we ought to read the Bible expectantly. We must realize that the Bible will do for us what it can do for any person (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is useful for teaching—what we need to know. It is profitable for reproof—what we must reject and refute. It is beneficial for correction—what we must turn away from and avoid. It is good for instruction in righteousness—what we must consider about our lives and duties with respect to God and man. Expect to grow stronger; be encouraged and more fruitful through regular contact with God’s word. Conversely, spiritual atrophy is the expectation for those who do not open the Good Book.



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Confident that it is true, but void of its power, defines the complacent attitude toward the Bible in which the Devil, no doubt, rejoices.

Rule Eight

Read the Bible fervently. Mortimer J. Adler in his work, *How to Read A Book*, begins his chapter on “How to be a Demanding Reader” with a yawning observation. By the way, get comfortable, and enjoy this quotation. The rules for reading yourself to sleep are easier to follow than are the rules for staying awake while reading. Get into bed in a comfortable position, make sure the light is inadequate enough to cause slight eyestrain, choose a book that is either terribly difficult or terribly boring—in any event, one that you do not really care whether you read or not—and you will be asleep in a few minutes. Those who are experts in relaxing with a book do not have to wait for nightfall. A comfortable chair in the library will do any time (1972, 45). We must stay awake to effectively read the Bible. But more than that, we must read it with focus and fervency. It doesn't matter if the brain wanders while reading the latest editorial in the paper. The Bible matters. The kind of effort we expend in reading, comprehending, retaining, and applying God's word matters eternally. Choose a time of day when you are alert. Select a place where you will not become easily fatigued. Provide yourself with adequate lighting. And focus. It is work; it is soul-saving work—your own!

Rule Nine

We need to read the Bible collectively. As friends, dating couples, married couples, entire families, small groups, congregations, we can read the Bible together and all be better for it. On

October 4, 1982, Ronald Reagan signed a joint resolution passed by the United States Congress. While it is worthy of being quoted in its entirety, I cite only the final paragraph:

Resolved the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized and requested to designate 1983 as a national “Year of the Bible” in recognition of both the formative influence the Bible has been for our Nation, and our national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures (in Federer 1996, 709-10).

We desire and pray that our nation's leaders would resolve to do what this august body resolved. We, however, who are not wavered by infidelity nor distracted by the entanglements of the world, what have we resolved? The Bible demands more than lip service from members of the Lord's church. It requires our attention in addition to our affection (Psalm 1:2). Become, or continue to be, an effective Bible reader. That is exactly what God wants you to be.

