

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

volume 4

MEN

Leading as a Godly Man in
an Ungodly Culture

HOLY BIBLE



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- Introduction
- What makes a Godly Man? *by Brandon Bradford*
- The Balanced Man *by Chris Clark*
- How to do Men's Ministry *by Bob Stone*
- Acknowledgments
- Additional Resources

INTRODUCTION

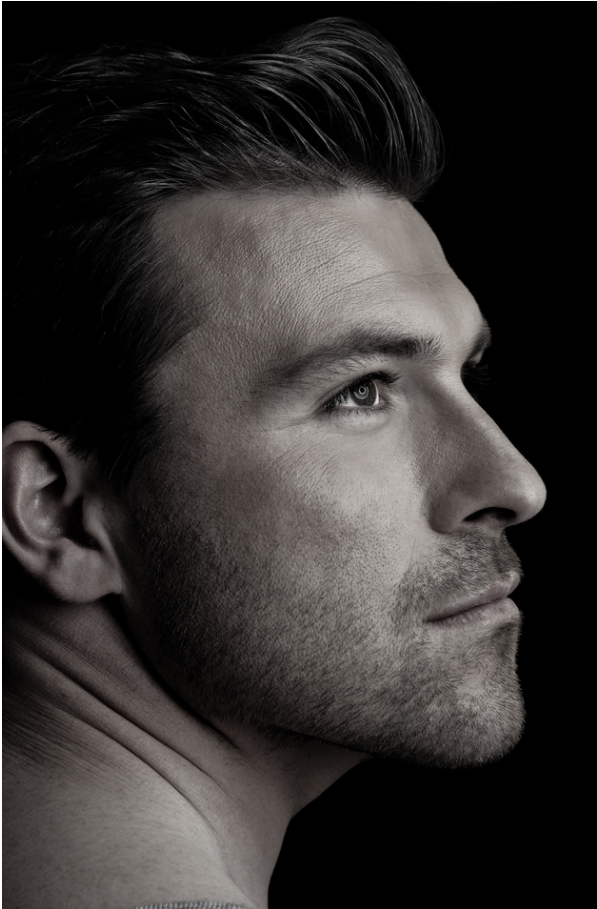
Men's ministry is one of the most important ministries in the local church. Unfortunately, some churches only see Men's ministry as a monthly breakfast, special event or even just serving bacon and Dad's Root Beer on Father's Day. All of those things are good; however, if that is all we do to challenge, disciple and grow the men in our churches, we are missing a huge opportunity!

We have asked several Men's Leaders from around our network to collaborate to write this resource to help us all understand the weight, importance and necessity in this day and age of Discipleship for Men. The following articles are meant to challenge our way of thinking and to broaden our ideas of what ministry to men looks like. The enemy has attacked masculinity, identity, the role of father, husband and even friend.

We want to look at God's design and plan for man and challenge the men of our churches to step up to be the spiritual leaders that God has called them to be.



Shawn Reine
Church Ministries Director



WHAT IS A GODLY MAN? THE CHALLENGE EVERY MAN FACES

by Brandon Bradford

This question has lingered for what seems like an eternity. Actually, it really has been around since the very beginning. Adam had to have asked himself and maybe even God this very question after that mishap in the garden. Now thrust into a very different reality than before, I'm sure this difficult question was present as Adam toiled to provide for his now growing family all the while trying to understand what it meant to be a husband and a father. It's a question that every man has and or will ask himself as he looks to find his way. In the world today this can be a difficult topic to navigate, but one that I think is essential for us as believers to try and answer. The very notion that a Man is even different from a

woman is under attack at the hands of a world that doesn't acknowledge our divine creator. So, how do we answer this question? First let's take a deeper look at some of the pressures and challenges that men face as they seek to find this answer.

The Pressures and Challenges...

Societal Inconsistencies and Influence. Let me start by saying this, a society that tries to give the definition of a Man or Woman without the acknowledgement of God as creator is destined to fail. We live in a construct that requires a personal relationship with God through the acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and savior as well as the Word of God to even begin the conversation much less hope to gain understanding. This is the reason we see all types of erratic behaviors and inconsistent perspectives as it pertains to genders, their roles, and even the virtues associated with them. We're inundated with the world's answers to this question in television shows, social media posts, political agendas, and public forums. Confusion has begun to set in, and Terms like "Toxic Masculinity" seek to tear at the very fabric of the Father's design. God has an order, and we must seek Him to understand its purpose!

