

10 Ideas to Start Men's Discipleship Conversations

Here are 10 scripts from "The Man in the Mirror Minute" radio program that I think hit the bull's eye on men's discipleship. Consider discussing them with your men's leadership team. Or pull a few men from your church together and use these ideas as conversation starters about the urgent necessity to evangelize and disciple more men.

1. Where is the bottleneck today? Men, 20 years ago there wasn't enough good curriculum to disciple men. Leaders recognized that as the bottleneck—the one thing "most" holding men's discipleship back, and began encouraging curriculum developers. Today there is a plethora of good curriculum to disciple men. It has led to an acceleration in men's discipleship. So what's the bottleneck today that, if removed, would most lead to an acceleration in men's discipleship over the next 20 years? The bottleneck today – the one thing most holding us back—is for men who have been discipled to turn around and disciple other men. Will you be that man? History has shown that a lot can happen in 20 years if we will be intentional.

2. "Disciples not making disciples." Men, so many of our problems—the collapse of Judeo-Christian values, racism, poverty, the federal deficit, ISIS, abortion, divorce, fatherless, or you name it—can be traced back to "disciples not making disciples." Disciples not making disciples has led us to the current situation—a spiritually obese generation of Christian over-eaters. The only solution is to get back to the Jesus way of bringing about change and transformation: "disciples making disciples—starting at home."

3. The "new wineskin" For reaching men. Men, the "old wineskin" for men's ministry was a small group of six men

meeting for Bible study at zero dark thirty on Wednesday mornings and twelve guys eating burned pancakes once a month on a Saturday morning. In the old way of thinking, if your church had that much going, you had men's ministry covered. But what about the men who are part of the worship team, teach middle school boys, park cars, usher, only attend the weekly worship service, or on holidays? How do they become strong disciples? The "new wineskin" for reaching men is to disciple all your men, not just those who show up for the "men's only" activities.

4. Why the term "men's ministry" is spoiled. Men, where did we ever get the idea that any more than a small fraction of men would be interested in joining a "men's only" ministry? Perfectly executed, you might involve 25 percent of your men, tops. The more you think about it, the more the old way of reaching men sounds like a design flaw on par with the Hindenburg (a small gondola strapped to a highly flammable balloon). We believe the term "men's ministry" is a spoiled term—in some places even toxic. Building an "all-inclusive disciple-making ministry to men" is the "new wineskin" for reaching men. In fact, we suggest you use the term "men's discipleship" or "ministry to men"—it can help you shed the baggage of the old way that reaches only "some" of your men.

5. Success means having a plan to disciple "all" your men. Men, my colleagues and I have spent 25 years studying why some churches disciple men more effectively than others. Of all the insights we've gained, none is more important than this: Successful churches have a vision to disciple "all" their men, not just those willing to join "men's only" activities. So broaden your thinking. Any activity or event where men are involved can also help you reach men. For example, the graduation ceremony for vacation Bible school, a tour of the local food bank, the annual fall festival, or the annual Easter egg hunt that draws families from the community to the church grounds. Here's the big idea: *However many men you have*

in your church, that's the size of your ministry to men.

6. Give your leaders a bigger vision for men. Men, help your leaders see that everything your church does that touches men is “ministry to men,” from the worship service to ushering to kitchen helper. An “all-inclusive ministry to men” disciples men right where they are. For example, you don’t need your male Sunday school teachers to join a separate ministry to men. Instead, have them gather thirty minutes early once a month to discuss “the challenges of being a male Sunday school teacher.” Why is this so important? We are not responsible for how men respond, but we are most certainly responsible that *all* of them have the opportunity to become disciples and disciple-makers.

7. Mentoring younger men. Men, disciples cannot be mass-produced. I can’t disciple young men by teaching them in my large Bible Study. Men need individual attention. Mentoring is very situational. Like when a young man is trying to figure out why his wife thinks he’s neglecting her, or whether to walk away from a home mortgage that’s twice as much as the home is worth. Who is going to show the ropes to all those young men whose fathers are not in the picture? Moms can only go so far. It takes a man to teach a man how to be a man. You are that man. If not you, then who?

8. Showing younger men the ropes. Men, a young man in his late 20s asked me to mentor him. On our fourth visit—long enough for him to size up whether or not he would trust me—he sat down and said, “I have a mediocre business, a mediocre marriage, and a mediocre relationship with God.” And then he sat back, a sense of relief sweeping over him as he finally got it off his chest. How did it happen? His father, though in the home, had never shown his son the ropes, never tutored him in the ways of manhood. Many young men like this are growing up as “practical” orphans. No matter how it happened, the only solution is for men like you and me to show them the ropes.

9. The collateral damage from the “men problem.” Men, the men problem is horrific, but the collateral damage on marriages and families is staggering. Tonight, 36 percent of America’s seventy-two million children will go to bed in a home without their biological dad. But perhaps the greatest cost to the *physical* absence of fathers is the *practical* absence of mothers. Essentially, one person must now do the work of two.

As a young woman who grew up without a dad said, “When my mom and dad divorced, I didn’t just lose my dad. I also lost my mom, because she had to work long hours to support us.” Men, we can no longer afford to wait for someone else to address this problem. However we get in so deep, the only solution is to disciple our way out. Together, we can do something about it.

10. I know you care, but what can we do? Men, we all know culture is increasingly hostile toward Judeo-Christian values. I know you care, but what can we do? Complaining doesn’t help. My Dad was such a sweet man, until the evening news came on. He would sit in front of the TV and yell. Complaining may feel good, but it doesn’t change a thing. Maybe that’s why Jesus never commissioned us to speak out against the culture. Instead, He commissioned us to go do something about it by making disciples. Making disciples is something that will actually move the needle. That may be sharing your faith or leading a small group. But it can also be the reason for letting someone pull out from a side street in heavy traffic. Anything that softens the soil counts.

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