



INFLUENCERS

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“MEN are God’s method. The church is looking for better methods: God is looking for better men. What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organization or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer.” -E.M. Bounds-

A few years ago a pastor friend asked me, “If you were mentoring a man and you could only teach him one thing in the spiritual disciplines, what would it be?”

There was a time in my Christian life when I would have had to think long and hard about this. Would I want him to be strong in the Word, having regular quiet times, memorizing Scripture, and having a method in how to study the Bible? Would I want him to link with a band of like-minded men who were chasing after Christ together? Would I want him to have a good method and habit of sharing his faith with others to be able to have a multiplying ministry and to populate heaven and help to accomplish the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19,20)? These are not just good things, they are crucial to Christian life, living and fruit-bearing.

BUT THE QUESTION REALLY IS, WHAT IS THE MOST CRUCIAL DISCIPLINE? What discipline will be foundational to all of the others? Which will be the deciding factor in whether the others are ever really realized in our lives? **My response today after forty years in ministry, hands down is...I would want that man to know how to pray,** to be comfortable on spiritual turf, or in other words, to be comfortable in God’s presence.

Now you might ask 10 disciple makers this question and get 12 answers, but let me explain why I adamantly feel this is the most crucial discipline:

- A man needs to connect with God at the heart to know Him and serve Him.
- Too many men want to serve God but will not take the time to get to know Him.
- To truly serve Christ, we must know Him intimately. To know Him intimately, we must spend time with Him. We believe that transformation comes through proximity.
- To serve and glorify Jesus, we must learn to act like Jesus. We must be with Him if we are going to learn to know His voice, to think like Him and have His perspective.
- Only when a man is with Him intimately will that man truly discover how much Jesus loves him. And His love must be what drives a man in service and relationship.
- A man must be free in his relationship with Jesus. This freedom comes when he hears Him say, “Son I love you.” This is the love that drives a man to stand in the face of danger, to bear up under suffering and to sacrifice for the good of others as Jesus did. This is ministry, and ministry is living in Christ to the extent that people are drawn to Him through our reflection of His glory. We have been in His presence.
- A man needs to know that Jesus loves him, approves of him and accepts him. I can tell him that, but he will only truly discover this when he is in His presence. Relationship!
- All of the other disciplines flow out of this one.

Why would a man want to discipline himself in the first place? Discipline is no fun. For many years I have sought to get men to memorize scripture, have quiet times, share their faith, involve themselves in ministry and service, and it has been like pulling teeth. They say they can’t memorize or journal and the “tyranny of the urgent” has captured them so that they are too busy doing good things to concentrate on the best things. They know they SHOULD do all these things, but they are not motivated to do them. WHY?

“Men ought always to pray and not faint.” (Luke 18:1) “Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity none is more essential and yet more neglected than prayer.” -Fenelon-

“I will behold Your face in righteousness: I will be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness.” (Psalms 17:15) “We can never expect to grow in the likeness of our Lord unless we follow His example and give more time to communion with the Father.” -E.M. Bounds-

Men are uncomfortable in God’s presence because they have a wrong view of who He is. They have lived their lives on such a performance-based, works-based system, that they can’t imagine that God is anything but disappointed in them. They just can’t get it together. They can’t keep the rules. They can’t please Him. They are mostly riddled with guilt and shame so they tend to run from God rather than to Him in their sin and struggles. This is killing the effectiveness of the church.

If nothing else, we are seeking to help men get into God’s presence so that they can learn to know Him, and to know Him is to love Him. To love Him is to want to please and obey Him. To obey Him is to demonstrate that we love Him and that glorifies Him. **It all starts with prayer, or being in His presence.**

We are seeking to create environments where God can come and help Himself to our lives. Because men do not know God intimately, there’s too much Christ-less Christianity going on out there; too many man-centered sermons; too many folks exercising their gifts of service because they need to feel better about themselves. **These are symptoms of a church where works has replaced grace**, where men have been given the idea that they are the center of their own universe, and they have to live this Christian life out in their own power. If the church is ever going to be what God intended it to be...well consider these quotes:

“Praying men are God’s chosen leaders. The distinction between the leaders that God brings to the front to lead and bless His people, and those leaders who owe their position of leadership to a worldly, selfish, unsanctified selection, is this: God’s leaders are preeminently men of prayer.” - E.M. Bounds-

“All continued with one accord in prayer.” (Acts 1:4) “In prayer the Church has received power to rule the world. The Church is always the little flock. But if it would stay together on its knees, it would dominate world politics—from the prayer room.” -O. Hallesby-

It’s not complicated, but it’s not easy. The spiritual battle going on is relentlessly seeking to separate men from God and to render helpless the work of God’s church. We’re a small bunch of guys seeking to influence a large bunch of guys in the direction of knowing Jesus, engaging the battle in His power, and seeking to be God’s men for such a time as this.

This is why we pray with men on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. We believe that prayer does not support the work; prayer IS the work! Men are beating a path to the prayer room, usually not a very well worn path. Therefore, men are being changed, forgiven, encouraged and blessed. Marriages, families, churches, businesses, the community and world are better off for it. God is answering our prayers, and He is pressing us to trust Him for more.

So, pray my friends. Pray like you’ve never prayed before. Pray for us. We are in desperate need of prayer. We are in a heavy spiritual battle in a faith-based, grace-driven ministry, and Satan would love to close us down. It’s always a team effort. Thanks for being on our team.

With much love and thanksgiving for you,

Pete