To Conform. Whether it's in the church or in the world, peer pressure is real! Many misguided perspectives and attempts within the church to shape this conversation have raised questions in the world about what it really means to be a man. Somewhere along the line, the sin that still impacts all of us including us believers has contributed to this problem. Some in the church have partnered with fear in their attempts to dissuade others' questions. Some have tried to control rather than teach or lead in love.

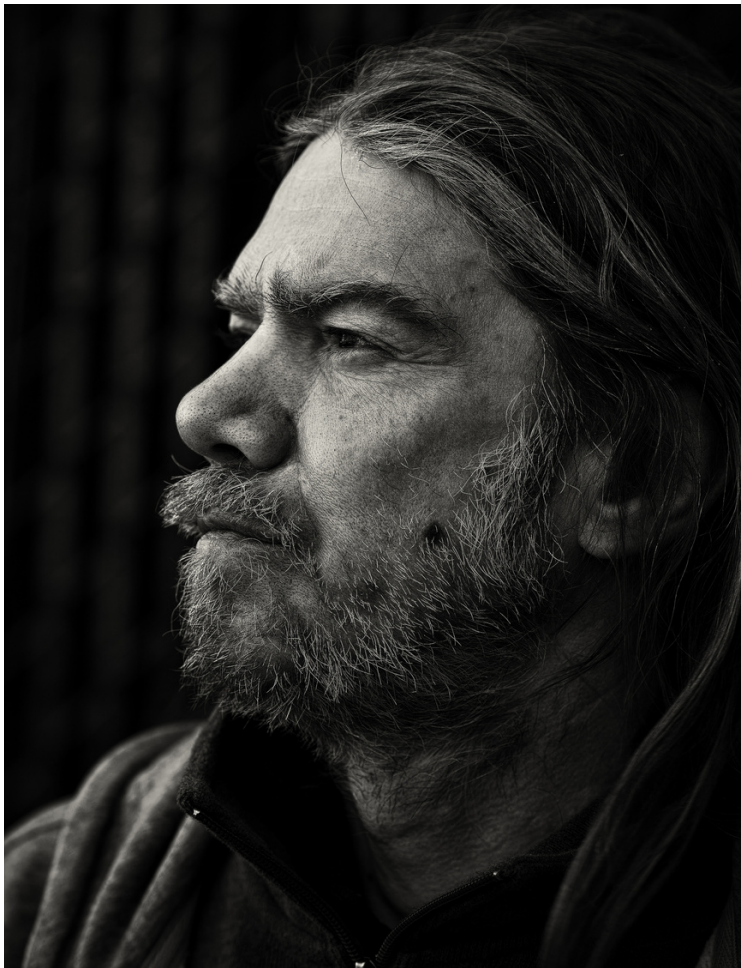
The world wants us to conform to its model, and so do the believers in our local churches. This struggle is real and it exists for all of us! The church is full of people at various stages in their own growth and maturity in Christ. Partner this with different denominational, doctrinal, and theological discussions and the enemy of our souls has all the ammunition necessary to distort the picture. Now a broken and wounded world shakes its finger at the church and seems to reject anything that it and the Word suggests as a Biblical model for Men.

To Perform. This pressure to look and act based on societal norms or fads has always been there. Even within the church. To dress, talk, act, or even believe the same as those around you is ever present. This is closely linked to conformity and production though slightly different. Acceptance is the root desire here. We want to feel accepted. This is a God given desire. The world says “We reject you, if you don’t look and act like us!” Unfortunately, this infiltrated the church as well. People became uncomfortable when someone dared to walk in looking like the “rest of the world,” all the while forgetting the work of the Holy Spirit and the process of sanctification go hand in hand. This has helped the enemy label the church as critical and judgemental. How has this been a problem for men? Stereotypes, classifications, and labels limit our perspective. God created men, as a very diverse group. Men often haven’t felt permission to look or be different from other men or the women within the church. The “Toxic Masculinity” conversation crossed over into the church as men were often labeled “Too Rough” and expected to look or act differently without being given a real model of Godly masculinity. This has created problems for men simply trying to be what they believe God and his Word have directed them to be, and facilitated a mass exodus of men leaving the church model for several decades.

