

Wired to Make Disciples

The director of ministry at Every Man Ministries is Danny Wallen. Around here we call him “Yoda” because every time he opens his mouth, you feel stupid. I usually have a pencil and pad handy when he goes off in a stream-of-consciousness discourse because the dude knows how to raise up and train men. Standing in my doorway one day, he shared these pearls about how men are wired by God with an urge to reproduce.

“The most natural and positive thing for a man is to reproduce. God made us that way,” he began. “Think about it. Why do you think we are consciously and subconsciously driven by our sexual impulses? We seek to connect, reproduce, procreate and multiply!

“The problem is that men don’t translate their natural drive to reproduce into a spiritual reproduction because sin and fear have conflicted and polluted our desires. Sexual success, material success and professional success have replaced relational success and multiplication. For most men, momentary attachments define us instead of our generational impact.”

Ouch, Danny. I’m not sure whether I should be glad I wrote that down. *Sex and discipleship*? What was he smoking?

But as I thought about what he said, I realized that it’s impossible to become God’s man in a vacuum. The disciples needed Jesus. Timothy, Epaphras, Titus and Mark needed Paul. God’s man needs to be trained by another man to worship, connect, grow, serve and reproduce His faith in a deliberately relational way. This is what you were made to do.

When it came to discipling, the apostle Paul viewed the men whose lives he touched much like banks that he had entrusted with the valuable commodities of his spiritual investments. While being held prisoner in Rome by Emperor Nero, Paul made sure one of his best trainees, Timothy, remembered how

precious Paul's investment was to him. Timothy was a spiritual repository of Paul's best thinking, modeling, ministry and message.

Paul defines discipleship in the simplest and most functional sense: *taking another man on a spiritual journey with you*. He grabbed Timothy and hit the road! They traveled together; taught together; ate many a meal together; laughed, I'm sure, together; and saw large numbers of people come to know Jesus. Paul passed down a pattern of thinking and teaching to his disciple while they were together over the years that Timothy needed to retain, protect and preserve as he lived among others he would influence for Christ.

Paul told him: "What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (2 Tim. 1:14, NIV).

After making a commitment to value and safeguard the message and truth deposited in his life, Timothy needed to take one more step. He needed to give away to other men what had been entrusted to him and multiply his impact generationally for Christ.

Here's Paul again: "So, my son, throw yourself into this work for Christ. Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!—to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:1-2, *The Message*). The call was crystal clear: "Reproduce yourself, Timothy!"

Risking spiritual reproduction of yourself requires guts and perseverance. But it is also the greatest adventure God's man will ever take. Raising up and training a leader to do God's work is nuclear—it has a blast zone that extends to people you will never know you influenced.

It will happen because you invested yourself and made deposits

into the life of one other person and intentionally brought him to maturity so you could release him to ministry. People touching people who touch people for Jesus in a chain of relationships that span centuries.

As a men's pastor, my goal for the guys in my church is that they be "contagious" reproducers—that other men will be "infected" with a desire for spiritual reproduction. The reason is that Jesus shared His life and mission with 12 men who in turn went on to infect the world with the gospel. Paul had the same mentality. How about you?

When God's man decides to give away to other men what he knows, he sets in motion a chain reaction. Who will be in your chain?

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