

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

An equipping e-newsletter from Man in the Mirror to help you reach more men.



How I Became a Disciple, Part 2

By Patrick Morley

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NOTE: This is the second of a two-part article excerpted from my new book, Chapter 6, "How I Became a Disciple—A Case Study," Pastoring Men (Moody Publishers) scheduled for release January, 2009. Part 1 covered my "calling" to Christ, and Part 2 will explain how I was "equipped" and "sent."

Fortunately for me (and for my wife, children, parents, and brothers), our church had a vision to disciple me to become a godly man, husband, and father. The pastor was determined to make this happen. And the church had adopted a strategy that not only got me started, but had additional steps to sustain my growth and service. And best of all—at least for me—our church acted quickly once they learned I had received Christ.

A Couples Bible Study

I've had many awesome opportunities to grow, but the most systematic one came when Patsy and I were invited to join a home Bible Study led Jim Gilleen. Jim was an engineer who really made us all think about what the Scriptures meant and, importantly, how they applied to everyday life. During those Bible studies I learned how to read the Bible for myself, how to pray, and how to have a daily devotional.

Scripture Memorization

Scripture memorization was popular at the time, and I memorized hundreds of verses—one of the best "equip" things I ever did. I still recall verses every day that I learned back then.

Proverbs

At a weekend seminar, the speaker noted that the book of Proverbs has 31 chapters. He suggested we read one chapter a day each month. I took the challenge and for 15 years or so, I read a chapter in Proverbs every day. With that kind of exposure, I was soon quoting "Proverbs" in my everyday language.

Teaching a Class

We were invited into Jim's Bible Study as part of a package to both "equip" and "send" us. We were "sent" when they asked Patsy and me to lead a six week Sunday school class for new Christians that repeated several times a year. Leading the class for new Christians was definitely "learning by doing." Even though the new believer's questions were simple and basic, I still had to scramble because I was a rookie at serving Christ. Leading helped me grow like a weed.

Evangelism Training

Our church hosted a Campus Crusade for Christ weekend training to teach people how to do personal evangelism. Patsy and I attended, and I just ate it up. They "equipped" us on Saturday and "sent" us on Sunday! I led my first person to Jesus on a Sunday afternoon home visit. I started taking businessmen to lunch, sharing



my testimony, and asking, "Where are you on your spiritual pilgrimage?" If they didn't understand the gospel, I would read them Bill Bright's Four Spiritual Laws and most of them became Christians too.

Marketplace Small Group

Six of us in the business community started meeting in a weekly small group to share, learn, and pray for each other. The main thing about this group was that we were "for" each other, and that "equipped" me to have adult male friendships for the first time.

Marketplace Ministry

One day I proposed to our small group that we fan out in the community and take positions in politics, education, and civic life. I volunteered to take the "civic life" category and joined the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce. They immediately put me on the Program Committee, and six months later I was the Chair. I prayed, "God, why am I here?" I sensed God had "sent" me there to start a prayer breakfast, so I acted. For the last 30 years we have conducted an annual Leadership Prayer Breakfast, and hundreds of business leaders have become Christians as a result.

A Men's Retreat

About this time, someone invited me to attend a weekend men's only retreat hosted by The Fellowship at Windy Gap, North Carolina. The main speaker was Tom Skinner, former gang leader and evangelist. Tom's messages focused on the kingdom of God, loving God, and loving other people—especially people who are different from us.

Tom liked to play tennis, and they had courts at Windy Gap. The next night I skipped out on the main session and walked up to the courts. Tom was there hitting balls. We struck up a conversation. He talked to me as though I was the only person on Earth still living. I felt the love of God coming through him into me. It was a supreme "equipping" time for me.

Leadership Conferences

The whole experience with Tom was so overwhelming to me that, being the task-oriented man I was, I immediately asked him if he would come to Orlando and share his message with all my tired, worn-out Christian friends. He said yes, and soon we hosted the first of several Christian Leadership Conferences in Orlando. I remember my Christian workaholic friends coming up to Tom after his sessions with tears streaming down their faces.

A One-on-One Friendship

One thing Tom said that weekend at Windy Gap gripped me: "If you want to change your city or church, don't try to organize a big revival. Instead, find some like-minded men and become to each other what you want your city or church to become. Meet together and share your lives with each other. That will create a model so attractive that others will want to be part of it." That really grabbed hold of my insides. As soon as I returned home, I started praying for God to send me a man. On the following Sunday, I saw Ken Moar, a friendly man 30 years my senior, standing in the hall. I shared Tom's idea, and we have been meeting weekly since 1977.

Serving the Community

In 1980, here in Orlando, we had a racially charged civil disturbance that was big enough to make the evening network news. I called an African American college



professor that I knew fairly well. Motivated by my relationship with Tom Skinner, I told him I would like to pull together a meeting of black and white men; not to change Orlando, but to become to each other what we think Orlando should become.

I made a list of 20 white men and he made a list of 20 black men. We invited them to come to a Saturday morning meeting. Half came—10 black and 10 white. We met one Saturday morning each month for the next five years. We called ourselves “The Black/White Fellowship.” More tasks and “sending” came out of that group than you can ever imagine: Men going to seminary, starting ministries, meeting financial needs, helping the poor, fixing houses, medical needs.

Books

The ministry of Christian literature began affecting me early. Frankly, though, some of the early books I read were too advanced for me. But I soldiered on, and several authors left deep imprints on my faith and worldview—men like Francis Schaeffer, J. I. Packer, Oswald Chambers, and C. S. Lewis.

Parenting Skills

As we started our own family, a very attractive couple in our church who raised four successful boys invited us to attend a parenting class. We already knew about the class, but the clincher for us to attend was a personal invitation to me from the man. I felt honored to be asked personally by a leader in the church. I had never been methodically “equipped” in the area of parenting. My wife, Patsy, had handed me many pages and even chapters of great parenting books to read —Dobson mostly. However, listening to our teachers and comparing notes with our peers brought everything down to street level.

A Disciple Making Church

When Dr. Chuck Green preached, he preached to men. Of course, he preached to women too, but he was a man’s man. He used a lot of humor and stories that I could relate to as a man. I didn’t feel like Christianity was for wimps. He had a vision to make disciples—calling, equipping, and sending.

The Gift of Giving

The Lord gave me some gifts in business, and by the early 1980s we were flush with money. My church presented good teaching on stewardship. Patsy and I decided to put a cap on our standard of living. We had been “equipped” to understand that God gives some people a spiritual gift of giving to the needs of others.

Conclusion

Each of your men is unique and God deals with them as individuals. Nevertheless, all men need to be called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ, and sent to live for Christ. I hope this two-part case study creates a sense of freedom and variety about the many ways your men can become disciples of Jesus.