To Produce. This pressure wasn’t just developed as a result of the “American Dream” but, this lie of the enemy that seemed to take hold during the 1950’s has strongly contributed to the problems many men face today. There is this underlying weight that men carry as the world’s value system tells us that we are worthless if we don’t contribute to the overall well being of society as dictated by... yep you’ve got it... society! This pressure to produce based on others expectations is a trap that the enemy has laid for men to keep them from understanding their self-worth. Somewhere along the lines we bought into the lie that you have to make a certain amount of money, own a 2500 sq ft 4 bedroom 2 and half bathroom house, have 2.5 kids, a dog and or cat and live in suburbia to be acceptable to society. This has driven men to be absentee husbands and fathers as they try to meet such demands creating an even greater gap for young boys hoping to understand how to become a man without having a Father around to help guide them.



Honorable mentions... Sex. God made it, the enemy has perverted it, and for years the church didn't talk about it. It might be the single most talked about subject in my office. In my opinion, there isn't a topic that the church shouldn't be prepared to talk about, teach, or engage in. If we don't, the rest of the world will help us find the answers. Religion. God made it, the enemy distorted it, and man in his infinite wisdom and carnal humanity just plain screwed it up! There was always supposed to be a combination of studying the scripture, corporate worship, and personal relationship with Jesus. Adherence to and the practice of our doctrinal beliefs is important, but the arguments amongst believers about what's more important has left many men feeling disengaged, disenfranchised, and running rogue for the enemy to pick them off. There are many layers to all of these topics that we could discuss at length, but each in its own way has created pressure and challenges unique to men and their discovery of what it means to be a Godly man.



So the question remains... What does it actually mean to be a Godly man? Before we break this down let's take a look at David. The only man in scripture to be called "A man after God's own heart..." 1 Samuel 13:14. You all know the story of David, but there are some attributes here that I think are worth mentioning. David was passionate! He served God with a fervent heart. This was evidenced by his stern reprimand of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:45-47 before he defeated him with his sling and cut off his head. David was a lover and a fighter, a worshiper and a warrior. When we look at David we see a beautiful blending of strength, resolve, and tenderness combined with faith, trust, love and devotion to God. David gives us a great example of what a Godly man looks like! As we try to answer the question at hand we'll break the answers down into 3 categories: gender, attributes and virtues, and role.

Gender: We can't overlook this part of the equation. Right now this is under siege and the answers being given are in direct contrast to God, His Word, and His divine order. God made Adam a man and Eve a woman. The animals he created into two different groups both male and female. Without taking the conversation in another direction, the physiological differences are evident between men and women and this was by a divine plan. I know that I'm probably preaching to the choir here, but the enemy has twisted this conversation. One's own thoughts can be deceiving and in the world we currently live in people are determining gender based on thoughts and feelings with complete disregard to physiology. That's scary to say the least. What we have to understand is that God designed men and women differently for a purpose. Each exhibits a different element of God that he took great intentionality in

creating. There's a beauty in each of them individually and a harmony that He desired to be displayed in their coming together. God chose the union of a man and a woman to bring new life into the world. Denying this very specific purpose means that humans would no longer inhabit the earth. Imagine if the animals suddenly decide to choose to be a different gender, or prefer the same sex. The world would completely cease to exist. The natural order of God's creation would be disrupted and eventually everything would die off. This brings us back to one of the very first points in this article. If we deny God as our divine creator, and Jesus as our Lord and savior, then God's divine order and perfect plan for both men and women can be called into question. Sound familiar?

Attributes, Characteristics, Traits, and Virtues: Masculinity isn't toxic. Pride is. Almost every example I can find listed as "Toxic Masculinity" is a quality God meant men to have that's been perverted by the enemy with pride, arrogance, and or insecurity. By the way, arrogance and insecurity are on opposite ends of the pride spectrum but still in the same family... they're both "Self Focused." The definition of the word masculine simply means having qualities regarded as male or traditionally associated with that of men or boys. It's what actually makes us men! Some of the qualities mentioned in this definition were strength, vigor, boldness, and confidence. What's interesting to me is some of the very same qualities that were acknowledged and even desired in men only a few years ago are now considered "Toxic" or even "Dangerous." John Wayne, also known as the Duke, often played the role of some tough old cowboy in his movies. A guy willing to do what was necessary to get the job done, willing to fight for what was right, and a man looking for a beautiful woman to love and share his heart with. How did that ever become a bad thing?? The emasculation of men has a very distinct purpose. Weak men are more easily manipulated, swayed, and or even subdued. Strong men aren't pushovers and they might just hit you in the mouth to remind you of that fact! But, a Godly man isn't merely a man of physical strength and stature. He's more than that. Otherwise, God would have made all men the exact same, Big and Strong! So what then do we look to for the answer? Here are some virtues of a Godly man found in scripture. In 1 Timothy 6:11,12 Paul tells Timothy to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Then he tells him to continue fighting the good fight of faith and no one will be able to find fault in him. A Godly man loves the Lord. He's steadfast and resolute in his faith. He's unwavering. Doesn't sound like this type of guy is a pushover is he? Galatians 5:24 states that those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their passions and desires of their sinful nature to the cross. They've crucified their flesh! No "Toxic Masculinity" here. A Godly man has submitted his heart to the Lord. He loves unconditionally and sacrificially, John 13:1.





He's willing to lay his own life down for those he loves. This sounds like Christ loving the church doesn't it? A Godly man takes a stand against wrong and fights for what is right, Matthew 21:12-17. Both David and Jesus himself provide models of what it looks like to be a Godly man. Godly men are honorable, accountable, vigilant, steadfast, have integrity, are protectors, providers, are loving, gentle, kind, and courageous. In Mark Batterson's book "Play the Man," he discusses the 7 virtues of manhood, none of which requires physical strength, large stature, or brute force.

1. Tough Love
2. Childlike Wonder
3. Will Power
4. Raw Passion
5. True Grit
6. Clear Vision
7. Moral Courage.

All of these virtues lend to something much deeper than merely physical strength or attributes. It's the heart, mind, and body of a man that's different and sets him apart. You combine those virtues with a man that also has been blessed with the physical gifts of size, strength, or agility and you have a force to be reckoned with! You have David or Samson. Maybe you weren't blessed with any of those physical gifts, but you have great resolve, wisdom, sticktoitiveness, or passion. Then you might be more like Noah, Solomon, Peter, or even Jesus! The list could go on and on, but the point is, none of these powerful men of God in scripture became who they were without the understanding that Abba Father was their creator and He had a purpose for them. For you and I, this means that Abba Father is our creator, Jesus is our savior, the Holy Spirit is our guide, and the Bible is our roadmap. Our identity is in Christ, and we need his help to figure out who we are and how to live it out correctly. Our hearts must be fully engaged, fully submitted, and 100% sold out to His perfect plan and purpose for us.

Role: The role of a man and the attributes that he brings to the table are unique. You see, God knew that life wouldn't be easy. He knew that this walk of faith would take something different. The roles of Father and Husband are given specifically to a man. Father's model God himself to the next generation. Loving, protecting, and stewarding them as they grow. A woman wasn't designed to carry the responsibilities of Father or Husband. This isn't a slight toward women! On the contrary, a woman was also designed for a specific purpose in all her splendor to bring God glory in a way that only she can. A man wasn't designed in this way either. Husbands were created to lead, love, and serve in a way that Christ modeled to the church. It was part of God's master plan. Yes, I know not every man will be a husband or a father. That doesn't mean the Father left you void of purpose. See those virtues listed above? You have them, and they're still needed in your community and your local church. Now, the problem starts when we try to compare men and women, or buy into the world's perspective of value, equality, or superiority. Comparison is the thief of joy. Remember, in God's economy the last shall be first and the first shall be last Matthew 20:16. He uses the things of the foolish to confound the wise 1 Corinthians 1:27. Men and women aren't equal, because they simply aren't the same. Nor is one superior to the other. Men can't be women, and women can't be men. We aren't interchangeable with one another or the rest of creation. Furthermore, the whims and decisions of men or society have no bearing on the identities, definitions, roles, or purposes of God's creation. God himself established these things. His word shows us the way, and church is the place where we get to learn and grow into these models. The family needs both. The Kingdom needs both! Both men and women are uniquely beautiful to God, designed with great intentionality, created for a purpose, and are deeply loved by Him. There is no comparison for either one! To God be the glory forever and ever... Amen!



THE BALANCED MAN

by Chris Clark

Years ago, someone told me I could have 5 things in life on a daily basis that I could do well at and everything else would likely not look so great. At the time I was in my early 30s and thought that was an odd concept. “Why only 5? I can multitask well so more than 5 is possible” is what I thought. Today I am 39 and I believe that person was right. Before we dive into that first off, an introduction. My name is Chris Clark. I’m married with 3 kids. I have an amazing wife of 17 years and the best kids ever. My kids are 14, 12, and 8. I work in the oil and gas industry as an operations manager and have a degree in Mechanical Engineering. I love the outdoors and everything it has to offer.

So, let us dive into the topic of 5. Why only 5 things right? Well today I think I can answer that because I got a chance to survive the other side. You see, I had way more than 5 things that I focused on daily until about 3 years ago and felt very unbalanced as a Godly man. Prior to that, I was focused on many things and the main one was climbing the corporate ladder. I became the guy at work that the company could count on my yeses. Those yeses began to interfere with the other parts of life though. To list a few of the other parts. Let’s see there is my Christian faith, my wife, my kids, my close family, my friends, two side businesses, the home duties, and oh yeah, all the outdoors activities that I love such as hunting, fishing, hiking, etc. My hunting hobby might be a little more than most. The rule of 5 does not fit with this list. You might imagine with the number of activities competing for priority things were suffering. The items that got the most attention was going the best. The job was good but the marriage wasn’t so great, but I was quickly climbing the management ladder and making the money that I always thought I needed.

For me it took a hard stop like the pandemic to shift my focus, some family struggles that began to show up in some raw and not so good impactful ways that awakened me in this space, and I began to change. I had become an unbalanced Godly man and my walk with Christ and the family were struggling deeply. The rule of 5 and the balanced Godly man became my focus.

So, what’s the rule of 5? What it means for me is I can put 5 things in order each day and focus on being successful in those areas. And for me 3 areas are the same everyday leaving 2 for me to have some option depending on the day of the week. So, #1 for me became my relationship with Jesus Christ, my number 2 became wife, and then my number 3 became my kids.





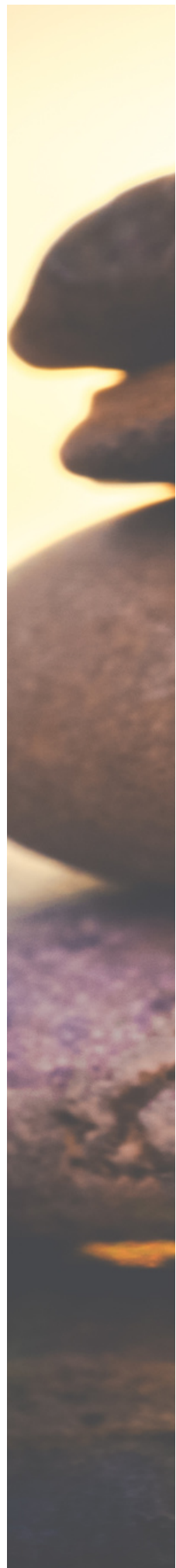
Focusing on number 1 for a moment. Prior to this shift in my balanced man focus I had become stale in my relationship with Christ. I grew up a church kid and my walk with Christ was ingrained into me at any early age, but it became routine for me at some point along the way. With this shift in focus, I began to really dig deep into my relationship with Christ where things became a relationship instead of routine. I prayed and worshiped more in my private times to build a stronger relationship. Those times of prayer, worship, and reading the Bible is where I felt like I met God in that deeper way. Over the last couple of years, I pressed even harder into this area by being the godly husband and father that I needed to be in my balanced man pursuit. It was the small things that changed for me such as praying for kids more regularly and praying out loud so they could hear me pray for them. I put significant emphasis on going to church even when the family didn't want to go. I wanted my wife and kids to see the importance I placed on being at church on a regular basis. Not because it was routine but because we needed the community time of worship together. We were better for it. As a father and a husband we should feel some responsibility in leading our family to a deeper walk with Christ and I was owning that completely.

Now for a deeper thought on number 2 and 3. 5 years ago, I would have put the wife and kids in one bucket. OH, what a mistake that was. Don't get confused by this idea. Taking care of your kids is not taking care of your wife. It's important to know the difference. Some ideas on how I focus on 2. Date your wife. Don't just go to dinner with your wife. Date your wife. Why stop dating because you got married. Put effort into your dates like you did before you were married. Actually, do better. Better effort because you know your wife better now. You know what she likes. Travel with your wife. My family and I take family vacations, but my wife and I take just her and I vacations just as much. This doesn't need to be big trips. The small local trips fit too. Talk to your wife. Give your wife the best of your day and not the last of your worn-out day. Take time to listen to her. Take time to tell her your thoughts. Be the man that you wanted to be when you got married. Men this is going to take some intentionality to focus on this. It was something I had to really focus on to give some of my best and not my last of the day. If you want to see your marriage start to change, be this man for your wife and watch the change. For your kids do one on one things with your kids. Play with your kids. It's ok to be a big kid with them. Play ball, ride bikes, play video games with them. Take a moment to slow down, listen, and play with your kids.

So, what about 4 and 5? Well for me 4 is work and then 5 are my hobbies. I'm a hardworking man and when I'm at work I show up big. I manage a large group of people with around 80 people that I'm responsible for leading. I get projects done on time. People can count on me. I love leading and I try very hard to be a positive impact at work that reflects the love of Christ. In today's world it's tough to do this but I've found that kindness and grace are ways to show this love without talking about Christ. I've found that eventually people ask me why I'm this way and that is when I'm able to share my faith. Years ago, this happened in a way when a gentleman at work began to break down and share home problems. My response to this was let's pray about it here and now. If you knew me well you would know this wasn't historically how I would responded to these situations normally but God had changed me and given me the boldness. I didn't get fired after that one but oh I thought it might happen. It was worth it though. God had orchestrated the moment and I was working in faith and going with it. Number 5, and oh how much I like number 5. Number 5 is usually something hunting related, and I love hunting. Hunting elk with a bow and arrow in September is the epicenter of all things hunting for me. I find peace and relaxation in the mountains of Colorado in September, but I've learned that if I'm going to be a balanced man that this one must stay number 5. It would be so easy for me to put that as number 1 but imagine how unbalanced that would be in life.

Diving into why I think being a balanced man is important. You see I think by keeping my 5 things in order on a daily basis I'm living the successful life that I want to live. I want to die an old man one day with Heaven on my mind and my entire family standing beside me. The balanced man gets me there. You see I need 4 and 5 to sustain life to the end. 4 provides the substance (the food, shelter, necessities) and then number 5 is just the fun thing that I enjoy doing and helps release some of the stress of life. The 5 things are my best guess on the amount of time that I have available each day. I'm not saying you can't have more than 5 things in life, but you should focus on the 5 first. You'll find that weekends don't require one of the 5 right, work. So other things do find their way in on the weekends like friends and extended family. Also, hunting isn't year-round so there's time that opens outside of hunting season. I think you see where I'm going with the rule of 5 as it's more about the priority of items more than the list.

I want to leave you with this. Ask yourself how's life going at the moment? Is your marriage good? Is the relationship with Christ in a great spot? How's your relationship with the kids? How's work going? Now ask yourself in what order do you find these things in your daily priority. The answers to these questions will yield the results on your life balance currently. If it's not balanced get radical about making changes and become a balanced man.



HOW TO DO MEN'S MINISTRY

by Bob Stone

We have found that a healthy men's group is a major part of the foundation of a strong local church. It is not an easy job to encourage men in their spiritual life but a needed and important area to address.

Attracting men to deeper spiritual life and providing men the right kind of help is a real job. When it is going well and good things are taking place it is very rewarding.

Our Men's Ministry

I have chosen to write a brief outline about the Men's Ministry Department at Victory Life Church. What we are doing now has developed over the last several years. I will probably address in part some of the topics you have suggested. Mostly, I want to share the pattern and path that is working for us here in our church and the method in which we minister to our church and community in the Grand Junction Valley.

Who are we as a Leadership Team?

We are a Leadership Team of men who have committed to come along side our pastor and church leadership and help minister to the men in our church. Our mission is that we all feel called to help every man in our church to attain his highest spiritual life. God has called us as a leadership Team to share our life together as we plan events and spiritual encounters. We meet in a monthly meeting, usually over a dinner at a selected restaurant. Our Leadership Team is composed of 8-12 men who allow our lives to be accountable to one another. We feel one of the positives of our Leadership Team is that we have decided to not choose one person to be our primary leader (president of the committee as such)



but we come together as a group of leaders that freely shares ideas, goals and direction for the greater men's ministry in our church. We share responsibilities to one another to get things planned out. We keep in communication through a group text regularly. We have a ministry plan that by and large has encompassed Small Group bible studies, regular meet-ups that are centered around men's activity that all men like to do, a dinner and breakfast met-up on a monthly basis and we plan an Annual Men's Conference usually in the spring. Each of these men's activities is planned with our Leadership Team at our monthly get together.

All of the topics in your project list are basically small group studies or a curriculum based study. I have used a number of these studies in the past and I will list them below. The main thrust of the Men's Ministry at Victory Life Church is centered on relationship building and providing activities that men enjoy doing so they will be excited to meet up with other men. Over the years we have had and will continue to have Bible based studies, Small group studies for personal growth, and other unique spiritual opportunities. Below is listed a few of the studies I have used:

Small group and curriculum based studies:

- THE SEVEN SEASONS OF A MAN'S LIFE by Patrick Morley
- FOUR PILLARS OF A MAN'S LIFE by Stu Weber
- ACT LIKE MEN by James Macdonald
- THE 17 QUALITIES OF A TEAM PLAYER by John Maxwell
- WHY GREAT MEN FALL by Wayde Goodall
- WILD AT HEART by John Eldredge
- FARHEREED BY GOD by John Eldredge





How do we lead our men?

Each of our planned events is designed to bring men together to have fellowship, fun, and food. The goal of these events is to initiate the discipleship process in men's lives and help make them stronger, stable and firm in the things of God. We desire to provide a space for men that are safe and welcoming but not intimidating. We desire that men will look forward to attending the next event and get involved. We advertise our meet-ups and other men's events the usual ways, through our church web site and published fliers. Pulpit announcements are helpful too.

Our Annual Men's Ministry Conference is a very important part of men feeling that they are a part of a much larger story. Each year we plan a big event in the spring that takes several weeks to accomplish the planning. Our Leadership Team most often increases in participants in order to accomplish our goals. The annual conference is the main event for men each year.

What are our men interested in?

It is important to understand who your men are and what their hopes and desires are. Men at Victory Life Church have a large variety of interest. We have a wide demographic of men. We have single young men, young married men with a family and lots of kids, older married men and men who are widowers. As you can imagine, the interests are varied. Most of our men enjoy the out of doors along with many other interests. We want to believe each man has a desire for a deeper walk with God. That they are concerned about how they can be a faithful follower of Jesus and how to be a good husband and father. I believe our men have a desire to feel connected to a movement of other men. The main goal of our Leadership Team is to schedule and plan for the best activities that our men would be excited to be a part of. It is a wonderful feeling to see a group of men attend an event, have a great time and enjoy each others company and go home as though they can't wait until the next time.

What about faithful leadership?

Above all it is required that a man be faithful. Being called to faithfulness allows our Leadership Team to experience the favor of God with us. Our best laid plans will be of no benefit unless God blesses them. I am deeply honored to be a part of a leadership team that is serving God and reaching out to men. I believe that the men in our churches are looking for faithful consistent leadership. When they see faithful men leading them, we will have a better opportunity to see them follow. Men will feel safe and excited to participate in what we plan. Nothing can take the place of faithful leaders who have experienced the call of God in their lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the following individuals for taking the time and energy to contribute to this resource:



Bob Stone

Men's Leadership Team Member
Victory Life Church, Grand Junction, CO



Brandon Bradford

Assistant Director, Life & Leadership Coach
Ranch of Hope Counseling, Westcliffe, CO



Chris Clark

Founder of Hoof and Rack Outdoors
Castle Rock, CO

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Books:

- PLAY THE MAN by Mark Batterson

Small Group and curriculum based studies:

- THE SEVEN SEASONS OF A MAN'S LIFE by Patrick Morley
- FOUR PILLARS OF A MAN'S LIFE by Stu Weber
- ACT LIKE MEN by James Macdonald
- THE 17 QUALITIES OF A TEAM PLAYER by John Maxwell
- WHY GREAT MEN FALL by Wayde Goodall
- WILD AT HEART by John Eldredge
- FARHEREED BY GOD by John Eldredge

